

Welcome to The Max! City of Laredo Municipal Golf Course



Photo special to The Laredo Sun.

City of Laredo mayor and council members host Texas-sized soft opening for the Max A. Mandel Municipal Golf Course, a Robert Trent Jones, II signature design

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By: Special to The Laredo Sun



LAREDO, TEXAS - Today, City of Laredo leaders officially opened the Robert Trent Jones, II signature design Max A. Mandel Municipal Golf Course, with a ceremonial putt and invitational "par-is-your-partner" tournament that included City of Laredo leaders; RTJ II; Landscapes Unlimited, the course builder/contractor; Foresight Golf, the course operator; the Mandel family and Ermilo Richer, the benefactors and land donors; and members of the local golf and business community.

In fact, the golf course, in all of its majestic beauty, is dedicated to Laredo's golf community and local business leaders, all who have been waiting with bated breath for a high quality, city-owned public golf facility in Laredo.

"I believe this is a landmark project for Laredo, all of South Texas and even, our friends in Mexico," said City of Laredo Mayor Raul G. Salinas.

"It touches several aspects of our community from recreation and leisure, job creation, and, adding a quality of life component that many outside business prospects look for when deciding where they want to bring their companies.

I look forward to seeing my colleagues, neighbors and friends, right here at The Max!"

Nestled on 270 acres along the Rio Grande, the architect took this pristine farm and river vega land and designed it into a signature top-notch course where hard-core golfers, novice players and everyone in between, will find the course challenging, fun, beautiful and just as importantly, affordable.

The Max golf course design and construction, including the green, fairways, bunkers and sand, incorporated some of the unique Laredo landscape into the features, and carved the natural beauty of the South Texas brush and the Rio Grande into the design, truly making the place a one-of-a-kind golf course in the country.

Jones says of the new course: "The Max A. Mandel Golf Course is a celebration anew of the great game of golf and its cherished roots as a game of the people.

The City of Laredo has graciously provided us with the latitude to let our imagination roam free across a rare piece of land that exuded the rugged essence of this storied region.

For the one-time capital of the Republic of the Rio Grande, we have created a golf experience that we hope will be a source of great pride and satisfaction for the public.

We believe the City of Laredo's inaugural public golf course is destined to be regarded as one of the best public golf courses in Texas and Mexico."

Before the groundbreaking for the course took place in late 2010, local golfers, golf pros, golf coaches and students, and the public in general were able to meet with the designer and others involved in the golf course construction so that they could give input about the features they would like to see incorporated into their municipal golf course.

According to leaders, the idea of a municipal golf course was always a project that was on the horizon, but lack of financing and other priority projects always pushed the project to the backburner.

When the City of Laredo first came up with the idea of a public/private partnership to develop the golf project into a reality, officials researched the possible positive financial impact the golf course would have on not only current and future Laredoans, but also, the impact to the economy in terms of jobs created.

City leaders soon realized the golf course was a priority project and pushed for turning the dream of a golf course into a reality. After a competitive bid process, which included 32 responses of all the top names vying for the job, the first municipal-owned golf course was about to get well on its way.

In fact, City of Laredo District VII Council Member Jorge Vera, in whose district the golf course lies, was a proponent of the project even before he was elected to the Laredo City Council.

Once on board, he immediately became engaged in helping the project become a reality, donating \$1.2 million of discretionary funds to complete the golf course.

"I always saw the need for a golf course of this caliber for our community because I see how it will impact Laredo in very positive ways, from our economy to more local talent playing the game," said Cm. Vera.

This \$8 million project, which includes the championship golf course, clubhouse, roadways and maintenance facility, was made possible by the generous land donation of 270 acres by the family of the late Max A. Mandel, a Laredo bank executive and economic visionary whose involvement in a variety of civic issues the past 45 years is legendary.

Along with the property, the family also donated \$1 million to the facility, as well as water rights for irrigation purposes.

"Max was an outstanding individual who loved Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and worked all of his life in Laredo to make this region a better place for all who live and work here," said Gary Jacobs, Mandel family spokesperson.

"When he passed away, Mrs. Mandel and her three daughters: Jessie, Louise and Suzanne, along with the grandchildren, wanted to do something lasting in his good name and something that would be a joy for people from all walks of life.

Max loved his Las Islitas farm on the Old Mines Road, so this beautifully designed and executed Robert Trent Jones, II signature golf course, is a wonderful tribute to Max and of his love for our Los Dos Laredos.

Additionally, we applaud the City of Laredo for their commitment to and vision of creating a great golf course, a model for what a public/private partnership is that leverages the relationship to the benefit of the taxpayers and the entire community."

The facility will open to the public on Friday, October 19, 2012, without a club house; however, club house services will be operating out of the cart barn, including: offering Max A. Mandel golf apparel; golf course material; snacks; and temporary restroom facilities.

Golf professional running the course for Foresight Golf will be Jorge Flores, a Laredo native who graduated from The Professional Golfers Career College in Temecula, California, with a specialized associates' degree in Professional Golf Management.

Flores later worked under three-time Pac-Ten Champion and First Team All-American, from 1964-1966 Sherman W. Finger, III at the Knollwood Club in Lake Forest, Illinois before returning to Texas.

According to Foresight, one focus of the new golf course will be to attract new enthusiasts to the game, hosting workshops, clinics and player development programs for young and novice players.

"Once again, the City of Laredo has created an extraordinary opportunity for its citizens and the many people that visit this great community. Foresight Golf is proud to have worked with the City in this effort and stands ready, willing and able to provide a remarkable experience for everyone that visits The Max," said Dan Pedrotti, President, Foresight Golf.

"Our approach is to establish and maintain consistently exceptional conditions and remarkably attentive customer service. Our strength comes from years of knowledge and experience as an owner/operator in concert with a keen sense of humility about our company and our efforts.

We are here to serve and we will work diligently to provide memorable events for all who visit The Max."

He continued, "We believe strongly that this stunning golf course will stand the test of time. It is absolutely unique in the world of golf as it was carved out of the magnificent South Texas Brush alongside the mighty Rio Grande.

The beauty and drama of the land upon which it was built provides an excellent showcase for our part of the world. It will serve the good people of Laredo in high fashion for many, many years to come and we are very pleased to be on the frontline of this effort," concluded Pedrotti.

For more information on course fees, setting tee times, and alternative options for shorter, family and/or inexperienced golfer course play, please call Foresight Golf at (956) 726-2000 or visit www.themaxlaredo.com for more information.

"We hope that The Max will attract the youth of Laredo who will want to come and learn the game in an informal atmosphere, and of course, golf enthusiasts who look for a challenging, charming and aesthetically pleasing course," said Horacio De Leon, Assistant City Manager and golf course project manager.

"Additionally, we expect that this golf course will attract visitors to Laredo from throughout Texas and northern Mexico, who are looking for not only a competitive golfing experience that will be found here at The Max, but also, all the cultural amenities that our great city has to offer.

As a facility, the golf course will add to an already bustling visitor economy."

The club house, which was expanded from its original one-story design to include a second floor with a breathtaking view of the Rio Grande, is currently under construction and is expected to be open in the spring of 2013.

The permanent club house is designed by local designer William Mortiz Luft and Metaform Architects.

Edited by: C.R.