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### "Longitudes Group Tracks Travel Trends for PGA"

Omaha, NE- Golf and travel are forever intertwined as golfers can not resist taking their game on the road. The PGA of America understands the impact of travel on the game of golf. In a recent report, released by PGA Magazine, a number of positive trends have been identified by leading golf and travel research companies. The travel industry has seen a number of ups and downs since 9/11. Longitudes Group and Ypartnership, as well as other golf travel and research companies, have tracked the trends annually. Positive results have been proven and golf travel is strongly emerging in 2007.

"Something must be working right, as prime tee times at the top Myrtle Beach courses are already sold out for weekends in April/May of 2008," states Scott Kramer, author of PGA Magazine's 2007 Travel Report. "Likewise, other top U.S. golf destinations are reporting a glut of advanced reservations. For example, Torrey Pines Golf Course in San Diego is the site of the 2008 U.S. Open. Officials tell PGA Magazine that there has already been much more demand for tee times as the U.S. Open nears, plus there are many curiosity seekers who visit the course to snap photos and purchase Open-logged merchandise."

"This implies to me that golfers wanting to play some of America's 'Best of...' courses need to plan ahead by up to nine months right now,' says Sara Killeen, president of Longitudes Group, a Nebraska-based company providing geographic-based research on sports, travel, leisure spending and recreation. 'So planning cycles are finally stretching out again.'"

"According to Killeen, there are other positive trends in golf travel emerging. 'Some of our favorite old trends are back,' she says. 'The buddy golf trip, which had fallen off the household budget for a number of reasons after 9/11, is now back on the list of annual trips approved by all parties in the household. The two most favorite traveling partners are either a spouse or friends of the same sex. Spouses rate higher than buddies, but just barely. Airplanes are packed, so that means folks are flying and feeling very mobile. With high gas prices, if driving to a vacation destination, consumers have pulled in their travel radius from say 600-plus miles to destinations in the 350- to 500-mile range. Their gas costs for the trip budget are then only up maybe \$50 or so over other years when they traveled farther.'"

"Lack of time is still our biggest enemy, and it's not improving,' says Killeen. 'Therefore, long weekend trips of three or four days are most typical. And that's another reason to either not go any further than 350 miles or so, or to get on a plane.'"

"When on their trip, golf travelers want to have fun nightlife options and a selection of fine dining,' she adds. 'There are a lot of 'foodies' out there who are passionate about good food and great wine. Again, great golf courses are a given when it comes to what golfers want most, but consumers are also seeking some of the other fun and culinary experiences that can be discovered at a destination.'"

"Peter Yesawich, chairman & CEO of travel consultant Ypartnership, LCC in Orlando, concurs with Killeen that while family travel is increasing - 36 percent of adults have taken at least one vacation with children this year - the most popular form of leisure travel remains adults traveling with spouses or with other adults (up 61 percent have done this). The typical adult takes four overnight leisure vacations each year that are more than 75 miles from home," explained Kramer. "Approximately a third of leisure travelers are grandparents, and one of every five has taken at least one vacation with their grandchildren."

"'Because the population is aging, the implication for golf is interesting,' says Yesawich. 'As people get older, they travel more for leisure because they have more leisure time, and they have more discretionary income to pursue that. That suggests to me that on the horizon, the golf industry is going to see an emerging opportunity for increased multi-generation family travel that occurs by default because the population is getting older.'"

"But with family trips that include golf come expectations that the golf rounds must be well valued and played quickly." Kramer found that, "Some resorts, such as Marriott Resort courses, have been playing to families by offering children free golf when accompanied by paying adults. Other resorts – Kiawah Island (S.C.) Golf Resort, for example – have reportedly set up social tee boxes geared specifically for families throughout the year."

"Recently studying the effect of rising gas prices on the travel behavior of 1500 participants, Yesawich concluded that 'the tipping point was \$3.50 per gallon. If gas got there, which it never did nationally, about 51 percent of travelers said they'd change their vacation plans.'"

"So Yesawich asked them how they would change plans. The most frequently mentioned response, by 25 percent of them: 'I would drive a shorter distance.' The second most frequent response: 'I would spend less on other aspects of the trip, maybe stay at a less-expensive hotel or spend less on food-beverage-entertainment.'"

"Explains Yesawich: 'So there would be a little fallout, but not to the amount the doomsayers claim. People would just change travel habits.'"

"The irony is that as gas prices go up, we see an increase in air travel because of the low-cost carriers providing an affordable alternative to driving. The airline competition has been severe. Southern Californians can buy a ticket on Southwest to Phoenix for \$69, which makes it almost comparable to what it costs to drive."

To view the full [2007 Travel Report](#) article, by Scott Kramer, pick up the PGA Magazine, October 2007 issue, Volume 88, No. 10 or go to [PGA.com](#).

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Longitudes Group, LLC, headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, is a research and marketing company providing unique analysis on the travel and spending behaviors of avid golfers. Armed with a database containing information on the behavior of 6.0 million avid golfers mapped by county and zip code, Longitudes Group uses a geo-demographic approach to probe both the location and travel behavior of the avid golfer population. On the supply side, Longitudes Group has built the most up-to-date database of golf retailers including 16,000 golf facilities, 1,574 off-course retail stores and 2,000 chain sporting goods store. For more information, visit the company online at [www.longitudesgroup.com](http://www.longitudesgroup.com).