

## **The Cliffs Launches Center for Environmental Golf Research with Clemson University and Slate of Industry-leading Contributors**

**Travelers Rest, SC (October 18, 2007)** – Golf is going even greener at The Cliffs Communities: today, The Cliffs Center for Environmental Golf Research, in cooperation with Clemson University, was officially unveiled. What will be a laboratory for first-of-its-kind, industry-leading turfgrass research will produce environmentally-enhancing, ecologically-complementary golf course and green space management and maintenance practices both within the gates of The Cliffs' communities and, ideally, outside the gates, as a model for others in the golf course development business.

The Center is situated in The Cliffs at Mountain Park, one of The Cliffs' eight private, master-planned residential communities, located in Travelers Rest, SC. Co-managed by The Cliffs Communities and professors affiliated with the Turfgrass Program in Clemson University's Department of Horticulture, the 5.6-acre site includes research laboratories, two experimental Par 3 organic golf holes grown with both warm- and cool-season grasses, 40,000 square feet of turfgrass plots, and office, meeting, and living space for administrators and students.

"We are excited about teaming up with Clemson University on a project that we expect will blaze trails in research and positively impact not only our communities but the business of golf course development and management," stated Jim Anthony, President and Founder of The Cliffs Communities. "The Cliffs decided to undertake this project because it's the right thing to do. 'Going green' is beneficial for all of us –as individuals and families, for our businesses, and ultimately, for our economy as a whole. It's a better way of living, and that's what we seek to provide here at The Cliffs: the best place to work, live, and play in America."

"The relationship between Clemson University and The Cliffs Communities is a model for the way a public university can partner with a private company to achieve far-reaching, multi-dimensional benefits for students, faculty and the business community by focusing together on the wise use and stewardship of our precious environmental resources," said Clemson President James F. Barker.

### **Trusted Research with Everyday Applications**

The Cliffs Center for Environmental Golf Research will be Clemson's third hub for turfgrass study, its additional locations located at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center near Myrtle Beach, SC, and at the Walker Golf Course and South Carolina Botanical Gardens on the campus of Clemson University in Clemson, SC. Mike Harbin, Director of Agronomy at The Cliffs Communities, and Haibo Liu, Associate Professor of Turfgrass Research at Clemson University, will be spearheading the Center's day-to-day activities and overseeing its staff of undergraduate and graduate students engaged in immersive learning.

At The Cliffs Center for Environmental Research, turf plots will be maintained to study the attributes and benefits of different grasses. A golf course management program will be applied to the turf with measured "inputs" (cultural additions to turf such as watering, mowing, aerofying, and fertilizing) and "outputs" (the effects of turf quality on the surrounding environment,

including ground water, run-off, and erosion control), with a focus of minimizing negative and maximizing positive impacts. The organic Par 3 golf holes will allow the study of building a turf program from zero inputs – a sharp contrast to the current, industry-wide practice of constructing golf holes via a management program.

“We could not ask for a better group to collaborate and innovate with than the Turfgrass Program’s faculty at Clemson University,” said Jim Anthony, President and Founder of The Cliffs Communities.

Clemson University has been engaged in turfgrass teaching and research for more than 50 years, and formulated a formalized program of turfgrass study in 2000 as a result of South Carolina’s becoming the nation’s second most popular vacation golf destination over the previous two decades. Clemson’s Turfgrass Program currently ranks eighth in the nation and third in the Atlantic Coast region, employs five full-time faculty members, 55 undergraduates in the golf course or sports turf industry and eight graduate students working in turf related research under the Plant and Environmental Science graduate program.

Research and findings generated through Clemson’s endeavors in turfgrass study are used nationwide through its web site (<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/turfornamental/>), research publications, and presentations by our graduate students and faculty at national and regional conferences. Its faculty has authored six textbooks on turfgrass management, including Clemson’s *Professional Turfgrass Pest Management Guide*, which serves as a model being used in surrounding states. Clemson’s faculty has traveled to more than 10 countries to present and provide turfgrass research and education, and makes more than 150 site visits annually to golf courses and athletic fields.

“What Clemson brings to the table for this project is invaluable to its success: their experience and expertise will help us move through volumes of ideas and processes to find the real, positive impacts and solutions,” stated Daniel Brazinski, Vice President of Golf Maintenance at The Cliffs Communities. “The beauty of the work that will take place at our Center is that positive impact findings can be incorporated into the management and maintenance of The Cliffs’ golf courses instantly – in days rather than years.”

The Cliffs, itself, brings over a decade’s worth of data and to the project, taken directly from daily monitoring and management of The Cliffs’ collection of golf courses, each of which is affected by unique factors resulting from the unique topography and micro-climatic patterns inherent in the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Under the leadership of Daniel Brazinski, The Cliffs Golf Maintenance Department, numbering over 150 in full-time staff, has implemented environmentally-sensitive measures on each of The Cliffs’ golf courses and in its communities’ 1,300+ acres of green spaces. These initiatives include an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program above and beyond what is required, to set higher standards for the handling and use of pesticides; the enrollment of The Cliffs’ collection of golf courses into the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program; and a detailed program of thorough recordkeeping on all inputs and outputs to The Cliffs’ courses, which has resulted in valuable analyses that produce better practices for lowering the impact of the golf maintenance program –while keeping the course experiences maximized for The Cliffs’ Members – with each passing year.

“In five years, I’d like this Center’s findings to prove that, with a team of highly-trained professionals, a golf course can be managed in a way that actually serves to enhance the environment,” Brazinski commented. “It’s our hope to share the knowledge that we uncover along the way to those who are interested in using these new techniques to improve their property management practices, whether they be golf courses, athletic fields, green spaces, or private lawns.”

### **Industry Leaders Sign On**

The turfgrass industry contributes over \$1.5 billion to South Carolina’s economy each year. With The Cliffs and Clemson University poised to conduct research that could very well change the landscape of golf course operations in the future, many forward-thinking private-sector companies –spanning international, regional, and local markets– have already expressed interest or commitment to lending their support through access to previously conducted studies and scientific data to serve as benchmarks, as well as other products and resources:

Syngenta	Bayer	Toro Company	Genesis Golf
Agri-Business	Corbin Turf	Golf Agronomics	Turf Mountain Sod
Profile Products	Harrell’s	New Life Turf	Nature Safe
Precision	The Andersons	Steve Ninemire	Scott’s Seed

“We have been more than pleased about the enthusiastic reception the project’s received from Clemson and from each product provider with whom we’ve shared our ideas. What is happening is a synergy among experts that’s bound to create a shared knowledge-based environment that will force the best solutions to the surface, added Jim Anthony.”

“The Toro Company is excited to take part in this progressive project,” said Dana Lonn, director of Toro’s Center for Advanced Turf Technology. “The Center represents a unique partnership between university scientists, manufacturers, and the golf course owner and operator. It affords all involved the opportunity to apply leading-edge science and technologies to improve the way we care for the outdoors while minimizing the use of resources such as water, energy, and plant protectants. Innovation has been, and will continue to be, our hallmark as we develop the next generation of products to both irrigate and maintain green spaces. Partnering with The Cliffs Center for Environmental Golf Research will help us to accomplish our goal.”

### **Setting a New Standard**

Being a conscious steward of responsible development practices while creating arguably the best golf experience in America has been a hallmark of The Cliffs’ success. Recently recognized as the Best Development in the United States by the CNBC International Property Awards, The Cliffs has also been described as offering “the most comprehensive and impressive club membership in the world” by *Resort Living*, and ranks among America’s Top 10 Private Golf Communities by *Travel + Leisure Golf* and *The Robb Report*.

Now, with their Center for Environmental Golf Research teed up to set a new standard in environmentally-friendliness, the attraction to live at The Cliffs becomes all the more compelling, says Scott Beville, President of Sales and Marketing for The Cliffs Communities.

“Increasingly, people are gravitating to responsibly-led residential communities,” Beville states. “Not simply communities that say they are making a difference, but ones who actually are and invite their owners and residents to help them cast a wider net of positive impact.

“At The Cliffs, we see families coming from almost every state in the country and increasingly from across the world, to be a part of what is happening here. Projects like this Center for Environmental Golf Research, while complementing their golf experience in the way of beautifully maintained courses with the lowest impact on nature, provide for our Members another outlet to get involved and a place to live, work, and play that they take pride in.”

The Cliffs’ Members enjoy a golf experience unlike any other in the world, as a renowned group of designers has come together over its 16-year history to create an unrivaled collection of golf courses – all located minutes apart and accessed by one membership: The recently announced Tiger Woods Design course at The Cliffs at High Carolina, Woods’ first course in America. Two Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Courses, one bordering Pisgah National Forest with views of the Asheville mountains and one situated along the shores of Lake Keowee, are coupled with two lakeside Tom Fazio designs: one with eight of its 18 holes boasting mountain-lake views and the second under construction at Keowee Springs Lodge and Spa, America’s First Luxury Family Wellness Resort<sup>SM</sup>. The new Gary Player Signature “river course” under development at The Cliffs includes a layout of 14 of its 18 holes along the North Saluda River, while minutes away, a parkland Valley course designed by Ben Wright showcases an incredible amphitheater of the Blue Ridge Escarpment. The Cliffs at Glassy, a Tom Jackson design rated Fourth Most Scenic in the Nation by *Golf Digest* behind only Augusta National, Pebble Beach, and Cypress Point, is South Carolina’s only mountaintop course.

### ***About The Cliffs Communities***

*Founded in 1991 by Jim Anthony, The Cliffs Communities is devoted to the sensible development of residential communities and other properties, within the United States and around the world. The Cliffs’ domestic properties include eight premier, private master-planned residential communities located in the heart of the Carolina Preserve between Asheville, NC, and Greenville, SC, collectively bordered by hundreds of thousands of acres of national forests and state parks in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Ownership in any one of The Cliffs’ eight communities carries the exclusive opportunity to become a Cliffs’ Member, with privileges that include access to The Cliffs’ international properties stretching from the marine preserves off the British Columbia coast to the virgin shoreline of Patagonia, Chile and the beaches and reefs of the private island of Cornish Cay in the Abacos, Bahamas. The Cliffs offers homesites from \$300,000 to over \$3,000,000 and custom homes from \$700,000 to over \$5,000,000. To discover panoramic living at The Cliffs, call (877) 254-3371 or visit*