

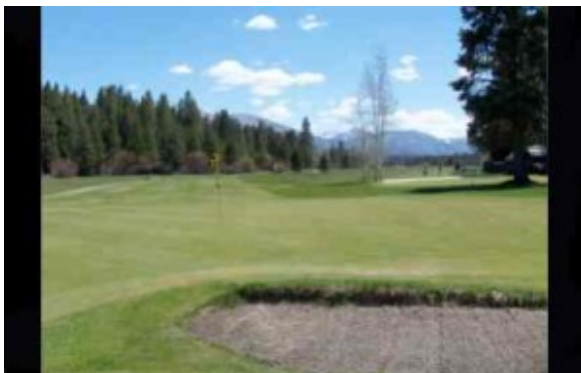
Report details golf as economic driver in Calif.

By Larry Bohannon, Desert Sun

There is plenty of important news in the latest 52-page report on the economic impact of golf in California.

According to the report, commissioned by Golf 20/20 for the California Alliance for Golf, the game has a \$13.1 billion overall impact, direct and indirect, on the state. That includes numbers like \$4.1 billion in wages for 128,000 golf-related jobs. There is also the \$346 million the game generates for charities in the state.

It is a comprehensive report, covering everything from tourism to real estate sales to television revenues to the sale of golf clubs through the 2011 calendar year.



Bijou Golf Course in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/SLT

But as with pretty much any economic report these days, there is both good news and a little bad news in the document, the first of its kind since 2006 by the California Alliance for Golf. For instance, the total golf economy in the state in 2011 was \$6.344 billion. That's down from the \$6.871 billion in 2006.

“The decline in the California golf economy was driven primarily by weakness in two industry segments: Golf real estates and golf course capital investment, which includes new course construction,” the report states.

Real estate accounted for \$1.365 billion in the 2006 report, and just \$372 million in the 2001 report. But other areas of the golf economy were up, including golf facility operations, and hospitality/tourism.

And in the last two years, since the numbers the report used were generated, most people in the golf industry will tell you the game has continued to climb from the depths of 2009 and 2010.

Why produce such a report? Because golf as an industry is fighting just like other industries for less intrusion from the state’s government and to maximize future revenues by understanding where the game stands now. The report also talks about golf’s environmental record, which it says is far better than the image of the sport as a big user of water and chemicals.

“Golf is more than a game. It is a business providing economic vitality for myriad California communities, jobs for thousands of residents, healthy outdoor recreation for families, necessary green space, and millions of dollars in charity to various local community causes,” state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Rocklin, said as the report was released.

The game is important to California.

The California Alliance for Golf report puts hard and fast numbers to the game so state officials and other regulators will understand that the game is something to be fostered.