



Stringers Restaurant, opening in the downstairs portion of the clubhouse, is one of several new additions to Heather Downs Country Club, which now caters to the general public.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEATHER DOWNS COUNTRY CLUB



The Heather Downs Country Club golf course is noted for tight fairways and small, challenging greens. The signature holes, Nos. 4, 5 and 6, are carved through a valley of Swan Creek, offering golfers a challenging course with a scenic view.

# Heather Downs Country Club Opens Its Doors To The Public

BY NANCY GAGNET  
PLAYLIST REPORTER

After 80 years of operating as a private club, Heather Downs Country Club in south Toledo was purchased by three local investors and

transformed into a semi-private club, making it open for public play for the first time since its 1925 founding.

The deal, which officially took effect on March 30, sealed years of speculation as

to what may happen to the member-owned club as it faced declining membership.

According to general club manager Dan Hathaway, several attempts were made to bolster membership since it began to slide four years ago, and although new members joined, there was not enough support to keep it going and the member-owners were forced to sell it.

Hathaway, who has managed the club since January 2004, attributes the drop in membership to a sagging economy, changes in spending patterns and changes in family demographics.

"The way people allocate disposable income has changed dramatically and people's lives are changing in terms of how families involve themselves in recreational activities," he said.

Hathaway said the changes were inevitable in order to stay in business.

"The major problem for Heather Downs was maintaining a certain level of membership, and like many private clubs around the country, going semi-private is pretty much what they have to do to sustain themselves," he explained.

The new owners — Joe Garverick, Scott Prephan and a third owner who remains anonymous — have made other changes. They have doubled the size of the kitchen facility and plan to increase banquet facilities and add an upstairs patio.

One of the biggest changes taking place is the addition of Stringers Restaurant, which will be open to the public in the downstairs area that once housed the terrace room.

The new restaurant will feature five specialty fish items along with burgers, sandwiches, salads and steak.

"It will be an informal, casual dining place open to the public," Garverick said.

Garverick, who serves as managing partner of Heather Downs Golf Course, also holds the same title at The Legacy Golf Course in Ottawa Lake, Mich.

He is enthused by the facility and the fact that it is

centrally located. With 192,000 people living within a five-mile radius of the club, he hopes to spark their interest and garner support to use the facility.

"We're still taking members and we're making it very affordable, but we also want the word out that we are now open to the public," he said.

Currently, there are 110 club members who still maintain golf privileges including preferred tee times on weekends and certain weekdays. Members will also have charging privileges for food and drinks. In addition, there is a members-only grill, and the men's locker room has

a designated members' area.

The club will continue to offer banquet operations for weddings, meetings and other functions as well as golf outings, golf leagues, tennis, pool memberships, a swim team and swim lessons.

So far, response from the public has been positive, and Hathaway reported that the leagues are filled to capacity, which is good news to a club whose future was once unknown.

"Heather Downs Country Club will continue under a slightly different structure but will be very viable in the future," he said.

Club memberships range in price from \$70.00 per

month for social members to \$265 per month for full family privileges. The club also offers summer pool memberships for \$400 per family.

Public golf play costs \$50.00 on weekdays and \$55.00 Friday through Sunday, which includes cart rental. Walking is allowed on weekdays with a \$36.00 greens fee.

Additional information also is available online at [Heatherdowns.com](http://Heatherdowns.com).



Walt Harris, who has been a member of Heather Downs Country Club for 28 years, takes a swing on the first tee.

PLAYLIST PHOTO BY NANCY GAGNET

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The Lucas County Fair will host "A Blast from the Past" on Friday, July 28 with legendary band Cheap Trick set to headline the entertainment.

Cheap Trick is known for a variety of hits including "I Want You To Want Me," "Ain't That a Shame" and "Dream Police" and will also perform songs from their new album, *Rockford*.

Local performers Josh Boyd and the VIP Band will open the evening at 7:30 p.m. with Cheap Trick taking the stage at 9:00 p.m.

Tickets are on sale at the Lucas County Fairgrounds office. Reserved ground seats are \$20.00 and general grandstand tickets are \$10.00. Tickets are limited and do not include admission to the Lucas County Fair. Tickets may be charged by phone at (419) 893-2127.

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