

September 1, 2009

LPGA tourney in Prattville seeks volunteers

By Marty Roney

PRATTVILLE -- The Navistar LPGA Classic is set to roll into Prattville at the end of the month, and tournament officials are recruiting an army of volunteers.

Volunteers are needed as marshals, to schlep water and ice, and for "ecology" -- the euphemistic term for sanitation duties.

"We can't pull the tournament off without volunteers," said Selina Maddox, volunteer coordinator for the tournament. "Prattville is a good stop because there is a corps of volunteers who work each year. They know what needs to be done, and they are familiar with the course and how the tournament operates."

About 400 people have signed up to help, and another 200 are needed. The tournament begins Sept. 28 and goes through Oct. 4 at Capitol Hill, with play days Oct. 1-4. A full field of the best women golfers in the world will test their skills against the Senator Course.

Maddox said volunteers don't have to know much about golf to participate in the tournament, which will be broadcast on the Golf Channel.

"Obviously if you are a marshal or scorer, a knowledge of the game and rules is beneficial," she said. "There are several other committees that don't require a knowledge of the game. We will have training for new volunteers before the tournament, so people shouldn't be intimidated.

Melanie Harper of Montgomery will be one of those new volunteers. She said she took up golf three years ago to have something to do with her husband, Bill.

"I'm looking forward to being a part of the tournament," she said. "We were out there last year during the tournament play and had a great time. I think it would be neat to be in on the behind-the-scene stuff."

Volunteers have to pay a fee to participate -- \$60 for golfers and \$30 for non-golfers. The golfers will get a voucher for a free round of golf at Capitol Hill once the tournament is over. All volunteers get a tournament shirt and cap or visor, as well as five passes to hand out to friends. Volunteers will be provided lunch on the days they work.

"We charge a fee to keep costs under control," Maddox said. "At the end of the tournament, we will donate money to local charities. So the more costs we can keep down, the more money we are able to give to the charities."

The field promises to be a good one, with 18 of the top 20 money leaders committed, 18 of the 20 world rankings committed, and 18 of the 24 Solheim Cup players coming, said Bill Lang, who handles media relations for the tournament.

Michelle Wei, Natalie Gulbis, Kristy Kerr, Christina Kim and Lorena Ochoa have committed. Ochoa is the defending tournament champion.

And the excitement is starting to build, Prattville Mayor Jim Byard Jr. said.

"Again, this looks like another exciting tournament week and another great publicity event for our city and region," he said.