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Ingleside preps for NFL alum project

BY JAIME POWELL
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INGLESIDE — Former professional football players could be some of the neighbors in an \$870 million residential and resort project, as part of an agreement between developers and a National Football League alumni group.

Live Oak Preserve, an 1,800-acre compound set to break ground next spring adjacent to Naval Station Ingleside, is the first NFL Alumni Licensed Community in the nation — and would set out to invite ex-pros to buy homes there and host an annual charity golf tournament.

It is set to include about 2,300 homes and condos, a 50-room boutique inn and spa, a 46-acre town center, about 134,000 square feet of commercial space and an 18-hole golf course and club house, Tennessee-based developer Leon Heron said.

And although the compound would not be only for former pros, NFL Alumni Inc., a charity group made up of former professional football players, plans to open an office at the Live Oak Preserve Town Center. The alumni group also would hold an annual charity golf tournament at the

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PROJECT from 1B

development's golf course and invite former players, many of whom live in Texas, to live in Ingleside or buy a second home here, according to Ft. Lauderdale-based NFL Alumni President and CEO Frank Krauser.

As part of the agreement, NFL Alumni Inc., which raises money for causes that affect children and former football players with financial or medical hardship, also would lend its name and logo to use in marketing the Ingleside development.

"We look at it as an opportunity for former players to live in the commu-

nity if they want to and be able to purchase a home or town home or condominium," Krauser said. "We have it written into the agreement where the player would get membership in the golf course and other incentives to get people to live there."

In exchange, Heron will host the charity golf tournament at the Links at Live Oak Preserve course designed by renowned golf course architect Bobby Weed, and he will donate a minimum of \$100,000 a year to the NFL Alumni to benefit regional children's charities. The tournament's date hasn't been set.

It was Heron who talk-

ed the NFL Alumni into considering Texas, after Heron flew Krauser in to tour the proposed development site.

"I have been approached by a number of developers over the past 10 years, where they wanted to do a development and market it under the NFL name to attract people's attention," Krauser said. "I had been focused on Florida as a place to retire or live as a second home. I had never thought of Texas. I stood on the banks of the intercoastal (waterway) where the marina is going to go and said it's phenomenal."

The initial phase of the development will include the \$10 million golf course

and roughly 50 residential properties, Heron said. It is designed to attract residents who can afford houses in the \$250,000 to \$500,000 range.

In 2007, the city of Ingleside and San Patricio County agreed to tax incentives for the project, including a reinvestment zone. After Heron spends \$24 million, 65 percent of the tax money generated by the development is to be spent inside the zone for 24 years, up to a total of \$75 million, Ingleside City Manager Jim Gray said.

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