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The Chimneys Golf Course turns big profits for Winder



photo courtesy of The Chimney's Golf Course

By Morgan Ervin

The City of Winder has turned what was once an expense into a significant revenue source through its ownership and management of The Chimneys Golf Course.

The grounds are part of the city's wastewater land application system and are irrigated by reuse water from that system.

According to city ad-

ministrator Mandi Cody, in previous years, Chimneys was costing the city about \$250,000 a year.

However, in Feb. 2021, the city council directed Cody to take the necessary steps towards making the course a financially self-sufficient operation and set a mandate of eliminating all financial transfers to the course.

Since then, the city

hired PGA golf pro and operations award winner Elizabeth Clarkson, who has led Chimneys to record-setting revenues of more than \$1 million since July 1, 2021, which marked the beginning of the city's fiscal year for 2022.

Clarkson was able to achieve success over the last year by revamping the clubhouse retail of-

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offerings, instituting new rate structures, enhancing the online reservations system and introducing a beverage cart.

Thanks to Clarkson's management and revamping of the course, the city has generated revenues at the mid-year mark of FY2022, which typically reflect a full fiscal year, according to Cody.

Clarkson's work at the course is far from finished as additional enhancements to the golf course are currently underway.

As of, Dec. 31, 2021, the end of the city's second quarter of FY2022, the city has generated a staggering 74% of the revenues budgeted for the year with expenditures on track at 49%.

This project, as well as a number of other projects around the city, including the Rose Hill Cemetery master plan recently approved by council, aim to identify ventures that are costing the city money and transform them into profitable enterprises it can be proud of.