

## Craig negotiating for PGA TOUR event

BY TRAVIS SUMMERS

MCKINNEY COURIER-GAZETTE

A deal that would bring a PGA TOUR event to McKinney's TPC at Craig Ranch in 2008 is close to becoming final, said Craig International President and CEO David Craig.

Craig said he has been in serious negotiations with the professional golf circuit about bringing an event to McKinney since the TPC was first opened in 2004. He expects a formal announcement regarding an event for the 2008

season to come within the next month.

"Somewhere in the neighborhood of maybe 30 days out, no more than 60," Craig said. "We are negotiating an event."

The PGA TOUR operates three different tours: the PGA Tour, the Champions Tour and the Nationwide Tour, but Craig declined to specify which circuit would be coming to his course.

"All I can define it as is a PGA TOUR event," Craig said.

It has long been speculated

that the organization's top tour, the PGA Tour, might move the Byron Nelson Championship from the TPC Four Seasons Resort in Irving to McKinney, but Craig said the event being discussed would not conflict with either of the two PGA Tour events in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

"It would not affect the Byron Nelson or the Colonial," Craig said.

If the event being discussed is not a PGA tour event, it would either be a Champions Tour tournament, for golfers 50 or older, or a stop on the Nationwide Tour, a developmental circuit affiliated with the PGA Tour.

One of Craig's biggest reasons for building such a challenging course was a desire to bring a major event to the city. Craig said the pending agreement would accomplish that goal.

"In order for us to agree to a tournament, it would have to be something special," Craig said. "The golf course deserves something special. It was built to host a significant event."

One of the major obstacles has been the lack of high-end hotels in the city that a tournament would need. But with construction of Craig International's Royal Tulip beginning and the Westin McKinney and surrounding Bridge Street Centre scheduled to be completed late next year, the infrastructure for a major golf tournament is beginning to appear in McKinney.

"I think the combination of the Westin McKinney on Bridge Street and the Royal Tulip, that should be enough to address the demand for the higher-end hotels an event like this would require," McKinney Economic Development Corp. President and CEO David Pitstick said.

See **PGA**, page 5A