Luck be a Raised Patio

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Like other businesses that rely on people gathering, the Municipal Golf Course in Luck, WI, was having a bit of bad luck when the COVID-19 pandemic closed all but essential businesses. Course superintendent Kevin Clunis spent that time making improvements and thinking about ways to add value for customers at the beautifully landscaped course on Big Butternut Lake.

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"COVID got us thinking about how to get more people here and how to keep them here longer," said Clunis. The original 9-hole municipal course was built in 1937 by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression.The goal was to put people to work and stimulate the local economy, and the course opened in 1938 with 38 members.

Luckily, early re-opening of outdoor recreational businesses during the pandemic brought the golfers back in droves. Clunis noticed that golfers continued to gather outside after their rounds, so he had chairs and tables put up on the grass. A decision was made to raise funds for an outdoor patio.

"We wanted to continue adding value for our guests, so we thought a patio would keep guests here longer and provide additional space for groups and tournaments," said Clunis. "Our numbers just shot through the roof."

Balsam Lake Pro-Lawn designed a raised patio with serpentine curves facing the greens, complete with a fire pit. The design has been successful in getting golfers to linger longer, plus the patio reinvigorated food and beverage service at its snack bar, open daily, and its restaurant, open three days per week.

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Now, the course — with the expertise of Balsam Lake Pro-Lawn — is planning phases two and three to expand the patio around more sides of the club house. “The goal was to get people to stay for a drink or dinner and to have a space for outdoor gatherings and events,” said Jon Hol, owner of Balsam Lake Pro-Lawn. “It was a huge success. We’ll begin construction on the second phase this fall and finish next spring.”

VERSA-LOK Standard in Weathered Chestnut Blend was selected for the retaining wall to support the raised patio and create seat walls. For the serpentine wall, the crew cut every other VERSA-LOK standard unit in half, Hol said. “They wanted a tighter curve for the solid sitting wall, and VERSA-LOK is the one block that does everything.”

“We were happy to help the golf course create a whole new culture of outdoor dining,” said Hol. “I’ve been using VERSA-LOK for 30 years, and the support I get from my sales reps is always top-notch.”

Location: Luck, WI
Owner: City of Luck
Contractor: Balsam Lake Pro-Lawn, Balsam Lake, WI
Manufacturer: Willow Creek Concrete Products, Faribault, MN
Solution: VERSA-LOK Standard retaining wall units, Weathered texture
Product color: Chestnut Blend

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VLS-220

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