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MEDIA CONTACT:

Patrick Pharris

Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort

(702) 491-7464

Patrick@PreRealInvestments.com

2026 Payne Stewart Award Recipient Notah Begay III Joins Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort

*Four-time PGA TOUR winner and longtime NBC Sports and Golf Channel analyst named
Founding Ambassador & Strategic Advisor ahead of 2026 New Mexico Open*

ELEPHANT BUTTE, N.M. (Sept. 2, 2026) — One week after receiving the PGA TOUR's 2026 Payne Stewart Award, four-time PGA TOUR winner Notah Begay III has joined Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort as its Founding Ambassador & Strategic Advisor.

The Albuquerque native and longtime NBC Sports and Golf Channel analyst will advise Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort leadership on golf, the guest experience and the long-term direction of the New Mexico golf and resort destination. As Founding Ambassador & Strategic Advisor, Begay will participate in selected golf and resort activities, strategic discussions, major events and media initiatives.

Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort is the only New Mexico golf course, resort, club or golf-community development Begay represents as an ambassador and spokesperson.

Begay will return to Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort Sept. 14-16 for the New Mexico Open Golf Championship Presented by New Mexico True, where Begay and acclaimed golf broadcaster Ryan Burr will host three days of live tournament coverage.

"I've spent most of my life at some of the best golf resorts in the world, and having the opportunity to bring that experience back home to New Mexico is important to me," Begay said. "Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort is entering an exciting new chapter, and I believe strongly in the vision James and his team are bringing to life. I'm proud to be part of this effort and look forward to helping create a special destination here in New Mexico - one that golfers, visitors and the local community can enjoy and take pride in for years to come."

Begay received the Payne Stewart Award on Aug. 25 during TOUR Championship week in Atlanta. The annual PGA TOUR award recognizes a professional golfer who best exemplifies Stewart's values of character, charitable efforts and sportsmanship.

Born and raised in Albuquerque, Begay has maintained close ties to New Mexico throughout his career. In addition to four PGA TOUR victories and his work with NBC Sports and The Golf Channel, Begay founded the NB3 Foundation, which works to improve the health and opportunities of Native American children and communities.

“There are business opportunities, and then there are opportunities to build something meaningful with someone you are fortunate enough to call a friend and a mentor. That’s what this is for me,” said James Prendamano, founder and CEO of PreReal Investments, owner of Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort. “I have tremendous respect for Notah, for the way he has carried himself throughout his career and for what he has done for New Mexico and Native communities across the country. Having him become part of the Turtleback family means a great deal to me personally. It also says something about what our team and so many people throughout this community have built here. We have big plans for Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort, and I can’t think of anyone I would rather have alongside us helping shape its future.”

“Notah Begay III is one of the most respected voices in golf, and his decision to become part of what is happening at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort says a great deal about where this property is headed,” said Kris Strauss, executive vice president of global sales and marketing at Troon. “Turtleback has the golf course, the setting and the opportunity to become a nationally recognized golf destination. Adding Notah’s perspective and his connection to New Mexico gives the resort another important advantage as it continues to grow.”

Among the areas Begay will advise on is the player and guest experience at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort.

“Notah is more than an accomplished professional golfer and sports analyst. He is an innovative catalyst in the golf world,” said Eli Eilers, head golf professional at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort. “As a leader of successful organizations, he inspires as a champion of dedication, integrity, and generosity.”

“What is happening at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort is important to the future of Elephant Butte,” Mayor Richard Holcomb said. “I’ve had the honor of meeting Notah on several occasions, and what has always stood out is his genuine desire to help others rather than seek recognition for himself. Having someone of his stature involved brings greater attention to our city and introduces more people to Elephant Butte, our outdoor recreation opportunities and the quality of life that makes this a wonderful place to live and visit. On behalf of our community, I’m pleased to welcome Notah to Elephant Butte.”

The 2026 New Mexico Open Golf Championship Presented by New Mexico True will be played Sept. 14-16 at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort. Administered by the Sun Country Section of the PGA of America, the championship is one of New Mexico’s longest-running golf events. Begay and Burr will host three days of live tournament coverage from the resort, giving golf fans an opportunity to see Begay at Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort less than two weeks after the announcement of his new role.

Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort is located in Elephant Butte in Sierra County, near Elephant Butte Lake. The resort’s 18-hole championship golf course is home to the New Mexico Open Golf Championship.

About Notah Begay III

Notah Begay III is a four-time PGA TOUR winner, NBC Sports and Golf Channel analyst, philanthropist and the 2026 recipient of the PGA TOUR's Payne Stewart Award. A native of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Begay is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and is of Navajo, San Felipe Pueblo and Isleta heritage. A three-time All-American at Stanford University, he helped lead the Cardinal to the 1994 NCAA Division I Men's Golf Championship before launching his career on the PGA TOUR. In 2005, Begay founded the NB3 Foundation, a national, Native-led nonprofit focused on improving the health and well-being of Native American children and families. He also founded the Notah Begay III Junior Golf National Championship, which provides young golfers opportunities to compete at the national level.

About Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort

Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort, home of the New Mexico Open, is a premier golf, residential and resort community located in Elephant Butte, New Mexico, just minutes from Elephant Butte Lake. The property features an 18-hole championship golf course, residential neighborhoods, planned resort amenities and a growing calendar of golf, lifestyle and community events. As one of southern New Mexico's premier destination communities, Turtleback Mountain Golf & Resort is helping drive tourism, residential investment and economic growth throughout Sierra County while providing an exceptional experience for golfers, homeowners, visitors and future resort guests. Turtleback Mountain's golf experience is professionally managed by Troon, the leader in providing golf and club-related leisure and hospitality services. Learn more: www.turtlebackmountaingolfandresort.com/.

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