

# Bi-Lo golfers tee it up for charity today



JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staff

Golfers check out the pairings for the 2011 Bi-Lo Charity Classic tournament during Sunday's pairings party and auction. The golf tournament takes place today at 11 courses across the Upstate and Western North Carolina.

## Charity Classic, largest such event in nation, takes place on 11 courses

By Jonny Munro  
STAFF WRITER  
jmunro@greenvillenews.com

The whack of a golf club hitting a ball sounds like money to the charities supported by the Bi-Lo Charity Classic golf tournament.

It means helping children and feeding the hungry. And much more.

"Not only does the Bi-Lo Charity Classic allow us to give back to the communities where we live and serve, it also brings more than \$3 million in economic impact to the Upstate during the tournament," said Anthea Jones, senior vice president of store operations and co-chairman of the Bi-Lo Charity Classic.

The event, which began 28 years ago to aid a struggling Meals on Wheels program, tees off today.

Last year, 1,300 golfers helped the tournament raise



JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staff

Sunday's pairings party includes food, friends and auctions before today's 2011 Bi-Lo Charity Classic tees off.

\$4.5 million, and this year nearly 1,200 golfers from around the United States are participating with a fundraising goal of \$4.575 million. Over the years, the event,

which raised \$34,000 the first year, has donated more than \$53 million to hundreds of charitable organizations, with missions focusing generally on children, education

and hunger relief, in the areas where the Mauldin-based grocery chain operates.

As the tournament grew and the proceeds increased, Bi-Lo officials decided in 1998 to create Bi-Lo Charities Inc. to take care of the planning and financing.

Although Bi-Lo as a company has undergone difficult times, voluntarily filing a bankruptcy petition for relief under Chapter 11 in March 2009, officials decided that year to continue its charitable commitment.

The tournament stands as evidence of the company's "stake-in-the-ground" commitment to the communities it serves while also symbolizing Bi-Lo's "amazing turnaround," said Michael Byars, Bi-Lo president and CEO. Bi-Lo's service area in-

See GOLF on page 7A

## GOLF

FROM PAGE 1A

cludes Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

"As much as anything, the whole tournament itself is unique in so many ways," said Byars. "From having as many as 600 volunteers to the way it's put together — it's the largest single charity golf tournament of its kind in the nation."

Sponsors of the event enjoy the fun, the visibility

and the fact they are helping those in need, said Scottie Mayfield, president of Mayfield Dairies.

"We are in the food business," he said. When Mayfield first became involved, Bi-Lo was "in the food business, and they were helping a charity feed people. We said, 'Let's help out.'"

Consumers also want corporations to be involved in their communities, he said.

Mayfield said those aren't the main draws for Mayfield Dairies.

"I don't know that we do it for publicity," he said. "For me, it falls into, That's

what you're supposed to do.' This event touches a lot of kids, and we think that's important."

Play will begin at 10 a.m. today at Champion Hills, Chanticleer at Greenville Country Club, Cliffs at Glassy, Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards, Cliffs Valley, Kenmore Country Club, Keowee Key, Musgrove Mill, Riverside at Greenville Country Club, Reserve at Lake Keowee and Thornblade.

Also, the Nine with Wine event, a women's golf outing, will be held at the Country Club of Spartanburg today.