Changing of the guard

Lyon ushers out successful term with GCSAA

BY PETER BLAIS

This month's 61st annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Golf Course Conference and Show will be the highlight of outgoing president Dennis Lyon's term. "The Orlando conference (Feb. 19-26) will be the largest and best yet," said the head of the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America. "We're both trying to get the same thing. We're working together with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) to gain knowledge so we can have an environment that's healthy for everyone."

"There's no reason for us to be adversaries," said the incoming president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. "We're both trying to continue its upward climb, then cooperation rather than confrontation is necessary."

The environment is the biggest threat to the game itself," said Faubel. "The growth of the game could be stopped quicker by environmental issues than anything else, even quicker than a change in the tax laws. Right now the tax law is very beneficial to golf course development because of the tax deduction for environmentalists are coming to blows rather than cooperation is necessary."

"As far as we're concerned, they (the high water marks) treated the court to rescind its decision."

The second hole at Royal Lakes Golf and Country Club in northeast Georgia shows the handiwork of architect Arthur Davis. For more on new courses see pages 14 and 15.

Underground tanks endangering courses

BY MARK LESLIE

Citing frightening statistics about the life of underground storage tanks, technical environmental consultant Mary Malotke of Cincinnati, Ohio, warns golf course superintendents to beware that their own situations may become very costly problems. Many golf courses have underground storage tanks and could face "major dollar costs" to clean any spills of hazardous wastes, Malotke told an Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show audience.

Malotke, president of Tencon, Inc., said there are 4 million underground tanks in the United States and their average age is 17 years.

"Insurance is required on these tanks, yet we are finding that insurance companies won't cover tanks over 15 years old," she said. "There is a 77-percent chance of leakage..."
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age after 16 years." Malotke said the biggest reason for leakage is corrosion from outside the tank. Ninety-one percent of leaks come from external corrosion as opposed to physical damage, loose fittings or corrosion from inside, she said.

Underground tanks are regulated—by the Bureau of Underground Storage Tanks—if they are storing petroleum or toxic substances. If a superintendent stores gas or hazardous material in a tank and 10 percent or more of the bottom of the tank is underground, it is considered an underground tank.

Years of wear underground take their toll on storage tanks and endanger water sources.

...because of its ability to leak into the ground, she said.

And, she added, "Your water source may be directly related to an underground storage tank leak."

"We have a situation at a golf course that had a tank leak and traveled to an adjacent nursing home," Malotke said. "They are looking at spending megadollars to clean up something that was preventable.

"They didn't account for the fact that they were putting twice as much gas into the tank as they were using..."

"If you have a half-gallon leak a day that is 180 gallons in a year," Malotke said that once a tank is pulled from the ground, an inspector will check for holes. If any are found, he will ask for "copious soil testing because he figures you've caused pollution," she said.

"You're trying to find as little as a one-half gallon-a-day leak," she added.

Malotke said a superintendent can do three things to find out if he has a problem:

1) Inventory control: Account for as little as a loss as a half gallon per day.

"If you can't do an inventory control tight enough to account for that, then you don't do an inventory control. It's a paperwork pain in the neck," she said.

2) Detection devices: Sink monitoring wells near the outside of the tank; and take ground samples and pressure tests.

3) Sample/monitoring: Dig cores or wells around the tank to look for leakage.

"Many people are just taking their tank out. It's a lot less trouble and probably not much more costly," she said.

Malotke said anyone who has an underground tank must notify state authorities.

Last August a law took effect requiring that overfill protection be provided on underground tanks as a minimum requirement.

She said many people are choosing to install above-ground tanks.

"It's off the ground, out of the way. You do not have 10 percent of the tank touching the ground," she said, but added, "The biggest problem you're going to have with an above-ground tank is with the fire department."

She said many fire departments will not allow above-ground gas storage tanks.

But if a community's fire department does allow that type, it has many advantages, she said.

"You know you're not going to

A checklist

- Are your tanks safe?
- Have you upgraded your underground storage tanks?
- Have you installed a leak-detection monitoring system?
- Are your tanks corrosion protected?
- Do you have a monthly inventory record?
- Should you repair or remove any tanks?
- What is the safest and most cost-effective option?

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have a problem because you can see a leak. You’re not regulated by the underground storage tank people, not regulated by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) if it’s gasoline. It’s basically probably the safest approach to take,” she said.

Malotke said: “Clearly the first line of defense in disposal is to use the stuff up. Mix up what you need; buy only what you need and use it up.”

If a course has materials it no longer uses there are some firms that will exchange other materials for them, she said.

“There are also some chemicals that are on such a ‘hit list’ that the only way to get rid of them is to fill out a 40 page form...,” with OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

“When you’re making your chemical inventory list for OSHA and come across something you no longer use, there is no time like the present to get rid of it,” Malotke said.

EPA lists four types of materials that can not be thrown out:
1) anything that can burn, if it has a flashpoint less than 140 degrees;
2) anything that is caustic or corrosive and can corrode things;
3) anything reactive; or
4) anything toxic.

To find out if a material is toxic a person should look up its CAS number.

EPA identification numbers are like a Social Security number (for the golf course), she said, while the CAS number is its site number.

“If you have 220 pounds or less of waste, in any calendar month, of routine kinds of gasoline, methylene chloride, you don’t come under the tight regulations of material disposal,” Malotke said.

“But if you have acutely toxic material, it is 10 times worse. If you have an EPA identification number you have to tell them what it is you are throwing away.”

Malotke said the expense of disposing of hazardous material should be incentive enough to be careful that any underground tank is safe and not leaking.

“If you have to dispose of a material then they (EPA) start looking and they have to have lab work done, and if they find a chemical in it, the cost starts to rise dramatically. The price of disposing of hazardous material can be upwards of $800 a drum.

“If you will go a long way toward showing the EPA that you do have a problem, it was an accident, that it was totally unexpected, that will keep you off that EPA hit list and will save time as well as money,” she said. But, “If you can’t document that you’ve been looking (for leaks), and it turns out you’ve had a slow leak for six months, you are going to have much more of a problem proving that this was, in fact, an accident.”

“One of the fociues of management needs to be in the area of waste management, preventing emergencies,” she said. “Watch out for signs of leakage: unusual odor; signs of drum or tank damage; unusual sounds; and inspect during a quiet time.”

She said that when there is a spill, two things must be dealt with: vapors and ground contamination.

“First, stop the spill from getting bigger, like turning the drum so the hole’s on top,” she said. “Second, clean it up. Go to the safety data sheet and EPA number, call EPA or a lawyer or environmental firm and they will call EPA.”

Spills of pesticides, herbicides, cleaning compounds and similar materials are often required to be incinerated. So it is essential to keep the spill as small as possible and clean it up as quickly as possible before it soaks any further into the ground.

Malotke said she knew of only four facilities in the country that incinerate and they are located in Chicago, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee.

“The cost will be in the neighborhood of $800 per drum to incinerate; $200 to $300 to ship each drum; and another $200 to $300 for lab work on each drum,” she said.

Once waste is spilled, a golf course has approximately 180 days to have it shipped. A safety data sheet on materials tells how big a spill must be before it must be reported; what procedures to use; what clothing to wear, etc.

“Any fire can be dangerous when toxic chemicals are involved,” Malotke said. “You should plan how you would deal with a toxic fire. Management should know who to call; know where everyone should assemble. You have to know where everyone was when the fire hit.”

“You can be seriously fined personally; never mind being responsible for someone being hurt.”

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