New life for Arizona projects

By MARK LESLIE

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The Arizona golf course construction industry has a pulse again.

One of the country’s largest water development systems is on-line and golf course projects — on hold for years because of lack of water — are lining up to buy into the new supply. As many as 14 new courses could be built now that non-potable water has started flowing from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal north along Pima Road to the northern reaches of Scottsdale. That is prime golf course territory featuring the likes of Desert Mountain Properties, The Boulders, Troon North, Desert Highlands and the Tournament Players Club of Scottsdale.

The $14 million Reclaimed Water Distribution System (RWDS) is the newest phase of the master plan, begun in the 1960s, to irrigate the West. Next up will be the 1995 startup of an effluent plant that will treat water from the major development area in north Scottsdale. That water will be reinserted into the pipeline,

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late June. Sources indicated officials from GCSAA and Connex were scheduled to meet in Kansas City to formalize the agreement around June 24. Sources also indicated International Management Group — the Cleveland-based sports representation and real estate colossus — played a major role in bringing the two sides together. The U.S. Government also played a role.

"We obviously encouraged the merger of the shows," said Paul Bucher, manager of Trade Fair Certification at the Department of Commerce. "This [the mega show] is what every exhibitor wanted. If everything works out, it should be an incredible boon to the industry." Golf Asia, staged annually by Connex since 1991, was the only

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10 years as demand has grown for grasses that use less water, grow more slowly, tolerate various stresses and require less pesticide. The result has been researchers scouring Africa in search of Bermuda grasses, the Midwest in the quest for buffalograss and the North for bentgrass.

Of all the material collected, 90 to 95 percent is eventually thrown away, Hurley said. Those possessing the most favorable characteristics are kept and bred. The result in recent years has been grasses that stand upright, are more attractive and are more resistant to fungicide dollar spot. Research on specific seed types, Hurley said, has led to some positive results in recent years, such as:

• Attractive bluegrasses with high seed yields, an unusual combination for this turf type;
• Perennial ryegrasses with improved cold tolerance, brown patch resistance, color and seed yield. Despite these advances, ryegrass seed prices have remained roughly the same as they were in the early 1970s. Little progress has been made in the battle against crown rust, red thread and pink patch.
• Tall fescues have been developed that can thrive even in such hot, humid climates as found in Tokyo. They are requiring less irrigation and are increasingly tolerant of shade. Hard, chewing and sheep fescues are particularly low-maintenance turfs. Brown patch and pythium remain a problem, although new chewings fescues are proving resistant to take-all patch.

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Southern California mesh perfectly with Southern Turf's sod and sprig production units in Georgia, Virginia and Hawaii," Holmes added. "Discussions with Southern Turf management and partners have been ongoing for quite some time, with most of our focus on the geographic synergy of the two companies."