Show floor agog with new technologies in turfgrass care

By HAL PHILLIPS

DALLAS—Trade shows are meant to generate consumer interest which, in turn, generates... well, trade. And nothing generates consumer interest like a new product.

The annual International Golf Course Conference and Show is the current venue of choice when it comes to launching a new product. A plethora of innovations made their debut in Dallas this year, but only a handful made a stir. For those who couldn't be in Dallas, a few of these "show-stoppers" are detailed below:

• The Ransomes E-Plex electric greens mower: This product and the competing Jake model (see below) dominated many a show floor conversation. The E-Plex sports a 48-volt industrial electric motor, powered by eight, six-volt, 244 AH golf cart-style batteries. While it stays charged for up to three hours, the quiet electric motor drew equal oohs and ahhs. Superintendents tending to development courses are well familiar with cranky homeowners complaining about early-morning greens mowing. Ransomes officials said the E-Plex should be available by this summer (see related story).

• The Jacobsen electric Greensking: Though still a prototype, Jake's electric product was the subject of similar discussion. "We have been working on and off for quite some time on alternative power sources," explained Eric Smitsdorff, vice president of marketing at Jacobsen. "This prototype was shown at the Dallas show to solicit input on where we should be going. We had hundreds and hundreds of superintendents take our survey and offer their ideas. We received some fantastic suggestions."

• The E-Z-GO Medalist Electric: As the only new golf car introduced in Dallas, the Medalist — in one sense — had the stage all to itself. Completely redesigned inside and out, the Medalist even sports the new-fangled DuraShield powder coat paint process, which involves electronically charging the surface before painting it. Other newly designed aspects include the steering system, accelerator pedal and the PowerWise solid state energy control (increased performance/voltage).

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Virginia’s ex-pro Bob Friend captures GCSAA golf crown

By VERN PUTNEY

AUSTIN, Texas — Bob Friend hugged fairway, green and par over two local courses and 36 holes to win the two-day annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America championship in his first try.

The superintendent at River’s Bend Golf Course in Richmond, Va., had 73-73 rounds at par-71 to win the two-day annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America championship in San Felipe, Texas. Waldron posted 79-70 and Browne 75-74 for their 149s. Newnan, and GCSAA immediate past president Randy Nichols of Cherokee Town & Country Club in Dunwoody — easily captured the chapter team championship. They combined for 248 points in winning their second title in three years. Waldron’s second-day 70 was the tourney’s low 18-hole score.

The Midwest AGCS #4 four some of Robert Kronm, Al Pendle, Tommy Robinson and Randy Walter led 225.

Wilson shared individual sixth place at 153 with Cole McElmisi of Willow Point Golf & Country Club in Alexander City, Ala.

Early the second day, Null seemed on the verge of winning the tournament with an assist from

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