

Matthews: Supers should join construction sites early on

By MARK LESLIE

DALLAS—A superintendent's failure on a new golf course falls on the entire construction team, said architect Jerry Matthews, adding that the "missing link" most of the time is getting the superintendent on board early in construction.

Matthews, the president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), said: "The environmental concern throws us all together even more than we

were before. No matter how well we design a golf course, how well we build it, how well the contractor and everybody else performs, if the superintendent does not do an 'A number one' job of maintaining it, it affects all our reputations.

"We need to establish, early on, a stronger working relationship between the client, the architect, the contractor and the superintendent. We can't say we'll hire a superintendent when you put the seed on.

Timing is of the essence."

Saying he works closely with the client "because he pays my bills," and the contractor "because I want him to fulfill what I want for a golf course" Matthews said: "The missing link most of the time is the superintendent, who is not at the meetings. He comes in with his own scenario of what maintenance is, and it might not fit with what the rest of us are trying to do. For the most part we don't talk about that, and suddenly

he appears on the job and starts telling us how the course should have been built.

"Hindsight is great. What we need is foresight. We need to get involved early."

Every architect knows they need a superintendent on-site at least by the time the irrigation system is to be installed, Matthew said.

He lamented that, too often, architects have to write maintenance programs for their

courses. "Rightfully, we should write it with the superintendent who's on board," he said.

"We also have to tell a public hearing the superintendent won't pollute the waterways and kill their children, goats, dogs and cats," he said, adding that the superintendent should be at those hearings as the agronomy expert.

Turfgrass schools should teach the theory and application of maintaining new turf, he suggested, mentioning situations he has encountered.

Once the course is built, Matthews said, the biggest problems are that "too many superintendents cut the grass too low, too quick and when it's too wet.

"I've seen mowing when there was not enough grass — there was literally a cloud of dust."

Matthews told superintendents: "Throw away the Stimpmeter. The first year, put it away and don't look at it again. Very few people expect a new golf course to be in perfect condition. They want nice greens, but nice greens normally mean 100-percent coverage of turf, not putting speed. I've never, in 30 years, seen one superintendent get fired for having greens that were a little too long and healthy. But I have known a few lose their jobs because they insisted that those greens have a very fast putting speed. You can do that but you're going to kill them."

Once the superintendent gets on the job, Matthews suggested they:

- Learn how to read blueprints.
- Look at surface water drainage on the course.
- Check the trees. ("Trees are a problem. They create beautiful golfholes. They frame them. They provide background. And, low and behold, when the superintendent gets there, all they are doing is providing shade, which prevents him from growing grass. I'm saying, 'I like those trees.' He's saying, 'We're going to cut them down.' There's a balance of design and practical construction leading toward a maintainable golf course and trees are just one issue.")
- Pay attention to how much topsoil goes back on the golf courses. ("If a superintendent is going to grow healthy turf on that site, he should watch what happens in terms of topsoil. Everybody does a nice job on tees and greens. But how about fairways and roughs?")

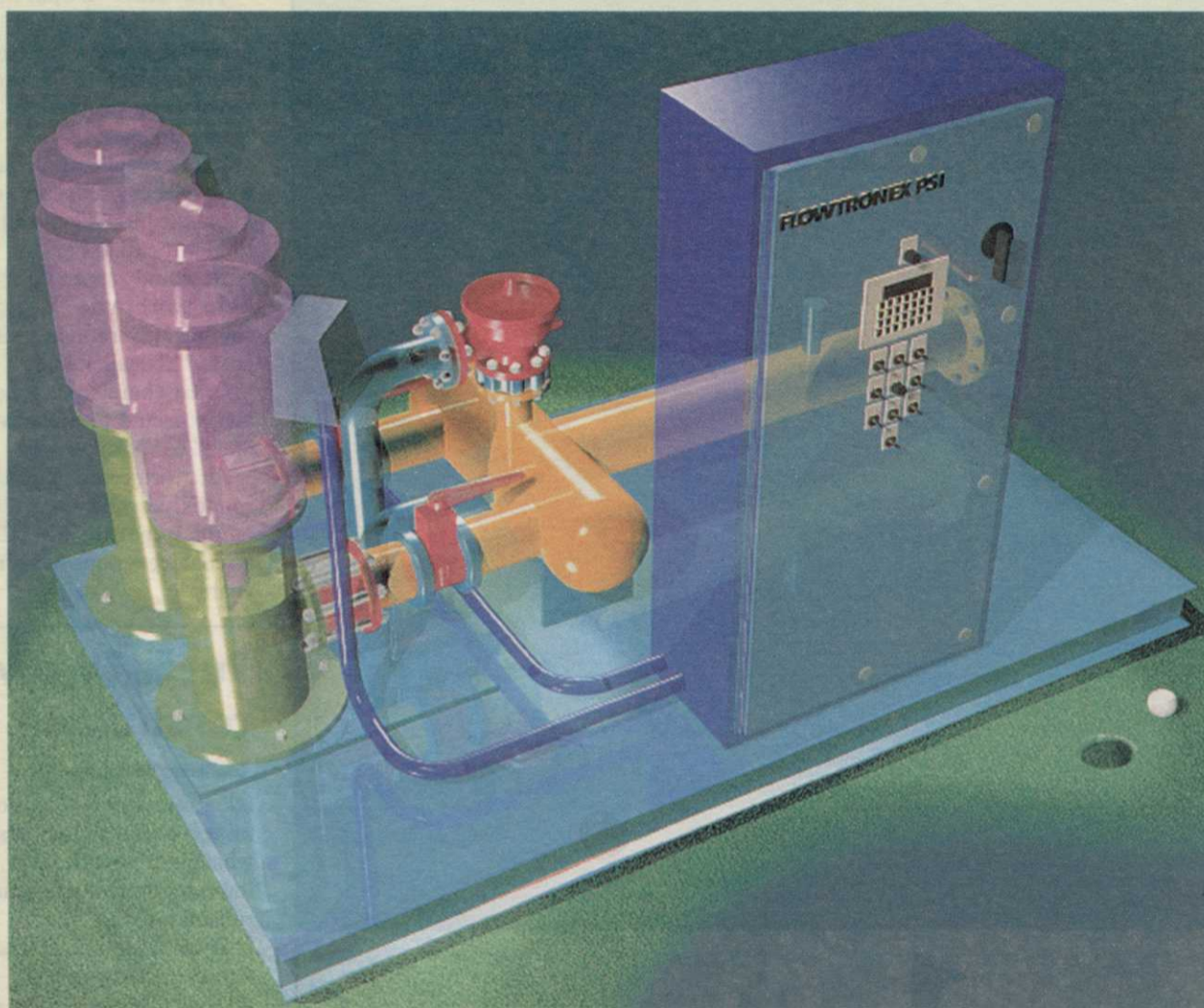
• Get involved by the time the irrigation system is installed in order to know where it goes and how it should function.

• Look at the slopes — how steep they are and if they are maintainable by equipment or hand-mowing.

• Check the drainage in the bunkers and "don't let anyone tell you native soils don't need drainage. Sometimes that is true but not usually."

SILENT STORM

Future technology available today.



"Silent Storm VFD pump station exclusively from FLOWTRONEX PSI"

Silent Storm represents the latest in VFD pump station technology from the industry leader.

Standard features:

- 98.5% efficient Variable Frequency Drive
- Quiet-running IGBT transistors
- OTIS intelligent operator interface
- Built-in data logging
- NEMA 4 UL listed control panel
- Steel pump discharge heads
- 100% seal-weld deck plate for optimum corrosion resistance
- 5 nano second surge arrester with ~20 million Volt Amp capacity
- Smoothflow V control software
- FlowNet service and support network



For more information and a complete product brochure call
1-800-527-0539

FLOWTRONEX PSI
Pumping Systems