Course of Study
Siena College and Schuyler Meadows GC will cooperate on long-term environmental studies.

Off the Record
Having decided to rethink its greens construction specs, the USGA solicits research proposals.

15,000 and Counting!
GCN and the NGF have identified the nation's 15,000th course, which opened for play this spring.

Top dressing breakthrough: Crumb rubber
By MARK LESLIE
WILMINGTON, Ohio — After five years of extensive study, Michigan State University (MSU) researchers are recommending crumb rubber, or finely chopped automobile tires, as a top dressing for high-traffic areas on golf courses and athletic fields.

"As much as we incorporated it into the soil profile, we never saw the panacea that people wanted. But we did find great results when top dressing it onto established turf," Dr. John "Trey" Rogers III of MSU said of crumb rubber.

"When we incorporated it, the rubber..."
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Claims drain funding for UST clean-up
By PETER BLAX
Nebraska recently delayed the clean-up of some 6,000 contaminated underground storage tank (UST) sites because its state-controlled cleanup fund is almost out of money. This spring, cash-strapped New Mexico diverted half the $14 million in its UST clean-up and indemnification fund to other uses.

Michigan declared its fund insolvent in April and went out of business for good June 29, forcing tank owners there to seek private insurance to meet the federal mandate of $1 million in liability coverage per incident.

"State UST funds in Florida and Illinois could soon run out money, according to Dennis Rounds...
Continued on page 37

Taxing setback in Florida court
By HAL PHILLIPS
NAPLES, Fla. — A precedent-setting battle is brewing here in South Florida where 12 Collier County golf clubs have challenged their property assessments in court.

For the moment, golf industry fortunes are flagging. Judge Ted Brousseau has upheld the municipal appraisal of Quail Creek Country Club in Naples, which argued the assessment was more than $3 million too high.

However, the remaining 11 clubs have yet to have
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Ever-shrinking dollar posing problems for manufacturers
By HAL PHILLIPS
America's ongoing currency woes are beginning to affect golf course industry firms, some of which have discarded product lines dependent on overseas manufacturing agreements. Others continue to monitor the situation closely, recognizing the possibility that plunging dollar values may render those agreements unfeasible in the long-term.

"Anybody importing from Japan any commodity is impacted by the currency situation," said John Brozek, director of industrial Product Sales at Daihatsu, which will cease production of its Hijet utility vehicle in December.

Like Daihatsu, Mitsubishi manufacturers its Mighty Mit utility vehicle in Japan, but that will soon end, confirmed Bob Hertel, industrial vehicle man-
Continued from page 1

co-chairman of a task force charged with monitoring petroleum clean-up efforts for the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials.

With claims on the rise, all 46 states with government-controlled UST funds must be concerned with the possibility of claims outstripping revenues, Rounds added.

"The long-term projections can be pretty scary," he said.

Should golf course operators be concerned that the state funds they believed would insure them against spill problems are in financial trouble?

"Definitely," said Sammy Ng, branch chairman of the UST National Selection Agency's UST Division. "First, tank owners must be in compliance with federal financial requirements. If they can't get the $1 million insurance through the state, then they must get private insurance. And that could be much more expensive.

"Second, if a state fund becomes insolvent, they won't release the course owner from financial liability for clean-up or third-party compensation. The golf course would still be liable, even if the state fund folded." A 1988 federal law required all tanks be closed, replaced or upgraded to meet leak prevention guidelines within 10 years. Private insurers said they were willing to insure structurally sound tanks or those that would eventually meet the new federal standards. But insurers shied away from existing problems.

"Insurance companies don't insure burning buildings," Rounds noted.

With many privately-un-insurable older tanks already leaking fuel into the ground, a mechanism to finance clean-up and compensation to third parties was needed. State funds were established to fill the void.

Those state programs have typically been financed by a few-cents-per-gallon levy. The average cost for a three-tank site [which includes most courses] is $500 to $600 per day, Brixen said. That's less than the 2 to 3 cents-per-gallon surcharge often used to finance state funds," Brixen said.

Beginning July 1, all Delaware tank owners/operators not in compliance will be subject to penalties ranging up to $2,500 per day, Brixen said.

To avoid financial problems, EPA has encouraged states to require their funds to have larger cash reserves, higher deductibles and the authority to raise levies if revenues begin to fall behind claims, Ng said.

Pennsylvania has managed to avoid the financial pitfalls experienced elsewhere. In fact, the state's mandatory program is running a healthy surplus, according to George Chapman, claims manager with the state UST Identification Fund. The key to Pennsylvania's success is that it closely scrutinizes all claims and performed detailed actuarial studies regarding projected funding and costs before implementation, Chapman said.

"We control remediation costs by requiring that tank owners make serious efforts to have their tanks in compliance with state and federal laws," Chapman said.

To help control the number of claims it accepts and how much is paid, EPA encourages states to adopt risk-based corrective action processes. This method calls for a ranking so that those spills posing the greatest threat are cleaned first. Additionally, only the areas needing cleaning within the spill area are actually cleaned, thereby avoiding unnecessary costs.

Still several state programs are in trouble and could disappear in the near future unless their financial picture brightens. Additionally, many of the healthy funds will likely be phased out as existing problems are taken care of. That means private insurance will be used more frequently in the future to cover tank owners, Ng said.

"That would be a good trend," Ng said. "Why should a state provide coverage if affordable, private insurance is available."

But tank owners frequently complain private insurance is too expensive. Not so, said David Brixen, an environmental scientist with the Delaware Division of Air and Water Management's UST Branch.

Delaware began enforcing financial responsibility requirements in December 1993 but soon suspended any enforcement actions when it realized many tank owners were failing to comply. The department established a special advisory committee to determine whether private insurance was indeed available and affordable, or if a state fund should be established.

The committee decided that private insurance was both easy to find and fairly inexpensive, making a state-operated program unnecessary.

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