

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 9
SEPTEMBER 1996 • \$4.50

INSIDE

Us vs. Us

Supers from "The Americas" tee it up against their counterparts from the "Rest of the World" 3

Bug-Eating Gambusias

Problems with mosquitos? Kill 'em at their source with surface-feeding mosquitofish 15

Winter Prep Report

Can compost fight snow mold? Can a fertilizer applicator overseed? Get answers before snowfall 38



INTO THE BREACH
When fire ravaged the maintenance facility at South Hills Country Club in Franksville, Wis., superintendent John Syty received a huge helping hand. See page 49.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

New zoysia varieties meet high expectations 15
Focus on Black Diamond's Laurie Frutchey 22
On the Green: Cart path alternatives 26

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

A cautionary tale of development in Jamaica 11
Brit Clark leads Maine back into boom 31
Matthews carves Hawk Hollow from quarry 34

COURSE MANAGEMENT

State bags owner who bagged permits 7
Family Golf Centers dominates range market 41
Managers contemplate industry in year 2016 42

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

EPA alters worker-protection standards 47
GCSAA Report: Platinum Tee Club expands 48
What's new in the marketplace? 50

New USGA service targets construction

By PETER BLAIS

FAR HILLS, N.J. — The U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section will launch its new Construction Education Program next month with Mid-Continent Regional Director Jim Moore as director. Moore is developing materials, web site and seminar programs that will be available at minimal charge to developers, superintendents, course owners, club managers, golf professionals and others involved in building golf projects.



Jim Moore

"We know that many of the physical problems golf courses experience after opening occur because of things that were or weren't done when the course was originally built," Moore explained. "We want to be involved up front providing good information for

Continued on page 28



Super Casey Crittenden at newly certified Beatrice (Neb.) CC.

Audubon
beat goes on
See page 20

NTEP funding survives; Morris credits lobbying

By MARK LESLIE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The embattled National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) received good news from Congress in August when the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed an agri-

cultural appropriations bill that included — even added to — NTEP funding.

NTEP operates as an independent agent under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but the USDA had proposed redirecting its entire NTEP funding to other research.

Citing effective lobbying from the \$30-billion turfgrass industry, NTEP National Director Kevin Morris said lawmakers actually increased the funding \$5,000 to \$55,000.

"We got a tremendous response from the letter I sent out [asking for industry support]," Morris said. "The Turfgrass Producers International and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America lobbied on our behalf at the Congressional level. It pushed the key congressmen. And that was really helpful."

Happy at the turn of events, Morris is nonethe-

Continued on page 53



WATERWORLD EAST

Man-made water features rival their natural counterparts at the Clyde Johnston-designed River Landing Country Club, a newly-opened club north of Wilmington, N.C. For story, see page 34.

Pebble Beach courses seek solutions to salty effluent

By J. BARRY MOTHES

MONTEREY, Calif. — Relief may be on the way for anxious superintendents at seven Monterey Peninsula golf courses.

Since last fall, the group has struggled with discoloration, wilting and disease on their greens caused by a higher concentration of salt in the reclaimed water now being used as part of a highly publicized recycled-water project. Putting surfaces at the seven, high-profile sites are annual bluegrass (*poa annua*), which has proved to be the best turf to cope with the peninsula's cool, foggy climate. But *poa annua* is also very sensitive to salt.

A definitive course of action is expected to be taken by the end of this month, after an engineer-

Continued on page 35



PUBLIC GOLF FORUM
A NATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND EXPO FOR SUPERINTENDENTS, OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF FACILITIES
OCTOBER 27-29, 1996

FORUM PREVIEW

- DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GROUNDED IN REALISM ... 54
- LOHMANN RENOVATIONS PLAY IN PEORIA 54

Nowhere is this impact more evident than in customer service where upscale, daily-fee facilities operated by hospitality-trained professionals have upped the ante on their privately run, public-access competitors.

"What golf management companies have recognized is that we're in the hospitality business — like hotels are in the hospitality business," said Gregg Gagliardi, general manager and PGA pro at Lansbrook Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Fla. "The golf industry has never been known as a very high-service business,

Continued on page 44

Priority One: Putting the customer first

By HAL PHILLIPS

CHICAGO — While management companies own or operate only 5 percent of the nation's golf course stock, their impact is felt throughout the industry.

Customer service

Continued from page 1
and that has to change."

Ken James, senior vice president of golf operations at American Golf Corp., believes the industry is changing, widening the gap between sophisticated golf course operations and those with mom-and-pop mentalities.

"I think, on a select basis, there are some very sharp operators out there," said James. "It really starts with golf course management. These days, leadership at golf courses is more often in the hands of businessmen coming from industries that are extremely in tune with

customer service. I know we're hiring a lot of people who come from outside the golf business because they have that sort of expertise."

In order to compete, owners and managers at public-access facilities need to face facts: Upgrade customer-service levels or possibly perish. To assist in this effort, The Public Golf Forum will feature "Customer Service: The Competitive Edge," an in-depth, interactive general session on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Sponsored by *Golf Course News*, the Public Golf Forum is the only national educational resource for owners, managers, developers and superintendents at public-access golf facilities. The Forum

will be held Oct. 27-29, here at the Lincolnshire Marriott. For information on attending or exhibiting at the Forum, call the *Golf Course News* Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

"Customer Service: The Competitive Edge" will feature a trio of speakers experienced in bringing high customer-service standards to golf operations. Following these 20-minute presentations, the audience will break into roundtable discussion groups where attendees will discuss what they've heard and help each other formulate and implement new customer service strategies. The speakers include:

- Claye Atcheson, vice president of

operations, Marriott Golf: As a member of both the golf and hospitality industries, Atcheson will share insights on how his firm has integrated the two.

- Marty Kavanaugh, senior director of operations, PGA of America. The PGA at the Reserve — the association's new 36-hole development in Port St. Lucie, Fla. — is a textbook example of how to center a golf operation around customer service. As the driving force behind the development, Kavanaugh will detail for Forum attendees what has made The Reserve an industry model.

- Vince Alfonso, president, Alfonso Creative Enterprises: As the former owner and pro at a successful daily-fee golf course operation, Alfonso has long recognized and preached the importance of customer service. His top-down approach to customer service will pinpoint shortcomings and begin the correction process.

"The main thing owners have to realize is this: Nobody on the planet needs a round of golf to live," said Alfonso. "Hey, what do the airlines say every time you get off the plane? 'We know you have options so thanks for flying American,' or whatever. I didn't make this up. All service business operations realize this.

"It's sad, but golf hasn't picked up on it yet. We've got to think about first impressions. We have to be ahead of the customers with a 'Hello' and a 'Thank you.' And we have to look in the mirror; we have to look at management first. What kind of job are we doing? Are we setting a good example? Do we have systems set up to make it happen?"

The differences between a positive golfing experience may be small but their impact is immediate.

"How many places answer the phone, 'Pro shop!' Well, which pro shop?" asked Gagliardi. "I remember someone said at the *Golf Course News* conference a few years ago: *Every call is a purchase order.* That is soooo true. That might be [a golfer's] only contact with your operation.

"Also, when there's nobody there to greet you in the parking lot — that drives me crazy! If you pulled up to a hotel and there was nobody there to help you with your bags, how nice would you think the hotel was?"

"And here's a really simple one: We really stress the cleanliness of our golf cars. Golfers spend four or five hours in these cars, but a lot of places don't clean them or have them on a steady maintenance program. We have a program where we fully service three per day — wash, wax, the works. It makes a difference to people, and the residuals on our trade-ins are unbelievable."

James noted that even American Golf Corp. routinely sends its management teams to refresher courses on customer service. It all comes back to the growing competitive nature of the golf business, he said.

"There are so many choices people have now; choices they never had before," said James. "Operators who have a passion for the *business* of golf have no problem recognizing this. But people who have a passion for the *game* have trouble.

"All things being equal, golfers will go where they perceive people appreciate their business. The upscale operations have recognized that it makes a difference to people. Even the city-owned courses recognize they have to offer added value."

Fine Lawn Research Presents...

The Perfect Partner On The Green!

"Lopez Creeping Bentgrass has better texture, better density and less grain than many other varieties, including Penncross. My observation concludes that Lopez is more disease resistant to Brown Patch and Dollar Spot when compared to some other improved Bentgrass Varieties."

David Stone CGCS
The Honors Course
Chattanooga, TN



LOPEZ

CREEPING

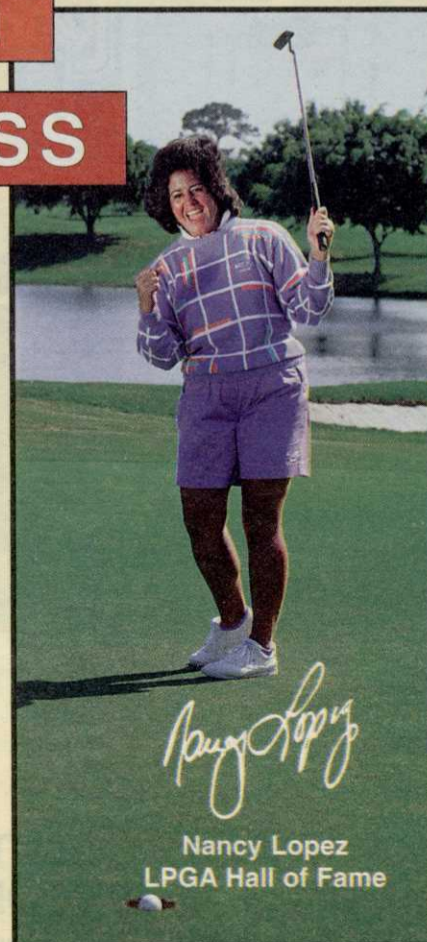
BENTGRASS

- A New Level Of Performance
- A Top Rated Cultivar In The National Bentgrass Trials
- For Professional Use On Tees, Greens and Fairways

Produced & Marketed By

Fine Lawn
RESEARCH, INC.

P.O. Box 1051 Lake Oswego, OR 97034
TEL: 503-636-2600; FAX: 503-636-7020



Nancy Lopez
LPGA Hall of Fame