Empowerment proves effective on grounds crews

By MARK LESLIE

INCOLNSHIRE, Ill. — Autonomy and empowerment are the operative words in assembling the most effective employees, according to Terry Riordan of the University of Nebraska.

Riordan has implemented a plan encompassing partially to fully empowered teams of workers, "town meetings," comprehensive training for managers and crews alike, and using managers as trainers, among other measures. All of this to "master peak performance."

"We're talking about autonomy and empowerment," he said. "I have several teams that are fully empowered. It frees me to work with teams not yet fully empowered and to concentrate more on day-to-day business."

Horton urged managers to create a standard, then lean on or improve upon that standard. He recommended that the superintendent, after hours, work his crew to training on the course — for instance, to a putting green where he can discuss what he wants and how to accomplish it.

"Give freedom to your best employees to do the job right," he said. "Coach and direct, but give them freedom and get out of the way."

Riordan: Buffalograsses more accepted, making greater contributions

By Mark Leslie

Q & A

Riordan: Buffalograsses more accepted, making greater contributions

Terry Riordan: A little slower than I thought it would. Total annual sales from turf farms and seed producers are running between $1.5 to $1.7 million. That's not insignificant, but not quite what I expected.

GCN: Who has been the major supplier?

TR: Crenshaw & Doguet Turfgrass [of Austin, Texas] by far. I thought sales by other suppliers in Arizona, California and Colorado would have been stronger. But they haven't.

GCN: Why not?

TR: The industry just isn't ready for it. The water crisis hasn't gotten severe enough, except in places like Austin and San Antonio.

Homeowners in Austin can get a $250 rebate from...
OTF’s Chafin hopeful

Continued from page 15

gies. That task, Chafin hopes, will be completed in 1998.

The long-range plan — a working document that will be updated and changed as the OTF nears its
goals — outlines the organization’s vision:

• earning international recognition for the results of turfgrass research it sponsors through Ohio State University;
• conducting and supporting a world-class edu-
cational program to prepare turfgrass managers in all specialties; this would entail lining up speakers from abroad;
• providing more than $500,000 annually to-
ward research and scholarships, including mon-
ies earned by its endowment; OTF now gives
around $150,000 to $200,000 a year.
• featuring a trade show with 1,000 booth
spaces and 10,000 attendees.

The vision, Chafin said, is a tall order that will take years to accomplish. But he fully expects great
strides to be taken this year toward those goals.

Pebble Beach ready for study

Continued from previous page

specifications, with layers of sand and gravel.

A second test green would be a pure sand-based “Califor-
nia” green similar to those at courses like Spyglass and
Spanish Bay. The third would
duplicate “push-up” style
greens that mimic those at Cy-
press Point, Monterey and Pebble Beach.

The turf selection would vary
on the greens and plots. Mahady
said the project would use four
different creeping bentgrass se-
lections, one annual bluegrass
similar to what Peninsula courses
now use, and three new annual
bluegrass strains developed
by University of Minnesota
Professor Don White.

White would be one of the
project’s co-leaders. The other
would be Tom Cook of Oregon
State University.

Another obvious variable
would be the water used to irri-
gate test areas — effluent or re-
claimed water vs. potable water.

But as of press time, it was un-
clear what role water would play
in the project.

Mahady said project organiz-
ers aren’t sure they can rely on
a constant, predictable supply of effluent over a 4- to 5-year
period. If they can’t, he said,
the project will have to be re-
vised.

"Some form of the trial will con-
tinue — exactly what all the
final variables will be have to
be decided," said Mahady, who
added that helpful information
could be gleaned from the study
within a year or two; other infor-
mation could take as long as five
or more years.

Mahady, Horton and others
involved with developing the re-
search proposal hope to get an-
swers from potential funding
sources in time to start work af-
ter Pebble Beach hosts the
AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am in
early February.

Each individual golf course
and the Pebble Beach Co. is also
expected to contribute funding.

"This is research that could
and would be very valuable in
the future across the country as
more and more courses go in
this direction toward reclaimed
water," said Horton. "The more
we learn the better it will be-
come."

Horton said he and the
Monterey superintendents are
committed to finding workable
solutions for using reclaimed
water, especially in the face of
shrinking potable sources and
ongoing public pressure for en-
vironmentally friendly main-
tenance practices.

"There are challenges that
we face but this project is very
successful," Horton said. "We
know we have a great water
system.

"We have the drought years
behind us. But we know we
have to use it [the reclaimed
water] better. Our objective is
to use 100 percent reclaimed
water."

At Zeneca Professional Products, it’s our goal to provide
good management products
through customer focus and
total commitment.

For more information on our innovative turf
management products, contact your Zeneca Sales
Representative or call Zeneca Professional Products
Toll Free at 1-888-617-7690.

REWARD® Landscape and Aquatic Herbicide—
Controls a wide variety of broadleaf weeds and
grasses, and more types of aquatic weeds than any
other product available.

Commitment to Innovation. We develop innova-
tive products tailored to the industry’s concern for
the environment without sacrificing performance.

Continual forward thinking will expand our existing
portfolio to include products that are synthetically
derived from naturally occurring chemistry.

• REWARD® Landscape and Aquatic Herbicide—
Controls a wide variety of broadleaf weeds and
grasses, and more types of aquatic weeds than any
other product available.

At Zeneca Professional Products, it’s our goal to provide
good management products
through customer focus and
total commitment.

For more information on our innovative turf
management products, contact your Zeneca Sales
Representative or call Zeneca Professional Products
Toll Free at 1-888-617-7690.