OSHA pushes case for ergonomics

By Mark Leslie

Washington, D.C. — Arguing that ergonomics is the solution, not the problem, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) ergonomics coordinator defended the agency’s work to define guidelines for the workplace.

“Our Congressional mandate is to prevent injury and illness in the workplace,” said Nancy Adams. “The way the debate gets framed, ergonomics is the problem. But it’s not. It’s an intervention strategy to prevent the injury from happening, by good engineering, good process design, fitting the job to the worker and not the worker to the job. You can’t do that as one-size-fits-all.”

OSHA’s push into the realm of ergonomics is not new. The first ergonomist joined the agency in 1979, and talks with labor, trade associations and professional organizations began in the early 1980s. But the business

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Irri-Tech on board with Smart Rain

By M. Levans

Komoka, Ontario, Canada — Irri-Tech Distribution Inc. is the latest on Smart Rain Corp.’s growing list of distributors for its new irrigation control system package that allows superintendents head-by-head sprinkler control.

The assets in the merger transaction will include the golf courses, the resort operation assets and developed and undeveloped land, but will exclude the hotels which are individ-

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Irri-Tech — a three-person division that Blue Jay Sprinkler Co. started specifically to accommodate the Smart Rain business — will be the exclusive distributor for Ontario, Western Canada and Northern Michigan.

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N.D. golf on the rebound

By Bob Spiwak

Grand Forks, N.D. — The Red River has receded into its banks after catastrophic flooding this spring, but golf courses in the Red River Valley are still struggling to get back to normal.

In the Grand Forks area alone, damage estimates are around $8 billion, and not one golf course is fully operating 18 holes again. Courses are still tallying up the damage with Federal

Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) — not only for facilities but lost revenues in an area where an estimated 80 percent of the population plays golf.

At Lincoln Park, a municipal facility run by the Grand Forks Park District, superintendent Steve Mullally said 60 acres of the 18-hole course will have to be reseeded, and nine of the holes

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CETCO consolidates in Fairmount

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. — Colloid Environment Technologies Co. (CETCO), a producer of pond and other liners, moved the manufacturing of its Bentomat line from its Villa Rica, Ga., plant to its Fairmount, Ga., facility. "This is the consolidation of two plants that were running individually within 100 miles of each other," said Rick Roesser, CETCO's director of marketing. Once the move is complete, CETCO said it will integrate new laminating technology, better utilize manpower and tighten inventory.

Oglebay takes Kurtz’s Sports Turf

CLEVELAND — The Industrial Sands Group of Oglebay Norton Company has acquired the Sports Turf Division of Kurtz Bros., Inc. of Independence, Ohio. Oglebay Norton said it will continue to operate the division as a separate business unit under the name Kurtz Sports Turf Services, a supplier of sand and organic blended materials to golf courses in Ohio and neighboring states, for a period of time.

According to R. Thomas Green, Jr., chairman, president and chief executive officer of Oglebay Norton, "This acquisition is important to our continuing focus on sand-related businesses as sand is a substantial component of many of the blended products sold by Kurtz Sports Turf."

Oglebay Norton’s other interests include Great Lakes marine transportation, the mining and marketing of industrial sands, and the manufacture and marketing of metallurgical products and related materials used in steelmaking.

Smart Rain/irri continued from page 1

"We came upon Smart Rain by accident," said Joe Carter, Irri’s vice president of sales and marketing. "I sold a pumping system to the City of London’s River Road Course and one of their suppliers introduced us to the technology," said Carter. "We hadn’t seen anything like it before."

The Smart Rain system (see GCN Feb, page 19) is a network of 6” and 12” soil probes that sense soil conditions of an entire course in real time. Data collected include soil temp, water content and fertilizer levels at every probe location, allowing a superintendent the ability to manage a course head-by-head and water where necessary through a software module called Smart Watering.

Through Smart Rain’s software package, a superintendent can see a 3D layout of every sprinkler head, as well as color-coded turf conditions, on an office-based computer. Head-by-head watering can be controlled from there.

"We have about a dozen distributors lined up but unsigned at this point," said Jim Simonini, vice president at Smart Rain. The company started its distributor training program at the beginning of June.

According to Simonini, distribution locations are on the brink of being confirmed in Denver and Pittsburgh in the U.S. The company already has Australian and South African distributors on line.


Smart Rain sensors will be ready to hit the market by July 1. Carter hopes that Irri’s initial marketing investment in the system will pay off. "We’ve been involved for about a year," said Carter. "We knew it was going to take some time to make some money. But we’re committed and we hope to gain more distribution area in time and prove we can handle it," he said.

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