Donors help Texas State tech program

By PETER BLAIS

ACO, Texas — Several companies recently made major donations to Texas State Technical College's (TSTC) new Golf Course & Turfgrass Equipment Technician Specialization program here.

The gifts are to help support the new associate degree program that trains graduates for positions as technicians at golf courses, parks, athletic fields and for lawn-care companies or equipment manufacturers.

Among the gifts are $85,000 in mowing equipment from Master Turf-Ransomes Inc. of Dallas, a north Texas distributor of Ransomes equipment. "The industry needs more technicians in the field for golf courses and outdoor power equipment," said company owner Paul Sims. "Manufacturers and distributors need to be more involved in helping train technicians or we'll be in trouble in the next few years."

Sims said the Ransomes equipment, along with some John Deere materials, will be on loan to the school until next year. Another major donation of $45,000 of mowing equipment came from Jacobsen Textron Inc. of Racine, Wis.

"We have been participating in developing this two-year program at Texas State," said Tony Saiia, vice president of customer service at Jacobsen Textron. "We believe it's important for a couple of reasons. We believe there is a shortage of technicians, whether they are working at golf courses or at equipment distributors. We just want to help improve that situation. Attracting people to this career is important because it is a good career, there are benefits. You need good schools to prepare technicians for these jobs. We've helped Texas State develop a program that would be meaningful. Having the equipment there will help people know what the product is all about."

"Texas Tech has a unique situation where they have good labs and can take the equipment apart and run it and see how it operates. The equipment we have donated is a mix of new and used equipment, to see how the equipment operates and what type of repairs might be necessary to keep it operating properly."

Other donations included:
- $1,500 of 419 Bermudagrass sprigs from Coastal Turf Inc. of Bay City, Texas.
- $1,200 of 419 Bermudagrass from Milberger Turf Sales of Bay City.
- $7,000 of 1211 Kentucky Bluegrass.

"It's industry support like this that allows TSTC to establish new programs while upholding a long-standing tradition of providing up-to-date instruction on the latest equipment," said Golf Course & Turfgrass Management Department Chair Tinker Clift.

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Architects plan unique session at int'l conference

ANAHEIM, Calif. — How do you reshape a green or convert it to bentgrass? What is the best way to repair a worn bunker face or edge a cart path? What remodeling can be done in-house and when should an architect be called?

These and other key questions that perplex golf course superintendents, owners and managers will be addressed during the educational session of the American Society of Golf Course Architects' seminar at the 69th annual GCSAA International Golf Course Conference here. The seminar will be held Friday, Feb. 6, from 2 to 5 p.m.

ASGCA President Alice Dye will moderate the session that will feature both informative presentations and interactive discussion groups. Seven members of the society — Craig Schreiner, Greg Muirhead, Bobby Weed, Vice President Bob Lohmann, Jan Beljan, Past President Don Knott and John Harbottle — will address a variety of topics relating to remodeling, renovation and restoration. Greens, tees, bunkers, grasses, and practice facilities will be covered.

Following these 10-minute presentations, the audience and members of the ASGCA will split into discussion groups that will include superintendents and architects from the same area. The session will give superintendents and architects a chance to discuss and learn from others who come from the same area.