Natural progress for supers

Kansas State University, State University of New York-Delhi. Who is next in the sweepstakes to become the "ultimate, deluxe, hybrid" educator of future golf course superintendents/general managers?

Penn State, Michigan State, Rutgers, Texas A&M, Guelph... The list of excellent turfgrass management schools goes on and on in North America. We are truly blessed in that way. And now, as a handful of superintendents are "advancing" into general manager positions, K-State and SUNY-Delhi have jumped out front in the quest to teach all people would need to know if they desire to someday be promoted to running an entire golf course. (See stories, page 1.)

"This is the perfect scenario," said David Gourlay, a Texas A&M graduate who is director of golf course operations and general manager at K-State's Colbert Hills Golf Course. "We are teaching the students that opportunities exist. When they finish here, they will have training in point-of-sales, merchandising, the pro shop, food-and-beverage, the golf course. They are positioned to do a great job."

"What we hope to achieve in the 21st century is to get out of the box," said hình Morales, SUNY-Delhi's turfgrass professor and department chairman, explaining the school will teach the entire "team" for golf courses: superintendent, general manager and head pro.

K-State's enrollment tripled when it announced its new curriculum in 1998. Sounds like journalism schools in the wake of Watergate, then foster investigative journalism. Excitement reigns today as students foresee possibilities of a more comprehensive and promising future for superintendents.

It seems like a natural progression — if a person is so inclined. Many of the thousands of superintendents working today went into the profession because they loved the earth, working outdoors, growing things, etc. They had no proclivity toward general manager-type jobs, and they still have none.

But, for those who believe they may want to take that step some day, the horizons have opened up to them. And for golf course owners and developers, think about it: Superintendents already operate the bulk of a course's budget, the majority of its property, and perhaps the largest staff. Though, they may not have been trained in finances and administration, they have gained the toughest training: the on-the-job type. Superintendents are also in charge of the most important asset, the thing that keeps golfers coming back — the course itself.

At many facilities, why look any further to find a new general manager? In many cases, for instance, Colbert Hills is the third facility at which he has been general manager as well as superintendent.

We tip our hats to K-State and SUNY-Delhi, and we wonder: Can others be far behind?

Al Gore is like the man who people said opened his mouth only Continued on page 12

Meaningful award for builders

To the Editor:

We at Golf Development Construction, Inc., convey our sincere thanks and appreciation for the Small Builder of the Year Award. The two awards given by Golf Course News each year are held in such high esteem by the builders and architects alike. The fact that these awards exist is a constant motivating factor to every golf course builder in the country and continues to raise the bar of excellence in golf course construction. This makes the last 30 years of moving and shaping earth and establishing grass all worthwhile the time and effort.

It was an added pleasure to meet the Golf Course News staff at the Builders' Banquet. Please extend our gratitude to your entire staff for all that they do in producing what is regarded as the best publication in the golf course industry as well as providing the highest award possible annually to the golf course builders.

What a motivating factor for this construction year! Thanks again for everything.

Sincerely,

Louie E. Miller Managing Partner/Agronomist Golf Development Construction, Inc.
Promoting golf course projects as 'smart growth'

By JASON STRAKA

A growing collaborative movement between development organizations, such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and environmental groups, like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is setting new development precedents around the country. This new movement is called "Smart Growth" and is aimed at preventing and/or minimizing the effects of "unmanaged growth" or urban sprawl. This collaborative effort has produced a consortium of development and environmental groups that back certain general principals of "Smart Growth" development including:

• Producing viable, economic development that protects and provides open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

• Providing predictability in the planning process and facilitating development that follows "Smart Growth" patterns to be permitted in a timely manner.

• Removing barriers to "Smart Growth," such as outdated zoning restrictions that separate and prohibit mixed uses.

• Providing safe, manageable land designs that enhance our communities and our quality of life.

While these principals are generally agreed upon, it is evident each supporting organization still places its own spin on the above principals and others they list in their "Smart Growth" policies.

For example, take the NAHB's recent publication on its support of "Smart Growth." NAHB articles are entitled: "Smart Growth" Means Satisfying Demand for Housing; "Smart Growth" means Economic Growth Prosperity for Local Communities; and Cancel the Crisis: Farmland is Not Disappearing.

Undoubtedly, these articles are focused on information that supports the ideals of "Smart Growth" and ways to improve our lives as seen by the homebuilders. They just do it with more of an economic-based spin and place more emphasis on that end of it. Rightfully so, since they are a development-based and -funded organization.

Conversely, the EPA's publication on "Smart Growth" emphasized the environmental end of "Smart Growth." Consider the titles of a few of their articles: "Smart Growth" Site Planning Protects Streams; Protecting Farmland: An Integral Part of Smart Growth; and "Smart Growth" and Floodplain Management.

These seemingly contradicting views on farmland and "Smart Growth" are the spin factor of opposing agencies trying to support the common good of providing viable, economic development while preserving and protecting our open space and natural environment. The essence of "Smart Growth" is to cluster housing closer together than most zoning would normally permit, and keep the "saved" ground as public or recreation open space — money versus environment, in extremely simplified terms, trying to reach a common goal.

What's this got to do with golf and politics? If the light bulb hasn't illuminat...