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K-State opening Colbert Hills as crowning jewel

By MARK LESLIE

MANHATTAN, Kan. — The hot buttons are all being pushed and on April 29, Kansas State University will unveil la piece de resistance: Colbert Hills Golf Course.

Colbert Hills is the crowning jewel on Kansas State's pioneering turfgrass management program, a curriculum that has been tailored to prepare students for club management as well as superintendent positions.

University officials believe it also sets the standard in other areas:

• The 27-hole facility will include a nine-hole par-3 course that will serve as a "living laboratory" for researchers and students. Sitting in the Transition Zone, Colbert Hills "has all the cool-season and all the warm-season grasses," said Director of Golf Course Operations and General Manager David Gourley.

• The nine-hole track will also be the National Academy of the First Tee program, named after Tiger Woods' father Earl, a K-State alumnus.

• Colbert Hills is in the final stages of becoming a Silver Signature Audubon Course.

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John Deere set to open new factory

By A. OVERBECK

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — After nearly a decade of double-digit growth and continually outgrowing several manufacturing facilities, John Deere Vehicle Group is set to open a new $30-million factory and headquarters here this summer. The 300,000-square-foot facility will house the manufacturing plant, a major design and engineering component and the sales and marketing team.

"The underlying reason for the facility is capacity"

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SUNY-Delhi program eyes 'whole team'

By MARK LESLIE

DELHI, N.Y. — Calling it "a blueprint" for other schools, State University of New York at Delhi is instituting a curriculum in which aspiring golf course superintendents, club managers and club professionals will be taught together under a new Department of Business Administration and Golf Course Management.

"What we hope to achieve in the 21st century is to get out of the box."

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Harding Park faces new life, Tour

By DOUG SAUNDERS

SAN FRANCISCO — The city of San Francisco has tentatively reached an agreement with Arnold Palmer Golf Management to lease the aging Harding Park Golf Course for 35 years.

Under the agreement, Palmer Management will spend $15 million to completely renovate the ignored jewel that is located along the shores of Lake Merced, just a stone's throw from the venerable Olympic Club. The goal is to bring the layout up to tournament standards in order to host the PGA Tour Championship in the fall of 2002.

Harding Park Golf Course was built in 1925 and is one of four public courses in San Francisco. Harding Park also includes a nine-hole executive course. The Fleming nine was named after its designer, Jack Fleming, who was a superintendent for the Department of Parks and Recreation and was a driving force in making the game of golf available to city residents.

During its 75-year history, Harding Park has hosted many amateur events, including the 1937 and 1957 USGA Public
Continued from page 1

SUNY-Delhi to start umbrella program

Calling the new curriculum “a good way to build a team in the future,” Morales said students will attend the same classes and “have a better appreciation for what each other does.”

The new department will begin operation with the fall semester and is accepting applications from high school graduates, transfer students and those involved in the school’s two-year turfgrass management program. Students will all be in the Department of Business Administration and Golf Course Management, but will choose a concentration within it, specializing in turfgrass management, club management or club professional training.

“We have built a good reputation as a two-year school and hope to do so on the four-year level,” Morales said. “Agronomically, our students learn a lot. It’s a highly technical field that is evolving rapidly. We’re trying to give the student a good solid foundation to build upon. Once they get to a facility in their three internships, they will get trained in the practical aspects. We will expose them to diversity.”

Also, SUNY-Delhi is developing a cooperative exchange agreement with Elmwood College in Scotland.

The final approval for the new umbrella program came from the state Department of Education following two years of development with separate task forces of superintendents, club managers and club pros.

A group of certified superintendents spent two days drafting a flow chart of tasks their job entailed and what would-be superintendents needed to be taught to carry out those tasks. Club managers and club pros did the same, and then the curriculum was written.

“Superintendents said they need agronomic principles, but also, as they moved up, they felt they were lacking in management skills,” Morales said. “Sixty to 70 percent of a superintendent’s job is management. So we developed a curriculum that in the first two years is heavy in agronomics, and the last two years is heavy in management.”

“We introduced courses like Golf Course Management and Planning; Advanced Golf Course Operations; Golf Course Governance and Public Relations; Argumentation and Debate; Strategic Management; Organizational Communication; Organizational Theory; and Public Policy.”

“There are core courses in all three concentrations,” Morales said. “The club manager will study hospitality marketing, risk management, etc., but also take courses in horticulture and grounds equipment, for instance. And the club pro also will take turf courses.”

Citing many advances affecting turf maintenance, Morales said: “A program like this needs to be fluid. We’ve always been very industry-sensitive.”

The program has an advisory board that is a cross-section of the golf world. Morales noted substantial support from industry — the New York State Turfgrass Foundation and the state’s half-dozen chapters of golf course superintendents.

Meanwhile, he pointed to Delhi College Golf Course, which was expanded to 18 holes a couple of years ago and serves as a training facility and “laboratory” for students.

The front nine is “a traditional older design, with push-up greens, built in 1963, with unirrigated fairways,” Morales said. “The back nine is high-tech, with sand greens, wall-to-wall irrigation and a sophisticated pumping station. It’s quite a contrast to learn on.”

Morales said interested people should contact the Golf, Plant Sciences, Recreational Services Department at 607-746-4410.
Conceived by PGA Senior Tour star and K-State graduate Jim Colbert, the facility was announced as being the first TPC-operated university course — although operation has been contracted out to Fore Star Golf.

A pilot program for internship residents is being operated at the course.

Excitement and high expectations over K-State's revamped turfgrass program have already more than tripled enrollment, from 40 to 130.

"This is the perfect scenario," said Gourlay. "We are teaching the students that opportunities exist. When they finish here, they will have training in point-of-sales, merchandizing, the pro shop, food-and-beverage, the golf course... They are positioned to do a great job."

Supporting the argument that golf course superintendents are naturals for course management, Gourlay said: "They already control the most costly part of the facility — the golf course. They run the biggest staff, have the most expenditures, know all the labor laws, deal with the public and are getting more and more educated all the time."

With some major players in the golf industry participating in the planning, K-State made waves in the late spring of 1998 when Colbert and university officials announced the project.

"We have the opportunity to make something very special happen in Manhattan, Kansas — something that will have a lasting impact on the world of golf and will enhance the golf program at the university where I began my career," Colbert said two years ago. He donated $500,000 himself and raised millions from friends toward the $10-million facility.

K-State built a partnership with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, PGA Tour Golf Course Properties Inc., Colbert and golf course architect and K-State alumnus Jeff Brauer of GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas.

"We took the original turf management option and tried to determine — through help from GCSAA, PGA Tour and faculty in three colleges here — what we needed to do to produce a better superintendent and one who had other career options, including managing the entire facility," said Dr. Jack Fry, who directs the program. "We have a minor in business built in, additional hours of communications and hotel and restaurant management courses."

Beginning this fall, Fry said, every student will have to do internships both inside and outside the clubhouse.

"They will get two views of the golf course profession," he said. "We think that's good, even for the superintendent, because oftentimes they get stuck down in the 'shop,' so to speak, and have no idea what the rest of the operation involves."

Keystones to the program are the 18-hole and nine-hole courses, which sit four miles from campus.

"We would not have had the program without the golf course," Fry said. "The biggest portion [of it] will be internship out there, students working. It will be an excellent on-site facility for them to learn how to manage a golf course."

"Secondarily, we are going to have a classroom facility there and we will be able to take classes like golf course operations and turf management and landscape maintenance classes there and have laboratories where we will focus on a given thing on a given day."

A number of environmental projects will be carried out as well, involving students and faculty in wildlife surveys, tracking birds, and studies on water quality, insects, soil structure, pesticide movement, and other related subjects.

A Toronto native who has held superintendent/general manager jobs at Summerlea Golf Club in...
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