



## BRIEFS

### BEST SAND TO SELL FOR VAN WEY

CHARDON, Ohio — Best Sand Corporation, a supplier of bunker sands and sand products used for the construction and maintenance of sports fields and golf courses, will be responsible for all sales and marketing efforts for Van Wey products in the southern Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and Indiana area, including its sports turf subsidiary, Grass One.

Van Wey Sand & Gravel has been supplying the southern Ohio golf courses and athletic fields market with sand and root zone mixes for over 20 years. Best Sand is a division of Fairmount Minerals, the third-largest privately owned sand producer in the United States.

In another exclusive distribution agreement, Kirk Materials will take on the sales and marketing of Best's TourGrade Bunker Sand products in the northern Indiana region, including Indianapolis and eastern Illinois. Kirk Materials has been providing the golf course market with topdressing and construction materials since 1989.

### PENN STATE TURFGRASS APPLICATIONS

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Applications are now being accepted for Penn State's two-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program for the class beginning in September of 2001. The application fee is \$35 and the deadline for applications is December 31, 2000. For more information contact (814) 863-0129.



### NORTH AMERICAN GREEN PROMOTES DEEGAN

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Greg Deegan has been promoted to vice president of sales for North American Green, a leading manufacturer of erosion control blankets and turf reinforcement mats. Deegan joined the company in 1988, and is responsible for both domestic and international sales. A civil engineer, he has worked in the environmental field since 1972.

His prior experience includes three years of water conservation and soil stabilization work in Saudi Arabia. Later, Deegan promoted and marketed water conservation products in Western Europe. Deegan is currently president of the New England Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association.

## School for troubled kids turns them on to golf course maintenance, on their own new layout

By JOEL JOYNER

GLEN MILLS, Pa. — Take one brand-new golf course, 65 troubled kids and a superintendent doubling as a guidance counselor, and what have you got? You have the Glen Mills School here, running one of the most unusual golf course maintenance training programs to be found anywhere.

Most of the kids have been "court referred" to the Glen Mills School, which is dedicated to turning around troubled teens. The student body, 1,000 strong, includes mostly inner-city youths from all over the country, usually aged 15 to 18, who are sent here for offenses ranging from drug dealing and auto theft to manslaughter and gang-related crimes.

The course, designed by Florida-based architect Bobby Weed, is an 18 hole, \$6-million layout, set right on campus. Open since September, it provides students a place to learn landscape maintenance, golf course management,

agronomy and maintenance mechanics. They'll also learn how to properly apply chemicals on the 235-acre track.

Although the public is welcome at the course, the school built the course spe-

cially to serve as a training ground for the students. "The goal is to turn out technicians who can command good pay on the market," said John Vogts, superintendent at Glen Mills Golf Course, who was formerly the assistant superintendent at nearby Merion Golf Club. "For most students in the program, to leave here for a well-paid job at a golf course is an accomplishment. We help them into careers where they can start at \$30,000 a year."

The groundskeeping program is one of the largest vocational programs at the school, with its own dormitory and classrooms.

Right now, 65 students are in the course-maintenance program, and Vogts plays a key role in their development. "They are basically fine kids who simply need a second chance," said Vogts. "We start them out on small projects like raking bunkers and mowing the grass. Then we proceed to more specialized training as spray technicians and equipment mechanics."

### COURSE IS CUTTING-EDGE

The construction of the course provided an un-

expected learning opportunity. "We had some weather difficulties," said Scot Sherman, senior associate designer at Weed Golf Course Design. "For the first

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Some of the first students at Glen Mills, with superintendent John Vogts (far right)

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## Piersol's Perspectives

### The Superintendent's Right-Hand Man

By JOHN R. PIERSOL

Ask golf course superintendents whom they consider to be their "right-hand man" and most will say "my mechanic." The importance of the turf equipment technician has increased tremendously over the last few years, but the supply of these specialists, unfortunately, is very low.

With a huge national job market and very respectable salaries (\$25,000 to \$40,000 to start with \$50,000 to \$70,000 potential), why is there a shortage of technicians?

It's a good question, and the answer basically is that most people have never heard of the career as a golf course equipment technician. This lack of awareness makes recruiting students very difficult, which in turn makes it hard to fill existing programs and prevents new programs from springing into existence.

At Lake City Community College, we have had a one-year mechanics program — Turf Equipment Management (TEM) — since 1973. The first few years we graduated only four or five technicians a year, but we have steadily grown and now graduate 22 to 25 students every year. We'd like to double that number, but we can't get

enough students in the front door, even though our graduates receive more than 100 job offers annually.

We have a nationally respected TEM program, a modern 15,000-square-foot building just for this specialized training, a dedicated team of three full-time faculty, and a huge, lucrative job market. But we still have trouble recruiting more than 30 students. It's a shame.

### RAISING AWARENESS LEVELS

I believe superintendents hold the key to the turf equipment technician career awareness problem.

Superintendents need to organize volunteers through their state chapters who are willing to go into one high school once a year to inform young people about this exciting career. If done year after year, the career awareness level will rise, which will lead to high school students asking the next logical question: where does one go to school for this training.

An increase in student demand will result in higher enrollment at schools with existing programs, and should bring about new programs as students call local technical schools and community colleges to ask about equipment programs. The way to get a new

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## Ziesmer named superintendent at Minisceongo

POMONA, N.Y. — Jason Ziesmer has been named superintendent at Minisceongo Golf Club, a private, non-equity club located here and owned by Empire Golf. Ziesmer is a graduate of Michigan State and has served as assistant superintendent at Minisceongo since 1998.

"Jason has done an outstanding job as an assistant, and under his leadership we expect Minisceongo to become the finest conditioned course in our region," said general manager John Napier.

Following his graduation from Michigan State with a degree in turfgrass management, Ziesmer spent time at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor on the horticultural grounds crew, as well as on the grounds crew for the school's acclaimed golf course. From there, he joined the Patterson Club, in Fairfield, Conn., before going to Minisceongo.

Minisceongo is carved out of 160 acres of forest, wetlands and red maple swamps. Surrounded by views of the Ramapo Mountains, golfers see two restored 30-foot-high fieldstone cisterns on holes 4 and 17, left over from the property's days as farmland. Players will also notice an 18th Century cemetery during their round, as well as hit their tee shots on the short 12th hole over an abandoned quarry.

Empire Golf is a subsidiary of Bergstol Enterprises. Courses in its management portfolio include Pine Barrens Golf Club, in Jackson, N.J., and New Jersey National Golf Club, in Basking Ridge.



## IGM adds West Bay Club to its maintenance lineup

ESTERO, Fla.—The West Bay Golf Club here has contracted with International Golf Maintenance (IGM) to help the course achieve Signature certification with the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

IGM is a leading golf course maintenance company, with every one of its 40 courses enrolled in the certification program.

“We strongly believe in working in concert with the environment,” said Scott Zakany, execu-



The fourth hole at West Bay Club, designed by Pete and P.B. Dye

tive vice president of IGM. “We realize that sound agronomic programs have far-reaching benefits for the golf course owners and the community.”

The West Bay course is the first in Florida designed by the architectural firm Pete and P.B. Dye. With varied elevations as high as 30 feet, natural vistas of mangroves and water on 12 of the holes, the 6,800-yard, par-72 private course offers a country estate setting that requires confidence and aggressive play.

As the leading provider of golf course maintenance and agronomic services, IGM offers personnel, materials, supplies, and equipment through an annual maintenance program designed for each individual course.

“We wanted a maintenance company with expertise in maintaining fine facilities,” said Frank Weed, president of West Bay. “In addition, we feel that IGM has a good understanding of the needs of the course.” The West Bay course will host the 2000 College Golf Foundation’s national match play championship this month.

IGM is a subsidiary of the Meadowbrook Golf Group, Inc. based in Lakeland, Fla. Resources and equipment are shared with all facilities served by Meadowbrook, which owns and operates courses throughout the country.



### OR DOWNRIGHT OBSESSIVE?



JOHN DEERE

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## Glen Mills golf

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six months or so there was a drought. Following that, we had downpours of rain – about twice the normal amount. It made things challenging, but we had some students helping out. They put down erosion-control matting, did seed-bed preparation and helped repair washout areas during rainy periods.”

Despite those tough conditions, there’s nothing secondary about the golf course here. Weed said the course is in the great parkland tradition, wandering over rolling terrain and through mature hardwoods. Layered-sod bunkers, like those on the Old Course at St. Andrews, can be found throughout the course. Several streams and plenty of elevation changes add to the character of the layout.

Weed is well aware of the uniqueness of the training program. “So far as we know, it is the only facility of its kind – for golf, this is really an industry first. I started my career in golf as a superintendent, went on to be the chief architect for the PGA Tour and then opened my own firm. I think that shows these young men that there are opportunities for them in golf.”

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## Glen Mills School

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### HANDLING THE HARDWARE

On the hardware and turf side, the students learn on state-of-the-art gear. "We have a Rainbird wall-to-wall, computerized irrigation system with Xerigation drip capabilities here," Vogts said. "It pumps more than 2,000 gallons a minute. We also maintain top quality bentgrasses on our greens, tees, and fairways. There's bluegrass for our roughs and several fescues in our native grass areas.

"There's also variety in our equipment to give the students a well-rounded experience," he said. "For instance, we have a number of Toro products, some Green Kings V's for our fairways, Jacobsen PGM's for greens, tees, and approaches, Ransom AR250's, and four Toro sprayers for fertilization. The school has a tradition that when they do something, they do it exceptionally well."

Already, Vogts has seen a nice payoff. "Some of the students do as good a job as some of my crew, and better in certain cases," he said. "Some of the kids who have progressed rather quickly have even started to act as trainers for other students. It creates less pressure for some kids.

"Our goal is to become the best-main-

*'Some of the students do as good a job as some of my crew, and better in certain cases. Some of the kids who have progressed rather quickly have even started to act as trainers for other students.'*

— John Vogts

higher education, but Vogts hopes to improve on that ratio. He now coordinates the program with some community colleges and four-year universities, hoping his young charges will rise to the challenge of getting a degree in turf management, soil science or in some other golf maintenance field.

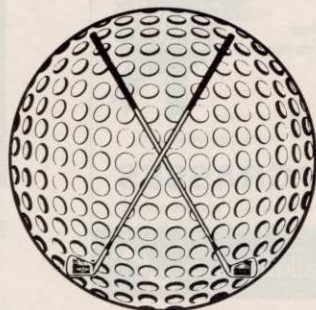
Currently, the kids are learning how to prepare a course for winter conditions. They're also observing clubhouse construction. All told, it's not a bad place for the youths, especially considering where they might otherwise be: behind bars. ■



The Par-5 4th hole at The Course at Glen Mills

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tained golf facility anywhere," he added. "When we start hosting tournaments next season, we could have 50 experienced people out working the course to keep it highly maintained."

A daily-fee facility, the course recorded 2,500 rounds during its opening month. The school does not depend on greens fees to support the course, however. Operational funds come from tuition and other sources. The institution receives \$87 a day for an in-state student and \$113 a day for an out-of-state court-appointed student. In addition, the school is granted \$1.2 million from the state of Pennsylvania every year. The course proceeds will go into a scholarship fund for the kids.

### CAREERS IN THE MAKING

The school also runs an active job placement program. As a student's "discharge" day approaches, Vogts and others begin hitting the phones. He frequently pulls out the membership directory for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

"Sometimes the student will know of a local golf course in his area, and we'll call and describe to superintendents just what kind of experience and skills the student is able to provide," he said. Three kids have already found employment in golf maintenance after leaving Glen Mills.

College is another option. Roughly 20 percent of the school's graduates go on to

## Come to the Club Managers Association of America's 74th Annual World Conference on Club Management and 24th Annual Exposition in San Diego

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