

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2001 • \$7.00

www.golfcoursenews.com

## INSIDE

### Mowers of the future

Robotic and GPS technologies promise to transform mowers.....9

### DaimlerChrysler growing fast

DaimlerChrysler Capital Service's golf division has become the industry's fastest growing lender.....21



#### PRESERVING CALIFORNIA'S NATURAL SPACE

The new Tom Fazio-designed Preserve Golf Club, high in the hills above Carmel, has created a fund to protect 18,000 acres of open space. The project is an example of the way in which golf development and land conservation can coexist without public funding. See story page 14.

#### COURSE MAINTENANCE

Bringing 'super-bent' thatch under control .....9  
John Deere Classic will host superintendents.....9  
Willow Run GC earns Audubon certification .....10

#### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Dallas Cowboys' course opening soon .....13  
Lohmann designing single-member course .....13  
Weiskopf joins Nicklaus at Lake Las Vegas .....15

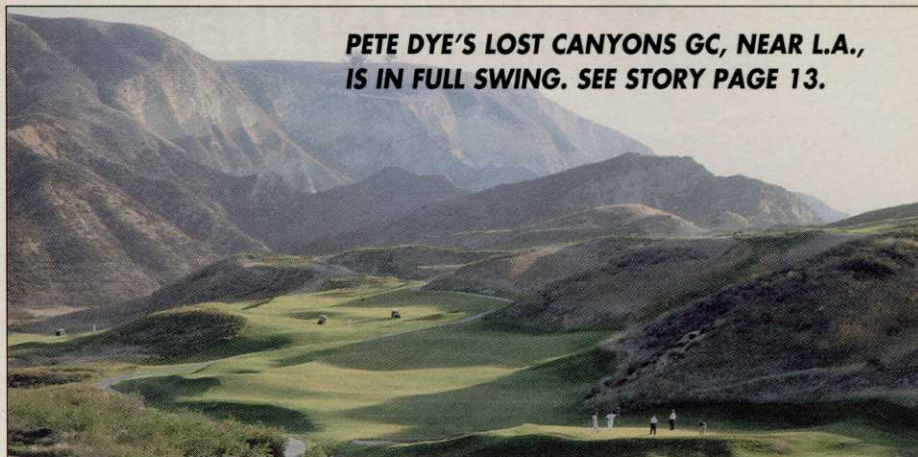
#### COURSE MANAGEMENT

Golf Matrix waiting for buyers' market .....21  
LinksCorp cautious about acquisitions .....21  
Turf equipment leasing surging .....21

#### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

New products galore .....19  
ParCar teams up with Briggs & Stratton .....25  
Davey Golf rolls out LiDAR mapping services.....25

PERIODICAL



PETE DYE'S LOST CANYONS GC, NEAR L.A., IS IN FULL SWING. SEE STORY PAGE 13.

## Superintendents tapping foreign labor force

By JOEL JOYNER

LAKE OZARK, Mo. — With the golf season fast approaching and labor markets still tight, superintendents everywhere are scrambling to find maintenance workers. Some are even pulling in help from abroad.

John Anderson, director of golf and grounds here at the Club at Porto Cima, will be relying again this year on Practical Employee Solutions (PES), a Dallas company that provides labor out of Jamaica. Last year, 12 of his maintenance staffers came from the Caribbean island nation. This year he's bumping the number to 16.



"They were very eager to learn and very easily trained," he said. "I'm really looking forward to this year because I'm supposed to have most of them back."

Housing, transportation and schedules were all considered before the migrant help arrived. "Local transportation was all done by bus," Anderson said. "We leased some apartment units, and they paid their own rent. We knew how many were arriving from the start, and it was very well organized."

Initial start-up of the program may be challenging. "I know it's a pretty lengthy process sponsoring them on a work permit deal," he said. "But some were processed a lot quicker this season, especially the ones returning."

#### JAMAICANS' STRONG WORK ETHIC

The Club at Porto Cima is one of three courses in the

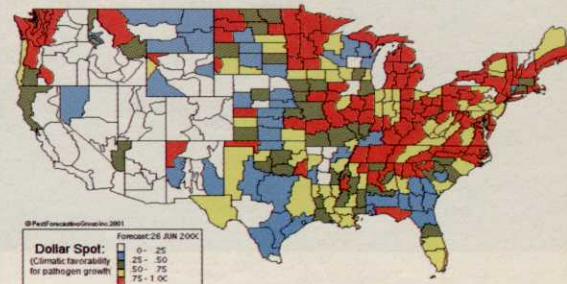
Continued on page 12

## Syngenta Web site to predict pest outbreaks

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Syngenta has partnered with Warrenton, Va.-based Pest Forecasting Group Inc. to launch an exclusive Internet site providing risk forecasts for diseases and insects. The site, www.turfpestoutlooks.com, was unveiled at the GCSAA Show in February and at press time was scheduled to be rolled out to end-users in late March.

PFG, which began working with Syngenta (then



Novartis) in 1997, has developed proprietary software that crunches weather data from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and compares it to disease and pest models that it has devised to create detailed forecasts. The nationwide forecasts are scaled down to provide information on 344 climate districts.

While the site will eventually include information

Continued on page 5



The seventh hole at Old Works GC in Montana will be replicated at Bear's Best Las Vegas.

## ClubCorp to unveil 'Bear's Best' concept this fall

By JAY FINEGAN

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The first of what could be many Bear's Best courses is slated to debut here Nov. 1, marking ClubCorp's entry into the world of "branded" golf.

The Bear's Best concept is a joint venture between ClubCorp, of Dallas, Texas, and Golden Bear International, of North Palm Beach, Fla., a company controlled by

Jack Nicklaus and his family.

The idea is elegant in its simplicity. Nicklaus selects some of his favorite holes from the nearly 200 courses he has designed, and 18 of them are combined into a single layout.

Bear's Best Las Vegas, under construction 20 minutes from the famous casino "strip," will present holes primarily from Nicklaus designs in the

Continued on page 23

## Bentgrass dead spot detected in 14 states

By JOEL JOYNER

LINCROFT, N.J. — It's difficult to identify. It attacks young turf. Recovery takes weeks. Little is known about how maintenance practices affect its development. Superintendents dread this turfgrass disease known as bentgrass dead spot, first identified in 1998.

Currently, bentgrass dead spot (BDS) has been discovered in 14 states from Illinois and Texas to New Jersey and the Carolinas. "Once it's there on the turf, it kills it and nothing comes back," said Jeremy Schaefer, assistant superintendent here at the Charleston Springs Country

Continued on page 11

## Labor force

Continued from page 1

Four Seasons Group, clustered here around Lake Ozark. All told, they brought in 52 Jamaicans last year. Only two won't be invited back. "Overall, we were delighted," said Nancy Adams, director of human resources. "We're looking to get 74 this year."

According to Adams, the Ja-

maicans worked like they were on fire. "People were skeptical at first. They kept telling me that Jamaicans have a high crime rate, that they'd bring in drugs and have long Rastafarian hair," she said. "But it wasn't like that at all. They worked extremely hard."

"They'd get up at four a.m., take the bus to one of our courses, work until 3:30, then change and come back to work as waiters or housekeepers until

nine at night," she said. "I actually had to tell managers that they couldn't allow them to work past nine. It would just be too strenuous. Americans wouldn't put up with a schedule like that. The Jamaicans are here to work their six months, make as much money as they can and take it home."

They were covered under their own insurance service, Adams added. "They were required to send a portion of their money

back to Jamaica, four percent went to the Jamaican government, and the rest had to be deposited into a savings account of some sort."

Amigos Labor Solutions, also of Dallas, provides a similar service for golf courses. It brings in Mexican labor under H-2B visas, charging an all-inclusive flat fee per worker.

### INCENTIVES AND BENEFITS

Jeff Holliday, the new super-

intendent at the Salisbury Country Club in Midlothian, Va., knows how to hire and retain quality employees from his previous position at the Country Club of Virginia (CCV), in Richmond. "We struggled with labor shortages at CCV," he said.

Benefits and a pay scale helped to ease the situation. "We found at CCV that if we increased incentives and benefits, employees tended to stick around," said Holliday. "We started a structured pay scale system where the quicker they learned, the more money they made."

Small details like providing uniforms, buying employees the occasional lunch and giving gift certificates make a big difference, too. "We also had a gas voucher program," he said. "If they came to work on time for a two-week period and showed up on their scheduled work days, they'd get a \$15 gas voucher."

### LATINOS IN NORTHWEST

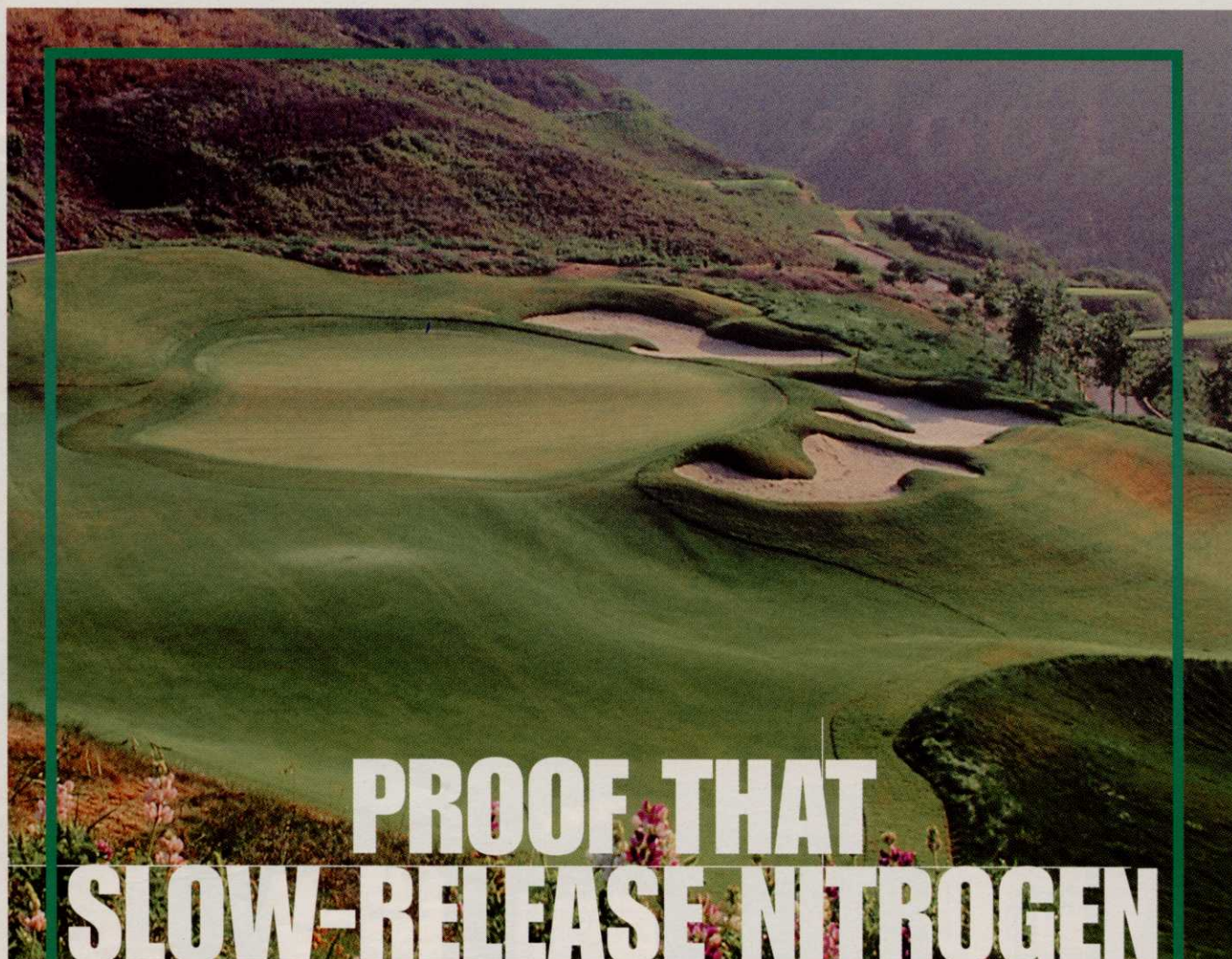
Latino labor has been filling the labor demand in the Northwest. "It's occurring all over the Southwest with very good results, and now it has arrived here on a regular basis," said Larry Gilhuly, director of the USGA's Green Section, Northwest region. "Their work ethic has been amazing from what I've heard. As a generalization, some of them tend to get upset if they only get to work 40 hours a week."

Turf management training programs sponsored by the Future Farmers of America (FFA) have been developed at the high school level in Washington state, according to Gilhuly. "The FFA supports it, but the teachers have really taken off with it," he said. "The main focus is on kids who won't be going to college, who may want to be irrigation or spray technicians or who simply want to work on a golf course."

There are roughly 80 high schools in the state currently teaching turfgrass maintenance. "It's really starting to gain some steam up here," said the director. "It provides a steady source of help that's highly motivated and very interested."

"Most people think that it's some sort of superintendent training ground, but it's not," Gilhuly said. "It's a golf course workers training ground."

One proponent of the program is Jeff Gullikson, superintendent of the Spokane Golf Club in eastern Washington. "Because the kids are in this FFA program, they're allowed to operate machinery, like mowers, that otherwise they wouldn't be able to do due to labor and industry laws that restrict minors using machinery at a workplace," he said. "With parental permission, they're exempted from those regulations." ■



**JUST SOUNDS EXPENSIVE.**



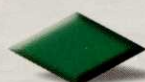
NX-PRO fertilizers from Lebanon

Turf Products feature Meth-Ex 40, the best source of 40-0-0 methylene urea on the planet. And not only is NX-PRO available in three useful size ranges - SGN 100, 145 and 195, it's also one of the most

affordable and efficient forms of slow-release nitrogen available. So you see, you don't have to overpay for technology. For more information, call your nearest Lebanon Distributors at 1-800-233-0628 or visit our website at [www.lebturf.com](http://www.lebturf.com).



To receive a FREE copy of our "Really Good Stuff Sheet" that details how Meth-Ex 40 is better than the competition, simply go to [www.lebturf.com/offers](http://www.lebturf.com/offers) and fill out the online request form. Coupon Code: GN8839



**Lebanon**  
TURF PRODUCTS

Our reputation is growing yours.™