Weather woes

Winterkill, drought and floods served up a myriad of challenges for superintendents in 2001.

GE Capital snaps up Heller

Heller Financial could become a bigger player now that it has been bought out by GE Capital.

TOTAL GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT BY QUARTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Qtr</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Qtr</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Qtr</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Golf course construction numbers slipped dramatically in 2001. While development levels may continue to decline, opportunities still exist. See story on page 3.

Source: National Golf Foundation

John Deere making move to become one-stop shop

By Andrew Overbeck

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — John Deere closed its acquisition of Richton International, the parent company of Century Rain Aid, in October adding the final piece — for now — to its newly created John Deere Landscapes division. The formation of the new division began with the buyout of McGinnis Farms earlier in the year.

The company's bold moves bring it closer to becoming a single-source supplier for the golf course industry. In addition to its primary business as a manufacturer of turf care equipment, John Deere has instantly acquired the commanding position as the largest distributor of irrigation supplies in the country and now has a significant interest in providing golf courses with landscape supplies, fertilizers, chemicals and seed.

While John Deere Landscapes' president Dave Werning is working on consolidating

IGM finishes year with strong growth rate

By Joel Joyner

CHAMPIONS GATE, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance has become one of the leading golf course maintenance outsourcing companies in the United States this year showing a strong level of growth in a market hampered by a sluggish economy and a decrease in rounds played. The company came away with an impressive list of accomplishments for the year and maintains a strong outlook heading into 2002.

IGM is a wholly owned subsidiary of Meadowbrook Golf, a golf course developer, owner and management firm headquartered here at ChampionsGate. The company merged with Meadowbrook in February 1998 enabling IGM to eventually manage all golf courses owned by Meadowbrook. IGM maintained about 30 courses before they were bought out. Today, they have 96 courses under their care with an objective to keep on growing. The company acquired more than 40 courses this year.
Zakany, CGCS, was one of the founding members of IGM back in September 1994. IGM's executive vice president Scott Zakany, CGCS, was recently caught up with Zakany at the company's new headquarters at ChampionsGate.

GCN: To what would you attribute to the success of IGM's growth this year?

Scott Zakany: The main thing we did this year – our biggest challenge – was to take over all the courses maintained internally by our parent company, Meadowbrook Golf. That was approximately 40 facilities. The transitions have all taken place as smooth as can be expected, except for a couple of isolated cases that will be finalized before the year is out. IGM has taken on 47 golfing facilities this year altogether.

GCN: Is there a goal set for IGM in terms of growth for 2002?

Scott Zakany: We're looking to keep the same growth percentage rate. Obviously, we started off higher in our first three years. But between 10 percent to 20 percent increase per year is our target. We're looking to acquire a new club per month.

GCN: What rises do you foresee IGM encountering in the future?

Scott Zakany: From IGM's standpoint, we've already had an agreement with Textron. We've expanded it to basically encompass Meadowbrook with equipment. By tying everything together, we're able to be a little bit more aggressive on our pricing and pass the savings on to our customers.

GCN: What does IGM look for in a course before signing a maintenance agreement?

Scott Zakany: What gets us excited is the potential of a course and the owners desire to get it there. We can make improvements, and we like to see the owners wanting to make those improvements.

GCN: How many course evaluations has IGM undertaken so far this year prior to signing any maintenance agreements?

Scott Zakany: We've expanded it to basically encompass our entire Florida market, particularly in central Florida, where do you see the company taking other solid positions in the United States?

Scott Zakany: About half the courses we maintain are in Florida. We're looking to expand in the markets we already have a presence in. We have several facilities in the Midwest and Northeast, some in the Atlanta area, several in California and we're just starting to operate in Las Vegas. We recently signed an exclusive five-year supply agreement with Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products. How do you see this effecting IGM's current and future clients?

Scott Zakany: On average, we probably do about three to four proposals for every job that we get. We're running anywhere from 25 percent to 35 percent closing margin on proposals to contracts.

GCN: What advantages does IGM have to offer a course considering outsourcing their maintenance programs?

Scott Zakany: We have a large support mechanism in place with key personnel in our corporate offices as well as in regional superintendent positions. There's a team of experts supporting our on-site superintendents coupled with the consistencies of our operations.

GCN: How does IGM maintain management and communication abilities with or between various courses?

Scott Zakany: We have a computer at every location and exchange a lot of information via the Internet. There's internal message postings and chat areas for our superintendents. In addition, we get superintendents together as a group once or twice a year for human resource, product and corporate office updates. On top of that, we meet monthly with our regional superintendents, and they disseminate information back to the on-site superintendents. A regional manager

A course site evaluation

Gregory Hofstetter, CGCS, vice president of business development

Greg Plotner, CGCS, vice president of business development

With all the recent world events, there's certainly going to be an economic challenge industry wide for 2002. There are clubs evaluating their maintenance programs and thinking they can manage things better and cheaper themselves. We've already received some fallout with some clubs and boards that were borderline to start with. On a day-to-day basis, they feel they can make cuts in the budgets where with us on a contractual basis they can't. At the same time, IGM might see a lot of high-end clubs next year looking to reduce their expenses by signing with us.

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