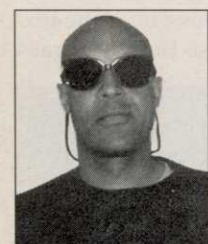


Tools of the Trade...at 'Roe' Sherbert's Heritage at Eagle Bend

AURORA, Colo. — The Heritage at Eagle Bend, an active-adult community golf club, has provided unique opportunities for superintendent Ronald "Roe" Sherbert — like working out of a tent.

The new layout completed its grow-in last September as Sherbert and his crew hunkered down for a tough, mile-high Colorado winter. "They've just started to



Ron "Roe" Sherbert

build the clubhouse, maintenance facility and housing for the community this year," said Sherbert. "It's been pretty difficult working out of a tent, especially this winter."

Lacking certain luxuries, the 5,000-square-foot tent provided storage for equipment and a modified shelter for the mechanic. "We basically put up four walls and a roof and placed a big old space heater in there for him," he said. "It provided him with a little bit of comfort to use his grinders."

Sherbert will settle into perma-

nent quarters this month, when his new maintenance facility goes operational. It's an 8,000-square-foot building that will include soil storage bins and an exterior chemical-storage facility.

The 18-hole Arthur Hills-design cruises through 150 acres of native areas. "I've had a long-standing desire to work on the development of a high-altitude course," Sherbert said. "It's been challenging as well, with the holes that play across Aurora's natural areas and with the elevation changes we have here. We had a good six months last year, but this will be our first full season."

As a construction grow-in superintendent with Western Golf Properties, Sherbert is responsible for the \$20-million golf course and facility construction project. "When the course was being built, my duties were to inspect Niebur Golf Construction on the shaping and seeding of the course, as well as the installation of the irrigation and drainage systems," he said.

"Then I had to get a pre-opening budget together, as well as a full-year operational budget for this year that totaled nearly \$2 million," said Sherbert, a gradu-



A new maintenance building at Sherbert's course is expected to open this month and replace his tent storage/maintenance facility.

ate of the golf course operations program at Lake City Community College, in Florida. "It's been a busy year for me."

The retirement community development encompasses a total of 1,100 acres, with 1,300 home sites. The golf course provides a 7,100-yard championship layout to play and maintain.

Greens mowers: 6 John Deere 220As with groomers

Tee mowers: 4 John Deere 220As

Fairway mowers: 2 John

Deere 3235A

Rough mowers: 4 John Deere 2653As

Riding bike rake: 1 John Deere 1200A

Turf utility vehicles: 8 Electric E-Gators, 2 Pro-Gators

Aerifiers: 2 John Deere 800 Aercore, 1 John Deere 1500 Aercore

Topdressers: 2 John Deere TD-100s

Tournament speed roller: Greensroller/Turf Iron

Reel grinder: Peerless

Bedknife grinder: Peerless
Irrigation pump station: PSI Flowtronex, 1,875 GPM, 3 mains at 75 hp; 2 boosters at 25 hp

Irrigation system: Rain Bird - Eagle series 500, 550, 700 and 750 heads

Golf car fleet: 80 Club Car, gas; converting to electric

Flagsticks: Eagle One, 8-foot tournament

Computer & accessories: Compaq MV 520, Translation program

Primary herbicide: Trimec

Primary fungicide: FFII/Fungicide 7-n-9

Primary slow release fertilizer: Grow-in, wall-to-wall Scotts starter 19-25-5; Season, Fairway-n-rough 20-10-20; 60 percent AgricoTurf, 4 percent Fc

Cannot live without: My staff — 5 year-round and 20-plus seasonal

Oldest piece of equipment on course: Me. Besides that, all equipment was purchased new in May 2000

Total sq. footage of maintenance building(s): 8,000 sq. ft.

Annual rounds of golf: 32,000

Normal green speed: 9' to 10'

CALIFORNIA ENERGY CRISIS

California superintendents preparing for power shortfall

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IRRIGATION SYSTEMS CEASE WORKING

A fast-growing number of golf courses now irrigate with the aid of computerized systems. These systems help control costs and water usage, but power interruptions cause them to crash.

"Pump stations will stop running during a blackout or grid shutdown, and more than likely will not start up until they can be manually re-set," Eastwood said.

To escape exorbitant daytime energy prices, most courses are now committed to irrigating only at night. "I've heard that we'll be notified a few hours before a shutdown, but I'm sure that all I will find is a message in my voice mail the next morning," Eastwood said. "Golfers at my facility will not stand for water being run during the day to make up for lost water during the night."

SKYROCKETING POWER RATES

The superintendent at The Meadows Del Mar Golf Club here, David Elliot, has already had first-hand experience with rolling blackouts. It was enough to effect his entire irrigation computer.

"We're a beta site for the Toro SitePro system," Elliott said, "and we lost all of our information. It took us a couple of days to recover and get a new computer disk from Toro. We basically had to start over to get the system operational again."

The course was unable to irrigate during those couple of days. "It shouldn't happen again," he said. "I now have a hard copy of that disk to fall back on for the next blackout, and we'll definitely have more blackouts this summer, guar-

anteed. It will be a long, rough summer."

Elliot's primary concern is skyrocketing rate hikes. "I've dealt with it big-time as a homeowner," he said. "For the course, it's still very unpredictable. We've actually tripled our costs in the past 18 months."

"But it's also tough for some of my employees as well," said the superintendent. "It's becoming extremely hard to live here while earning \$8 an hour." Financial pressures preclude any raises, however.

FEARS ESCALATE

Steve Fackler is plainly worried. "There hasn't been a lot of discussion within the association," said Fackler, superintendent at The Ridge at Auburn and president of the Sierra Nevada chapter of the California GCSA. "I'm not sure if there's a silent panic, or what. There's also the concern that we won't have enough water this year, either."

"When there's not enough power, they generally spill more water to generate hydroelectric power. That may possibly reduce the quantity of water that we can use," he said. "It could be a double whammy. We're definitely at risk, and none of us likes to live at this level of fear."

RIPPLING EFFECTS ON OPERATIONS

Power outages, considered guaranteed to occur by many superintendents, will have a rippling effect on entire golfing operations.

"The clubhouse will feel the power crunch as well," said Fackler. "Most of the blackouts will probably take place during the day. They will have to deal with comput-

erized tee times, reservations, registers for food and beverage facilities, air conditioning, kitchens, you name it."

If the club can't prepare and serve food during blackouts, then, on top of already high rates, this summer will hurt the course financially. "The general manager isn't about to say, 'Food and beverage didn't meet their quota last quarter, but maintenance can still keep their budget the same,'" Fackler said.

"Superintendents know how power shortages will effect them. They see things in terms of turf loss," he said. "But I think, realistically, we'll be able to handle blackouts better than the food and beverage and pro shop operations this summer."

NORTH VERSUS SOUTH

The nation's most populous state is large enough that there is a distinct difference between many Northern and Southern California courses. "In the south, most courses have warm-season grasses like the Bermudas that can tolerate drought conditions more than we can here in the north, with our cool-season grasses," said Fackler.

"If we go two or three days without irrigating because of blackouts, we're going to lose a lot more turf than some of the southern courses," he said. "Here in the Sacramento area, I've seen temperatures in the past reach as high as 112 degrees. When it starts getting over 105, that's when things start to get iffy."

BRUTAL RATES, LIMITED OPTIONS



An energy crisis of such magnitude hasn't been seen in the state since the Arab oil embargo in the early 1970s. The Public Utilities Commission, which approved another rate hike last March, is considering raising prices by as much as 46 percent this summer. That's in addition to the nine-percent to 15-percent rate increase approved last January and the 10 percent planned for next year.

In the meantime, Pacific Gas & Electric, one of the state's largest power companies, has gone bankrupt.

"We're doing all we can to conserve energy," said Bob Tillema, superintendent at the Riverside Golf Course in Fresno. "All unnecessary lighting is turned off, and I only irrigate when I need to. I'm trying to determine what we are going to do this summer about changing our water practices."

"Last year, I converted the irrigation satellites to a fully automated system so that 99 percent of all of our watering is done during the night," he said.

OMINOUS LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

With widespread rolling blackouts anticipated, utility companies aren't the only ones leaving superintendents in the dark. The politicians who created the fiasco are apparently so embarrassed at their ineptitude that they're trying to duck out of sight.

"It is just amazing how much we hear on national television and how little we hear locally [from government officials]," said Don Parsons, the semi-retired superintendent at the Old Ranch Golf Club at Seal Beach. "I think they're trying to ignore the problem. But it is very serious. On the news recently, they were discussing the

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