IRS expediting golf course tax decision

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WASHINGTON — The National Golf Course Owners Association has scored a major victory in its battle with the Internal Revenue Service.

This legal maneuvering centers on the depreciation of golf course improvements in the federal tax code. The IRS put the course construction matter at the top of the seven-issue list that it will study under its new Industry Issues Resolution pilot program, aimed at setting a consistent IRS position on industry issues.

If the depreciation decision comes down in the NGCOA’s favor, the average 18-hole course constructed using modern techniques could see tax savings of $400,000.

The NGCOA has been working with “big five” accounting firm KPMG for the last two years, trying to convince the IRS to update tax laws to allow modern golf courses to depreciate greens, bunkers, and other facilities.

California’s deepening energy crisis striking fear in superintendents

By JOEL JOYNER

SAN DIEGO — California, crippled by an energy debacle and facing financial straits, may leave golf courses with a dark, dry summer as power usage peaks. With predictions of widespread blackouts and staggering energy bills, superintendents in the Golden State are deeply worried.

Moreover, electricity blackouts could spread to Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and other western states this summer, according to government authorities. For golf courses and other businesses, the potential financial consequences are disturbing.

“It’s possible that budgets will be destroyed and, in the case of limited-resource facilities, energy bills may not be paid,” said Corey Eastwood, superintendent at the Stockton Golf & Country Club, east of San Francisco. “Who knows what will happen?”

Eastwood’s Central Valley course requires enough energy to pump up to one million gallons of water a day during June, July and August. “If we’re caught without power, a lot of the grass on the putting greens will be lost,” he said.

West Nile virus spreading south and west

By JAY FINEGAN

ATLANTA — West Nile virus, already found in about a dozen northeastern and mid-Atlantic states, is expected to spread further south and west this summer, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The CDC is monitoring the virus along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, from Maine to Texas. West Nile is carried by mosquitoes. The virus’ first U.S. appearance came in metropolitan New York City in 1999. It has since been detected in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Further south, the potentially deadly microbe has invaded New...
AUROA, Colo. — The Heritage at Eagle Bend, an active-adult community, 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 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 encompasses 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 permanent quarters this month, when his new maintenance facility goes operational. The 8,500-square-foot building will include soil storage bins and an exterior chemical-storage facility.

The 18-hole Arthur Hills-design courses through 150 acres of native grasses. “We 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 Northern Colorado and on the planning 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 graduate of the golf course operations program at Lake City Community College, in Florida. “It’s a busy year for me.”

The retirement community, located nearly 40 miles north of Denver, has provided him with a country golf club, has provided a tough, mile-high Colorado winter.”

“It’s been pretty difficult work—him,” he said. “It provided him modified shelter for the me—than likely will not start up until they can be—even. He said. “Golfers at my morning,” Eastwood said. “Golfers at my shutdown, but I’m sure that all I will find his entire irrigation computer. During the day to make up for lost water days to recover and get a new computer system,” Elliott said, “and we lost all of his entire irrigation computer. During the day to make up for lost water days to recover and get a new computer system,” Elliott said, “and we lost all of the next blackout, and we’ll definitely our first full season.”

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Mel Summer

YORBA LINDA, Calif. — The City of Yorba Linda has appointed Mel Summer as superintendent for their Black Gold Golf Club, a 6,900-yard, par-72, 18-hole public facility opening this spring.

Prior to joining Black Gold, Summer worked for more than 26 years in maintenance, care, construction and growth of golf courses as a superintendent, project manager, assistant superintendent and construction foreman for various Southern California golf facilities. His most recent postings were at Summit Golf in Corona, Costa Mesa Country Club in Costa Mesa and Pelican Hill Golf Club in Newport Beach.

Summer is a Class A member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and is active in the California Golf Course Superintendents Association.

The Black Gold Golf Club is managed by KemperSports Management of Northbrook, Ill., and was designed by Arthur Hills. The course, located 10 miles northwest of Disneyland, will include a lighted driving range, practice putting green and a 20,000-square-foot clubhouse.

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