E-commerce struggles for golf foothold

By A. Overbeck

While e-commerce may actually revolutionize business-to-business transactions someday, the message now is 'Don't believe the hype.' In the past year, e-ideas have been scratched and retooled and company strategies have been rethought and rejected. In the process, gobs of money has been raised and spent developing software and Web sites and rolling out lavish marketing and promotional schemes.

Some companies, such as Carl M. Freeman Golf Solutions, never got off the ground. Still other companies, including Golfsat, GreenIndustryOnline.com and Greentrac.com, have

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Development slowdown a healthy trend, experts say

By Andrew Overbeck

JUPITER, Fla. — The downturn in golf course development that was predicted by the National Golf Foundation's 2001 facilities report is becoming evident. The foundation recently reported that for the first half of 2001, just 176 courses were completed. The updated prediction for the year is 378 course openings, down from a record 524 in 2000. This will bring total development numbers back to early 1990s levels.

The significant drop in development, however, is not seen as a negative

Continued on page 14

$100-million Red Sky Golf Club unfolding in the Colorado Rockies

By Jay Finegan

WOLCOTT, Colo. — One of the most lavish golf development projects in history is unfolding amidst stunning alpine scenery here in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

Vail Resorts, best known for its ski operations, is pouring $100 million into Red Sky Golf Club, currently under construction in the Vail Valley. The 36-hole complex, featuring signature designs by Tom Fazio and Greg Norman, promises not only eye-popping vistas but two long layouts providing plenty of challenge.

"This place is unbelievable," said director of golf Jeff Hanson, formerly head pro at nearby Beaver Creek Golf Club, also run by Vail Resorts. "I think it's going to be the best club anywhere in the West. From the standpoint of playability and aesthetics, it will rival anything in the country. We're targeting for each course to be in the top 100 right away.

The 700-acre property, formerly ranch land, slopes steeply up a mountainside from I-70, Colorado's major east-west artery. The club lies about two hours west of Denver and 20 minutes from Eagle County Regional Airport.

HIGH-ALTITUDE GOLF

The Fazio Course, slated to open next summer, stretches an impressive 7,400 yards. Players will make their way through sage-covered hills, dense forests of aspen and juniper, and around a highland lake.

"You'll get two different feels on the Fazio side," said Hanson. "You get a Troon, Scottsdale type of look on the

Continued on page 13

Fought-Lehman design team fast out of the gate

By Jay Finegan

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The new design team of John Fought-Tom Lehman Golf Course Architecture is off to a strong start, with three projects in Arizona, one in California and another in Minneapolis.

Fought and Lehman first came together in 1997 to design The Gallery, an 18-hole private course north of Tucson that opened to high praise. More recently, they completed a total renovation of The Farms, an exclusive club near

Continued on page 12

Golf cart vandals nabbed in Washington

By Jay Finegan

BREMERTON, Wash. — Three joy-riding teenagers who crashed 16 golf carts at Gold Mountain Golf Course here have been arrested and are being prosecuted.

"They're getting hammered pretty good because they did about $10,000 in damage around here," said PGA pro Scott Alexander, director of golf at the 36-hole club. "They ended up driving three carts down the road about five miles and we couldn't find them for a week. That turned out to be grand theft — a felony deal.

According to Alexander, the culprits were the same youths who had broken

Continued on page 20
"For one, I was a younger man when I was grow-in superintendent at the OGA Members Course at Tukwila. Now, I’m married, have two dogs, a cast on my foot, our course has a beautiful new clubhouse, and we’ve had more than 300,000 rounds played on our PennLinks greens since we opened in August, 1994.

Our crew has managed to control Poa annua in our greens even though our public course is surrounded with hazelnut orchards where annual bluegrass thrives under the canopy of trees. To start with, PennLinks is a strong variety with good recovery from daily scars and wounds. When managed consistently with a balanced fertility program, and by aerifying in late May and mid-September—after Poa annua backs off the seeding stage—we can keep the nuisance grass in check. We’ve observed that alternative spikes don’t disturb the putting surface, thus providing an ideal seedbed like steel spikes will. When Poa annua does occur in our greens, crew members remove the individual plants with tools we’ve adapted for the job; like a sharpened screwdriver, weed cutter, and a plunger for stubborn plants. Collars are the buffer between the surrounds and the greens, and have some Poa annua growing in them. I plan to re-sod the collars this year to start afresh and stop the threat of encroachment.

We’re open year ‘round, and have consistently posted more than 44,000 rounds per year for the last seven years. Our PennLinks greens are cut at 0.110 to 0.115” in the summer, and raised to 0.135” in the winter. We strive to maintain country club standards with less than a country club budget.

I may not look as young as I did seven years ago, but our PennLinks greens do. Now if I could get rid of this cast and control those geese, all would be well."

Kirk Kundrick, Superintendent

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GE Capital buying Heller

By JAY FINEGAN

CHICAGO — Heller Financial, a $20-billion commercial lender that recently launched a golf financing division, is being acquired by GE Capital, the $370-billion financial arm of General Electric Co.

Chicago-based Heller established the golf-lending group in hopes of filling the void created when Bank of America abandoned the golf-financing field last fall.

Rick Nekoroski, a vice president and investment officer in the Heller golf unit, said it’s way too early to gauge the transaction’s impact on the golf-lending operation.

"In 60 to 90 days we’ll know a lot more about how the acquisition will affect us," said Nekoroski, who handles the eastern half of the country from Boston. "I’m continuing to put out proposals on new deals, and we’re closing deals involving course acquisitions. So we’re still in business, still doing golf deals."

Chrisy Lockridge, product manager of Heller’s golf group, said it’s business as usual for the whole department.

LOWER COST OF FUNDS

GE Capital is paying a premium for Heller — $33.75 a share — 50 percent more than Heller’s closing price July 27 on the New York Stock Exchange. Japan’s Fuji Bank, which owns 52 percent of Heller and controls 77 percent of the voting power, agreed to the deal.

According to Nekoroski, the acquisition may work to the advantage of borrowers. GE Capital, he said "is not just buying the Heller portfolio. They are buying the people and the intellectual property. So all assumptions are that all business units will continue to operate, which could be great for golf, because we’d have access to lower cost of funds and a bigger machine."
The law of supply and demand applies to the current construction slowdown explores the current construction slowdown and finds that it's not such a bad thing.

In one, managing editor Andrew Overbeck and finds that it's not such a bad thing.

In the other, a profile of Red Sky Golf Club, high in the Rockies, we discover just one of several new properties rapidly turning Colorado’s Vail Valley into a major golf destination. First, let’s examine the slowdown.

According to National Golf Foundation projections, roughly 378 courses will open this year, down from last year’s record total of 524. At first glance, that 30 percent slide seems like a big negative. But industry experts, from architects to lenders, are hardly despairing.

THE PIG IN THE PYTHON

“It’s a period of adjustment,” says Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America. The law of supply and demand applies to golf, and in many places the glut of golf courses has outstripped demand. By taking a breather from the recent feverish pace of construction, all those new courses will have a chance to be absorbed by a rising number of golfers.

It’s like a pig moving through a python. In time, the snake will be hungry again. But not for a while.

Bobby Fitzpatrick, managing director of golf lending for DaimlerChrysler Financial Services, wishes even fewer new layouts are being filed in here, with what seems slow is actually ebbing back to what seems like a big negative. But industry experts, from architects to lenders, are hardly despairing.

Is your course prepared for medical emergencies?

By PATRICK ROSELLI

Each year thousands of medical emergencies occur on golf courses, beyond the reach of medical help. The majority of incidents are minor and require minimal assistance by course staff and often are managed by the golfers themselves.

When a true life-threatening emergency happens, however, it’s a different story. The stricken golfer might be isolated from emergency medical services (EMS) that are desperately needed. If the victim is on a remote part of the course, without easy ambulance access, the scenario grows even worse.

The solution is for the course to provide immediate assistance with trained staff until the ambulance arrives.

DEALING WITH CARDIAC ARREST

According to a study conducted in the Seattle area, and published by the American Heart Association, golf courses are the fifth most likely public place for cardiac arrests to occur. Unlike a heart attack, in cardiac arrest the victim’s heart ceases to pump blood, breathing stops, and death quickly follows if immediate assistance is not provided.

Survival is dependent on several factors, none more important than the amount of time before intervention. In fact, each passing minute without CPR and defibrillation equates to a 10-percent reduction in rate of survival.

If assistance were provided by staff at the golf course within three minutes following collapse, a golfer has a 70-percent chance of survival. After five minutes it falls to 50 percent, and after 10 minutes survival is rare. From the time 9-1-1 is contacted until EMS arrives at the golfer’s side, 10 to 20 minutes can easily elapse.

FORMULATING A RESPONSE PLAN

Until recently, most golf courses lacked the necessary equipment and training to manage on-course medical emergencies. This is quickly changing as more clubs purchase automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and train staff in CPR and AED use.

Obviously, not all emergencies are cardiac arrests. But an allergic reaction to a bee sting, a serious injury, electrocution, stroke or drowning all require a timely and coordinated response by staff to provide assistance.

The goal is to deliver life-saving care within five minutes of the emergency and until EMS arrives to take over. To achieve this, a well-designed internal response plan must be in place and ready for activation at a moment’s notice.

CLUBS POORLY PREPARED

We conducted a survey of more than two dozen golf courses to determine how well prepared they are to deal with medical emergencies. It’s not pretty.

Some clubs had no plans at all and others were woefully inadequate. In one, the managing director claimed the club had a well-designed internal response plan. When we asked what it was, the response was, “Well, we have staff and we have phones.”

Return to normal.

To golf architect Damian Pascuzzo, however, the hysteria has a ring of déjà vu.

“In the early ’90s, you had a lot of very expensive golf courses being built,” he says, “and hoping that you’d be able to pay for buying some very expensive real estate. And then people stopped buying the very expensive real estate, due to a recession. I think we’re now making the same mistakes.”

Pascuzzo, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, blames a lackluster stock market for today’s downward trend. “I have no idea when this thing will turn around or what will happen,” he says. “But you have to put it in perspective. The last couple of years were extraordinary. Today, what seems slow is actually ebbing back to historical norms.”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN “HIGH END”

In Colorado’s scenic Vail Valley, meanwhile, course builders are moving at warp speed.

Niebur Golf recently opened Eagle Ranch Golf Club, an Arnold Palmer signature design. That’s a public course, with rates down to $30 for the locals. But the buzz in the valley concerns two swanky new clubs created for...Continued on next page
Managing liability to avoid legal system ‘gone haywire’

By Gary M. Crist

In today’s litigious society, lawsuits and liability claims are facts of life. Many believe the legal system has gone haywire, characterized too often by trumped-up cases filed by unscrupulous lawyers. As a result, golf course operations, like any other business, are increasingly scrutinized in situations where personal injury or property damage is incurred, or illegal discrimination is claimed.

Of course, the objective of the scrutiny is to find fault, lay blame, and ultimately recover big bucks through the legal process.

Difficult and frustrating as liability matters have become, the forward-thinking business person should focus not on the apparent abuses of the system, but on the steps that can be taken to minimize legal exposure. Such discipline will serve to help protect business assets from the potential devastation of an adverse legal judgment.

UNDERSTANDING LIABILITY

The first of these steps is to recognize that liability generally results from the failure to fulfill a legal duty owed to the injured party. In the case of premises liability, i.e., responsibility for damages incurred on or about the golf course property, the nature of the legal duty owed by an owner/operator to facility patrons is the exercise of “due care.”

Admittedly a vague standard, the essence of due care is to anticipate foreseeable safety risks, and take reasonable steps to minimize them. As an example, when locating a practice green, the selected location should be well removed from the range of even the wildest slices and hooks. A recent legal settlement of $7.5 million was based on a golfer being struck by a ball while standing on the practice green (GCN October 2000).

However, the legal obligation is not to ensure that no one is ever injured. The obligation of the owner/operator is to do what is reasonable and prudent under the circumstances. For common risks, the elements of due care are often obvious: signage should be used on slippery floors and identification should be checked to avoid serving alcoholic beverages to minors.

RISKY BUSINESS

More complex risks sometimes make the components of due care more difficult to determine. A good example is the risk of lightning strikes, which is statistically high at golf facilities.

A recent legal case, Maussner v. Atlantic City Country Club indicates that golf facility owner/operators have some duty to at least warn golfers of the dangers of lightning and to detail what safety procedures, if any, are being utilized.

The quandary for the owner/operator is what, if anything, is appropriate in addition to the posting of warning signs. From customer service and general safety standpoints, more pro-active lightning risk management practices seem indicated, particularly in view of the sophisticated lightning prediction equipment and weather monitoring services now available in the marketplace.

When the specter of legal liability is taken into account, however, sometimes less is better when it comes to managing risk. The “catch-22” is that if a facility installs lightning prediction and warning systems, they run the risk of being sued for negligently not ordering an emergency cart. Conversely, if a facility doesn’t install such systems, it bears the chance of being sued for negligence of not taking precautions.

Medical readiness

Continued from previous page

determine what steps have been taken to manage medical emergencies at their facilities. Not surprisingly, we found very few golf courses do more than call 9-1-1 and wait for the ambulance to arrive.

Of the 17,000 courses in the United States, we estimate that only three to five percent have a comprehensive medical response plan in place today.

Considering the number of new golfers over the age of 50 (a 34 percent increase annually from 1994 to 1999, according to NGF), most clubs are not adequately preparing for the increased in on-course medical emergencies.

ULTIMATE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

A medical emergency at your facility requires immediate response by your staff. Calling 9-1-1 and waiting to meet the ambulance is not an adequate plan. Instead, being prepared to manage any incident with a professional, competent and caring response will make the difference between a medical crisis and providing the ultimate in customer service.

So what goes into a medical response plan?

• The first step is to evaluate your facility, including course layout, EMS access points, staff training, equipment, on-course communications and local regulations governing medical equipment.

• Your plan needs to address how your staff is notified of an on-course emergency, who responds, deployment of your medical equipment, first aid procedures...

Continued on page 17
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Armyworms hit the Northeast, far afield from usual range

By JOEL JOYNER

MASHPEE, Mass. — The media has tried hard this summer to whip up a public hysteria about armyworms, but superintendents have taken the so-called invasion pretty much in stride. "They're fairly easy to kill," said Bill Levesque, assistant superintendent here at Willowbend Golf Course. "And they probably won't survive the winter this far north."

Truth be told, armyworms are a menace. They often travel and feast in masses, like soldiers moving across enemy land. They'll devour turfgrass leaves right down to the nubs before migrating to a new sector. They've been known to consume up to 10 acres of crops within a 24-hour period.

Usually found in the South and Midwest, great numbers of armyworms made their way to the Northeast this year, borne on the winds of tropical Storm Allison. They hit the region by the millions. 'BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS'

As homeowners grew panicky about their lawns, the media picked up the scent of a big story. In sensationalized stories, they tossed around terms like "attack," "siege" and even "plague." One reporter totally lost his grip and said the invasion was "of Biblical proportions."

"Armyworm" is really a misnomer—it's not a worm at all. The pest is actually a caterpillar with a voracious appetite for turfgrass, wheat, corn, rye, and hay. The insects

Continued on page 10

Cook 11th American to qualify as Master Greenkeeper

By JOEL JOYNER

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — Steve Cook, superintendent here at the Oakland Hills Country Club, is now one of the 31 certified Master Greenkeepers worldwide and the 11th American to achieve the prestigious distinction from the British International Golf Greenkeeper Association (BIGGA).

A graduate of the University of Illinois, where he earned a B.S. in ornamental horticulture, Cook has nearly 20 years of experience in the golf course maintenance profession. Cook said he undertook the process as a personal challenge. "If you're going to be a superintendent, you might as well go as many certifications as the industry offers," he said. "I consider myself a goal-oriented person, and it was one more goal."

Building his resume in hopes of higher

Continued on page 9

NEW WEB SITE FOR SEED SOLUTIONS

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Viewing the Internet as an important tool for future opportunities, Seed Solutions has created a new site at www.seedsolutions.com. "This is the first step of our commitment to build a complete business-to-business e-commerce solution for our customers," said Bill Junk, president of Seed Solutions. Visitors to the site can find complete product information for turf, farm, garden, native grass and wildlife seed. The site also features a distributor locator.

ERIC COMES TO NEW ENGLAND

CARY, N.C. — The Environmental Resource Center, headquartered here, has announced the opening of a new branch office in Hartland, Vt. Though the organization has operated in the area since 1981, this is the first time that it has established an office in the region. Vermont staff are now available to provide information on environmental safety, permit assistance, audits, and customized on-site training. The new office will handle environmental and safety requirements throughout the New England area.

GOLF COURSE NEWS
Start-up superintendent Mike Scott bringing Fazio design to life

By JAY FINEGAN

RINGOES, N.J. — Mike Scott had a terrific job as a young superintendent—head honcho at the famed Winged Foot Golf Club. But it wasn’t enough. The former Army tank commander wanted to call all the shots. So he packed up and moved to The Ridge at Back Brook, a Tom Fazio design that won’t open until next summer.

“It was just time to get on my own—to make all the decisions, not just run a crew from day to day,” he said. “At Winged Foot, I ran the courses while Paul Latshaw was there as director of golf. I interviewed who came in from Pebble Beach. Eric and I worked together at Merion Golf Club. I wouldn’t have grown if I’d stayed there another year.”

Scott is glad he signed on at The Ridge, a golf-only private club situated in rural country northwest of Princeton, overlooking the Sourland Mountains of Hunterdon County.

Under development by owners Joel and Pam Moore, the 300-acre layout features the 20-foot-wide Back Brook, multiple rock-walled ridges and dense stands of century-old forest.

“It’s a unique site,” Scott allowed, “and it’s going to be a tough course. The slope rating will probably be around 140.”

STRONG RESUME

With his 1995 Penn State degree in turfgrass science, Scott launched his groundskeeping career at Oak Hill Country Club, in Rochester, N.Y., then moved to the famed Merion, in Ardmore, Pa., where he became first assistant on the East Course.

In 1999, he returned to Oak Hill, and from there he switched to Winged Foot, in New York’s Westchester County.

His tournament experience includes groundkeeping stints at the 1995 Ryder Cup, at the 1997 U.S. Open at Congressional Country Club, in Bethesda, Md., and at the 1997 Australian PGA Championship at New South Wales Golf Club, in La Perouse. He spent five weeks there.

Prior to all this, from 1987 to 1991, Scott pulled Army duty as a tank commander in Kirchgoens, Germany, as a member of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Armored Division.

STARTING ON GROUND FLOOR

As the start-up superintendent at The Ridge, Scott has to keep a lot of balls in the air. The challenge, however, is worthwhile. “To work with Tom Fazio and his team is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” he said. “Also, the course is closer to home for us, and we have two young kids.”

Fazio visits every two months, he said, but two of his architects—Andy Banfield and Tom Griswold—come in every two weeks.

Scott said the founder of the project, Princeton businessman Joel Moore, has a “tremendous vision” of what The Ridge will ultimately become—an exclusive, high-end championship course with a keen environmental ethic.

“We’re definitely going for the Audubon Sanctuary program,” Scott said. “What’s great about a new course is that you can start on the ground floor and hopefully get everything right the first time.”

His responsibilities include involvement in the day-to-day construction operations, so he’ll be familiar with the grading, drainage and installation of the irrigation system. “We’re putting in a state-of-the-art Toro SitePro 2000,” he said. “It’s fully computerized. You can run it from a Palm Pilot.”

LABOR FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

In addition, he’s establishing the maintenance regimen, purchasing equipment and training a staff. He expects his maintenance crew to peak at 25 to 35, settling back to 10 or 12 off-season. With the local unemployment rate low, he’ll be pulling in workers from Latin America.

“When I was at Merion,” he noted, “I had guys from Ecuador and Puerto Rico. At Winged Foot, I had workers from Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Americans don’t want to do manual labor for $7.50 an hour, but these guys from South and Central America are hungry. They want tons of overtime.

“I don’t care which country they come from, as long as they have a pulse,” Scott added. “This isn’t rocket science.”

EROSION CONTROL IS VITAL

After grow-in, he’ll be responsible for maintaining Fazio’s design. He hopes to have the course fully shaped and seeded by late September, with L-93 bentgrass on fairways and tees, A-4 bent on the greens and a bluegrass-fescue blend in the roughs.

For now, he’s also overseeing the three contractors on site, one clearing trees, one building ponds and roads, and one—Pavlec Construction—building the layout.

Pavlec is working on six holes at a time. “They want us to close up and temporarily seed six holes before we go on to the next six,” Scott said. “Right now we’ve got the front nine and the driving range wide open. The topsoil has been removed and we’re shaping the subsoil.”

“Erosion control is a big issue with the regulators, so we’re keeping things tight,” he said. “We can’t afford to have a soil erosion problem shutting us down, even for a day. We’ve got $12 million worth of equipment on site, and that leases for about $40,000 a day.”

Continued on page 10
Steve Cook, MG  
Continued from page 7

compensation played no role in his pursuit for the credential. "I haven't even informed the club here about it," he said.

Cook first encountered BIGGA in 1990 while working as construction superintendent at the Golf de Joyneval, a 36-hole Robert Trent Jones-designed complex near Paris.

"Although the French have their own association, BIGGA is the main one over there," Cook said. "I've only been to one of the BIGGA conferences, but they seem a little more laid back to me. They take the profession seriously, but they don't seem to take themselves too seriously."

ESSAY EXAM

BIGGA's certification involves a two-day written examination, practical work experience and a course inspection. The exam consisted of two essay questions, one for each day.

"They give you a scenario, then you have three hours to come up with an answer," said Cook. "It's considerably different from the GCSAA exam, because I don't think anyone can really study for it. The exam puts a premium on personal experience. You either know the subject matter or you don't."

College professors and others review the answers. According to Cook, every question is different for each exam.

"One of the scenarios was developing a budget for a golf course. The other one was more science related, on the physiology of turfgrass," he said.

Cook typed six-page essays for each question. "The length of the answer depends on how loquacious you are," he said. "But three hours was barely enough time."

The course inspection must be conducted by a Master Greenkeeper.

"It was a one-day inspection, and Bill Montague, who was over at the Oakland Club in Ohio at the time, came over to do it," said Cook. "We basically talked about the chemical and fertilizer programs we have here, how we're organized and how the staff is managed. We toured the course, and then he submitted a report, which I wasn't able to see."  

PREPARING FOR RYDER CUP

Cook benefited from the experience of other superintendents early in his career while at the Medinah Country Club in Chicago. Superintendents Danny Quast, Pete Wilson and Phil Taylor are high on Cook's list of influences.

"Danny Quast has just retired, and Pete Wilson is over at the Seattle Golf Club now," he said.

Those guys had a lot of patience with me and taught me that being a superintendent is a lot more than growing grass."

Cook is now getting Oakland Hills ready for the 2002 U.S. Men's Amateur and the 2003 Ryder Cup Matches. The course is in the final stages of a $2-million renovation project involving green banks and surrounds, bunkers, and a new irrigation system.

IGM adds three  
Continued from page 7

operations for IGM. "We're looking forward to bringing the course back to the original conditions that made it the jewel it is best known as being."

Staff at the course will remain. "When IGM took over our maintenance operations, we were able to keep our own staff, which was a big plus," said John Cargill, general manager at the club.

COMPUTERIZED IRRIGATION

The third acquisition, Pelican Bay, consists of two 18-hole courses. Its North Course, designed by Bill Amick in 1980, is private; the South Course, designed by Lloyd Clifton and opened in 1985, is semi-private. Both layouts curve around inland waterways. The North Course, playing at 6,889 yards, underwent IGM-supervised renovation work in 1996, creating smoother putting surfaces and larger greens. The project also altered sandtraps, bunkers and tees, and improved drainage.

Plans are under discussion for a practice putting green and computerized irrigation system for the North Course, said Jason Moore, IGM's central Florida regional manager.

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Armyworms
Continued from page 7

feast for about two weeks before birth and when they escape into the soil, only to emerge as moths in a few days.

Several generations of armyworms may occur in a single season, with female moths capable of laying as many as 14,000 eggs. The moths can ride the jet stream over great distances.
Mirabel Golf Club takes shape on former Norman course site

By DAVID HUBBARD

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — When Mirabel Golf Club opens here in December, the story of what might have been will have faded to vague memory. Like the legend of the Phoenix rising from its ashes to grow anew, what was nearly the area’s most difficult daily-fee facility was ultimately destroyed to make way for the present 720-acre private golf community.

The project is being developed by the high-end, San Francisco-based Discovery Land Co. for the owner, a Dallas-based investment firm called Terrabrook.

Considering that the former Greg Norman target-style design — called Stonehaven — featured a mere 45 acres of turfgrass, Mike Meldman of Discovery Land decided that the original concept would prove far too challenging for high handicappers.

He wanted a tame track for the exclusive club he had in mind.

Without much debate, Discovery officials called in the bulldozers and prevailed upon their long-time associate, golf architect Tom Fazio, to come up with a totally new and considerably more ample layout.

EXPENSIVE PROPOSITION

At $65 million for the land, plus an additional $7 million to dig up the Norman course and then redesign and rebuild a new one, Mirabel stands as Discovery Land’s most expensive undertaking to date.

It joins a sparkling company portfolio that includes the nearby Estancia Golf Club, along with The Santa Lucia Preserve in Monterey, Calif.; Kukio Golf Club in Kona, Hawaii; Spanish Peaks in Colorado Springs; and the 2,000-acre Crosswinds at Lake Las Vegas in Henderson, Nev.

The project is being developed by the owner, a Dallas-based investment firm called Terrabrook. The property is a three-hour drive south of Auckland, New Zealand capital of Wellington and Lake Taupo is accessible from the New Zealand capital of Wellington and is a three-hour drive south of Auckland, the country’s largest city.

“The land on which we will design the golf course and oversee the operation is much more conducive to golf terrain. The design may encroach on only 10 percent of the total area of the washes and arroyos, making the designers very selective in the compromises they must cede to Mother Nature.”

WHITE SHARK ERADICATED

In this open setting, Mirabel offers 310 homesites, from half-acre lots to three-acre parcels, ranging in price from $250,000 to over $600,000. Forty-five golf villas will also be available. Fazio’s redesign

Continued on next page

First Nicklaus course in New Zealand to be built near Auckland

By JAY FINEGAN

EAGLE, Colo. — Amid a building boom of super-exclusive and super-expensive golf clubs in the Vail Valley, Arnold Palmer has come to the rescue of the ordinary Joe. With a signature course, no less.

Eagle Ranch Golf Course, the first new daily-fee layout in the valley since 1975, opened for play this summer, providing golfers with inspiring mountain scenery, superb guest service and affordable green fees.

It’s only the third public course in this burgeoning alpine region about two hours west of Denver. “This is something the valley has been begging for for quite some time,” said Jeff Boyer, the club’s director of golf.

In this open setting, Mirabel offers 310 homesites, from half-acre lots to three-acre parcels, ranging in price from $250,000 to over $600,000. Forty-five golf villas will also be available. Fazio’s redesign

Continued on next page

Palmer Design brings affordable golf to Vail Valley

By JAY FINEGAN

EAGLE, Colo. — Amid a building boom of super-exclusive and super-expensive golf clubs in the Vail Valley, Arnold Palmer has come to the rescue of the ordinary Joe. With a signature course, no less.

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Continued on next page

layout – namely, irrigation hardware and the original holding ponds – Fazio’s solution is much more conducive to golf course living. He completely repositioned the ninth and 18th fairways to allow views of the action from the clubhouse.

Stretching as long as 7,200 yards from the back tees at par 71, Vazquez’s graceful fairway contours and swales play in sharp contrast to the dry desert washes and granite outcrops. Arizona’s land usage laws basically mandate forced carries over natural terrain. The design may encroach on only 10 percent of the total area of the washes and arroyos, making the designers very selective in the compromises they must cede to Mother Nature.

WHITE SHARK ERADICATED

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Fought, Lehman
Continued from page 1

Diego.
Earlier this year, the two formalized their partnership, setting up shop here in Arizona. So far, it looks like a winning combination.

SEPARETE PATHS
Fought, the PGA Tour's Rookie of the Year in 1979, left the pro circuit in 1985. Sidelined by a vertebrae problem, he began designing courses and renovations with Bob Cupp.
Later, from 1995 through 2000, he designed a number of courses while working with OB Sports, including Washington National, in Seattle; Cimarron, near Palm Springs; and Langdon Farms, just outside Portland, Ore.
"I resigned from OB Sports last fall," Fought said. "Tom [Lehman] was doing projects with other architects. He came back to me a year and a half ago, and he particularly enjoyed working with me."

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE
Lehman, winner of the 1996 British Open and multiple other PGA Tour events, had honed his design skills working with Arnold Palmer and the Hurdzan, Fry team.
"Maybe our biggest asset as a team is that John has all the technical expertise one needs as a designer," Lehman said. "I'm learning and steadily growing in that area."

Six months into their partnership, Lehman and Fought have landed some high-profile projects. They've begun design work for WhiteStone (Phoenix), The Preserve (east of Scottsdale), WindSong Farm (Minneapolis), and Andreas Ranch (Indio, Calif.). They're also crafting a second course at The Gallery.

WINNING NOTORIETY
Lehman, for his part, is deeply involved in the new venture. This is not a deal where he simply lends his name and prestige, "We go look at sights together," Fought said. "We do planning together. He visited The Farms 12 times. This is a real business, and he's involved with the whole thing."

Eagle Ranch
Continued from previous page
course where locals can sometimes get on – Beaver Creek – where green fees run in the $140 range.
Unique to golf courses in the area, Eagle Ranch features the Uplink GPS system on each cart. The unit not only provides golfers with exact yardages, it also allows them to order food from the clubhouse.
Course construction and development were managed by superintendent John Martin, with his two assistants – Derek Rose and Pat Nunn.
"The crew worked very hard here and I was extremely pleased with the grow-in," Martin said. "The contrast of the bluegrass tees and fairways and the bentgrass greens, the many native areas, the restoration of old wetlands and the overall beauty of this area will be very memorable to golfers."

Mirabel
Continued from previous page
places the larger home lots back away from the fairways.
The 25,000-square-foot clubhouse complex, complete with swimming pools and tennis courts, will provide the crowning touch to Mirabel's luxurious lifestyle. Construction on the other club amenities will begin once the golf course opens. Membership here is by invitation only, and the 375 members will fork over an $85,000 initiation fee.
Red Sky
Continued from page 1
lower holes, but when you reach the upper holes there’s definitely a mountain feel.”

Fazio’s front nine includes two monster par-5 holes, one measuring 582 yards from the tips, the other stretching to 612 yards. Golfers will get some help from the 9,000-foot altitude, because the ball sails about 10 to 15 percent farther in the thin air. Five sets of tees on all holes will provide additional relief.

“The Fazio Course will be awesome,” said Hanson. “The fairways are wide, so you can play the championship tees and get everything you want from a length standpoint.”

300 WORKERS ON SITE
Mike Valiant, CGCS, director of golf maintenance, is one busy man as workers race to meet the Sept. 15 deadline to have all greens and tees seeded before the first frost. The greens will sport A-4 bentgrass, and some 80 acres of fairway have been sodded with bluegrass.

“We have about 300 people working out here,” said Valiant, gazing around the bustling construction scene on the front nine. “Around 60 are with Landscapes Unlimited, our main contractor, and the rest are subcontractors building roads and doing utility work.” But much work remains to be completed before December, when snow will shut down the construction.

Valiant is also riding herd on a massive revegetation effort, budgeted at $1.6 million on the Fazio layout alone. “Last summer we salvaged 23,000 sage plants and another 2,200 juniper and serviceberry,” he said. “This year we purchased another 11,000 junipers. The Fazio guys want it to match the existing environment.”

RUGGED NORMAN COURSE
High above the Fazio layout, set apart by a huge ridge, lies the site for Greg Norman’s gargantuan 7,600-yard track. Construction began this summer, with the opening planned for 2003.

“You’ll get a totally different look up there,” said Hanson. “It’s in a bowl, a big deep valley. The holes crisscross back and forth through these winding aspens and junipers. It has craggy rock outcroppings, rugged gulches and wildflower meadows. It’s like a wilderness experience.”

A resort guest clubhouse will anchor the Fazio Course, but the super-upscale, 26,000-square-foot private member clubhouse will sit on the Norman site. Designed by Hart/Howerton, it will be constructed of stone and massive logs, ranch-style, like a classic western lodge, meant to blend easily with the surroundings.

Memberships, capped at 425, are selling already for $150,000, with dues set initially at $6,500 a year. “The demand has been unbelievable,” Hanson reports, “because this is definitely the best project in the valley.”

NORMAN’S PICKUP TRUCK
The price tag here — $100 million — is steep for two courses, but the expenses kept piling up. The 700 acres alone cost $15 million. Costs for construction and the pumping system, which brings water a mile uphill, also ran high.

“The rock blasting here has been unbelievable,” Hanson said. “We knew these were the Rocky Mountains, but we didn’t think they were that rocky. Huge boulders had to be blown out of the ground. And the architect fees are $1.2 million apiece. These are signature courses, so the site visits are on top of that — they want you to pay for their jet fuel. But Norman actually has a big 3,000-acre ranch in Meecker, a couple of hours west of here, so he drove over in his pickup.”

Despite the cost, Vail Resorts stands to turn a tidy profit on its investment. The 87 homesites on the property, most of them 1.2 acres, are going for $785,000. “That’s just for the lot, for the dirt,” Hanson said. Between the $63.7 million in initiation fees, and $69 million in lot sales — $132 million — the operation should open in the black.

No wonder a third course is under discussion. “This land was owned before by George Joufflas,” said Hanson. “He’s a big rancher from Grand Junction, and he owns thousands of acres as you continue west. He wants to sell us some land for another course, so we’re talking to him.”

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BASF
Development slowdown
Continued from page 1

The numbers we are seeing are more justified given the current market conditions," said Barry Frank, vice president of membership services for the NGF. "As the slowdown occurs, it will give all the new courses that have come online a chance to be absorbed into the market."

CONDUCTED OVERSUPPLY
After six years of breakneck growth, golf course development was bound to slow down.

"It is a cyclical pattern," said Henry DeLozier, vice president of golf operations for Del Webb Corp., which recently merged with Pulte Homes. "In most markets there is an oversupply of golf courses. That has caused the financial community to pull back from its previous lending levels."

Besides the oversupply in some areas of the country, the softening economy and flat golf participation rates also have scared off potential lenders. According to Frank, this combination will lead to fewer courses "graduating" from the NGF's list of courses "in planning" to "under construction."

Rick Nekoroski, with Heller Financial, which was recently acquired by GE Capital, (see story page 3) agreed. "These numbers tell us that what is already in the pipeline is getting completed, but there are not a lot of new projects getting started," he noted. "Developers don't see building courses as being an attractive option, because in given markets there are too many courses."

"However, from a lenders perspective," he continued, "those numbers are more positive than negative. It will give the inventory that has come on the market time to be absorbed. That will stabilize the market in the coming years."

While a prolonged slowdown may lead to a more hospitable lending environment, national lenders are still shying away from new construction loans, said DaimlerChrysler Financial Service's Bobby Fitzpatrick. "We have not done a new construction loan in 18 months," he said.

"STILL PLENTY OF WORK TO DO"
Phil Garcia, president of Ryan Golf Corp. in Deerfield Beach, Fla., knew the end of the boom was coming. However, his company still has plenty of work, and 2002 is scheduled to be another healthy year, despite the development drop off.

"We did not expect the record number of courses that were built in the late 1990s to continue forever," he said. "It was not reality. But the numbers that we are seeing now are still substantial. This roll back that is starting will just help to bring some sanity back into the marketplace."

However, if the trend of fewer courses holds true, Garcia admitted that some builders might be left out to dry. "With the record numbers, there were a number of newcomers to the industry," he said. "This downturn will affect the newcomers more than the established companies that are in it for the long haul."

"BLOODLETTING TO COME"
With new construction loans out of the question, national lenders are focusing on acquisitions and the refinancing of existing courses.

"Why would you build a course when you can buy someone's mistake at a lower price?" said Fitzpatrick. "It is not busy yet, but a lot of people are looking to buy and are hopeful that prices will continue to drop. This fall people will put courses out on the market. I do think there will be some bloodletting a little later in the year."

Nekoroski concurred. "In the next 12 to 24 months there will be a strong opportunity to buy," he said. "People are looking to acquire courses."

According to DeLozier, courses changing hands does not translate to a market in free fall. "Those who talk about a free fall are not paying attention to long term cycles," he said. "Those who are paying attention are positioning themselves to participate in the cycle. There are some developers who have positioned themselves to be buyers of courses."

"GOLF COURSE NEWS"
High Sierras: Intrawest Golf lands Coyote Moon contract

By JAY FINEGAN

TRUCKEE, Calif. — Intrawest Golf has been selected to manage the popular daily-fee Coyote Moon Golf Club here in Truckee, near Lake Tahoe in the High Sierras.

The par-72 course plays to 7,100 yards at an elevation of 6,200 feet. The layout, designed by former PGA Tour pro Brad Bell and his partner Chris Steel, rolls through 250 acres of secluded piney forests and sweeps over valleys, ravines and lakes.

The 18-hole track is rare in California, as it is a stand-alone project, built strictly for golf, not to sell building lots. Not a single house disrupts the natural environment.

Coyote Moon, which opened last year, is ranked as one of the top five new courses in California by California Golf Guide, and Intrawest hopes to make the facility even better.

Golfers are teased to play shots into greens protected by huge rock outcroppings, hit to pins 80 feet below over creeks, and nail drives over tantalizingly long lakes. Throughout the course, Intrawest Golf’s “Our game plan is to integrate the things the club already does well with the practices and procedures that have earned Intrawest golf courses around the country sterling reputations for exceptional conditioning and guest service.”

Intrawest Golf, headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz., is a division of Intrawest Corp., a Vancouver-based firm that also operates premier ski resorts.

Empire Golf unveiling two new layouts this fall, including first in Florida

ROYAL PALM BEACH, Fla. — Empire Golf will add two more courses to its growing portfolio of high-end, daily-fee clubs with the fall openings of Brantoon Woods Golf Club in Dutchess County, N.Y., and The Links at Madison Green, here in Royal Palm Beach.

Brantoon Woods, north of New York City in the Hudson Valley region, promises to be as challenging a layout as any course, public or private, in the tri-state area. Designed by Eric Bergstol, president and founder of Empire Golf, the course cruises through woods and fields, with mountain views on many holes.

Oki’s Hawks Prairie adds two courses

By JAY FINEGAN

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Hawks Prairie LLC has purchased two daily-fee layouts at Meridian Campus in Lacey, near the Washington state capital of Olympia. Meriwold Golf Course and Vicwood Golf Links bring to six the number of courses owned by Oki Developments, based here in Bellevue.

Hawks Prairie is a division of Oki Developments, a diversified company whose investments include a professional soccer team, a restaurant and real estate holdings. Scott Oki is the group’s chairman. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

Developed by Vicwood Meridian Partnership, the two courses are part of a 1,155-acre master-planned community. When completed, the project will include several residential neighborhoods, two parks, schools and a business center.

VIEW OF MOUNT RAINER

The Meriwold course, designed by Bill Continued on next page

Errant golf shots ‘natural as rainfall,’ court rules

By JOE DEVANNEY

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — In an unusual decision handed down recently, the Illinois Supreme Court formally declared it common knowledge that “golfers do not always hit their balls straight.” Crooked or wild shots, the court said, are “as natural as gravity or ordinary rainfall.”

And with that, the case was closed, but not before imparting some useful advice for course developers trying to forge neighborly relations with nearby homeowners.

The ruling involved a lawsuit originally filed by plaintiffs Larry and Choh-Ying Geddes, of Kane County. They believed that Mill Creek Country Club, adjacent to their property, committed intentional trespass and nuisance against them. The club was allegedly culpable because errant golf balls were continuously hit onto their land from the fifth hole.

Before reaching the state Supreme Court, the Geddes had asked the trial court, and then an appellate court, for compensatory and punitive damages from Mill Creek, a daily-fee facility in Geneva, Ill., managed by American Golf. They also had sought to enjoin the club “from causing and allowing the continual trespass of golf balls to occur.”

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The facts of the case date back to 1986, when the Geddes purchased 16.5 acres of land. At the same time, a golf club, which would eventually become Mill Creek, was being contemplated as part of a planned development in the adjacent area.

The plaintiffs, who used their property both as a residence and as a nursery/agricultural business, eventually signed a 1986 agreement with the developers. It provided for an eight-foot-high chain link fence with two 14-foot entrance gates along the common border of the properties.

One provision of the agreement stated that “the fence and gates will be installed and maintained by the developer, at developer’s cost. The fences and gates will be maintained and kept in good condition by developer. The developer will not permit golf balls to be hit on the property.”

The plaintiffs later argued, however, that the agreement never mentioned golf balls. They had always insisted, they said, that “golfers do not always hit their balls straight.” Crooked or wild shots, the court said, are “as natural as gravity or ordinary rainfall.”

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Hawks Prairie
Continued from previous page

Overdorf, opened in 1995. The championship layout is considered among the toughest in the state. Cascading waterfalls, native wetlands, dense forests and tiered greens add beauty and challenge.

Vicwood, designed by Peter L.H. Thompson and completed in 1999, reflects Scottish accents with a definite Northwest twist provided by scenic vistas of Mount Rainier and Puget Sound.

Both Vicwood and Meriwood have appeared on Golf Digest's list of top affordable courses.

Empire Golf
Continued from previous page

"Branton Woods will rival any golf course in the Empire Golf portfolio," Bergstol said. "It's a beautiful course, and as with all our properties, we've made every effort to preserve the natural wildlife with minimal disruption to the native environment."

A 6,000-square-foot clubhouse will be completed by the start of the 2002 golf season.

PINE BARRENS AT MADISON GREEN

The Madison Green course, a 7,000-yard layout, has more than 40 acres of lakes scattered across the links.

"If you took all the great golf courses in the Palm Beach area, you'd probably find a little bit of each at this facility," said Dennis Preslar, Empire Golf's on-site project manager. The course is slated to open this October.

Architect John Sanford retained much of the natural vegetation, although some revegetation will take place, including the replanting of 500 palm trees, 250 oaks, 1,500 native trees and more than 20,000 native plants.

"The unique thing about the course will be the development of the pine barrens," Sanford said. "The predominant native tree species is the Florida slash pine. We've tried to retain as much as we can by developing 10 to 12 acres of pine barrens within the transition areas."

DIFERENT LOOK

"We'll use recycled concrete screenings, three to four inches deep," he added. "It's nice because you can run carts through there and the ball sits up well on top of it. It will give the course a completely different look than anything in the daily-fee market in this area."

Sanford moved about 300,000 cubic yards of dirt to shape the $3-million layout. Florida-based Quality Grassing & Services is the course builder. Madison Green marks the first Florida project for Empire Golf, which operates several courses in New York and New Jersey.

Club at Newcastle opened its second 18-hole layout - the China Course - in July, joining the existing Coal Course, which opened in May 1999.

Upon completion of their China Course round, on weekends, golfers are greeted by a bagpiper on the 18th hole. The bagpiper accompanies players as they make their way from the final green to the clubhouse.

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16 SEPTEMBER 2001
Larry Geddes even claimed that one of the balls hit his tractor while he was mowing. A few other balls were alleged to have strayed as far as 300 feet from the boundary line. Both plaintiffs stated that they feared for the safety of themselves and their "pick your own" customers.

COURT ANALYZES DESIGN

The court, through Justice Charles E. Freeman, spent considerable time analyzing the design of the fifth hole. Freeman noted, for example, that the fifth fairway is 300 feet wide and separated from the Geddes property by a strip of rough 25 feet wide. Both the fence and tall trees also surround the property. These elements, the court wrote, all conform to accepted design standards.

Freeman further observed that most golfers will slice, rather than hook, their errant shots. This means, given the layout, that the Geddes land had more exposure to risk. The court even studied the prevailing winds at the fifth hole, which generally move from west to east, and concluded that these could also contribute to balls sailing over to the Geddes property.

IGNORANCE OF GOLF NO EXCUSE

In the end, however, the plaintiffs received a "thumbs down" from the court. Much of the legal argument centered on the complex law of estoppel. In essence, estoppel means that a person cannot induce someone to do something and later attack the other person for doing it. Mill Creek argued estoppel by claiming that the plaintiffs had encouraged it to design the fifth hole in the manner in which it did. Justice Freeman agreed, finding that the plaintiffs had not objected to the plans at county planning committee meetings.

Nor was the justice swayed by the Geddes' argument that they knew nothing about golf. After making his observations about errant golf shots being "as natural as gravity or ordinary rainfall," Freeman said, "We repeat: it is a matter of common knowledge that golfers do not always hit their shots straight....Even assuming that plaintiffs did not know of this fact of life, they reasonably should have."

VAGARIES OF GOLF SHOTS

Michael T. Reagan, of Ottawa, Ill., an attorney representing Mill Creek, believes that the significance of the case lies in two areas. "The court's opinion demonstrates the importance of careful negotiations with adjoining landowners in the development phase," he said. "Those agreements will be given real meaning. In addition, the judicial recognition of the vagaries of golf balls will be incorporated into the outcome of many aspects of litigation concerning golf balls."

Larry and Choh-Ying Geddes thus saw their action dismissed. In their initial dealings with the developers, they had created a legal sand trap from which there was no escape.

Joseph J. Devanney practices law in Philadelphia.

Medical readiness

Continued from page 5

and coordination with the incoming EMS unit.

- Staff training should include CPR, AED and first aid. Mock drills and exercises need to be conducted to reveal deficiencies and to build confidence and good communication.

- And finally, you need a solid quality-improvement process, which reviews medical incidents and provides feedback.

Your members and guests need a competent and effective safety plan in place, prepared to manage any medical emergency that may arise. They will soon expect it.

Patrick Roselli is president of GolfSafe Inc., of Manchester, Mass., which specializes in medical response planning for golf courses.
Flowtronex targets water quality management with new division

By ANDREW OVERBECK

DALLAS — Flowtronex PSI has rolled out a new line of fertigation products that will be part of its long-term goal of building a water quality management division.

"The idea is to capitalize on Flowtronex's success in the water quality business," said Allen Olson, the national sales manager that will head up the new efforts. "In addition to fertigation, we are going to develop a water quality management program that will help superintendents and management companies make agronomic decisions based on water quality readings."

The new system will be built in Dallas and marketed to customers in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Previously, Flowtronex was marketing fertigation products manufactured by Turf Feeding Systems. With the move, the company becomes the first pump station manufacturer to integrate a fertigation system into its product line.

"We have the advantage over a market that is still made up of regional players," Olson said. "We have a network of national service people and can support the pump station and other equipment that we are putting with it. It gives us the single source accountability that superintendents want."

SYSTEM IN DEVELOPMENT

Flowtronex will introduce the fertigation component Sept. 1. "Fertigation will be the first step because it is the easiest," said Olson. "Our eventual goal will be to be able to read different parameters in the incoming water stream such as salt and pH. That will all be on a central-control operating system that will enable the superintendent to adjust the fertility program through the irrigation system from the desktop in his office."

According to Olson, Flowtronex will be looking to partner with other companies to deliver other products. The additional water quality components and remote interface are due to be rolled out in early 2002.

MARKET GROWTH

Fertigation and water quality management

Golf Ventures to distribute WinterStar

HUBBARD, Ore. — Turf-Seed has struck an exclusive arrangement with Golf Ventures to distribute and market its Winterstar Poa trivialis in Florida.

"We are pleased to be associated with Golf Ventures on an exclusive basis," said Turf-Seed CEO Gordon Zielinski. "We have developed a full line of overseeding mixtures for them and look forward to a long relationship." Winterstar, a recent release from Turf-Seed, has a deep green color with improved density and texture that allows a rapid spring transition in the southern overseeding markets. It can be seeded as a monostand or blended with turf-type perennial ryegrass or creeping bentgrass for niche overseeding mixtures. It will also tolerate mowing heights from one-eighth to one-tenth of an inch.

Located in Lakeland, Fla., Golf Ventures is a full service supplier to the turfgrass industry.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

TORO SHIPPING NEW 228-D AND 328-D GROUNDMASTER MODELS

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has begun shipping the latest in its line of Groundmaster mowers. The new 228-D has a new 28-hp Kawasaki diesel engine and offers a choice of five full flotation cutting units ranging from 52-inch to 72-inch widths. The 328-D features the same engine but offers four different 72-inch rotary cutting decks, a wider wheelbase and heavy duty welded steel decks and frames.

Sybron finds a home with Novozymes

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SALEM, Va. — Sybron Biochemicals has finally found a parent company that is interested in developing its Green-Releaf product line. The company, which was bought by Bayer last year but never integrated into its business mix, was purchased in June by Novozymes A/S.

"We had been looking for a parent since the beginning of the year," said John Sedivy, general manager of the Green-Releaf agricultural products group. "Novozymes is looking to expand through acquisitions and we are the first. We are both green companies and have complementary product lines, and they are investing in our growth plan."

Novozymes, based in Denmark, is a $600-million biotech company that is the world's largest producer of industrial enzymes.

NUMEROUS ADVANTAGES

According to Sedivy, becoming a part of Novozymes will provide

OGIO takes golf car to the 'extreme'

BLUFFDALE, Utah — Golf bag maker OGIO has decided to produce an "extreme" golf car that it originally built for promotional purposes.

The so-called "Battle Ready Vehicle" is a modified Yamaha golf car that has a tweaked engine, a six-inch lift kit, Hella lamps, Corbeau racing seats, a winch, studded tires, and a roof rack.

The car, which OGIO unveiled at the PGA Show in Orlando this winter, gener-
Sybron, Novozymes

Continued from previous page

significant advantages.
"They have 650 scientists and we have 25," he said. "They have been developing a wide variety of microbes and have the world's largest culture bank that we can draw on. The synergies are numerous." New product development will be the primary focus of the Green Releaf division and a new biofungicide is already being evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"It is being reviewed right now and is slated for approval in 2002," Sedivy said. "It is a bacteria that produces antifungal compounds that shows control of dollar spot and brown patch, as well as activity on fusarium and pink snow mold."

Research on the biofungicide at universities and laboratories is ongoing in order to determine label uses. The product can be used as a preventive or under low- to mid-disease pressure and will be priced similarly to Daconil, Sedivy added.

CLEARY TO DISTRIBUTE AND MARKET PRODUCTS

While Sedivy's Green-Releaf team continues to concentrate on new product development and manufacturing, Dayton, N.J.-based Cleary Chemicals will be handling the distribution and marketing.

"We carry traditional products like 3336 and Pro- tect. However, we figured that with everything going on with the reregistration of compounds by the EPA and other anti-pesticide legislation, for the long-term it would behoove us to offer products that are non-pesticide in nature," said Hal Paul, national sales manager for Cleary. "The Green-Releaf line fits that bill."

Paul does not see the Green-Releaf line, including the new biofungicide, competing with its existing products.

"We feel that the whole microbial line is a great adjunct to the stuff we are already doing," he said. "It is a new category for us and we think that it will help us grow our business."

E-commerce woes

Continued from page 1

altered their strategies entirely. That said, however, two entities are still pursuing e-commerce: GolfGM.com and the GCSAA/XS Inc.

Here is an update on where the e-commerce ventures stand:

GCSAA/XS INC.

The association, which is developing an e-commerce platform in conjunction with XS Inc., has completed its 60-day pilot program and is in the process of evaluating its Internet efforts.

The model tested two different methods of e-commerce. The storefront is a neutral exchange and product listing, and the storefront model is designed to showcase the wares of an individual distributor or manufacturer.

"When we balanced the current wants and desires from our membership on the buyers' and the sellers' side, it looks like the best solution at this point is to go with the storefront model," said Julian Arredondo, the association's CFO. It will take some time to evaluate the e-commerce plan, he continued.

"We need to put a design together and do more focus groups," Arredondo said. "We intend to launch something in the next few months."

GolfGM.com

Sacramento, Calif.-based GolfGM.com continues to focus on the golf course industry with the development of GolfMarket maker and CloseOutlet features.

GolfMarket maker is designed to build private label purchasing communities for management companies, retail operations and groups of golf courses.

"They can choose vendors that they want to work with. It is a closed purchasing community," said CEO Chris Soderquist. "The software is designed specifically for an individual company."

The CloseOutlet functions as a close out site for manufacturers trying to unload excess goods. Products on offer vary from pro shop items to maintenance commodities.

The site has registered 330 vendors and buyers including Marriott Golf, ClubCorp, American Golf, Troon Golf and 125 individual facilities on the buy side.

Western Golf, Eagle One, Seed Research of Oregon, and West Coast Turf are on the sell side.

"So far the transactions are less than we projected, but we are in better shape now than we were four months ago," said Soderquist. "If we play our cards right, five years from now we might have something. This is not a get-rich-quick scheme."

GOLFSAT

Golfsat, having abandoned its strategy to become a community site for superintendents, has been concentrating solely on selling its software to companies who are looking to build their own e-commerce sites.

"We are looking at ways to enhance the distributors and dealers in the market," said CEO Mike Scott. "We want to make their business more efficient through technology and communication and back-end support."

While Scott said that Golfsat is working with Lesco, he wouldn't divulge which other companies they are in talks with.

"We came out with Golfsat and made a lot of noise," he said. "In our particular venture right now there is no advantage to us telling the world what we are about. We are more productive behind the scenes right now."

SMALLER PLAYERS

GreenIndustryOnline.com is involved in both the lawn and landscape and golf industry and has changed its strategy from being a customer management software and e-commerce vehicle to being purely a directory portal for the entire industry.

"We are now selling the directory and enhanced listings and we have turned to building a Yellow Pages for the green industry," said president Steve Cissel. "I think we have value to offer and customer traffic is climbing."

Greentrac.com is another that has switched strategies in order to broaden its market appeal. The company still offers exchange and eRFP services on its site but has gone beyond the green industry to more general procurement solutions for any industry.

"The site can still be used by the green industry, but it is not our focus anymore," said Greentrac.com's Joanne Miller.

Flowtronex

Continued from previous page

will be growing sectors of the irrigation and pump station business, said Olson.

"We need to realize that water quality issues are going to drive the market as much as quantity issues," he said. "You have to be able to measure quality and react to changes. If you know that salt content is up, you can react to it with different cultural practices." Flowtronex's system will be especially useful for courses utilizing water that varies in quality, he added.

Fertigation systems are primarily used on new layouts to speed grow-in.

"Sixty percent of new golf courses utilize fertigation to some extent," Olson said. "But courses are beginning to see an ongoing need for liquid fertilizers and other products."

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Golf Course News
Cart vandals...
Continued from page 1

into the club two months earlier and heisted some beer. He said alcohol also was involved in the freakish vandalism in late June. That's when the lads - including two 15-year-olds - crashed a car through the golf course gates late at night and made for the cart barn.

"They didn't have to break into the cart garage. One of the kids that worked for me gave them the combination to the lock," said Alexander. "That fellow no longer works here."

SMASHING THE BENCHES

Once inside the barn, the youths fired up the gas-powered E-Z-GO carts and moved out, cruising over greens, bashing into each other like bumper cars, and smashing down four-foot-tall yardage signs on the driving range.

"These new carts are so pliable that they don't smash up the way cars do," said Alexander. "The cart bodies almost bend in half, but the steering columns break if they get hit hard. We had five or six carts with broken steering columns."

Several carts were left overturned, including one in the parking lot. "The kid hit a rope," Alexander said. "The rope caught his tires, and the cart flipped. It's amazing these kids didn't kill each other."

The youths even smashed carts into a large, solid cedar bench. "They went at the thing full tilt and got it turned over, then drove the cart over the top," he said. "One bench got stuck underneath a cart, so the cart couldn't move. That's why they took out 16 carts. They'd drive one until the thing wouldn't drive anymore and go get another one."

SEARCH FOR MISSING CARTS

All told, the youths spent more than two hours vandalizing the course. "They were up here for a long time, smashing the cars together," Alexander said. "Fortunately the kids didn't kill each other."

"One bench got stuck underneath a cart, so the cart couldn't move. That's why they took out 16 carts. They'd drive one until the thing wouldn't drive anymore and go get another one."

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Continued from previous page

ground was pretty firm, so there was no significant damage to the greens."

When it came time to leave, the boys helped themselves to three fresh carts. They tooled down the road in the middle of the night and disappeared. Alexander spent a few days looking for the three vehicles, searching nearby canyons and forests. He finally went up in an airplane and still found no trace of them.

"They went about five miles, then turned onto a dirt road going up a mountain to a place where they partied. And that's where we found the carts," he said.

ROUGH RIDERS

The boys left the three carts in rough shape. "The tops were ripped off," Alexander said. "They had stump-jumped them up through a bunch of stumps and Scotch broom. They were a mess."

He said a judge ordered the youths locked up. "They'll be on probation, basically, after they spend some time in jail," Alexander said. "If they live up to probation and pay restitution, they have a chance to get it wiped off their record in a year."

Extreme golf car

Continued from page 18

"We have not only unearthed a huge, untapped cache of existing and potential new golfers whose first love is extreme sports, but we're also providing a vehicle for these athletes to comfortably cross over to the golf world," said new business development manager Jon Jones.

According to company spokeswoman Kelly Mooney, 250 of the $12,000 cars will be made, but OGIO does not expect to enter the golf car retrofitting market as a core business.

The cars, perhaps more suited for an off-road rally, will in fact be used on golf courses.

"The people who have already ordered them say that they will use them on the golf course, but they don't really serve any function beyond being a golf car," said Mooney. "People just want them because they are fun."

— Andrew Overbeck

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Golf Course News 106 Lafayette St., PO Box 997 Yarmouth, ME 04096 or fax to: (207) 925-1099. Please attach separate sheet of paper with ad copy.
Crist on liability
Continued from page 5

apparatus, the facility's due care responsibility becomes greater.

The judge in the Mausser case put it this way: "All golf courses have a duty to post a sign that details what, if any, safety procedures are being utilized by the golf course to protect its patrons from lightning...If, however, a golf course chooses to utilize a particular safety feature, it owes a duty of reasonable care to its patrons to use it correctly."

Similar complexities are involved in the decision to make defibrillators available to assist in cardiac incidents on the golf course. On the one hand, it certainly seems like the enlightened and progressive thing to do. On the other hand, such well-intended, humanitarian efforts, if implemented incorrectly or inadequately, could increase liability exposure rather than reduce it.

COMMON SENSE

Perhaps the best mix in fulfilling the duty of due care is a combination of concern, common sense and a good liability insurance program. Paramount should be concern for the customer's welfare and desire on the owner/operator's part to anticipate foreseeable risks and take reasonable preventive measures.

Avoiding liability claims is impossible, but a concern for safety, a good liability insurance program and the implementation of risk management policies will go a long way toward keeping things under control.

Gary M. Crist practices sports and entertainment law in Jupiter, Fla. Prior to establishing his own practice in 1994, he was general counsel to the PGA of America and associate general counsel to the PGA Tour.

Bryn Mawr
Continued from page 7

Noted projects that contributed to the certification include: allowing non-play areas to grow naturally; adding several bluebird and wood duck houses; incorporating native prairie plants into the landscape; and decreasing pesticide usage.

"We have an integrated pest management scheme here now where we monitor turf conditions heavily," Bossert said. "We don't spray anything on a preventive basis."

A new irrigation system was installed in 1998 to water the layout more efficiently and a $25,000 equipment wash pad was put in place the following year.

The superintendent credits his former assistant, Dan Augdahl and his assistant for the past two years, Bryan Widmer. "They really deserve a lot of the credit," he said. "They did all of the documentation work."

This fall, the facility will complete the final stage of a four-year renovation plan. "The project is mostly new tees and bunkers," said Bossert. Architect Richard Jacobson, based in Libertyville, Ill., provided the design work for the renovation project.

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