GCSAA, industry working to keep show vibrant

By A. OVERBECK

Lawrence, Kan. — As tough economic times continue to impact the golf industry, it is no surprise that many companies are re-evaluating the investment they make on the annual GCSAA Conference and Show. Recognizing that it depends on industry suppliers to support its programs, the GCSAA and the Industrial Advisory Council (IAC) are working to maintain the show’s value proposition.

“The show is still number one in the industry, but we don’t want to rest on our laurels,” said GCSAA CFO Julian Arredondo. “Because some of our partners are hurting right now, they are challenging their marketing dollars. We are trying to be as responsive as we can be because we rely on the industry dollars to support programs that otherwise don’t pay for themselves.”

According to trade show consultant Steve Miller, the trade show business on the whole has been in decline since 2001 and the trend has spilled into 2002. First-quarter trade show attendance was down 8.1 percent and exhibitor participation fell by 2.4 percent.

While these trends have not been directly evident at the GCSAA Show (Trade Show Week magazine placed the show in its top 100), the GCSAA has changed the role of the IAC to allow exhibitors more input in shaping future shows.

“In the past the IAC has been more trade show policy-oriented,” Arredondo said. “The shift has been a strategic one. We are examining how the industry can help the GCSAA create an even stronger, must-attend event.”

While there are no firm directives to date, the IAC is continuing on page 18

Yamaha Golf Car rolls out G-MAX line

Six more new vehicles to come next year

NEWNAN, Ga. — Yamaha Golf Car officially unveiled its 2003 golf car line June 8 during the opening ceremony of its new $81 million manufacturing facility.

The G-MAX models include the gas-powered 4-stroke and the electric 48 V. In addition to the G-MAX line, vice president Bill Szarowicz said the company would be unveiling six new models in 2003. Improved utility vehicles will likely be included in the new product mix.

Major new features of the G-MAX golf cars include:

- The True-Trak suspension system has automobile-style struts and self-adjusting rack-and-pinion steering.

- The Ergo-Style sun top has integrated grab handles, allowing golfers to keep their entire bodies within the vehicle, improving safety and comfort.

- The Genius diagnostic system allows fleet service technicians and eventually golf courses to use any personal digital assistant to perform diagnostics via infrared.

The gas car also features a more powerful 11.4-hp, 357 cc engine and the 48 V electric model now has an inline battery layout to allow for more convenient battery tray removal.

— Andrew Overbeck

Roberts Seed now Turf One

By ANDREW OVERBECK

TANGENT, Ore. — The Pickseed Companies Group has renewed its commitment to its Roberts Seed subsidiary, quelling any rumors that the 29-year-old entity would be folded into Pickseed West.

As part of the new plan, Roberts Seed will be re-launched Aug. 1 as Turf One.

“We are staffing up with some experienced people and we are going to continue to build on Roberts’ existing customer base and put an added emphasis on professional turf,” said new marketing director Dave Friesen, who worked for Pickseed West from 1987 to 1993.

In addition to Friesen, the company has brought in veteran seedsmen Tom Burns as general manager and Mary Beth Menard as vice technician and even-