Armed with 14 colleges and universities providing scholarships to participants, The First Tee is on track to meet its goals. President and CEO Michael DiMino is leading the charge to expand The First Tee's sales and distribution capabilities.

**First Nat'l sees rise in volume**

*By Derek Rice*

MARTINSVILLE, N.J. — Despite an economic downturn in 2002, First National of America Inc. has not seen a decrease in the number of golf course loans it has made, according to Jerry Sager, First National's president.

"Either we're dull and boring or incredibly wrong. We do about the same lending volume each year," he said. "We did a little more volume, surprisingly enough, this past year than the year before, and I know everybody else wasn't doing stuff."

Sager attributes this increased volume to First National's commitment to look at loans for projects on Native American land (GCN, April 2002), as well as the company's track record as a national lender for golf projects.

"We opened up a new lending market because we're doing Native American stuff now, which we did not do before. So that's something we're dull and boring or incredibly wrong."

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Superintendent Bill Wall at Dauphin Highlands Golf Course in Oberlin, Pa., agreed. "The last two years have been the most difficult years I have had, and I have been in central Pennsylvania since 1975," he said.

Parts of Pennsylvania and all of New Jersey were placed under water restrictions early this spring after an unusually dry winter. "In March we had our water cut back to 50 percent of the normal amount," he said.

**Bayer to sell fipronil product line to BASF**

*By Andrew Overbeck*

MONTVALE, N.J. — BASF agreed Oct. 28 to buy certain assets including fipronil insecticides and several fungicides from Bayer AG, clearing the way for full regulatory approval of Bayer's acquisition of Aventis CropScience and the creation of Bayer Environmental Sciences. Officials from both companies would not discuss the specifics of the pending transaction.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission granted approval to Bayer's acquisition of Aventis CropScience in June, but required the divestiture of acetamiprid and fipronil to be completed by December (GCN, July 2002). The deal, worth a reported $1.16 billion, would beat that deadline and includes buyback license agreements that would allow Bayer ES to market certain products and retain trademarks. The FTC and the European Commission must still approve the transaction.

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The First Tee announces scholarship program, 2002 successes

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — At its fifth annual meeting in late October, The First Tee, in conjunction with Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., and 13 additional colleges and universities, announced that 28 scholarships will be available to First Tee participants beginning in 2003-2004.

"We have established an exemplary Scholarship Advisory Committee that will oversee the administration of The First Tee Scholars Program, and we look forward to announcing our first scholarship recipients next year," said Dr. William Crouch, president of Georgetown College.

The announcement stems from Crouch’s surprise announcement at last year’s meeting. At that meeting, Crouch said his college would donate two first-year scholarships to qualified participants of The First Tee. Kan-

Dr. Virginia Lehman's new L-03 bentgrass. She developed this product an even more valuable and versa-

tile tool for golf course superintendents," said Owen Towne, business director of Griffin’s Specialty Products Group.

When applying TranXit to bermudagrass greens prior to overseeding, a two-ounce per acre rate should be used. For Poa annua control on non-overseeded bermudagrass greens, TranXit should be applied at one-ounce per acre.

Valdosta, Ga. — Griffin LLC has re-

certification on all of our courses in four years," said Allan Pulaski, director of golf and grounds mainten-
ance. "We did two courses a year in 1999, 2000 and 2002. We took a year off to renovate the Magnolia course in 2001."

The Landings Club has received certification from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Sys-

tification is on track to achieve 30 percent. At last year’s meet-
ing, the organization set a goal of 75, but has added 107 since then.

The organization has also opened 115 new facilities this year, slightly lower than the 120 projected last year. How-

ever, Barrow said, the organi-

zation is on track to achieve its goals.

"We are confident that with the continued efforts of our chapter leadership, along with the commitments from our corporate partners, we will reach our 2005 goal," he said.

— Derek Rice

Columbia Seeds seeks to empower distributors and growers

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Tom Pape and Scott Harer have left Seed Research of Oregon to form Columbia Seeds, a new company that more directly links growers with distribution channels.

The two longtime seed industry execu-

Columbia Seeds has signed agreements with two independent breeding programs to source new turfgrass varieties. "We will be marketing Dr. Virginia Lehman’s new L-03 bentgrass. She developed L-93 for Lofts Seed and this is an improved product," said Pape. "We will also work with Dr. Steve Whitten’s breeding firm, Apex, on several tall fescues and perennial ryes."

Pape said Columbia Seeds will form strategic alliances with other Willamette Valley seed companies to market their varieties and that they will have a full line of cool-season, and possibly some warm-

season, turfgrass varieties.

Pape said Harer and Pape are working now on finalizing a distributor network and signing independent sales representatives to handle sales across the country.

"We have already sold a few loads of seed and by spring we will have expanded our distributor network," Pape said. "By fall we’ll really be good to go."
COMMENTARY

Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Even the political spin doctors, who as I write this are working overtime to squeeze percentage points out of close mid-term races, would be hard-pressed to put a positive spin on the year the golf industry had in 2002.

The year served up healthy portions of economic uncertainty, drought conditions, flat rounds numbers and declining golf course construction figures.

Several articles in this month's Newsmakers edition chronicle these big picture stories that characterize the challenges the industry faced over the last year. Drought conditions plagued almost half the country this year (see story on page 1), ushering in water restrictions and disastrous agronomic consequences. The aforementioned economic woes led to shrinking course revenues and tighter maintenance budgets for most courses. More than 80 percent of courses in the country will spend the same amount or less on maintenance in 2003 than they did in 2002 (see story on page 6), making extravagant maintenance programs a daydream for many superintendents.

Course construction figures are also set to come in lower for the second year in a row. The luster of the "if you build it they will come" years has quickly faded as new golf course financing backs out of the market.

The golf business has taken its lumps this year, that's for certain. But in some sectors there appears to be reason for optimism.

In this month's commentary (see below) Larry Hirsh takes a stab at what it will take to bring the industry out of its collective funk. After close consideration, he sees signs that the industry is on the brink of a resurgence. Wall Street money is coming back into golf, valuations are nearing bottom and troubled properties are bound to start changing hands soon.

Furthermore, in managing editor Derek Rice's survey of management companies, he discovers that several have grown, and the instability caused by the financial travails of National Golf Properties and American Golf Corp, are coming to an end (see page 1).

Another promising trend to emerge from these tough times is that more golf courses are being run like a business. Superintendents, whether they like it or not, are becoming better at managing expenses and most are paying just as much attention to rounds played as they are to agronomic issues. An opportunity exists to improve profit margins as golf course managers, owners and superintendents work better together as a team.

And leave it to me, and many dustry has tightened and financing has become more difficult, more often than not, the courses being built are more economically feasible projects.

A return to reality, both in terms of economic principles and fiscal responsibilities, will make for a healthier industry.

Golf industry needs a shot in the arm

By LAURENCE A. HIRSH

When the brain trust at Golf Course News called and asked me to discuss the current state of the golf market it raised an interesting and often asked question: Where are we right now? Since nobody can confidently predict the future, we're all speculating, but it's just that type of speculation that creates market evolution to begin with.

The last four years have seen much change in the golf industry. Many players have departed the business, resulting in consolidation. Some courses have ceased operation and many clubs have been sold, supply is coming back into balance with demand. As the industry has tightened and financing has become more difficult, more often than not, the courses being built are more economically feasible projects.

Despite this, there are several reasons for this:

• Many undercapitalized projects are struggling under high debt loads and are eager to sell, often at bargain prices. This produces buyers and eventually supports higher prices.

• Markets that have been overbuilt are seeing motivated sellers who have had enough with the intense competition. This creates demand.

• The preponderance of upscale daily-fee facilities in some markets has opened up opportunities in the affordable daily-fee and private segments and the market perception that opportunity exists.

• The apparent interest of Wall Street and the institutions should signify equity (and maybe debt) capital is on the way. With the stock market as volatile as it has been, real estate is often a safe haven and yields on golf courses (though not exactly pure real estate) exceed those on traditional investment grade real estate.

Golf still has "sex appeal." Whether the traditionalists like to admit it or not, golf is still attractive to captains of business and industry. It fuels tourism in many cases and what the golfer doesn't dream of building his/her own course? Those with the resources can do that.

Given all this doom and gloom, however, I think the golf industry may have hit bottom and is on the rebound. There are several reasons for this:

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The big issue holding back recovery is debt financing, or lack thereof. Textron remains the industry leader after the Bank of America departure. GE Capital and GMAC Mortgage are staking positions, but in general there are few other sources, and that the industry may have hit bottom and is on the rebound. There are

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Life imitates ‘art’

In any business, it pays to be aware of popular culture. Some may argue, but as evidence, I point to an Oct. 26 incident in Aurora, Colo.

Four men cut security chains and hot-wired 23 golf cars at Kennedy Golf Course. In two hours, the vandals had done $10,000 damage, leaving one car at the bottom of nearby Cherry Creek.

Golf car thefts are nothing new. In fact, Kennedy GC has had at least five car-theft cases this year. But in most cases, all the vandals want to do is joyride. This particular instance is most disturbing because of the seeming desire to simply cause damage.

So the question becomes, “Why the change in attitudes?”

The answer, more than likely, is “Jackass: The Movie,” which was released, not coincidentally, on Oct. 25. The movie is the big-screen version of the recently cancelled MTV series, which features a group of guys doing things that no one in their right mind would ever think of, such as being covered in meat and barbecued. It should go without saying that these are not the kinds of things one should try at home.

One segment in the movie features the group driving golf cars wrecklessly around a course, crashing into each other and jumping over bunkers and water hazards. At one point, one of the cars flips over, destroying everything in its path.

The lesson is this: either be sure your golf car storage area is secure or become the victim of the next “Jackass”-inspired vandalism.

But hey, it could be worse. John Rocker’s signature sideburns.

Hirsh: Golf market comeback imminent

Continued from page 4

to the volatile nature of the economy.

One area of particular concern is that of secondary market private clubs. Many of this type seem to be struggling more than other market segments. Many smaller communities are no longer able to support their clubs and in those with multiple clubs, the competition for members has become so intense that entry fees have dropped to levels which provide no encouragement for members to stay and play. These clubs, along with “second-tier” private clubs in even the primary markets have experienced some problems. Members levels are declining due to competition that is either newer or cheaper. In many cases, these clubs have been forced to become either semi-private or daily-fee, or have been hosting more outside functions to make up for declining membership. This is particularly troublesome in those markets where residential developers build private clubs as amenities to their developments and create additional supply in markets with limited depth.

In closing, it is my opinion that while there is evidence of recovery, certain things need to occur first:

• We need to see the ultimate results of the Golf Trust of America and NGF situations. What will happen with the rest of the GTA portfolio and what courses from the NGF portfolio will be spun off?

• Debt financing needs to become more available in the marketplace.

• Some courses will close and help balance out supply and demand. This does not imply that we will end up with fewer courses, only that those which were ill conceived in the first place or their locations are now too valuable for golf should be put to alternative uses.

• Sellers need to realize that golf is not just a real estate investment, it’s a business and as such will require a higher rate of return, and a correspondingly lower value. Let’s all watch and see what happens next.

The Point-Counterpoint feature, which usually runs in this space, will return in the January issue.

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DECEMBER 2002 5
MAINTENANCE

BRIEFS

USGA RELEASES "MAKING ROOM FOR NATIVE POLLINATORS"

FAR HILLS, N.J. — The United States Golf Association has released a new book, "Making Room for Native Pollinators: How to Create Habitat for Pollinator Insects on Golf Courses." Written by Matthew Shepherd, pollinator program director for the Xerces Society, the book is a result of a grant provided through the USGA's Wildlife Links program and is targeted to golf course superintendents, course officials, and environmental consultants to help manage out-of-play areas on the golf course. By taking some simple steps to establish patches of native wildflowers and nesting sites, golf courses can provide an important refuge for bees and other pollinating insects, which in turn helps maintain healthy plant communities.

VALLEYCREST GOLF NETS STONE CREEK GOLF CLUB CONTRACT

MAKANDA, Ill. — ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance has signed a partnership to perform golf course maintenance for Stone Creek Golf Club in Makanda, Illinois. Under the agreement, ValleyCrest will provide professional maintenance services for the 18-hole daily-fee golf course. The addition of this facility is the company's first in Illinois and increases the company's maintenance portfolio in the Great Lakes area to four. Stone Creek was designed in 1998 by Jerry Lemmons of Golf Links Inc. The course features bluegrass/ryegrass tees and fairways with fescue roughs and bermudagrass greens. Superintendent Joel Tyrpak will handle maintenance duties at the course.

DELLI PAIR WIN SCHOLARSHIP

DELHI, N.Y. — Two students of the State University of New York at Delhi's golf course management program were recently awarded scholarships from the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association. Brian Macmillan and Christian Munoz were awarded $750 each, recognizing them as outstanding students pursuing a career in golf course management.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

More superintendents taking organic approach

By DOUG SAUNDERS

TRUCKEE, Calif. — The interest in organics has increased this year on many fronts other than in the golf industry. The Food and Drug Administration recently announced new guidelines for the labeling of organic products for the marketplace after years of discussion. More organic products are appearing in stores, which increases public awareness about trends in the agricultural industry. More public awareness leads to more concerns on how to best protect our environment.

But for the golf maintenance industry, the talk of organic methods for the golf course is tempered by several factors. Foremost is the desire to present the best possible conditions in order to attract the playing public. Second are the economic factors that have to be weighed as golf course superintendents are continually juggling their budgets in order to satisfy the needs of their golf course and the demands of their course managers. Can an organic approach satisfy these two primary demands? Over the last several years more organic fertilizers and products have been introduced to the golf market but the decision to use them is a difficult one for course managers as there is little track record on their effectiveness. "The bottom line in the discussion about the pros and cons of the use of organics on golf courses is that the turf itself knows no difference in nutrients that come from organics or from synthetic..."

Old Brockway near Lake Tahoe has adopted an organic maintenance program.

Continued on page 9

Compost tea shows promise

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WOODBURY, N.J. — As more superintendents study organic golf course maintenance practices, compost tea has emerged as viable alternative to a chemical-only approach.

While the compost tea technique has been around for more than a century, today's higher-tech version "brews" compost to create a concentrated "tea" that delivers beneficial microbes and low levels of nutrients to turfgrass. Evidence at this point is strictly anecdotal, but superintendents using compost tea report less disease pressure, less need for fertilization and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

Last February, Golf Course News interviewed Woodbury (N.J.) Country Club superintendent Charles Clarke about the results he had gotten after two years of using compost tea. Clarke stuck with his compost tea regimen this year and recorded a third successful season with his "home brew"..."

Continued on page 19

Roundup Ready bentgrass still on track

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. and Monsanto are pressing forward with the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. The transgenic turf has created a buzz throughout the golf industry this year because it would allow superintendents to control weeds with Roundup without damaging the bentgrass (see related story page 18).

Since gaining approval from the Oregon Department of Agriculture in July to set up an 11,000-acre control area for the production of the transgenic turfgrass, 400 acres have been planted and will be ready for harvest in July 2003. However, the two companies cannot market Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass until they receive approval from the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS). That..."
McDonough battles water restrictions at Keswick Club

By Derek Rice

KESWICK, Va. — Despite severe water restrictions mandated by Virginia’s governor, Keswick Club superintendent Peter McDonough has managed to keep his course looking green.

Proclamation 33 placed water restrictions on everyone in Virginia, not just golf courses, and runs through June 30, 2003 unless, as McDonough said, “we get grand amounts of moisture.”

McDonough and the Virginia GC Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry issued its proclamation, it enabled the VGCSA to show the state that superintendents were already taking steps to reduce water use.

“We were able to say, ‘Look, we’ve been in voluntary compliance on restrictions and water cutbacks before the order,’” McDonough said. “That really helped us in getting some exemptions, which were only given in the first 48 hours after the order. So if you didn’t get your exemptions in the first two days, it wasn’t going to happen.”

Moving forward, McDonough said he hopes to follow the example of superintendents associations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who have worked with their respective states in shaping local regulations (see story on page 1).

“Our long-term goal is to follow their example,” McDonough said. “We’ve been doing this for over 40 years and have a pretty good record. We don’t want to be seen as the bad guys. We want to be seen as the good guys.”

McDonough said he feels it is his duty to lead the way in identifying ways for superintendents to conserve water. For example, he increased the height of greens and fairways to keep them from burning up during the hot, dry summer months.

“We did all the right things this summer that we were advocating to the Mid-Atlantic PGA, the Club Managers Association of Virginia and the Virginia State Golf Association,” he said.

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“We were able to say, ‘Look, we’ve been in voluntary compliance on restrictions and water cutbacks before the order,’” McDonough said. “That really helped us in getting some exemptions, which were only given in the first 48 hours after the order. So if you didn’t get your exemptions in the first two days, it wasn’t going to happen.”

Moving forward, McDonough said he hopes to follow the example of superintendents associations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who have worked with their respective states in shaping local regulations (see story on page 1).

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Superintendents doing more with less

Continued from page 6

but you still have to keep the course green and clean,” said Sam Hocutt, superintendent at Pawleys Plantation in Pawleys Island, S.C. “We cut costs this year by watching our insecticide use closely. Because of the drought we didn’t have as many mole crickets so we were able to use half rates and save the other half for next year. We controlled army worms by doing a two-ring perimeter around the fairway instead of spraying the whole fairway.”

How will your 2003 budget compare to last year’s?

to balance the budget because of lower payroll increases and good price competition on chemicals, fertilizers and other supplies. Speciality chemicals and equipment have gone up in price, Robinson noted.

However, Robinson also said there is a reluctance to modify the budget once it has been put in place.

“If I have a new idea or a new product that we didn’t consider in the budget process, I don’t bring it up,” he said. “Before, I may have mentioned it, but right now it isn’t even an option.”

That said, Robinson has done his part to trim costs out of the budget.

“We have been converting our out-of-play roughs to native grasses that don’t take as much water,” said Robinson. “It helps with the drought and it means we don’t have to mow out-of-play areas. It reduces our cost per acre from $2,000 to $500.”

In the short term, superintendents seem to have a handle on managing constrained budgets. However, in the long-term some worry about events out of their immediate control.

“Things are closer to normal now,” said Hocutt, “but if we go to war with Iraq then I’m pretty sure we’ll have a new scenario because there will likely be a cutback in golf. You have to look into the future when planning a budget. Gas recently went from $1.27 a gallon to $1.47 a gallon so now I have to redo my budget and plan for around $1.50 for gas.”

James McNair, superintendent at Orchard Valley Golf Course in Aurora, Ill., anticipates a budget similar to last year’s.

“We had a slow spring because of weather but revenue was up in August and up significantly in September and October,” he said. “Overall our play was down two percent.”

While he plans on having more of a capital budget to buy some new equipment this year to replace 10-year-old greens mowers and other aged machinery, McNair got through this year because he had a good mechanic.

“Sometimes it is Band-Aid and Duct tape,” he said. “It puts a greater load on the equipment technician but we do the best we can to keep things running around here.”

Cutler Robinson, superintendent at the private Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach, Va., is part of the 18.7 percent that will see a budget increase next year, although it is a modest one.

“We will have a small increase of three to four percent,” said Robinson. “We are doing well and we filled our membership to its limit of 300 members a year ago. Our play and revenues have been similar to projected and our expenses have been similar to projected.”

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Golf courses explore organic options
Continued from page 6

methods," explained USGA Green Section agronomist Patrick Gross.

Still, with all of these variables there are golf course superinten-
dents around the country who have
made the philosophical commit-
tment to an organic approach to
course maintenance. The choice to
use organic methods is driven by
same desire to develop the healthi-
est stand of turf possible in order to
make the plant more disease resis-
tant. In theory, a healthier plant
has less needs for insecticide and
herbicide applications.

The big difference in the organic
approach is that the primary drive
to stimulate healthier turf begins
with the concept of doing all that is
possible to alter the chemical struc-
ture of the soil itself.

"I look at myself as a dirt
farmer," explained Mike Kozak
of Lahontan Golf Club in Truckee,
Calif. "I believe that the neces-
sary nutrients for plants are avail-
able in every acre of land. My job
is to unlock these nutrients from
the soil so that they are available
to the plant. Synthetic applica-
tions go directly to the plant but
can have a detrimental effect on
soil structure over time."

Around the country some su-
perintendents have begun to look
to organic fertilizers as an alter-
native because of increased envi-
ronmental concerns. Dave Laurie
is the superintendent at Old
Brockway Golf Course, an 85-
year-old nine-hole course located
near the shoreline of Lake Tahoe,
Calif., one of the most scruti-
nized environmental

regions in the nation. The lake's
water clarity has be-
come a hot
issue over the last 20 years, and
Laurie and course owner Lane
Lewis decided six years ago to
take a more proactive approach
to deal with the course's impact
on the environment.

"We have undertaken a com-
plete refinement of our facility to
control how we affect our ecosys-
tem," said Laurie. "We have de-
veloped filtration ponds to cap-
ture all of our runoff. We have
installed a new irrigation system
to reduce our water usage. And
we have undertaken a total com-
mitment to an organic fertiliza-
tion program in order to improve
our soil structure."

The commitment is important
as it takes years of a concerted
effort to realize the benefits of an
organic approach. For course
manager and owner Lewis, he
had to weigh the extra cost with
the eventual benefits.

"It is more expensive for us to
maintain the course organically
and we have to make the golfing
public aware of what it is that we
do here so that they understand
and appreciate our approach,"
Lewis said. "I feel that over time
we will be able to lower our fer-
tilization rates to a point that we
will see an economic benefit.

"We have also found golfers
who play here regularly because
of our no pesticide approach," he
continued. "Both Dave and I see
this approach as turning back to
the roots of course maintenance
rather than being on the cutting
edge of a new concept."

While these mountain courses
have an advantage in that they don't
have a large list of pathogens to
combat, there are courses in other
micro-climates that have begun to
find benefits to the use of organic
fertilizations. Don Paul, CGCS,
at De Laveaga Golf Course in Santa
Cruz, Calif., maintains an 18-hole
course near the coast where he
must deal with such pathogens as
dollar spot, yellow spot and snow
molds.

"I have been creating an intense
IPM program over the years and
the use of organic fertilizers is a
part of that program," said Paul. "I
am going to expand my plan by
including compost tea, which I will
use to try to increase microbial
rates to try to control snow mold,
which I deal with during the cold
foggy mornings in the winter. I
think that the industry is going to
make a more pronounced turn to
organics in the future. I just seem
to like the right thing to do for me."

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July, 66 percent of respondents said turfgrass breeders were making progress and that drought resistance would be consistent demand. In fact, in a Golf Course News poll in July, 66 percent of respondents said turfgrass that offered drought tolerance would provide the most benefit (see graph at right).

According to turf breeders, work on drought-resistant varieties is ongoing, but bringing them to market will require consistent demand.

"When I started in this business 20 years ago, I thought we would be up against the wall and that drought resistance would be the major issue," said Seed Research of Oregon's Leah Brillman. "But drought-resistant varieties are never going to make it in the marketplace if courses don't make it a priority in their selection process and value the trait in the long-term.

"A lot of people are interested in these new varieties, but you have to be careful because they have trade-offs depending on where you are," she said. "The hybrids may look good in Oklahoma but some get bad disease in New Jersey. In New Jersey, courses may be better off with a turf-type fescue and we continue to do work on those."

Jackie Seed's Doug Brede said his breeding program has had good success with two tall fescues.

"We have been testing our experimental and varieties at locations across the country, including Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Idaho and California for the past decade," he said. "Two tall fescues, Quest and JT-99, have shown more durability during the drought this year."

"Quest was bred from components that survived drought and high disease pressure at a sod farm in Maryland and JT-99 was bred from components that performed well during drought in New Jersey. Both were entered in the 2001 tall fescue NTEP trials."

While the influence of the El Niño will be much weaker than the last one in 1997 and 1998, its effects will continue to be felt into early 2003. In general, the disturbance will bring only moderate relief to the Southwest and southern and central Plains states but below-normal rainfall will persist in the Northwest, Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Ohio Valley.

NOAA's 2002-2003 winter outlook predicts:

• Below-normal precipitation in the Northwest including Washington, northeast Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, western parts of North Dakota, and northwest South Dakota.

• Precipitation will be below normal in the Ohio Valley states.

• In the southern parts of the United States, from central/southern California to the Carolinas, precipitation is expected to be above normal.

• Temperatures are expected to be above normal across the northwestern, mid-western and northeastern states.

• Temperatures are also expected to be above normal over southeastern parts of Alaska. Below-normal temperatures and precipitation are expected in Hawaii.

"We are working with Advanta Seeds and Dr. Ronnie Duncan at the University of Georgia to find drought-resistant tall fescues and perennial ryegrasses," she said. "We have a whole series of new blue-grasses and hybrid Texas by Kentucky bluegrasses from Rutgers University and we are working on drought tolerance and seed production yields on them."

However, Brillman said there is no one variety to turn to when it comes to drought resistance.

"As soon as the rains come, people forget about these issues. That is a mistake." — Chris Carson

"As soon as the rains come, people forget about these issues," he said. "That is a mistake. There needs to be a unified program and a protocol to make sure that restrictions make sense. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is very concerned about existing use and future use of water because we are a densely populated state."

Wall said he now assumes that each year will be going to be a drought.

"I have incorporated more wetting agents into my budget," Wall said. "I am also modifying our irrigation system with 50 more quick couplers so every point of the golf course is within reach of 150 feet of hose."

"When you have to reduce an already reduced supply by 30 percent, it is a problem. We did a lot of hand-watering to increase efficiencies and tackle hot spots."

Even courses in parts of the country that didn't have state mandated water restrictions had problems when they flat out ran low on water.

"Our water is captured from runoff from the course and the surrounding development and once its gone I have to buy portable water," said Tony Bertels, superintendent at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in Olathe, Kan. "That gets pretty expensive. We purchased 60 days of water, which costs $1,000 a day. It's a budget-breaker."

Billy Lewis, superintendent at Carolina National Golf Club in Bolivia, N.C., had to buy nearly $60,000 in water last fall to complete overseeding after his lakes dropped five feet. This summer, a series of low-pressure systems hung just off the coast, bringing timely rains that held his water buying to just under $10,000.00.

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Both Bertels and Lewis are looking to get more water from other sources.

"Since there is not a lot of water close to the surface here, we are considering working with the adjacent airport to build a five acre lake to augment our water supply," said Bertels. "They have a big watershed area we could use and gravity feed it into our lakes."

Lewis is banking on effluent water to fill his water needs down the road. "We have 800 lots sold, so we should pick up quite a bit from effluent and that should alleviate the problem," he said.
**WEITZ COMPLETES ROSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION**

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Weitz Golf International has completed construction of Rose Creek Golf Course in Edmond, Okla. The Arthur Hills-designed course, which also features a large practice facility, will open for play in early summer 2003. Rose Creek is being developed by The Melrose Co., based in Hilton Head, S.C.

**JACOBSON FINISHES PHASE I OF INDIAN LAKES RENOVATION**

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Golf course architect Rick Jacobson has completed the first phase of a $5 million 36-hole renovation at Indian Lakes Resort in suburban Bloomingdale. He also broke ground in early October on Phase II of the project, which will turn the 1960s-era resort into an upscale, state-of-the-art golf complex. Phase I involved a complete makeover of the front nine of the resort's West Course.

**WEISKOPF RESTORES GREENS AT TROON NORTH MONUMENT**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Renovation at the Monument Course at Troon Golf's Troon North Golf Club has been completed. Tom Weiskopf, who originally designed the course with Jay Morrish, restored the greens to their original specifications over the summer. The most major change Weiskopf oversaw was widening of the long, narrow green on the 14th hole to provide additional pin placements behind the front green side bunker.

**PGA Village to proceed — maybe**

By DEREK RICE

SAN ANTONIO — The cyclical saga of the proposed PGA Village here continued through late October, with the San Antonio City Council unanimously approving a new agreement with Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corp. to build the golf resort on environmentally sensitive land above the city's aquifer recharge zone.

The resort would include as many as three courses, a golf education center, two luxury hotels and several thousand residential units, all built on 2,861 acres. Earlier this year, opponents of the plan collected enough signatures to force a referendum on the issue, which led the PGA to withdraw from the project.

The groups' opposition to the plan is based on two factors. Because of the location of the site, there is concern that chemicals from the golf course could find their way into the city's drinking water. While that is a major concern, Enrique Valdivia of the Smart Growth Coalition, one of the groups that opposed the project, told Golf Course News in June that the major opposition stems from in the greens mix. The moral of the story is to make sure you spend adequate time and energy to make visual enhancements to the course.

**WEITZ COMPLETES ROSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION**

STUART, Fla. — Sitting in the men's locker room on opening day can really provide you with direct feedback on the successes or failures of a project. After having the membership removed from their home club for six months, there are anxious moments while listening to folks comment about their first impression of their new and improved course. Let me share with you some of the comments that we have received and some that any golf course superintendent can expect to hear after a reconstruction or renovation.

**PGA Village to proceed — maybe**

Editor's note: This is the final installment in a series of articles on the renovation at Willoughby Golf Club by superintendent Kevin Downing. After six months of work, the club reopened on Nov. 1.

**BUILDERS WEATHER LOW CONSTRUCTION DEMAND**

By DEREK RICE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Golf 20/20's first annual report, released earlier this year (GCN, Sept. 2002), projected that there would be 285 course openings, one of the smallest numbers in years. If that number holds true, this will be the third consecutive year that openings have declined, which doesn't paint a rosy picture for the construction industry.

Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, said while the market has slowed down, the accredited builders in the association are finding work. "All my guys are busy right now," he said. "Construction isn't at the volume where it used to be, but if you've established your credentials to where people know who you are and that you can bring a project in under budget, then I think you're OK."

One of the challenges, Hetrick said, is the ability to bid competitively without losing money. "The bidding is very competitive," he said. "It's a whole new world out there for some of these guys."

Hetrick said renovation work is helping to keep some in the industry busy as they try to

**HIGH-PROFILE RENOVATION**

Architect Tom Fazio points out some of the changes at Augusta National to Jim Nantz and Ken Venturi of CBS Sports prior to this year's Masters.

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Without a doubt, the most talked-about renovation of 2002 was the lengthening of Augusta National. The public got to see the result of Tom Fazio's much-anticipated renovation during the 2002 Masters in April.

But last year's renovation isn't the end of it, according to published reports, Fazio is working on lengthening the fifth hole, known as "Magnolia," a 435-yard uphill dogleg-left, in time for the 2003 tournament. According to the Augusta Chronicle, the tee has been moved back 15 yards while the fairway bunkers have been moved forward 80 to 90 yards. The entire fairway will also be shifted right to create a more daunting dogleg.

Neither Fazio or Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson have spoken about the changes, but Johnson said in April that "we are going to address the weakness of the fifth hole."
First National
changed a few things for us,” Sager said. “I also think, because we’ve always been there and haven’t stepped away from golf, our volume may have changed a little bit. We continue to do a lot of construction lending and a lot of development lending.”

In general, Sager said 2002 was a good year for lenders. “I don’t think it’s been a bad year for golf course lending at all,” he said. “I think it’s continued from page 1

BUSINESS 101

The reason many lenders may be skittish about golf course financing, Sager said, is that the wrong type of person is looking to own and operate courses. “The biggest problem we see in the industry is that golf should be run by business people, not by golfers,” Sager said. “When you start having golfers involved and they fall in love with properties and overpay, it’s no different than if you overpay for a class A office building or you overpay for a franchise restaurant. You can’t raise the rent high enough in an office building or charge enough for a pizza or a hamburger to make enough money to cover debt service or cover overhead.”

Where some of the companies who have left the business have gone wrong is in not looking at the industry as a business, Sager said. “Golf is a business, and I think that’s where so many people on all sides of this industry have made huge mistakes,” he said. “They look at golf as a sport or a hobby, and that’s fine if you’re the consumer. If you’re on the other side, golf’s a business and you need to make money and you need to manage your operations well.”

“Those are not the people who understand sales vs. dollar spot, they don’t understand the problems with the irrigation system, they can’t do the lease vs. buy analysis on the golf course and all they want to do is have the best golf course in their area,” he said. “Unfortunately, that’s not how you make money on golf. You make money on golf exactly as you do in a coffee shop. It’s how many cups of coffee you can serve when people are going to work. How many guys can you get off the tee in a given number of daylight hours with decent weather and make money?”

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

While many in the industry may shy away from loans, Sager said there are still plenty of opportunities out there for both lenders and borrowers to succeed. “If you do the right loans and you’re prudent in your due diligence as a lender, you’ll make money and your borrowers will make money and do well,” he said. “If a borrower comes to us with a logical, solid transaction in golf, we will do the deal.”

As evidence, Sager pointed to the 14,000 or so golf properties in the United States that are not private equity clubs, which he said have an average value of around $5 million. “That gives you a $7 billion real estate marketplace,” he said. “If you assume that only a third of those change hands or finance themselves each year, that gives you a $2.3 billion dollar market every year looking for some kind of financing on their golf course.”

Even with that kind of opportunity in the market, Sager said, no one in the industry has ever taken more than a 10 percent stake in that, leaving the vast majority of those loans to be completed locally, below the national scope.

“If we lend $200 million in the marketplace and Textron does $200 million, between the two of us, we still control less than a 20 percent market share,” said Jerry Sager.
Renovation
continued from page 11

focused on green surfaces that
needed more cupping space with
the new ultra-dwarf turf or just a
few holes that were improved by
rethinking course strategy. The
bunker complexes were all adjusted
to create a better playing surface in
conjunction with some nice visual
enhancements to the bunker faces.

"The major focus of our renova-
tion was our greens and tees, so I
fully expected to see the effects of
those changes," said John Ginnetti,
vice greens chairman. "However, I
was delighted to see the dramatic
changes that have resulted from
the work done on our bunkers.
The strategic placing of a few fair-
way bunkers and the facing of bun-
ker edges with sod has given many
of our holes more character."

GROW IN

Our particular grow-in was more
challenged by the utilization of
personnel rather than the agron-
omic needs of the turf. Our staff-
ing requirements necessitated a
rollback of approximately 25 per-
cent of our team, until it was time
to start gearing up for the reopening.
We probably didn't accom-
plish as much as I would have
liked, but our major thrust cen-
tered on the playing areas and in
particular the holes where we per-
formed major construction. After
creating two or three priority lists
and focusing on all the details, you

PGA Village
continued from page 11

tax breaks the city extended to
Lumbermen's. According to
Valdivia, more than $50 million in
public funds would have been
available to the developer.

"That area of San Antonio is boom-
ing and has seen a lot of develop-
ment over the last 20 years," he said.
"The notion that you need to offer
someone an incentive to build there
is pretty counter-intuitive."

The new agreement replaced the
tax incentive with an agreement
that the city would not annex the
property for 15 years, which would
still provide a substantial financial
benefit to Lumbermen's.

On Oct. 27, the day after the
city council approved the latest
deal, opponents organized as Save
Our Aquifer filed a motion in fed-
eral court to freeze the plan until
a citywide vote could be held.

From the beginning, the pro-
cess has been one of ups and downs.
Each time one side has appeared
to gain a victory, the other side has
come back with a victory of its
own. Just when it looked as if the
PGA and Lumbermen's would look
elsewhere for a site, the city counci-
lar joined in favor of a new plan.
Williams will oversee golf near Austin. At Cimarron, Todd Williams has been all golf programs including operations and will create at the Jack Nicklaus-designed new business opportunities European division, based in Troon Golf has formed a European division, based in Troon's facilities and seek out Allianz Golf Limited (EAGL) has acquired five Texas-based properties from Dallas-based ClubCorp as part of its efforts to expand its portfolio. Included in the transaction, terms of which were not released, were Plantation Golf Club in Frisco, The Golf Club at Fossil Creek in Fort Worth, The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch in Katy, Greatwood Golf Club in Sugarland and Clear Creek Golf Course in Houston. The acquisition brings to 40 the number of facilities owned or operated by EAGL, West-based Partners, which owns EAGL, provided funding for the transaction. ClubCorp recently announced it would reduce operating expenses by $20 million because of the economic slowdown.

TROON HIRES DELLANZO TO HEAD EUROPEAN DIVISION

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Management, development and marketing company Troon Golf has hired a European division, based in Milan, Italy, to be headed by Paul Dellanzo. In his position, Dellanzo will oversee Troon's facilities and seek out new business opportunities throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Prior to joining Troon, Dellanzo held hotel and golf positions with Starwood Hotels and Resorts and Pepper Golf Resort in Arizona.

CIMARRON HILLS NAMES WILLIAMS HEAD PRO

GEORGETOWN, Texas — Todd Williams has been named head golf professional at the Jack Nicklaus-designed Cimarron Hills, located near Austin. At Cimarron, Williams will oversee golf operations and will create all golf programs including tournaments and instruction. Prior to joining Cimarron, Williams managed golf operations for Maroon Creek Club in Aspen, Colo. He also spent seven years at the La Quinta Resort and Club in La Quinta, Calif.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

2002 an up-and-down year for management cos.

In the 18 months since Golf Course News last published its management company listing, there have been many changes in the industry. Several companies have either gained or lost a significant number of courses in their portfolio, while others have emerged on the scene or closed their doors.

There is no question that the flattening of rounds played numbers and the sagging economy have caused problems for the golf industry. Most notable among management companies struggling to get by have been American Golf Corp. (AGC) and Golf Trust of America (GTA). At press time, AGC was in the midst of a buyout and merger with National Golf Properties, while GTA's shareholders were expected to approve the company's latest plan for liquidating its assets at the company's annual meeting in November with an eye toward a leadership change-over.

The same month Rhodes was in September. "Apollo [Real Estate, backers of Apollo. "We've taken a look at what we're doing strategically and how we're going to grow both geographically, as well as in product type," Kelly said in the April 2002 issue of Golf Course News. "We've got a very clear plan for the next three to five years as to how we're going to approach that." In addition, Meadowbrook increased its focus on both development completed a nearly top-to-bottom change-over among its leadership. "Everyone has turned over here," said Don Rhodes, who joined the company in September. "Apollo [Real Estate] has cleaned house and I'm the last guy of the new team. [CEO] Ron Jackson is a good guy for this company now. He's not a golf guy. He has run big company operations before." The same month Rhodes was hired, long-hinted-at financing came through for the company in the form of its Honors Fund, backed by Apollo.

We've got a very clear plan for the next three to five years as to how we're going to approach that.

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Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Meadowbrook on track for growth in 2003

CHAMPIONS Gate, Fla. — Capping off what has been a busy year, Meadowbrook Golf Inc. has teamed with The First Tee to found the inaugural First Tee program in Philadelphia. At press time, the Meadowbrook-managed Franklin D. Roosevelt Golf Club (TDR) was to break ground in November with an eye toward a May 2003 opening. Meadowbrook has been through a lot of changes, both in its programs and its management team, this year. The hiring of industry veteran Don Rhodes as vice president of acquisitions and development completed a nearly top-to-bottom change-over among its leadership. "Everyone has turned over here," said Don Rhodes, who joined the company in September. "Apollo [Real Estate] has cleaned house and I'm the last guy of the new team. [CEO] Ron Jackson is a good guy for this company now. He's not a golf guy. He has run big company operations before." The same month Rhodes was hired, long-hinted-at financing came through for the company in the form of its Honors Fund, backed by Apollo.

We've taken a look at what we're doing strategically and how we're going to grow both geographically, as well as in product type," Kelly said in the April 2002 issue of Golf Course News. "We've got a very clear plan for the next three to five years as to how we're going to approach that." In addition, Meadowbrook increased its focus on both development completed a nearly top-to-bottom change-over among its leadership. "Everyone has turned over here," said Don Rhodes, who joined the company in September. "Apollo [Real Estate] has cleaned house and I'm the last guy of the new team. [CEO] Ron Jackson is a good guy for this company now. He's not a golf guy. He has run big company operations before." The same month Rhodes was hired, long-hinted-at financing came through for the company in the form of its Honors Fund, backed by Apollo.

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Continued on next page
The biggest gainer in number of courses under management since GCN's last management company list has been Troon Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz. The company has added more than 30 properties, with more coming on line almost monthly. KemperSports Management has been the number-two gainer, increasing its portfolio by 17.

Meanwhile, AGC has been the biggest loser, dropping more than 36 in that same timeframe. Meadowbrook Golf has dropped 12, but is looking to reverse that trend through a series of changes and new financing (see story on previous page).

For the most part, however, companies' portfolios have remained steady over the last 18 months (see abbreviated management company list on previous page). The complete 2002 Golf Course News management company list will be available on our Web site in December. The goal is to keep the list updated on a regular basis. A printed version, similar to that found in the June 2001 issue, may follow as space allows.

Neil Koenig of First Union said the amended plan brings the merger closer than ever to finalization. "The structure of this is very different from what originally started out last summer (2001)," he said. "Nothing ever got this far along or this specific."

In April, a source close to the negotiations told Golf Course News the deal was expected to close sometime before the end of the third quarter. Koenig said the delay in completing this deal, which has been in the works for more than a year, is par for the course and that the two are committed the merger.

"A special committee of certain board members deemed this to be the best alternative [for First Union]," he said. "It's more of everyone agreeing on an ultimate structure because there are a lot of different pieces that come along with the transaction and how to deal with each of them individually was very difficult. That just takes time."

First Union has issued a proxy statement to shareholders that details the transaction, but has not set a firm timetable for completion, which would make Gotham Golf Corp. a publicly traded company.

"All of these efforts will provide participating club owners with additional membership sales, rounds and revenues, along with numerous other long-term competitive advantages," he said.

Hoppenrath said 2003 should be a big year for the alliance.

" Owners are struggling with that, and I mean really struggling," he added. "When we talk to people, that's primarily one of the main topics."

Recognizing that customer loyalty is essential to golf course operations, Meadowbrook introduced Honors Club in September. The program offers a consolidated membership and loyalty program that is recognized at several Meadowbrook courses across the country.

While the number of courses Meadowbrook manages has fallen slightly since June 2001 (see related story on previous page), the company hopes double the size of its portfolio, which currently comprises 43 courses, in the future.

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NGP 2002 timeline

Feb. 8: NGP reaffirms restructuring efforts and announces a forbearance agreement with Bank One NA.

Feb. 13: NGP and AGC announce plans to merge; terms of potential deal are not disclosed.

Feb. 15-21: Several class-action lawsuits filed against NGP, claiming the company misled investors about its financial health.

March 19: Cliffwood Partners, NGP's largest outside shareholder with a 9 percent stake, announces opposition to merger and proposes NGP find other managers to replace AGC, rather than complete the merger.

April 1: NGP announces terms of the proposed merger.

April 23: NGP president James N. Stanich resigns.

April 30: Bank One extends NGP's forbearance agreement for the second time; over the next two months, the two will continue to sign two-week extensions until agreeing on a longer extension — through March 31, 2003 — on June 28.

July: Rumors abound regarding a potential buyer or financing agreement for NGP. Reports cite Westbrook Partners, Blackstone Group and eventual buyers Starwood Capital and Goldman Sachs as potential saviors.

July 23: AGC enters into a restructuring agreement with its lender, Bank of America; NGP and AGC chairman David Price pledges 3.6 million shares in NGP and a deed of trust with the understanding that cash would be substituted by Sept. 30 for the deed and by Oct. 15 for the shares.

Aug. 2: AGC announces it has satisfied the conditions of the restructuring agreement with Bank of America announced July 23.

Sept. 16: NGP's board of directors and its independent committee approve the sale of the company to an investment group led by Goldman's GS Capital Partners and Whitehall Real Estate Fund, along with Starwood Capital. As part of the $1.1 billion deal, the group says it will also purchase the outstanding equity interests of AGC. An early 2003 closing date for the deal is set.

Sept. 18: In conjunction with the buyout agreement, NGP enters into an amended and restated merger/reorganization plan with AGC.
Lesco to strengthen sales, add stores-on-wheels

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CLEVELAND — When Michael DiMino replaced Bill Foley as president and CEO of Lesco in April, he outlined a simple strategy for bringing the company back into the black. DiMino immediately focused on leveraging the large amount of capital that Lesco had invested in manufacturing facilities by improving the company’s selling and distribution capabilities.

The new CEO is in the process of implementing a new hub-and-spoke distribution system that will allow for overnight or next-day delivery to its 227 service centers and 77 stores-on-wheels. DiMino has also bulked up the sales staff by adding 54 representatives and plans to add even more services centers and stores-on-wheels in 2003.

So far DiMino is optimistic that the new structure will pay off in the long run. Despite flat sales, third quarter 2002 results showed improved earnings, up to $9.1 million in 2001.

“Although sales are flat, we are hitting all of our financial objectives,” said DiMino. “Lesco is doing well from an overall profitability standpoint which is vastly improved from last year.”

According to DiMino, superintendents will hear more from Lesco in the coming months.

“We have set up five zone vice presidents and our sales team is moving together again,” said DiMino. “We are going to add more stores-on-wheels and to 30 stores. And we have added golf sales representatives who will have a truck and a laptop and will be able to service golf courses. They will see more of Lesco.”

The beefed-up sales force will focus on the underserved areas on the West Coast, and in the Midwest.

Adding salespeople, stores-on-wheels and service centers is central to the company’s success, added DiMino. The company expects that adding to sales will be the key to strengthening sales, add stores-on-wheels.

Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Foam marker, Toro 4500-D top new product list

Editor’s note: Back in February, GOLFCourseNews asked intrepid contributing writer Kevin J. Ross, CGCS, to scour the GCSAA show floor in Orlando, Fla., for innovative new products. The list he compiled appeared in our post-show issue in March. Ross has revisited his picks to see which products made the biggest impact in 2002.

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

While you certainly could not label 2002 a banner year for equipment debuts, some pieces of new equipment remained very hot topics throughout the year.

The newest product of the year was the miniature foam marking kits for walk spreaders from Salvavani North America. This foam marking kit technology has been available for years for use with boom sprayers, but this was the first year that the technology was miniaturized for use with walk spreaders.

Continued on page 19

2002 NEWSMAKERS

YGC to unveil new vehicles in ‘03

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEWNAN, Ga. — After opening its new $31 million manufacturing facility in June and rolling out its new G-MAX line, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) is gearing up for another set of new product introductions in 2003.

“We are more than surprised with the results of the new G-MAX line,” said vice president Bill Szarowicz. “It has been a difficult year, but we have had a great response based on where the market is now.

“But we built the factory not just for golf cars,” he added. “We will be rolling out some exciting new products that will expand the Yamaha Golf Car business. We will be introducing new vehicles in June 2003.”

Six new models are slated to be introduced next year, and utility vehicles will be included in the product mix.

“We will be expanding our utility vehicle line. We feel we have a good medium-duty vehicle in the G24, but there is a spot in our lineup where we...”

Continued on page 19
Turf-Seed continues research on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HUBBARD, Ore. — The development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass by Scotts and Monsanto has been a contentious issue for turfgrass producers, particularly those in the Willamette Valley area.

Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, based in Hubbard, says the transgenic turfgrass has the potential to cause ecological and economic disruption because it could contaminate other stands of turf. The organization is also petitioning the USDA to list Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass as a noxious weed.

Rose is concerned that production fields in the Willamette Valley could be contaminated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, where strict regulations for open pollination of Roundup Ready plants are mandated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, where strict regulations are in place. In October, researchers said that they had a male sterile bentgrass plant.

There is also resistance from groups in the United States like the International Center for Technology Assessment, which is pressing the United States Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) approval for open pollination of Roundup Ready bentgrass in an 11,000-acre control area in Jefferson County would be a “disaster,” Rose said. “The results in October look very good, but we will wait until January or February for another generation to confirm it.”

After confirmation, Rose said the next step will be to conduct field-testing and that will require getting a permit from the ODA.

There is a massive research effort on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass available, including a variety of species that are resistant to the herbicide Roundup.

Bayer divests fipronil

Continued from page 1

Bayer has divested its fipronil product line, which includes Chipco Choice, Top Choice and Fire Star. The company said it is “not critical to our business model.”

There is a massive research effort on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass available, including a variety of species that are resistant to the herbicide Roundup.

Scotts, Monsanto preparing to resubmit Roundup Ready bentgrass petition

Continued from page 6

The Toro Flex 21 may still be the hottest new mowing unit. By the end of the season, demo units were out in fairway areas with close-cutting units that are very similar to a Greensmower. The Toro Flex 21 has 18-inch cutters on its front and rear, providing a smooth and consistent cut. The unit has been well received by superintendents, some of whom have already asked Rose when they can buy it. But we can’t sell or market it until APHIS approves it.

Bayer’s company Pure Seed Testing is also working on getting a turf label for its naturally Roundup tolerant Aurora Gold hard fescue and Pure Gold and Tomahawk RT tall fescues that are already on the market.

According to Pure Seed president Crystal Rose-Fricker, the company is waiting for an approval from Monsanto so it can release recommended safe Roundup rates that can be applied to the turf without harming it.

Rose-Fricker said work is also progressing on naturally Roundup tolerant creeping fescue, chewings fescue, slender creeping fescue, perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bentgrass.

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Adaptive market waiting to take off

Continued from page 17

that manufactures Club Car's adaptive golf car is convinced adaptive cars will become required. "Golf courses are required to provide access under the Access Board guidelines," said Pretelin. "And courses must be designed to have easy access by wheeled vehicles. The only way courses can legally not provide access is if it is economically prohibitive or if it fundamentally alters the characteristics of the game or the facility."

Skenes said he has a bad back, "So we have to offer adaptive cars.

Fairway Golf Cars, in Brookfield, Wis., is expanding its manufacturing facility, but is taking a much broader approach to the market by offering an adaptive car, a power caddy, and a new single rider fleet model which it is set to unveil next summer.

"There are two challenges with the adaptive market at this time," said president Cole Braun. "There is a need for marketing, inventory, and distribution capabilities. People are going to have to invent the wheel."

SoloRider has already sold 300 adaptive cars, 250 of which have been placed on golf courses. The company recently signed a deal to provide all TPC courses with adaptive cars.

E-Z-GO's adaptive car, the Eagle, went into production two months ago and marketing communications coordinator Ron Skenes said there is a growing market for the vehicle.

"We think the demand for these types of vehicles is going to grow and there are going to be more courses wanting to offer them as an option to handicapped players on down to those who may just have a bad back." Skenes said.

The vehicle is being manufactured by Eagle Products and distributed by E-Z-GO. Yamaha is looking to enter the adaptive car market as well.

"We are probably going to team up with someone else [a adaptive car manufacturer] that is already out there," said Yamaha Golf Car vice president Bill Szarowicz. "There is no need to reinvent the wheel."

However, all manufacturers are viewing the market with such optimism.

Several smaller manufacturers have gone out of business and veteran adaptive golf car maker Golf Xpress recently pulled out of the market and is looking for a buyer of its assets.

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"There are two challenges with the adaptive market at this time," said president Cole Braun. "There is not a definitive rule from the Department of Justice, and second, the golf industry has not had a good year so they are not going to invest money in something that they can't see an immediate positive return on.

In the face of these challenges, Fairway Golf Cars has placed its adaptive car, the Spirit, on 40 courses nationwide including municipal courses in Indianapolis, Branson, Mo., Lincoln, Neb., and Portland, Ore.

"The adaptive market is still solid, and there is a need there," said Braun. "But we also want to revolutionize the way people move around the golf course and give owners another option. The new single-rider fleet model and the power caddy provide that option."

Lesco to increase sales capabilities

Continued from page 17

and distribution capabilities will help it grow sales in the six to eight percent range next year.

"We will continue to add salespeople, stores and stores-on-wheels," he said. "I have all the data and our return on investment is outstanding when we add new sales capabilities. If we don't add, we'll die."

The hub-and-spoke distribution system is nearing completion with new centers already open in Westfield, Mass., and Avon Lake, Ohio. New centers in Atlanta and Chicago will be on-line by the beginning of the year and facilities will be added in Stockton, Calif., and Texas later in 2003.

"We have changed the profile of how distribution centers hold products and what services they provide," said DiMino. "We need to replenish service centers and stores-on-wheels from the local level instead of from distant distribution centers.

Our five zone vice presidents are in place to put the right products on the shelves and decide where stores and stores-on-wheels go," added DiMino. "Their job is to drive the regional competitors crazy using the Lesco assets.

We are a national player but we want to look like a local player."

REDUCING OVERHEAD AND CUTTING COSTS

DiMino, however, has also had to trim costs. He has reduced what he calls "corporate overhead" and manufacturing costs. Lesco also sold its troubled fertilizer-Novak fertilizer plant to KPAC Holdings Inc. in late October. The company has signed a supply agreement with KPAC and said the Novak products will continue to available to Lesco customers.

"We will be able to produce it cheaper in this new structure than we were when we were producing it ourselves," said DiMino. "Novak will still be our product for greens and tees and hopefully for fairways soon as well. There will be no interruption in the supply."

With new factory online, YGC set for a busy '03

Continued from page 17

YGC's new 220,000-square-foot factory is making the product line expansion possible.

"The plant is going crazy," Szarowicz said. "The efficiency rate is up, and production numbers are up. So far it is exceeding expectations. We are also looking at implementing a build-to-order system. This gives us the ability to react faster. Before when we shared space with ATV manufacturing we couldn't do all of this."

New production technology has also made the G-MAX car better. The new facility features 17 robotic welding stations and a new multi-step frame coating system that includes immersion cleaning, immersion corrosion protection and powder coating.

According to Szarowicz, the new car has set itself apart from the field with its TrueTrak front suspension and ergonomic ErgoShade sun top with integrated grab handles.

The company will soon roll out its Genius fleet management system that uses any personal digital assistant to perform diagnostics via infrared.

CREATING FLEET OPTIONS

YGC also introduced its certified pre-owned program this year that is based out of a separate facility in Peachtree City. Szarowicz said hundreds of reconditioned units have already rolled off the line giving the company an opportunity to compete in a different market.

"This brings the golf car out at a different price point and gives us an advantage at looking at ways courses can save money on their fleet," he said. "For example, some courses have chosen to mix and match. They may need 60 cars but would like 80. We now can offer 60 new cars and 20 certified pre-owned cars and they can get what they want at a lower price point. Golfers will never know the difference."

Compost tea brewing organic success

Continued from page 6

since he is just beginning the program, Struse is applying compost tea at a 35-gallon-per-acre rate every week. While it was too soon to see results this season, Struse did benefit from another of Clarke's techniques - topdressing tees with compost during the winter.

"I put down a heavy layer on the tees in January and let it rain in and then blew off the debris," Struse said. "The compost leached through and that was great. We didn't have to fertilize them until September."

Clarke topdressed roughs, six tees and two fairways with compost last winter and noticed that it helped combat drought conditions.

"We have a mixture of bluegrass and ryegrass in the roughs and they went dormant later and bounced back earlier. The areas we didn't get to went dormant right off," he said.

Clarke plans to topdress the whole course this year.

COMPOST TEA CATCHING ON?

If compost tea provides at least some benefits, why aren't more superintendents aren't using it? Clarke said the lack of university research is the biggest problem.

"A lot of guys won't accept it until a Rutgers or a Penn State or an NC State says 'Yes this is the way to go.' Unfortunately this is a grass-roots thing and there is no one with the money to pay for a study," said Clarke. "So far, anecdotal evidence is the only way information on compost tea gets out there."

In December, Clarke was also convinced compost tea was the way to go. Clarke lawyer has a compost tea program that has been going on for years.

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DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION

Construction in 2002
Continued from page 11

weather the slowdown in not only con-
struction, but in business in general.

"About five years ago when people
started looking at the new starts and it
started to wane, I think the smart guys
got out and started to retool their mar-
keting efforts toward renovations and help-
ing superintendents and looking at the
small projects that typically five years be-
fore that they wouldn't have even consid-
ered because there was such a demand for
them to do full-scale golf courses," he said.
Both now and in coming months, Hetrick
said builders face difficulty in finding af-
fordable insurance and bonding for
projects. He said the problem could get
worse before it gets any better.

"If there's one issue that we have that's most
difficult for builders to face today it's the
bonding issue and insuring the project," he
did. "That's the one that's going to be
the biggest hurdle to get through. It's been
described to me that we still haven't seen the
bottom of the barrel in the bonding market
from 9/11. You have to figure out how you
can go out there and maintain a level of expertise
and not have everything crater in on you."

What makes construction a particularly
tenuous industry is dependence on pro-
jects' "trickling down" from developers to
builders, Hetrick said.

"Everybody is entitled to make a profit," he
said. "It really hurts the industry when it gets
so competitive that people start buying jobs.
"Some jobs you have to let go by," he added.
"The balance is extremely keen right now."

While it is difficult at the moment, Hetrick said the golf industry as a whole
should begin to see an upturn in the near
future.

"There are projects out there and they're
finding funding. Everybody seems to be
getting the work and maintaining some
level of security for their employees," he
said. "We all seem to be busy. Everybody
seems to be getting the work and maintain-
ing some level of security for their employ-
es, so we're cautiously optimistic."

"Everybody is entitled to make a profit... it really hurts the
industry when it gets so competitive that people start buying jobs."
— Lee Hetrick

We want to hear from you!

Letters to the editor are an integral part of GCN, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

Andrew Overbeck, Editor
Golf Course News
106 Lafayette Street
PO Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
Fax: # 207-846-0657
aoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com

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### National Golf Rounds Played*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>Y.T.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW ENGLAND (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)</td>
<td>-7.1%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE ATLANTIC (DE, NJ, PA)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST NORTH CENTRAL (WI, OH, IN, IL, MI)</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST NORTH CENTRAL (MN, IA, ND, KS, NV, SD, NE)</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>-5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH ATLANTIC (FL, GA, SC, NC, VA, TN)</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST SOUTH CENTRAL (GA, AL, FL, MS, AR)</td>
<td>-5.8%</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST SOUTH CENTRAL (NM, CA, OK, TX)</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUNTAIN (UT, CO, WY, MT, ID, NM, AZ, UT, NV)</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFIC (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI)</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentages above represent the difference in number of rounds played in the month of September 2002 to the number of rounds played in September 2001.

Source: Golf Data Tech

### Golf Course News STOCK REPORT (11/1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company (Symbol)</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Change (%)</th>
<th>52-wk range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aventis (AVE)</td>
<td>59.20</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
<td>48.00 - 77.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayer AG (BAY)</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>16.77 - 36.00</td>
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<td>BASF (BF)</td>
<td>37.05</td>
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<td>37.84 - 46.85</td>
</tr>
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<td>Central Garden and Pet (CENT)</td>
<td>19.99</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6.60 - 20.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>46.39</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>36.60 - 49.98</td>
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<td>Dow Chemical Co. (DOW)</td>
<td>25.99</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
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<td>1.26</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.88 - 7.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ingersoll-Rand (IR)</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>29.69 - 54.40</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.10 - 12.26</td>
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<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.20 - 36.35</td>
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### Year-to-Date Golf Project Activity (Monthly Change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Under Construction</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>386 (-2)</td>
<td>348 (NC)</td>
<td>184 (+8)</td>
<td>452 (+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDITIONS</td>
<td>66 (+3)</td>
<td>177 (+1)</td>
<td>95 (+4)</td>
<td>279 (+12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Renovation numbers

The National Golf Foundation's monthly Golf Project Report numbers do not include courses classified as reconstructions or renovations. This year to date, 51 renovated/reconstructed courses are under construction and 24 courses have opened.

### New Additions

- **Proposed**: 452 (+1)
- **Under Construction**: 279 (+12)
- **Completed**: 184 (+8)

### Show Information

### Celebrate the Past. Seize the Future.

#### January 23–26, 2003
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Florida

NEW for 2003—Expanded at-show seminar & conference schedule, improved New Product Center, extended Show hours and more!

Join over 30,000 colleagues and more than 1,200 exhibitors as golf's premier trade event celebrates fifty years of excellence.

- Preview all the newest products and technologies
- Gauge industry trends
- Network with colleagues
- Attend hands-on equipment demonstrations
- Choose from a variety of trade-focused conferences

If golf is your business, this is one anniversary you can't afford to miss!

**Don't miss your opportunity! It's not too late...**

**Preregister now** to save $20 in on-site registration fees,* avoid the lines at the show and receive your Pre-Show Planner in advance, so you won't miss a thing. To register, simply visit www.pgaexpo.com or call 1-800-840-5628.

*On-site registration fees do not apply to PGA members.
Penncross Preferred
These Experienced Experts Still Choose Penncross

"As a certified golf course builder for 37 years, I still specify Penncross for 95% of greens I build or rebuild. Penncross takes extremes of cold, heat, traffic, plus wear and tear of daily spiking and ballmarks. Plus, Penncross adapts to various superintendents' management styles.

"Why do I still specify Penncross? It has been where other bents are trying to go."

Louis Miller, President
Golf Development Construction, Inc.
Louisville, KY

"With our short season in northern Minnesota, we need a grass that is reliable, dependable, and proven. At Deacon's Lodge, we want to provide the best possible conditions every day. Penncross fits that bill perfectly. Its aggressiveness coming out of winter lets us open sooner and be in better condition quicker. With bi-weekly spiking and light topdressing, we have consistent, true putting surfaces that our guests love.

"With Penncross all we have to do is feed it, water it, mow it and forget it."

Scott Schunter, Superintendent
Deacon’s Lodge, Breezy Point, MN

"Angus Glen owner and architect Doug Carrick selected tried and true 'Penn Pals' based on their track record worldwide. I've never seen anything better than Penncross for greens in my 35 plus years as a superintendent. Penncross is a complement to our Penneagle fairways and Pennway blend tees. I feel that these bents were helpful in Angus Glen earning '1995 Golf Digest Best New Canadian Golf Course' award, and host course for the 2002 Canadian Open."

Ernie Amsler, CGCS, Superintendent
Angus Glen, Markham, ON, Canada

Penncross creeping bentgrass, released in 1955 by Professor H.B. Musser and Dr. Joe Duich, remains the most widely used and specified creeping bentgrass of all time.