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 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 from $20 million in 2001.

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

According to DiMino, representatives 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 20 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 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 need a larger vehicle.”

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Adapter car makers await final DOJ ruling

By ANDREW OVERBECK
When the U.S. Access Board released revised programming guidelines regarding golf course accessibility in early September, it did not include a provision requiring golf courses to supply adaptive golf cars for handicapped players.

The Department of Justice will eventually adopt the guidelines of the U.S. Access Board and then issue regulations regarding adaptive golf cars. In the meantime, whether courses have to provide the special cars remains voluntary, unless they are forced to by a lawsuit.

The fact that there are still gray areas in the interpretation of what courses are required to do under the Americans with Disabilities Act has not put a damper on some adaptive car makers’ enthusiasm for the market.

Roger Pretekin, president of SoloRider, the company
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Foam marker, Toro 4500-D top new product list

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 nearest product of the year was the miniature foam marking kit which is vastly improved from last year.

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Continued on page 19
Jefferson County would be a "disaster" and Monsanto has been a contentious issue, as detractors here in the Willamette Valley contend the transgenic turf will ruin the country's primary bentgrass production region.

Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, has been the most vocal, predicting earlier this year that the Oregon 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," he said. "My goal is to try not to get it banned."

Rose is concerned that production fields in the Willamette Valley could be contaminated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, which have strict regulations in the United States, "As a result of this control area, I expect to see genetic-altered turfgrass banned in the United States," he said. "My goal is to try not to get it banned."

There is also resistance from groups in the United States like the International Center for Technology Assessment, which is pressuring the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to deny Scotts' and Monsanto's petition for approval of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. In a petition filed in August, the group called Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass a "superweed" and said 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.

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