



## BRIEFS

### FEARIS JOINS PBI/GORDON

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — David Fearis, CGCS, and past president of the GCSAA has joined PBI/Gordon Corp. as a consultant. He will provide golf market education, consultation and project coordination for the company's professional turf and ornamental product line. Fearis recently retired from his superintendent post at Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City.



David Fearis

### KEN EDWARDS RETIRES FROM DEERE

MOLINE, Ill. — Following a 30-year career with John Deere, Kenneth J. Edwards has announced his retirement. Edwards has been the director of marketing and sales for John Deere Golf & Turf since its inception in 1986. During his tenure, Edwards guided the division through a period of rapid expansion and developed it into a worldwide market leader. He also created the John Deere Golf & Turf Feedback program that allows superintendents from around the world to test and evaluate the company's equipment. Edwards will be replaced by Gregg Brenningmeyer.

### N. AMERICAN GREEN APPOINTS MARTIN

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Shannon Martin has joined North American Green as southeast sales manager. In his new position, Martin will work directly with the company's wholesale distributors in the southeastern United States. His responsibilities will include customer service, technical sales and field assistance. Martin will be based in Franklin, N.C.



Shannon Martin

### PROFILE PARTNERS WITH IECA

BUFFALO GROVE, Ill. — Profile Products LLC has been named the premier partner of the International Erosion Control Association's (IECA) 33rd annual Conference and Expo. The event will be held Feb. 25-March 1 in Orlando, Fla.

## DiMino charged with improving Lesco's operations and profits

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CLEVELAND — In a move to streamline operations and improve profits, Lesco has reshuffled upper management by naming Michael DiMino president and COO. The company said the move would allow CEO William Foley, who previously held the additional post of president, to focus more on long range strategic planning for the company.



Michael DiMino

DiMino, the former president and COO of Uniforms To You, a Chicago-based division of Cintas Corp., will be responsible for day-to-day operations including sales, marketing, product supply and information services. He will also supervise the company's new independent marketer program (GCN, December 2001).

At Uniforms To You, DiMino turned a family-run business into a professional organization, growing profits from \$50 million to \$215 million and eventually selling to Cintas in 1998. While DiMino admitted that he has much to learn about the professional turf care market, he said there are many similarities between the two companies.

"We had the same approach as Lesco," he said. "We were very customer focused. We had a very diverse product line. The same is true here."

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## Adcon's new sensor line targets irrigation efficiency

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Aiming to take the guesswork out of golf course irrigation, Adcon Telemetry has unveiled Aquaflex, a new line of wireless soil moisture sensors.

The company, which already makes the "Lite" Station, a wireless weather station for golf courses, claims that courses using Aquaflex are saving up to 20 percent on irrigation costs. Product trials are underway at four courses in Europe and two courses in the United States, and Adcon plans to initially market the products to courses in California and Florida.

"Superintendents irrigate each day without knowing whether the turf is getting the proper amount of water," said Hans



The Aquaflex soil moisture sensor uses wireless communication.

Reinisch, alternative industries business development manager. "Conditions change all the time. Right now a superintendent has to go around the course each day to monitor what is needed. This system allows him to monitor the course from his computer and irrigate where it is needed."

### HOW IT WORKS

Aquaflex sensors read conditions up to two feet deep in the soil and ten feet in diameter. The wireless sensor sends data back via the weather station and updates a software program on the superintendent's computer every fifteen minutes. The unit works with all irrigation control systems and can also be set up to control individual irrigation valves to automatically shut them off when

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## BASF's Insignia to offer broad control

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — New research covering field trials of Insignia fungicide, which will be introduced by BASF this year, indicates that it offers broad-spectrum control of a wide range of turf diseases, in addition to significant suppression of dollar spot. Registration of Insignia (pyraclostrobin) by the Environmental Protection Agency is expected in early 2002.

According to Wakar Uddin, Ph.D., assistant professor of plant pathology at Penn State University, research trials in several U.S. sites have shown that pyraclostrobin is highly effective in controlling gray leaf spot, anthracnose basal rot, Pythium foliar blight, brown patch, gray and pink

snow mold, take-all patch, leaf spot and summer patch.

The new compound is a strobilurin, a class of systemic fungicide that has gained wide acceptance in the turf industry.

Strobilurins feature low use rates and relatively longer application intervals. However, the class of fungicide has not previously been effective at controlling dollar spot.

Pyraclostrobin inhibits fungal pathogens at virtually all major stages of the life cycle.

With most target diseases where the compound was effective, preventive applications provided high levels of control, and curative applications significantly suppressed the diseases over periods of 14 days or longer.



## Golf Course News Stock Report (1/14)

Company(Symbol)	Price	Change(%) 12/14/01	52-wk range
Aventis (AVE)	67.44	-.2	64.05 - 84.50
BASF (BF)	37.25	-.3	27.15 - 47.22
Century Garden and Pet (CENT)	7.40	8	5.94 - 10.25
Deere & Co. (DE)	43.00	3	33.50 - 45.96
Dow Chemical Co.(DOW)	27.05	-22	25.06 - 39.67
Golf Trust of America (GTA)	5.39	29	4.01 - 9.25
Ingersoll-Rand (IR)	41.58	-4	30.40 - 50.28
Lesco, Inc. (LSCO)	7.00	5	6.10 - 14.68
National Golf Properties (TEE)	10.68	20	7.96 - 27.70
Monsanto Co. (MON)	32.66	-6	28.10 - 38.80
Syngenta AG (SYT)	10.33	3	8.50 - 12.67
Toro Co. (TTC)	46.00	2	35.62 - 50.00
Textron, Inc. (TXT)	40.63	7	31.29 - 60.47

## Nu-Gro improves Organiform

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Nu-Gro Technologies, Inc. has reformulated its Organiform controlled release nitrogen to reduce heavy metals content.

"The new formulation is based on ureaform technology but uses peanut shells as an organic base component," explained Bill Walrath, manager of technical services at the company's Gloversville, N.Y. facility. "The formulation change further reduces any concerns about metal content and provides improved economics for the end-user."

Organiform 30-0-0 is a reacted nitrogen product that offers an intermediate release up to 24 weeks, which is between Nu-Gro's other proprietary products, Nutriform (ureaform) and Nutralene (methylene urea). Organiform also offers dual release mechanisms, low salt index and other environmentally responsible attributes.

Production of Organiform will increase as the company's methylene urea facility in Gloversville comes on stream.

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Nu-Gro has also revamped its Web site, [www.nugrotech.com](http://www.nugrotech.com). The more user-friendly site now offers information about Nu-Gro products, application advice, and a direct line to the company's resident fertilizer expert Bob Staib.



## Aquaflex to improve efficiency

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the area has received the proper amount of water.

"It allows you to fine tune irrigation practices," said Reinisch. "It identifies the exact time that the turf is irrigated enough and keeps you from over doing it."



As a result, said Reinisch, courses will be able to save water, energy and time. When applying fertilizers and chemicals it will also keep them from being washed away.

### SYSTEM COST

The system varies in cost depending on the size of the installation. The one-time software cost is substantial, with one independent sensor with remote costing between \$5,000 to \$6,000. Outfitting a whole course with sensors on every green and fairway, valve controls and two or three weather stations could cost between \$80,000 and \$90,000, said Reinisch.

The company has 10 support managers in its offices in Florida and California, and aims to have 50 to 60 courses using Aquaflex by the middle of the year.

"We install, support and monitor the system in addition to training the superintendent," Reinisch said. "We will add support managers and distribution partners as we add courses."

Reinisch's next goal is to team up with golf irrigation companies to expand market share and develop a better distribution network. "We want to help them make their systems better," he said, "we don't want to compete with them." ■

## Big three look for stronger 2002

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three manufacturers said demand for golf equipment slowed on the year.

### THE GOLF SLUMP

The reasons for the slump are clear: a late, wet spring, fewer new golf courses, deferred purchases, and slashed budgets.

"In the upper Midwest and Northeast, especially, cash registers did not ring until May or June. And although rounds were not down much for the year, once a course gets into its season a little ways they tend to postpone capital equipment purchases if it looks like 'old Betsy' is running okay," said William Robson, director of marketing for Textron Golf Turf and Specialty Products.

According to Toro's director of investor relations Steve Keating, the 2001 slowdown was inevitable.

"The golf business struggled last year," he said. "But we are conservative enough to know that the 500 new courses a year was going to come to a stop. When you have an over abundance of courses, flat participation, and an economy that keeps folks from spending money, you are going to have a downturn."

### TURNAROUND IN SIGHT?

The companies are optimistic that the downward trend of 2001 will not continue into 2002. While there are signs that the economy may be turning the corner, industry executives hope that aggressive

sive leasing packages, new products, and product turnover will lead to marginally better sales.

"To a certain degree the golf industry is a captive market," said Chuck Grief, manager of market development for John Deere's golf and turf division. "They have to mow and maintain the golf course if they are going to do business. We are not



Chuck Grief

looking at growth like we have seen in the past, but 2002 will be better than 2001."

Those buyers who deferred purchases last year are still out there this year, said Robson. "Whenever there is a dip in demand from deferred purchases, then that comes back the following year," he said. "We are looking for a strong 2002 in terms of overall demand."

According to GCN's News Poll (see page 3), 35 percent of courses will be spending somewhat or significantly more on equipment in 2002 for many of the above reasons.

"Our budget is slightly more than last year," said Steve Adams, president of Adams Management Group. "We know that when business gets competitive, a well conditioned golf course may be your only competitive

advantage. It is the last place we will cut back."

However, 28 percent of the courses reported that their budgets will decrease due to poor 2001 revenues.

"My equipment budget will be significantly less because we opened about six to eight weeks later than normal due to spring flooding," said Larry Meyer, superintendent at Slayton (Minn.) Country Club. "We also had other unexpected expenses during the year."

As a result, Toro's director of marketing John Wright expects 2002 to still be a challenging year.

"Buyers will still be cautious," he said. "We will do well as a company because we have a strong product line and we are going to have an improved financial offering. But I think the golf industry as a whole is going to be in for a few challenging years."



John Wright

### RUNNING A TIGHTER SHIP

Equipment makers have consolidated manufacturing plants in the past two years in order to maximize efficiency. Textron closed its aging Racine, Wis. plant and moved its Jacobsen facility to Charlotte, N.C. Toro shut down its Evansville, Ind., and Riverside, Calif., plants and is in the process of moving certain operations to El Paso, Texas.

"You have to stay lean and mean," said Keating. "You have to look at overall manufacturing capabilities and have the right factories in the right places." ■

## DiMino to increase Lesco's profits

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### CLEANING HOUSE

DiMino will initially focus on improving Lesco's efficiency.

"I feel you have to have positive discontent," said DiMino. "In this case, for a \$500 million business, Lesco should be performing better from a financial standpoint. But we are going to address that and become more efficient and effective at what we do."

Lesco posted third-quarter sales of \$144.1 million, up from \$139.6 million in the third quarter of 2000. Net income for the quarter, however, slipped to \$0.3 million from \$4.2 million.

"We have to ensure that supply chain management is run effectively and that all assets are geared towards creating more value for the customers, the shareholders and the employees," DiMino said. "We need to take away products that don't sell and keep the product lines fresh. We have a lot of SKUs (stock keeping units) that are not selling."

While DiMino said it was too early to tell which products were going to be discontinued, he maintained that "none of them would be missed."

"It will be a constant improvement. It may be as simple as going to our own brand as opposed to carrying someone else's version of it. We may just change the formulation, or we may drop the product altogether," he said. "This will make for a healthier Lesco."

### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

With DiMino on board, CEO William Foley will be free to develop a more robust long-range plan for the company.

"While he runs out ahead of us," said DiMino, "my job is to make sure that this year's plan is executed and accomplished. I am looking forward to the challenges of reshaping the inside of the company so we can enjoy better profits and customer relationships." ■



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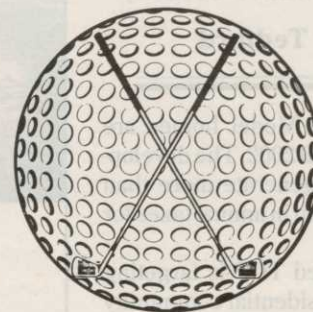
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