Green Touch Industries rolls out custom bed rail rack system

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Green Touch Industries is attacking the utility vehicle market with the full-scale rollout of its new bed rail rack organizing system that can be adapted to most utility vehicles on the market. The company, which has been in business for 12 years, got its start in the golf industry as an allied partner with John Deere distributors. Last year Green Touch unveiled its bed rail rack system that allowed it to more easily expand beyond the John Deere partnership. They now offer packages for Cub Car, Toro, E-Z-GO and Cub Cadet. For the most part, the rail systems are installed by authorized dealers as an aftermarket accessory.

"Before we had a complicated inventory with a different rack for each brand," said Green Touch's David Sargent. "Now we offer a bolt-on system that requires little drilling. We have a bolt-on rail on each side and they are connected in the front of the bed with a torsion bar, which eliminates any chance of damaging the bed by bending or twisting."

New utility vehicle players make a move

Continued from page 1

POLARIS PROFESSIONAL SERIES

"There are not a whole lot of barriers to entry in this market," said Erik Memmo, dealer development manager for Polaris who also worked for E-Z-GO Textron for five years. We have made products for recreational use that have doubled as vehicles on golf courses and we are now going to apply those directly in the golf market."

Polaris has set up a separate division, Polaris Professional Series, dedicated to the expansion effort and is in the process of forming an entirely different dealer network to handle the products.

"We have our own sales force and marketing department and we are in the process of building a dealer network to make sure that we are delivering the right product," said Memmo. "We currently have 100 dealers and we aim to have 350 in place by the end of the year."

Polaris has unveiled a complete line of products that include both two- and four-wheel drive UTVs, the ATV Pro four-by-four and the Light Utility Hauler (LUH) six-by-six. The UTVs feature 24- and 30-hp liquid-cooled engines, four-wheel hydraulic disc brakes, front independent suspension, three person seating capacity, and a payload of 1,500 pounds. The four-by-four model can go through water 27 inches deep. The ATV line features liquid-cooled 499 cc engines, and the four-by-four model comes with front and back racks, and the LUH has a rear cargo flatbed with a payload capacity of 800 pounds. All models are available with turf tires. Prices range from $6,500 for the ATV to $9,900 for the UTVs.

The bottom line for both vehicles, said Memmo, was that Polaris has used high performance components from its existing vehicle line and "pushed them down to meet the requirements of the golf industry."

IN A BIG COUNTRY

Cub Cadet is also running for the top competitors with its Big Country utility vehicle.

"We are definitely challenging them," said Kemmerling also said Cub Cadet made it a point to include more standard features such as manual dump bed, a class-one hitch, to increase the payload capacity to 1,400 pounds. Kemmerling also said Cub Cadet made it a point to include more standard features such as manual dump bed, a class-one hitch, with a crew vehicle or a mobile work station," said Mike Packer, vice president of utility vehicles for Club Car. "It also gives us a niche. No one else has anything like it."

Packard added that Club Car is working on adapting its electric motor and IQ platform to utility vehicles. "We believe there is an opportunity with electric motors and IQ to do something similar on the utility vehicle side. But it will obviously have to be more heavy-duty."

FOCUS ON RECREATION

"We are looking at any opportunity out there that might grow our division," said Memmo. "We want to make our name as synonymous with work as it is with recreation."

10 JUNE 2002
Dealing with diving raptors

Continued from page 8

raptors (hawks, owls, and their talon-footed relatives) dive at golfers, and what can and should they do? The talon-footed relatives dive at golfers, too. They are a menace and rarely minor injury, but occasionally fatal. They are not going to go away, and they could expand to other states. This human/kite conflict is not going to go away, and this is not an easy problem to solve. This is a complex problem, and one that needs to be addressed.

Raptor facts

Diving occurs only when nesting attempts are present or when eggs are near hatching from mid-/late June through July. A majority of nesting attempts do not dive, but a kite often prefers to attack certain people (color of clothing, smaller size, etc.) or golf cars, and only rarely will more than one kite at a particular nest dive. Most dives are into the wind, and from behind a person. Only in a minority of cases will a person be hit on the head or shoulders. Kites have small toes and feet and weigh only 225-350 grams (about a half-pound), so they usually do more than punch a person, knock off a hat, or disrupt a putt. Larger raptors could potentially inflict larger lacerations or punctures.

In most states Mississippi kites are considered an endangered species, but are protected by both state and federal laws. Management should only be attempted by those with both knowledge of kite biology and the proper state and federal permits. For help with diving problems, one should contact local, state, federal or other wildlife biologists or game agents/warden.

People management

Education efforts should be strong, with much of the above kite biology being explained to citizens and organizations. Kites have the admirable quality of being able to adapt to how humans have changed habitat, and common sense, tolerance, and simple solutions should be used. Often, reasonable people simply need to know enough about the kites to realize that adapting one's behavior eliminates virtually all real danger.

For changes in behavior advise people to: become aware of the location of the nest and the usual flight paths of the kites; wear sturdy hats; carry, but do not wave an object, such as a golf club near and above the head; watch the kite as it dives and wave arms vigorously when the kite gets close; and most importantly, reroute one's walking as much as possible to avoid the nest tree.

Don't bother with nets, noise-makers, or other "repellents," including models of large owls or nesting kites placed in trees; these require too much time and trouble, and are usually ineffective.

Kite management

Rarely, active management is required if it appears that diving is unusually problematic or that illegal citizen action to stop diving is likely to result. If all else fails, nesting levels, preferably at least one-week old, can be removed from a nest by legally authorized professionals, and the nest destroyed. Nestlings should be transferred to a nest of another kite pair in a location where diving will not be an issue, or to a suitable wildlife rehabilitator. Kites will accept foster nestlings and, with proper regard for nest and nestling sizes, will usually be able to raise three nestlings, sometimes four. It is best not to remove eggs because kites at such nests will likely renest very quickly, sometimes nearby.

NEAR EASTERN RAPTOR RESEARCH

James W. Purker, Ph.D., is a raptor ecologist and ecological educator who has studied Mississippi kites since 1968. He operates Aerie East Environmental Education Programs and Foundation in Montana, and has published both popular and scientific manuscripts and book chapters on the kite, other raptors and diving by raptors. He can be contacted at 267-778-9437 or aerieat@aol.com.

New utility vehicle offerings

Continued from page 10

Harry Hansen, superintendent at Miles Grant Country Club in Stuart, installed the SurfRax system last fall after hearing about the one Terra Kinetics put in at Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Country Club. "I had a finite amount of money and was upgrading my chemical mixing and loading and wash rack area. We decided to go with SurfRax because I could get a lot more for the money than I could with a recycled system," said Hansen. According to Hansen, the simplicity was a driving factor in the decision, but more importantly, he was attracted because the system meets all of Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) guidelines. Akre is working with the DEP to gain compliance certificates for each system that Terra Kinetics installs. "Before we had no system other than to just go outside and wash it off. No one is forcing us to do this, but if you have a complaint then you have problem," Hansen said. "I wanted to stay ahead of the game."