

Editorial Focus: Utility Vehicles

## 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 roll out 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 Club Car, Toro, E-Z-GO and Cub Cadet. For the most part, the rail systems are installed by superintendents as an after-market 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.

"With the more heavy duty models, the rails are set into the stake pockets. That allows superintendents to slide the rack in and out as necessary," he added.

According to Sargent, the benefits of



Green Touch Industries' rack system organizes equipment

organizing racks are numerous.

"Crews can go out to the job site with backpack blowers, line trimmers and hedge trimmers thrown in the back and still have room to pick up debris and throw it in the back," he said. "They also don't have to take all the equipment out just to get to one thing,

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## New utility vehicle players make a move

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### 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



The Polaris UTV in action

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

models 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 gunning for the top competitors with its Big Country utility vehicle.

"We are definitely challenging them," said Craig Kemmerling, national accounts manager for commercial business for MTD products. "The utility vehicle market is a fast growing market that we want to participate in. We have added an industry-first full independent suspension and a 20-hp Honda engine.

"The independent suspension ensures that all four points stay on the ground at all times," he continued. "This makes the unit safer, more stable, and it allowed us

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## New, upgraded vehicles hit market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

Not to be outdone by new entrants into the utility vehicle marketplace, several existing manufacturers have introduced new or tweaked models this year.

Club Car has rolled out its Transporter 472 utility vehicle that offers seating for four or an extra-long cargo bed. Broyhill has unveiled the TerraSport that offers a segmented cargo area. Toro has upgraded its Workman 3000 and 4000 series utility vehicles by adding new engines. The company has also added front hydraulic disc brakes to its Workman 2110.

### ROOM FOR FOUR

Club Car's new 472 utility vehicle is a four-passenger version of its existing 272 utility vehicle. The 472, however, has a bigger 13-hp engine, a heavy-duty transaxle and bigger gears. The new features also carry over into the 272 model, but the 13-hp engine is optional.

The four passenger seating is also optional on the 472. Instead of the



Club Car's new 472 utility vehicle

extra seating, superintendents can opt for a larger six-foot bed, although the total cargo capacity remains 1,200 pounds. The 472 will cost around \$8,995.

"This provides the superintendent 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."

Packer 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."

### THE ONE-THIRD, TWO-THIRDS BED

Broyhill, an admitted niche manufacturer, has taken its marketing con-



TerraSport has a unique segmented cargo area

cept one step further with its TerraSport, a new version of its existing TerraForce unit.

The TerraSport, however, has a unique segmented cargo bed that allows a tool box, sprayer tank or paint tank to sit between the seats and the separate 1,000 pound capacity cargo bed. The unit has a total cargo capacity of 1,500 pounds and features upgraded four-wheel hydraulic brakes, full suspension and a 16-hp Briggs and Stratton gas engine. Pricing for the vehicle starts at \$8,850.

"The bed configuration allows for a more versatile vehicle that can handle a sprayer or a cooler without interrupting the usage of the cargo box," said Broyhill's sales manager Myron

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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,



Cub Cadet's Big Country utility vehicle

a front bumper, built in storage areas and a 12-volt power point. The unit will cost around \$8,500 and be available from the company's network of 1,700 dealers.

### FACING THE COMPETITION

The top manufacturers, however, said the two new entrants to the market have their work cut out for them.

"They say it is a growing market for them because they have never been in it," said Neil Borenstein, Toro's marketing manager for vehicles. "We have set ourselves apart because we concentrate on

the golf and turf market. We don't build a derivative of an ATV or a golf car or an agricultural machine."

At the same time, Toro and other manufacturers including Club Car and E-Z-GO are looking to expand into the consumer side of the business where they see growth — and also competition from Polaris and Cub Cadet.

"I look at Polaris and Cub Cadet and see good companies, but they don't have the relationships with golf courses and it is questionable that they understand the needs of the superintendent," said Mike Packer, vice president of utility vehicles for Club Car. "Now in the consumer markets like hunting and recreation, they will be a force to contend with."

Both Polaris and Cub Cadet remain undaunted, however. Cub Cadet is planning to introduce another utility vehicle this fall and Polaris' Memmo wouldn't rule out further expansion into the golf course industry.

"We are going to look 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." ■



## Dealing with diving raptors

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raptors (hawks, owls, and their talon-footed relatives) dive at golfers, and what can and should be done, and by whom?

Misunderstanding, fear, irritation and rarely minor injury, such as scratched scalps, have occurred in hundreds of incidents. Consequently, a lot of kites, nests and their contents have been "removed," sometimes fatally, illegally and unnecessarily. This human/kite conflict is not going to go away, and could expand to other states. Plus, diving by other raptors is similar to that of kites in most respects, except other species are not colonial or as numerous as kites, nor are they as likely to nest on or near golf courses.

Since I began my kite studies in 1968, I've found towns with more than 40 pairs of nesting kites, town roosts of more than 50 kites, and several golf courses with about 10 pairs. One, the Altus, Okla., Air Force base golf course, hosted 27 nesting pairs in summer 2000. In the late 1980s the management there established a positive, tolerant approach to the diving behavior. More recently, the approach has been more adversarial, resulting in the removal of dozens of nests and the killing of dozens of eggs.

### RAPTOR FACTS

Diving occurs only when nestlings are present or when eggs are near hatching from mid/late June through July. A majority of nesting kites do not dive, 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 no 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 not 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/wardens.

### 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 only if it appears that diving is unusually problematic or that illegal citizen action to stop diving is likely to result. If all else fails, nestling(s), 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 re-nest very quickly, sometimes nearby. ■

*James W. Parker, 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 Maine, 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 207-778-9437 or aerieeast@somtel.com.*

## New utility vehicle offerings

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Sargisson. "The TerraSport will be a good fit for the golf and sports turf market."

### UPGRADED POWER AND BRAKES

While Toro does not have any brand new products this year, the company has made significant improvements to two of its existing models.

Toro is now offering the Heavy-Duty Workman 3200 and 4200 models with 31-hp gas Briggs and Stratton Daihatsu engines and the 3300 and 4300 models with 26.5-hp diesel engines. The 3100 now comes with a 23-hp Kohler engine.

"The new engines increase its ability to tow and pull loads," said Neil Borenstein, Toro's

marketing manager for vehicles. "The total payload is now up over 2,700 pounds."

The Workman 2110 also features extra cargo capacity thanks to new hydraulic front brakes



Toro added hydraulic front brakes to the 2110

and a more powerful 16-hp Briggs and Stratton Vanguard engine. "The unit can carry 1,200 pounds, where in the past it could just take 800 pounds," said Borenstein. ■

## SurfRax

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and \$80,000 to install and are more costly to maintain.

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." ■

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