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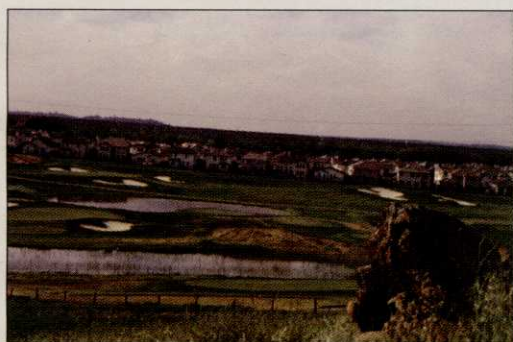
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EMPIRE RANCH'S LONG WAIT IS OVER

Seven years after its initial planning, Empire Ranch Golf Club in Folsom, Calif., is set to open. The project was delayed for a number of reasons, including problems with wetland mitigations and the rocky soil. Despite these obstacles, B and Z Property, working with architect Brad Bell and Wadsworth Construction, finally brought the ClubCorp-managed course to fruition. (see page 14)

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COUNTERPOINT

Yamaha Golf Car to unveil \$31 million factory, '03 model

By A. OVERBECK

NEWNAN, Ga. — In a strong statement of its commitment to the golf market, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) is set to open a brand new \$31 million manufacturing facility dedicated solely to golf cars, utility vehicles and off-fairway vehicles June 8. At the grand opening the company will also unveil its 2003 golf car model — reportedly the first of several new products slated to roll off the production line at the state-of-the-art, 220,000-square-foot factory.

"The first car to come down the line will be the '03

model," said Jon Bammann, division manager of new business development and off-fairway vehicles. "We will also be expanding our utility vehicle line. We feel we have a good medium-duty vehicle in the G21, but there is a spot in our lineup where we could have a heavy-duty and lighter-duty vehicle."

Yamaha officials also hinted at future products that will push golf's staid image.

"We have some fun stuff that we are going to leverage," said Stu Horlak, general manager for Yamaha Motor Co. "We have the



A sneak peak at the 2003 model Yamaha golf car

advantage of bigger markets and more diverse product lines [ATVs, motorcycles, watercraft]. The guys at YGC don't stop thinking with the traditional fleet golf car, [su-

perintendents] have needs from turf care to off-fairway vehicles."

HIGH-TECH FACTORY

To be certain, YGC's significant investment in a

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PGA Village foes face referendum deadline

By DEREK RICE

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Opponents of the proposed PGA Village here were disappointed by the City Council's 9-2 decision to approve a deal with Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corp. to build the resort on land that drains into the Edwards Aquifer, the city's sole source of water.

Hours after the April 5 decision, a coalition of groups that oppose the plan began scrambling to obtain the 68,023 signa-

tures that would be necessary to put the issue to citywide referendum. Under the city's charter, the groups had 40 days, or until May 13 to obtain those signatures, although the interpretation of the charter is open to debate.

"There are a number of different interpretations about what that date

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Editorial Focus: Utility Vehicles

New players enter utility vehicle fray

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MINNEAPOLIS and CLEVELAND — Unfazed by a slowdown in golf course construction, Polaris and Cub Cadet have made a bold entry into an already crowded golf course utility vehicle market.

The two companies are entering unfamiliar territory — Polaris' primary business is in consumer products such as ATVs and snowmobiles and Cub Cadet is a division of outdoor power equipment maker MTD Products. While the new players are still focusing on consumer products, both see a large growth opportunity in the golf market.

Continued on page 10

Easement could spell large tax savings

By DEREK RICE

BRADENTON, Fla. — Despite the human nature to shy away from anything involving property tax valuations and the Internal Revenue Service, golf course management consultant Michael Kahn of Golfmak Inc. believes the financial benefit of conservation easements is



too good to pass up for golf course owners, operators and managers.

Under the program, if a golf course is situated on land that will be dedicated to the golf course forever and will never be subdivided or built

on, an owner can go to a recognized

Continued on page 24

'The Skeptical Environmentalist' documents world's improving state

Golf industry could learn from alternative perspective

By JOHN STRAWN

Inspired in part by a plan to refute the optimistic environmental views of the late American economist Julian Simon, a young Danish political scientist named Bjørn Lomborg set out in 1997 to assess the scientific basis for the more familiar gloomy scenario. He expected to prove that the environmentalists' "litany" predicting a future dominated by overpopulation, resource depletion, accelerating rates of species extinction, deforestation, air pollution and mass starvation—catastrophes that, taken together, had inspired an overwhelming popular sense of impending cataclysm—was based on scientifically reliable data.

What Lomborg discovered instead, he reports at length in "The Skeptical Environmentalist," is a world which sustains more and more people in longer, healthier, better lives, especially those of us living in the developed world. In Lomborg's view, we're not rushing pell-mell toward the apocalypse, but instead are learning to deal with the effects of the pressures we've placed on the environment, in part by public policy, in part by the use of new technologies. The green revolution in agriculture—which has had major



Bjørn Lomborg

transfer effects in the turfgrass industry—has produced enormous increases in crop yields. Despite its growing population, for example, India is now a net exporter of grain. Better crop breeding combined with inexpensive fertilizers has dramatically increased yields, which in turn reduces pressure on marginal land.

Most episodes of mass starvation in the modern world are the result of political crises, not shortages of food.

Lomborg's data, gleaned mainly from official documents of national governments and United Nations agencies, show that the total calories available per capita have grown rather than diminished even as the total world population has increased.

In short, the "litany," while pointing toward real problems, does not fairly or accurately summarize the state of the world. Chapter by chapter, subject by subject—energy depletion, food production, global warming, toxic pollution, water use—Lomborg presents a summary of the state of the environment that is far less pessimistic than the standard view. And this is from someone who describes himself as an "old leftwing Greenpeace member"—not an ideologue from

a conservative think tank.

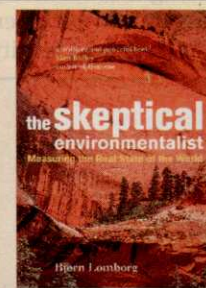
Lomborg's analysis is not easy to summarize, especially given how thoroughly most people believe the premise of the litany. He is not claiming that there are no environmental problems, but rather that the way we perceive short-term trends effects our political judgements and the solutions we will seek. Anyone working on land development in the United States knows that public policy based on the litany can stop even the most environmentally appropriate project in its tracks. In the phrase of a previous writer on these topics, Greg Easterbrook, it is as if the only solution to continued deterioration of the global environment is to stop the world at "a moment in time," despite the fact that the natural world is in a constant state of flux.

Lomborg's views have been ferociously attacked by both the environmental movement and scientists who specialize in problems such as global warming and biodiversity, whose work Lomborg had the audacity to evaluate and question. *Scientific American* magazine, for example, recruited four specialists to refute Lomborg. Stephen Schneider, a Stanford University professor whose expertise is global warming, expressed his fear that "laypeople and policymakers ... could well be tricked" by Lomborg's scholarly apparatus into thinking that he's right and the specialists are wrong. But Schneider also acknowledges that "we could be lucky and see a mild effect or unlucky and get the catastrophic outcomes" of global warming, so his crystal ball isn't quite so clear either, and arguing from authority—"I know more than you...."—isn't the same as refuting the facts. Schneider's argument instead smacks of self-serving elitism.

In the golf industry, despite the

efforts of groups such as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Audubon International, we face both the bureaucratic version of the litany during permitting processes, and the popular version in general. A

have not come to pass, yet somehow retains his credibility. In 1974, for example, Ehrlich predicted widespread scarcities due to excess consumption by 1985. Instead, every raw material Ehrlich predicted would be in



Bjørn Lomborg, "The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World." ISBN 0 521 01068 3. 515 pages. Originally published in Danish in 1998. Revised English edition published by Cambridge University Press, 2001.

recent *Sports Illustrated* article on golf development in the Carolina low country quotes an opponent of development who says that the coastline is heavily polluted and that "golf courses and their chemicals are the biggest culprits," without attempting to assess the truth of that claim. Everyone "knows" that golf courses pollute. The anti-golf version of the litany says that golf courses make excessive use of pesticides and herbicides, that they pollute groundwater and stream runoff, that they use too much water, and so on. The facts don't sustain this view, either, but when, as representatives of the golf industry, we make these claims, we're regarded too often as self-serving.

Lomborg has, I believe, supplied a plausible alternative point of view to the litany. He does not deny that serious problems exist, but rather asserts that we are better equipped to cope with them than the environmental movement will acknowledge. What's most compelling about Lomborg's analysis is its caution and its refutation of some famous predictions of impending doom. Paul Ehrlich, author of "The Population Bomb," has consistently prophesized disasters that

short supply is readily available and cheaper than it was in 1974.

Lomborg, on the other hand, by suggesting that the world is actually improving in many respects, such as air quality and the efficient use of resources, is denounced as a shameless partisan. This is unfortunate, since my reading of Lomborg convinces me that he is neither partisan nor attempting to speak for a special interest or a political constituency. I believe that he was convinced against his own instincts by what his analysis revealed. I also think Lomborg's hopeful views can help guide us toward a realistic future, which in turn can accommodate development that is sustainable, responsible and environmentally appropriate—that his views can help us shape a future that most people in the golf business clearly desire, as they have shown by their willingness to adopt best practices in resource use and preservation. We just need to learn from him how best to frame a story that is hopeful rather than a prelude to global disaster.

John Strawn is the author of "Driving the Green" and a member of the golf course design firm Robert Trent Jones II in Palo Alto, Calif.

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PGA Village

Continued from page 1

means," said Enrique Valdivia, a spokesman for the Smart Growth Coalition. "We've been assuming we need to have that threshold number at that time."

However, the groups could have as much as 65 days, or until June 7, to come up with the total number, provided some signatures are submitted by May 13. At press time, Valdivia said he was optimistic that the issue would be put to referendum.

"It's going to be tough, but I think it can be done," he said. "It's not impossible."

The groups' opposition is twofold. Because the proposed site sits atop the aquifer recharge zone, which is where additional water from sources like rain and runoff

re-enters the aquifer, there is concern that chemicals from the golf course could find their way into the city's drinking water.

However, that hasn't been the main sticking point, Valdivia said. What has rankled a lot of people is the city's creation of a special tax district for the property. According to Valdivia, that makes public funds available to Lumbermen's for the project, to the tune of more than \$50 million.

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

On the tax issue, the city's hands may be tied. Under state law, the city had to approve the special tax district that will allow

Lumbermen's to recoup money for roads, water, sewer and other improvements to the land.

While some have argued that San Antonio doesn't have the demand to support another golf course (see story on page 14), Valdivia said his group doesn't think that argument is relevant.

"The PGA would be the crème de la crème of golf courses nationally," he said. "Before we reached this point, a number of us felt that we don't want to be put in a position to say we don't want the PGA. It's really a concern that we don't want the PGA over our recharge zone."

The planned resort will include three golf courses, two luxury hotels and more than 3,000 residential sites. A spokesperson for Lumbermen's was not available for comment. ■