

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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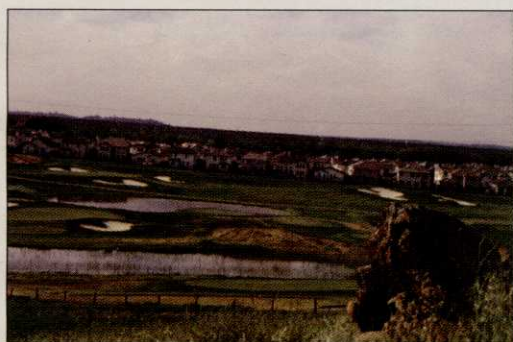
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#### EMPIRE RANCH'S LONG WAIT IS OVER

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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PERIODICAL

## POINT

Damian Pascuzzo and Walter Uihlein square off over the impact of improving golf ball and club technology.

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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.

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## 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

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## 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,

Continued on next page

### 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



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

## Editorial Focus: Utility Vehicles

### 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." ■