

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Architect Damian Pascuzzo and the NGCOA's Jay Karen debate the need for municipal golf.

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COUNTERPOINT

Comm'l Bancorp fortifies its golf lending practice

By DEREK RICE

DUBLIN, Ohio — Around the first of the year, Commercial Bancorp, which specializes in golf course lending and financing, plans to bring some clout to its already respected practice, according to CEO Steve Mooney.



With the hiring of several people with many years of experience, the company plans to further establish its existing process for helping potential buyers know what to plan for when seeking funding for golf projects.

"We've gotten with some people who are at the highest level they can be as far as putting a process together and who have been very successful with Fortune 10-type companies," Mooney said. He declined to identify who those people might be or what companies they may come from.

The company has spent the last year fine-tuning the education process they go through with potential borrowers, said Commercial Bancorp's Jerry Cummings.

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Editorial Focus: Wetland Management

Wetland issues delay Shelter Harbor project

Course to break ground after long permitting process, many 'significant' routing changes



An artist's rendition of the wetlands-challenged Shelter Harbor Golf Club.

By DEREK RICE

NEWPORT, R.I. — Nearly three years after the permit process commenced, Shelter Harbor Golf Club is set to break ground this month. Permitting in Rhode Island is usually difficult, said architect Michael Hurdzan, who designed the course.

"We've worked in 30 or 40 states at this point, and I would say Rhode Island is the most difficult state to get permits in," Hurdzan said. "They have a very small parcel of ground that they fiercely protect."

The major cause for the delays

centered around the property's hundreds of acres of wetlands, Hurdzan said.

"We went through the normal identification, avoidance and all that, but they would continually find more wetlands," Hurdzan said. "Each time we did a wetland survey, they would find more, so there was never a definitive wetland survey until someone finally said, 'Stop, we have to have a map that we work with.'"

"This was the most complicated and litigious permit process that

we have been through. It was a large tract of land, it was in two towns and it had a lot of different issues," he added.

Another wetlands related issue

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LandLogic puts GPS mapping in supers' hands

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Technology entrepreneur Larry Robinson has rolled out an affordable and highly portable Global Positioning System (GPS)-based facilities management system to help superintendents become more efficient.

Robinson's company, LandLogic, gives superintendents the power to create a GPS map of their own courses that can easily be updated through a pocket PC. The company sends GPS mapping equipment to a course for 10 days, the superintendent and his staff map the course and then send the equipment back to LandLogic. The company creates the maps, loads them onto a desktop computer and a



Superintendent Kevin Hicks at Hillcrest CC in Boise, Idaho, said LandLogic lets him spend more time in the field.

pocket PC and sends the package back to the course. The whole process takes around three weeks and costs \$7,000.

"We realized that superintendents don't have accurate course maps because they are prohibitively

expensive," said Robinson. "You can bring a GPS mapping firm out and easily spend \$20,000 and still have to escort a technician who is unfamiliar with golf courses around the facility. We decided to build a mapping technology that was simple enough for courses to do it themselves and cut out the

cost of the middle man."

The software is highly customizable, allowing users the ability to enter in exact information about each course feature. "You can tell it exactly what kind of

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IGM expands westward

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance (IGM) is expanding westward with the opening of new business development offices in Dallas and Phoenix. It is also moving its West Coast headquarters from Los Angeles to Las Vegas.

The contract maintenance company currently has four courses in the region and plans to add more.

"Our parent company, Meadowbrook Golf, is looking to acquire courses out West, so we thought it would be a good fit to increase our presence in these year-round golf markets," said IGM vice president Scott Zakany. "We had a presence out here, but our people were focusing on operations and business development at the same time."

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LandLogic gives GPS capabilities to superintendents

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irrigation head you are mapping and what brand and type it is," Robinson added. "It is tailored to your course. If a head is added or moved any time down the road, the superintendent can adjust the map accordingly so the map stays current and doesn't become obsolete."

HELPS KEEP OPERATIONS ON TRACK

Superintendent Kevin Hicks at Hillcrest Country Club in Boise, Idaho, has been helping Robinson test the software package for the last year.

"I had never even used a pocket PC, but it was pretty self-explanatory. We mapped 7,500 points in 10 days," said Hicks. "We mapped the entire irrigation system, all trees, all buildings and all utilities. We had an irrigation system on our first nine that was more than 30 years old and that map was very sketchy. Now we know where everything is and when we tweak the system during the season we can easily update the map."

"It was very helpful for us because we host a Buy.com Tour event and I was able to go out and create a map of where I wanted gallery ropes and port-a-potties," he continued. "I created that, printed out the map and the tournament director knew exactly where things needed to be. That is a real time-saver."

In addition to creating accurate maps and work orders for staff members, the system can eliminate paper record-keeping and improve communication.

The map allows superintendents to accurately quantify how much material to use on a given area, and keeps records of how much has been used to help keep inventory up-to-date.

"Since spot-applications are more common, we have enabled users to circle an area on the map and instantly get the square footage to calculate how much material they need," said Robinson.

Superintendent Travis Blamires at Troon North Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., has been using the system since August and plans to map the amount of *Poa annua* he has on each green.

"We will be able to quantify how much *Poa* we have on each green and then be able to quantify how effectively chemicals are treating the problem," he said. "Before you had to guess, now I can quantify it, and draw up a map for the spray tech and send him off to do spot applications more accurately."

Superintendents can also record audio notes and create schedules on the pocket PC as they make their morning rounds. Once back in the office the maps and notes are all transferred to the desktop PC. When the irrigation technician or assistant superintendent comes in and docks to the PC, the notes and work schedules are instantly added to their pocket PCs so they know what tasks need to be completed. The pocket PCs have removable 128-megabyte memory cards that can hold up to three years of data.

All notes, records and changes to the maps are stored on the unit and can provide powerful information to the superintendent.

"He can keep track of labor usage and chemical inventor and he can calculate how much active ingredients he is putting down. All that information can be isolated down to specific areas on the golf course," said Robinson.

INFORMATION STAYS AT THE COURSE

Another reason Robinson developed the

LandLogic system was so owners and management companies could prevent all the agronomic knowledge from leaving the facility when a superintendent moves on to another job.

"I got the idea when I was a member at Desert Highlands GC and we lost our superintendent John Szkliński to Southern Hills CC," said

Robinson. "We took a real hit in terms of agronomic standards because when he left, all the agronomic knowledge left with him. I wanted to create a better way for superintendents to record information to insulate owners and management companies from the investment that they make in superintendents and their expertise."

Robinson is slowly introducing the product and hopes in three years' time to

have 10 percent of all superintendents using LandLogic. Both Troon Golf and IntraWest Golf are currently doing pilots at their premier facilities.

"Education and understanding are the biggest barriers, not price," Robinson said. "We de-emphasize the technology because superintendents don't have a great relationship with many of the software products they use. They are generally perceived as complicated and unreliable so they assume we are no different. Instead, we provide them with a basic service and give them the tools to grow at a pace they are comfortable with. This is very much a crawl, walk, run approach." ■

'We can quantify how much Poa we have on each green and then quantify how effectively chemicals are treating the problem'

— Travis Blamires

49th Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show



Cover photo: Derf Soller, "Elk" Nine at Breckenridge Golf Club

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