

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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**INSIDE****Bayer ES unified for 2003**

The integration of Bayer and Aventis CropScience is complete and the firm is set to introduce a bevy of new products ..... 3

**Growing the game locally**

Little Thunder Kids Golf Course is a kid-sized course in Ohio that hopes to set up an endowment to let kids play free ..... 5

**COURSE MAINTENANCE 9**

- Dobie uses See Snake to solve drainage problems
- Returning superintendents find tough job market
- Tools of the Trade at Workman's Cateechee GC

**DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION 13**

- Maine ski resort to build golf course in 2003
- Course Crafters makes the case for Billy Bunkers
- Architect Spencer sells firm, finds job security

**COURSE MANAGEMENT 21**

- Course owner discovers life after American Golf
- Interstate Cos. hires owner-operator for sales, consulting
- Cincinnati taps Billy Casper Golf to manage seven courses

**SUPPLIER BUSINESS 24**

- E-Z-GO unveils new MPT utility vehicle line
- Underground reel market still developing
- Rain Bird to introduce Eagle wireless rotor

**POINT**

Kevin J. Ross, CGCS, and Audubon International's Kevin A. Fletcher debate the value of Audubon's certification program.

Page 6

**COUNTERPOINT****GCSAA Show Section ...17****Rebranding: Textron to go with Jacobsen**

By ANDREW OVERBECK

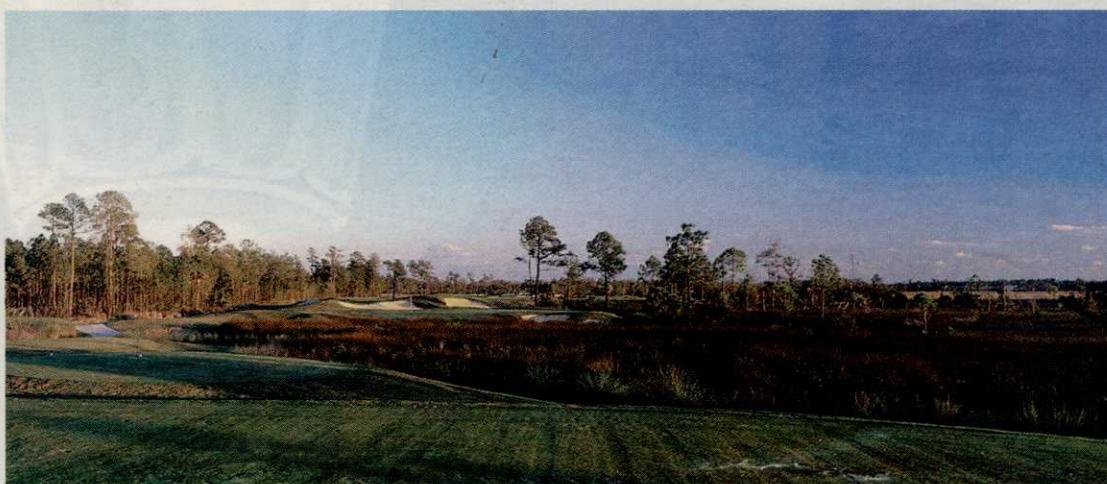
CHARLOTTE, N.C. — As part of its second rebranding strategy in as many years, Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products has changed its name to Jacobsen Turf, Commercial and Specialty Equipment. The company will officially announce the name change and introduce several new products at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Show in Atlanta this month.

Last fall, Textron adopted orange as its flagship color to visually unify its four major brands: Jacobsen, Cushman, Ryan and Ransomes.

The recently announced rebranding strategy will go much deeper than the paint job. The Cushman and Ryan names will be folded into the Jacobsen brand, joining the Ransomes products that were rebranded last year. For the first time, commercial landscape products will also be branded Jacobsen.

"We did some research over the last year and a half that indicates there has been fragmentation in

Continued on page 26

**Palmer Design gets boost in 2002**

The 8th hole at the Palmer-designed Rivertowne Country Club outside Charleston, S.C., which opened last year.

By DEREK RICE

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Despite the amount of negative news coming out of the golf course industry, 2002 was a banner year for Palmer Course Design, according to Erik Larson, the company's vice president and general manager.

The company experienced larger than average revenue increases last year as compared to 2001, Larson said.

"It wasn't just double-digit growth, it was 25 percent in revenue," he said. "We picked up two new markets — offshore construction and we've also started a remodel program that

has been very helpful."

Larson also said the company expects revenue growth in 2003.

"We're going to have a good year this year too — good being up from last year," he said. "What percentage I can't predict, but I would say it's going to be in the five to 10 percent range, and we're comfortable in that prediction."

While the offshore market has been lucrative of late, Larson said it is often unpredictable and lags behind trends in the United States.

"The offshore market is always herky-jerky," he said. "When things go down here, it tends to pick up there because they follow the trend that happened here a

couple years prior."

The company's remodel program, called Charger Series, is a new addition to its menu of services and has seen a very positive response, Larson said.

"With this program, the improvements are endorsed as

Continued on page 15

**Court ruling puts Gotham Golf future in limbo**

By DEREK RICE

HERSHEY, Pa. — The last several weeks have seen the fortunes of a Gotham Golf Corp. merger with First Union Real Estate Equity and Mortgage rise and fall on almost a daily basis.

At press time, the merger seemed as far from a done deal as it has been since it was first discussed nearly three years ago. The Wall Street Journal reported that William Ackman, co-head of Gotham Partners Management Co., a \$300 million hedge fund, announced to investors that he and partner David Berkowitz were shutting down their fund. Ackman also said Gotham Golf,

**Deere to test hydrogen fuel cell technology**

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MOLINE, Ill. — As part of an effort to explore alternative fuel options across all of its product lines, Deere & Co. has partnered with Canadian fuel cell manufacturer Hydrogenics Corp. to develop a modified Pro-Gator demonstration vehicle that uses a hydrogen fuel cell.

The project is being handled by Deere & Co.'s new ePower Technologies Group that was set up last year to evaluate alternative fuel technologies and see how well



An engineering diagram of Deere's hydrogen-powered Pro-Gator

these technologies to a variety of our products and some of the first

candidates are going to be some of our golf equipment like mowers and utility vehicles," said engineer Bruce Wood,

director of the ePower group. "These are products where the hydrogen fuel cell can do something better than a diesel engine or a battery. The technology has made enormous strides in the last couple of years."

Wood said Deere turned to Hydrogenics because they are a leader in

Continued on page 25

## Deere testing hydrogen-powered Pro-Gator

Continued from page 1

hydrogen fuel cell development. General Motors owns 24 percent of the publicly traded company.

"Hydrogenics is becoming a major supplier of small portable fuel cells under 100 kilowatts. We are putting a 20-kilowatt system in the Pro-Gator," said Wood.

### DEERE SORTING OUT ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES

Deere anticipates that using a hydrogen fuel cell will allow for a more simplified and technologically advanced vehicle.

"Where you had mechanical linkages with chains and sprockets, now you run power cords to motors," said Wood. "This gives the operator the ability to control things more carefully. With electrical controls you can start and stop things almost immediately. You can't do that with mechanical controls."

The technology would also replace hydraulic systems, eliminating the concern of fluid spills and the resulting turf damage on golf courses. The system has the added benefit of being entirely quiet and producing no pollution.

Wood said the use of hydrogen gas as fuel is completely safe and less dangerous than gasoline. Maintenance facilities could easily store the fuel on site.

The technology still has some drawbacks, however.

The largest disadvantage at this point is cost. Deere & Co. said the price of fuel cells is coming down rapidly and that by the time production could begin, the cost could be comparable to a current Pro-Gator, especially once tax-incentives are factored in.

Another potential pitfall is range.

"One of the problems that you have with hydrogen is that to have enough fuel to have all-day range requires a lot of space," said Wood. "If we put it on a mower that you expect to run all day, you may have to refuel halfway through."

According to Wood, fuel cell technology will eventually move to solid hydrogen which will give vehicles extended range because it allows more fuel to be stored on board.

### PRODUCTION COULD START IN FIVE YEARS

While the demonstration vehicle will be ready this spring, Wood said production of a hydrogen fuel cell-powered vehicle is five to eight years away.

Before committing to production, however, Wood will be working extensively on the demonstration vehicle.

"We need to figure out how you put the system in without

altering the vehicle design," he said. "Then we will demonstrate it and see what kind of reactions we get and see what works and what doesn't."

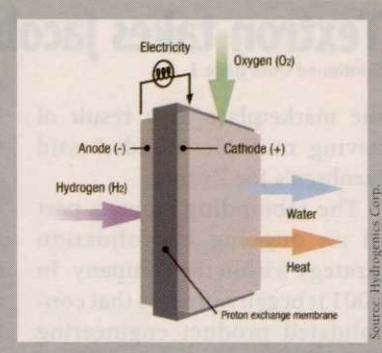
In addition to hydrogen fuel cells, the ePower group is also testing hybrid power systems and what Wood called "high-performance batteries." ■

## How a hydrogen fuel cell works

Most people know that hydrogen is a cleaner source of energy, with the only byproduct being heat and water. However, *Golf Course News* turned to John Deere's Bruce Wood to explain exactly how the hydrogen fuel cell produces electricity.

"The fuel cell is a powered battery," said Wood. "It uses a

proton exchange membrane that has a platinum catalyst. When the hydrogen molecule is forced through the membrane, an electron is stripped off. That is what creates the electricity. On the other side of the membrane, the hydrogen ion combines with oxygen to form water."



Source: Hydrogenics Corp.

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