E-Z-GO revamps utility vehicle line

Rain Bird to unveil Eagle wireless rotor

Kubota files trademark infringement suit against Kioti
Textron takes Jacobsen name, introduces new products

Continued from page 1

The rebranding move is part of an ongoing consolidation strategy within the company. In 2001 it began a process that consolidated product engineering and design, sales, marketing and customer service and support into three locations. The turf care division operates out of Charlotte, the utility vehicle division is based in Augusta, Ga., and commercial grounds care is based in Johnson Creek, Wis. As part of this strategy, the firm also streamlined product lines and reduced costs in manufacturing, distribution, procurement and warehousing.

While Zvanut said the consolidation process is still ongoing, he added that the company will count on several new products to drive its growth in the golf market. Among the products that Jacobsen will be introducing in Atlanta are two new walk-behind greens mowers.

The patented E-Walk electric greens mower uses two 48V electric motors that independently drive the ground speed and clip frequency. It uses snap-in/snap-out sealed battery backs and is lighter than a comparable gasoline-powered unit.

"It is pollution-free and noise-free," said Zvanut. "And it has no oil or hydraulic fluid. This is a growing market segment. Depending on the size and un

Mihailides, Reelcraft developing market

Continued from page 24

projects," he said. "We need to get consultants and distributors involved to help the product." However, since irrigation sales depend on slimmer and slimmer margins, Mihailides is finding it difficult to penetrate the market with such a cost-prohibitive product. While it is difficult to argue the convenience of having an underground, constantly pressurized hose next to a green to control hot spots and localized dry spots, it has been difficult for some superintendents to get past the price point.

"Our underground reel costs $1,450 with a 75-foot hose attached. A quick coupler, pressurized isolation valve, hose and fittings costs $400 and the hose can be used all over the course," said Mihailides. "So there is a price difference. But we are also saving courses labor, time and wear and tear on equipment. "This keeps the hose right at hand and saves water because you only have to water as much as is needed," he continued. "Instead of sending four or five guys out to hand-water all day long, one guy can do it."

Product benefits aside, Mihailides realizes that he has a challenge ahead.

"We have a brand-new product and no competition," he said.

One way he hopes to build awareness is to produce private-label products. "That way," said Mihailides, "superintendents won't say 'Why should I buy this' but 'Who should I buy it from?' In a move to expand the product line beyond underground reels, Reelcraft has introduced a trailer-mounted reel to allow golf courses to more easily transport hose around the golf course. The unit hooks into the back of a utility vehicle.

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Wireless rotor

Continued from page 24

identification information via a handheld device. That information is then transferred to the central control system, allowing the rotor to be operated with the central control. Rain Bird's Freedom System, or manually. Pricing for the wireless system has not been released.

According to Sakurai, the wireless rotor will offer many advantages when it comes to renovation work.

"Wireless technology provides the necessary installation flexibility and makes retrofits and additions simple," he said. "There is no turf damage from trenching, limiting downtime in play."

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Continued from page 24