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 they fit into the company’s plans for future products,” said Erik Larson, 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 26

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 they fit into the company’s plans for future products.

“We are learning how to apply 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 Power 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

Palmer Design gets boost in 2002

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

The business newspaper for the golf course industry