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No. 1 Priority
Superintendents with smaller budgets focus on their greens.

ALSO: Golfdom Reader Putting Greens Survey

BY SETH JONES, JOHN WALSH, JOE SELL AND GOLFDOM STAFF

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By Steven Tingle

Online Exclusive
Stop by the Golfdom Daily (www.golfdom.blogspot.com) to see more than 1,000 responses to our putting greens survey.

About the cover
Aaron Ripplinger of the Toro Co. snapped this shot at Town & Country Club in St. Paul, Minn., where Bill Larson is the CGCS.

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Superintendents and manufacturers have held their breath for an economic recovery for five long years. Now, they can begin to exhale, ever so slightly, as the industry starts to show signs of a comeback.

National Golf Foundation (NGF) Senior Vice President Greg Nathan is encouraged by the positivity he’s hearing from leaders in the industry. And, thanks to the mild winter, the past four months have shown double-digit year-over-year rounds gains, he said.

Ihms, who’s also secretary/treasurer of the GCSAA Board of Directors, said Country Club of Little Rock has kept records on play since he arrived in 2006. This year, he said, “we experienced the biggest January and February of any of those years. There’s been more activity out on the golf course, and encouraging to me, more interest in our junior golf program for the summer.”

Another positive sign, golf attrition finally is tapering off. According to the NGF, the game’s losing players at a much slower rate than in the recent past. In 2011, NGF stats show, golf lost 400,000 players, a 1.5 percent drop from 2010. That’s a mere shadow of the mass exoduses of 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, when the game lost 1.5 million and 1 million golfers, respectively.

Equipment manufacturers also are noticing improvement. “2009 fell off the map — for everyone,” said Grant Young, Toro’s Director of Marketing. “Since then, things have rebounded, simply because sooner or later, people have to buy or replace equipment.”

At Jacobsen, meanwhile, “more than 80 percent of our territories are reporting a year-over-year increase in sales,” says Jacobsen Vice President of Sales Ric Stone. “We are cautiously optimistic about the rest of the year.”

Also “cautiously optimistic” is John Deere Marketing Manager Mark Ford. “A lot of courses have been deferring maintenance well, and they now have the reassurance to seriously consider purchasing,” he said.

“It’s a little early to draw any definite conclusions,” Ford continued. “But we’re encouraged. There was a positive feeling at the Golf Industry Show that everyone felt, and we don’t feel that was a mirage.”

NGF research “has shown that golf has emerged from previous recessions pretty quickly,” Nathan said, “and there are good reasons to expect a similar pattern this time.”

Whether golf is making a lasting comeback is “TBD,” Young said. “The key to the future will be getting players into the game and keeping them.”
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• Overcomes conventional rate controller limitations.
• Addresses operation limitations.
• Provides "As-Applied" mapping that can be saved as permanent file.
• Provides on-demand drift control.
• Reduces spraying time significantly.
• Reduces chemical costs up to 30%.
• Improves coverage and turf appearance.
• Delivers greater spraying operation efficiencies.
• All in a manner that's better for the environment.

A spray system so good it'll pay for itself.

Projected Annual Savings on $50k Chemical Budget

Low Speed Overspray Overlap Total Over Application Savings Savings Potential

(up to) $1,250 (up to) $12,500 (up to) $1,250 $15,000

This is what the future of spraying looks like.

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Forget everything you know about spraying. The new Smithco Star Command System changes everything.

The brains behind the Star Command System is the Smithco-Capstan® SharpShooter® plus... the SharpShooter Electronic Control, two nozzles and solenoid valves at each nozzle location TO LET YOU SPRAY FROM 2 TO 10 MPH. You can realize significant reductions in spraying time without compromising quality.

INSTANT ON AND OFF BOOM TIP CONTROL
SharpShooter controls the “ON” and “OFF” spraying function RIGHT AT THE TIP. Shut off is instantaneous. The flow and pressure are retained in the boom at the tips so there is instantaneous flow at the proper pressure when the boom is turned on.

ON-DEMAND DRIFT CONTROL
Operator selects a lower pressure providing bigger droplets and fewer driftable fines. Application is maintained independent of this pressure change.

A Raven Envizio GPS Pro® shows the application as it's applied and Raven Switch Pro® controls each nozzle. You'll see on the monitor an “As-Applied” map of the application as it is being created by the GPS-guided sprayer’s individual nozzles. They will automatically and instantly shut off over areas that have already been sprayed and automatically and instantly turn back on over unsprayed areas. “As-Applied” maps can be created and named for each fairway. Then each map can later be downloaded to the office computer as a permanent record of the application.

• Reduces chemical costs up to 30%.
• Improves consistency of chemical coverage leading to better turf health and appearance.
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3 integrated modules make the hard-to-believe happen.

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• Save up to 30% on chemicals annually!

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• The lowest center of gravity ever built into a spray vehicle.
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• 31 hp twin-cylinder air-cooled engine. More power than anyone.
• 200 gal/757 liter tank, constructed of chemical-proof fiber reinforced polystyrene, chemicals kept in suspension by the Smithco Quad-Jet Agitation System.

Spray Star 3180
(Identical to the Spray Star 2000 except for the tank size and engine.)
• The tank is low and sleek and has a capacity of 318 gal/1,203 liter tank, constructed of chemical-proof fiber reinforced polystyrene, Smithco Quad-Jet Agitation System.
• 35.5 hp/26.6 kW three-cylinder diesel engine. Power to spare.

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A spray system so good it’ll pay for itself.

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<th>Low Speed Over Application</th>
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<th>Total Potential</th>
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This is what the future of spraying looks like. And only has it. NOW!
Off The Fringe

Phipps Joins GCSAA Staff

BY BETH GERACI

David Phipps rises every day at 4:15 a.m., as he has for years. It’s hardly an unusual ritual for a golf course superintendent. The thing is, Phipps isn’t a superintendent anymore.

After 20 years in golf course management, and an impressive 12-year run as Stone Creek Golf Club superintendent, Phipps has joined the GCSAA as its Northwest Region field representative.

“As I weighed my career options, I thought it would be a logical next step for me professionally,” Phipps said. “It just seems to fit with what I’m so passionate about.”

In his new position, Phipps takes one of his most notable passions — the environment — to the doorstep of chapters throughout the region. Phipps won the GCSAA’s 2011 President’s Award for Environmental Stewardship and is a five-time winner of the GCSAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

Now, he advises superintendents throughout the Northwest on environmental initiatives. He’s also responsible for promoting the association, reaching out to members and empowering chapters to connect with their communities.

Phipps was impressed by the GCSAA on a 2004 business trip and in 2008 began contemplating a career with the association. “Being in Lawrence, you buy in really quick,” he said. “Because you realize how strong the association is, in terms of friendliness and organization. I think our leadership at GCSAA is phenomenal right now.”

But for Phipps, saying goodbye to Stone Creek wasn’t easy. “Stone Creek is my baby,” he said. “I built that thing.”

He’ll be back, often — as a guest.

Syngenta’s Bell Retires

It was a stellar run, but after 35 years at the company, Syngenta marketing communications manager Margaret Bell retired May 4.

Bell launched her Syngenta career in the Chemicals Group, switching to Ag in 1980. She’d worked in marketing communications in Syngenta’s Lawn & Garden Group since 2001.

Bell “has been a trailblazer in our industry in many ways, and her business savvy, contacts and knowledge of the golf, lawn care and landscape markets will be difficult to replicate at Syngenta,” said Syngenta Turf and Landscape Territory Manager Lee Bloomcamp.

“Nothing was more important than getting the job done — and done right,” added Walt Osborne, Syngenta’s key account manager for national golf accounts.

Bell was active in many Green Industry associations, especially the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA), of which she served as vice president for nearly 12 years.

She will savor most the camaraderie she felt in the golf industry. “A lot of times I’ve been the only minority and only woman in the group, and I didn’t even notice it,” Bell said. “That’s pretty good, to know you’re around people who are all good folks. I will miss that more than anything.”

A DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS

Joe Stribley, superintendent at Yellowstone CC in Billings, Mont., recently spotted an unusual sight. “It was dark, I thought, ‘what the heck is that?’” he says. “I shined my headlights on her... it’s the first time I’ve ever seen an albino deer.”
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Professionals across the country who selected Dismiss® herbicides for their sedge control last year have been amazed by the fast visible results they achieved. But they’re also experiencing an exciting and unexpected difference this season: a significant reduction in new sedge populations.

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