

TEXTRON



Steve Chicken

A threat to jobs at Textron's Ipswich headquarters has receded following a review on the future viability of the manufacturing facility.

In the last few weeks Textron initially announced that the review "may potentially

place some jobs at risk" and added that "the company will be working with its workforce and relevant interested community agencies in the review. The study does not affect the Sales, Marketing, Customer Service or Engineering parts of the company".

The initial statement, by Steve Chicken, Textron Managing Director continued, "Uncertainty in the worldwide golf and municipal markets, as well as tough global market conditions, has increased the difficulties of maintaining financial performance. We need to find ways of more efficiently delivering our brands to our customers and maintain competitiveness in an aggressive marketplace."

However, despite such an ominous warning there was better news when the review was completed and Steve Chicken was able to make a much more positive announcement a few weeks later.

In the statement he said, "It has quickly become clear that we can serve our European customer base best by maintaining our current manufacturing facility, as such

the Ipswich plant will not close. We shall continue to produce the municipal and European golf-related products in the Ipswich plant. We shall continue to improve efficiencies within the manufacturing process by adopting contemporary world-class automotive practices as employed in our American factories.

This is good news for everyone associated with the company and the news was unanimously welcomed by the entire workforce and enthusiastically embraced by the local Trade Union representatives and community leaders.

"The decision to continue with production in Ipswich was strongly supported by our American parent company. We have secured the future financial success of Ipswich with an aggressive plan for the sales of our products over the coming months and years. The continued support of our dealer network, who have been particularly positive over the past few weeks, to make these plans a reality is a key factor. We intend to continue to produce top quality turf equipment for the global marketplace from the Ipswich site as well as from our facilities in the USA.

"The current range of golf and municipal products built in Ipswich today will continue unaffected with the exceptions of the Multi-mower, the T-Plex 180, the Triple 18 and the Greens Super range which will be discontinued as stocks run out during the months ahead.

"As I said in my previous statement, we remain totally committed to the Ransomes brand and to Ipswich as a base for manufacturing, selling, supporting and designing high quality products for the worldwide market."

RAIN AT ST ANDREWS

Recent excessively wet weather has had a noticeable effect on the numbers of rounds of golf being played at St Andrews Links. After last year's new record of 215,000 total rounds, this year seemed to be following the same path - until June. With 50% more rain than usual for June, the number of rounds played at St Andrews in June was down by 7% on last year, with the decrease affecting both local and visiting golfers.

Figures for the first six months of 2002 show an overall 2% decrease in golf primarily as a result of fewer visitors, as play by local golfers is up by 1%.

"The weather is clearly deterring casual golfers and last minute visitors," explained Peter Mason, external relations manager at St Andrews Links Trust.

"Even the ballot for the Old Course has been relatively quiet so golfers who are happy to play whatever the weather have a better chance than usual at this time of year of getting a tee-time."

Golfers who have ventured out in between downpours will have noticed the effect of the heavy rainfall on the courses as there has been more than the usual greenkeeping activity taking place at the world's most famous golfing venue.

"The greenkeeping teams have had to concentrate on managing the rough including invasive plants such as clover, which is more difficult to spray effectively in wet weather," explained Gordon Moir, Links Superintendent at St Andrews.

"We have had strong winds which displace the sand in the bunkers resulting in many hours spent reshaping and restoring the bunkers. The courses are more lush and greener than we would like. On the bright side, it only takes a few dry and breezy days to firm up the greens to traditional links standards."

NEW AREA MANAGER FOR SCOTTS



Gary Smith has joined the Scotts Company (UK) Ltd as Turf & Amenity Area Manager for Scotland, Cumbria and north Northumberland.

Gary began his career working as a greenkeeper in Scotland having qualified some 12 years ago. He subsequently changed role

to take on sales positions - notably for Scotts distributors Stewarts - in fertilisers and chemicals for the sports and amenity turf, local authority and landscape industries.

He is a keen sportsman, playing golf regularly and holding a black belt in Taekwon-do.

AVONCROP AMENITY PRODUCTS LTD

Avoncrop Amenity Products Limited has announced that Richard Aitken of Richard Aitken (Seedsmen) Limited has become a Shareholder and Director of the Company.

The appointment is seen as a strengthening of the two companies relationship and market positions. Both Companies have recently launched the "Award" brand of granular and liquid fertilisers and hold similar distributorships. Mr. Rod Feltham who will remain Managing Director of Avoncrop Amenity Products Limited said "This joint marketing venture will result in further developments of innovative products and services that will be offered to Turf Managers across mainland UK. The move will give real benefits to the industry, not only for our customers but our suppliers as well. We are very excited for the future".

NATIONAL TURFGRASS FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

As an entertaining addition to the National Turfgrass Foundation Conference in Southport from November 18-21, a Ryder Cup-style match is being organised for American superintendents and European greenkeepers.

A party of superintendents from some of the major courses in America is attending the Conference and will be playing in the Match on November 22. Captained by Melvin B. Lucas CGCS, past-President of the GCSAA, they hope to beat the European Team, strongly captained by BIGGA's inaugural Chairman, Walter Woods BEM, past Links Supervisor at St. Andrews. The two Captains may even look on it as a return match after an American victory in 1980 at Anaheim, California when GCSAA members played SIGGA members under the same captaincies. This could be as much of a needle match as this month's clash at The Belfry!

Sponsored by Bernhard & Co in their support of the National Turfgrass Foundation, the event should prove to be great fun, despite the inevitable competitiveness. Attendees at the Conference who would like to be considered for the European Team should contact Martyn Jones on +44 (0) 1995 670675 or Louise Clegg on +44 (0) 7759 755844 or Email: NTFoundation@aol.com.

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