

Car association's Inman sees major challenges

BY MARK LESLIE

The new president of the National Golf Car Manufacturers Association believes the industry is about to experience the greatest growth it has ever seen.

Club Car Inc. President George Inman, who was elected president of the organization at its annual meeting, foresees an upbeat year both at home and abroad as golf popularity booms.

The golf industry faces the "challenge and opportunity" of meeting the demands of growing numbers of golfers, and this "brings a great opportunity to everybody who is supplying anything such as golf cars to the industry," says Inman.

Saying that golf course builders cannot keep up with the growing demand for courses, Inman said the industry will see "more crowding and more difficulty in getting on courses, and so I see that as being the biggest challenge and it's a great opportunity for everyone supplying the needs."

Citing the National Golf Foundation's finding that one golf course a day is needed between now and the year 2000, Inman said, "Take that type of growth alone, multiplied by the number of golf cars that are normally put on a new golf course, and you can extrapolate that into better growth for the golf car industry — on new business alone — than it has ever seen in the past."

Inman said the average fleet of new golf cars for a full course is between 55 and 70.

While in the past, many courses added two or three cars a year, "golf cars are now a part of the game," he said. "They are the tre-

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mendous revenue source, and they're needed, and courses start out with a full complement."

He said many of the courses, especially the resort courses, and many of the upscale minicourses want the image of good equipment.

"Golfers don't want to play on junk; they want to play on nice new equipment, so they (courses) are starting right off the bat with a full complement of new cars, which is good for our business," Inman said.

Inman also sees "tremendous activity" overseas.

"We have had more interest in international sales in the last six to 12 months than we have in all my history in the business," he said.

"And that's all the way from the East to the West and all over. Europe is getting ready to

really bust open. There's no doubt about that."

Inman said the entire golf car industry is upbeat about this year and the future, especially because of its members' love for the game.

"If the members ever allow ourselves to get selfish then the association will disband," he said. "We'll lose that spirit, the camaraderie that is there, the sport that we are all interested in."

Rossi doesn't expect that to happen. Rossi said the golf car manufacturers are "good people ... always looking at the best interests of golf."

Rossi pointed out that all the companies are doing independent research on compaction of the ground and materials for golf paths. They also stand behind self-imposed manufacturing standards they established

Golf car makers' 1989 officers

NGCMA's new slate of officers includes:

President: George Inman, president of Club Car Inc.

Vice President: Todd Sauey, president of Columbia ParCar Corp.,

Secretary-Treasurer: Don Rossi, the association's executive director.

10 years ago, and support the National Golf Foundation and other golfing organizations.

"The whole industry creates a spirit that is really healthy," Inman said.

An Augusta, Ga., native and resident, Inman has been involved in the golf car business since 1961. He worked with E-Z-GO for 16 years, the last several as vice president of operations. In 1978 he and seven other E-Z-GO employees led a purchase of Club Car, and he took over as vice president of operations for 10 months until becoming president, chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

Since his group bought a major minority of the publicly owned Club Car, it has grown twenty-fold. It has grown from 75 employees to more than 600 and now controls 30 percent of the golf car market with 135 outlets that sell the cars throughout the United States and in 26 foreign countries.

Fertilizer Institute elects Geise chairman of new officers

Al Geise is the new chairman of The Fertilizer Institute, Washington, D. C.

His and other elections came during the association's recent annual meeting at New Orleans, La. More than 1,000 industry representatives attended.

Geise is vice president of plant

food, Cenex/Land O'Lakes, St. Paul, Minn.

Al Rouse, president and chief operating officer of Terra International, Sioux City, Iowa, was elected vice chairman. Gary D. Myers, Washington, D. C., was re-elected president and chief staff officer.

Others elected to the executive

committee were: Philip Ashcraft of Agway in, Syracuse, N. Y.; Michael Hochgesang of Jasper Plant Foods Warehouse in Jasper, Ind.;

Also, Herbert Kirby of Arcadia in Parsippany, N. J.; Richard Norton of Allied Signal in Morristown, N. J.; Charles Seaton of Kaiser Estech in Savannah, Ga., and

Dean Travis of J.R. Simplot in Pocatello, Idaho.

Billie Turner, IMC Fertilizer, Northbrook, Ill., immediate past board chairman, is an ex officio member.

Other Washington staff officers re-elected were: Ford B. West, vice president, government relations;

Thomas E. Waldinger, vice president, public affairs, and Harold W. Hale, vice president, administration and secretary-treasurer.

With Hale's announced plans for retirement later this year, the board elected P. Whitney Yelverton to assume Hale's position effective June 1.

USGA awards \$660,300 in grants

The United States Golf Association has announced a record \$660,300 in grants this year as part of its turfgrass research program.

This is an increase of more than \$190,000 over 1988.

The program, now in its seventh year, is a cooperative venture shared by the USGA and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The USGA now has provided nearly \$3 million in grants in an attempt to develop new turfgrasses and management techniques that will reduce golf course maintenance costs and water use by 50 percent by 1993.

Grants will be awarded in 1989 for 19 projects to many institutions for studies involving turfgrass breeding, cultural practices and the USGA Turfgrass Information File at Michigan State University.

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