

## Conference Report

## Self-audit 1st-year report card: 'Very favorable'

BY PETER BLAIS

"Very favorable" is how Hall-Kimbrell project manager Steve Wharton describes the first-year response to his company's environmental self-audit program.

Courses in 34 states have taken part in the Environmental Compliance Assistance Program since it was launched in February 1989.

"That speaks well of the superintendents across the country and their awareness of their environmental responsibilities," said Wharton.

Still, there are those who have not heard of the program and its potential to help courses comply with environmental, health and safety laws. But that is changing.

"The program was almost ahead of its

**The response 'speaks well of the superintendents across the country and their awareness of their environmental responsibilities.'**

— Steve Wharton

time last year," said Wharton. "People weren't thinking about environmental issues as much as they are now."

There were also misconceptions about the program, many of which have been dispelled over the past 12 months, according to Wharton. Among them:

- *It would be a struggle to get course boards of directors to approve the self-audit.* In reality, nearly 80 percent of the boards have been strongly behind the program and 15 percent weren't opposed if the superintendent was in favor.

- *The program wouldn't address a course's particular situation.* Over 90 percent of the superintendents participating have in fact commented that all their issues were addressed. Another eight percent wrote that the audit included all but one of their problems.

- *The cost (\$725) was too high or superintendents didn't have authorization for the additional expense.* Actually, cost and authorization have not been issues. This spring's incentive plan lowering the price to \$600 for courses signing up by May 1 has left many

superintendents with extra cash in their budgets for other compliance projects.

- *It will take too much time.* Superintendents have more often said they don't have the time not to participate. The 600-question audit and the final report (usually returned to the course within a month) have allowed superintendents to organize their thoughts and provided an educational tool. In three-fourths of the cases, superintendents have been able to implement any proposed changes themselves, instead of relying on expensive, outside help. And completing the audit presents the course to the public and governmental agencies in a very positive light.

"It allows a course to be pro-active rather than re-active," said Wharton. "If a government agency sees that a course has made a good-faith effort toward complying with the law, it is more likely to issue a warning rather than just automatically levy a fine."

The most common recommendations contained in the audits have involved health and safety issues, worker protection, underground storage tanks and pesticide safety.

"Some of the changes have been simple and inexpensive, like moving where you store something from one part of a room to another or putting up a safety sign. Others have been more complicated and expensive, like building a new type of facility or removing a tank. The advisories don't discriminate as to cost. But the cost of non-compliance generally far exceeds complying," explained Wharton.

Wharton said the program has produced some major accomplishments during its inaugural year, including upgrading superintendents' awareness of their environmental responsibility; providing a program recognized by insurance companies that can lead to premium discounts; allowing re-certification credits for superintendents; and being required as part of the remedy at New Jersey courses where state enforcement of laws is necessary.

"Overall, we're very happy with the way things went this past year," said Wharton. "It's given superintendents a way to figure their way through the complex information coming out today."

## CONCRETE NOW REPLACES ASPHALT!

With the Concrete Path Paver you can install concrete paths for less than the cost of asphalt construction.



- Neater, Cleaner, Faster.
- Custom-built concrete paver designed to pour paths and sidewalks.
- Eliminates form work while reducing labor as much as 80%.
- Capable of placing and finishing 10 yards of concrete in three minutes in paths of 4-12 feet wide.

Call or FAX today for free estimate or more information.

**(800) 833-3014**

(904) 746-3130 FAX (904) 746-4006

**Southern Concrete Pavers, Inc.**

3210 W. Woodthrus St. • Lecanto, FL 32661

Patent #4,878,778

For free information circle #158

Reach 20,000  
Decision Makers  
at Every Golf  
Facility  
in the Country

The closing date for the  
May issue of *Golf Course  
News* is April 13th.

Call Charles von Brecht  
today to schedule your  
advertising in the news-  
paper of the golf course  
industry.

**GOLF COURSE  
NEWS**

(813) 576-7077

# We've got you



**Sonar® covers your ponds  
against weeds.**

Sonar cleans your ponds and lakes of problem weeds such as milfoil, duckweed, hydrilla, waterlily and pondweed for one year or longer.

And Sonar won't harm the environment. No restrictions on swimming, fishing or drinking after application. Its selective control allows desirable vegetation to establish itself as habitat for water life.



**Team™ covers your course  
against weeds.**

Team preemergence herbicide lets you take a season-long vacation from weeds with split applications. Controls tough weeds such as crabgrass, goosegrass and suppresses oxalis and spurge. Without harming your turfgrass—even sensitive bentgrass.

You can either spread it straight in granular form. Or spread it on fertilizer available from leading formulators.

Find out more. See your Elanco distributor. Or call toll-free: 1-800-352-6776.