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GOLF COURSE NEWS

PULL-OUT SECTION
Int'l Golf Course Conference and Show
Pages 37-44

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INSIDE

Mother Nature gets nod

Superintendents giving more importance to biologicals and biostimulants in their turf care 22-23

Reno out of dormancy

Resort course first in 20 years at Nevada's Lake Tahoe area. 32

Handicapped children

Florida man turns retirement time into teaching time with school children 33

Blenders a perfect mix

Course construction companies find perfection a necessity in blending soil mix for greens. 14

USGA awards millions in research project grants

By Peter Blais

Pesticide and nutrient fate along with alternative pest management are the primary focus of the 15 research grants the United States Golf Association has decided to fund as part of its most ambitious research effort ever.

Contracts potentially worth a total of almost \$2.8 million over the next three years will soon be offered to 15 colleges and universities, said USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

Some schools are involved in more than one project.

Certain projects, especially those involving pesticide and nutrient fate, will take three years to complete, he added. Some could continue farther into the future.

Requests for bid for another \$300,000 in research money dealing with golf

course benefits will be made this winter. The USGA's Environmental Research Committee will select the successful proposals at its March meeting, Snow said.

The research committee met in early December. "It
Continued on page 25

Japanese continue investments

By GCN staff

Landmark Land Co.'s anticipated sale of the bulk of its golf and resort assets for approximately \$739 million is just the latest of dozens of

Japanese golf facility acquisitions in the United States that have put that country's financiers at the forefront of U.S. golf ownership.

According to Mead Ven-

tures, Inc., of Phoenix, Ariz., which provides information on international business, 120 golf course developments totaling about 160 courses in the United States

were owned wholly or partly by Japanese companies or their U.S. subsidiaries before the Landmark purchase.

The Mead total includes
Continued on page 57

GROWTH OF COURSE TYPES IN U.S.

Year	Municipal	Daily Fee	Private
1983	2032	5915	5137
1984	2056	5961	5164
1985	2090	5968	5196
1986	2098	6004	5251
1987	2122	6025	5289
1988	2135	6203	5288
1989	2166	6296	5276

See related page 1 story on municipal courses.

Source: NGF

COURSE MAINTENANCE

UTS rules violators being fined 17
Club Corp. takes no chances 17
Jo-Ann Ward gives course feminine touch 18

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Pesticides lone hold-up at Sherman Hollow 29
Course listing shows work continuing 30
Supers give Dakota Peat rave reviews 34

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Recession is "beatable" at nation's courses 57
Landmark on verge of joint venture deal 57
Johnson Golf expands role 57

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Lesco opens distribution center 60
Appointments fill managerial spots 60
VanderHave USA buys Adikes 62



The River Islands Club course, designed by Arthur Hills, plays on both sides of the French Broad River and on two islands in between. It opens for play this spring. For more information on golf course development see pages 29-33.

Communities finding munis money-makers

By Bob Seligman

A growing number of communities are building municipal golf courses to earn money and provide recreation for their residents.

According to Angelo Palermo, vice president of golf course development for the National Golf Foundation, 125 municipal courses were in planning last Dec. 1, as

opposed to 85 at the end of 1989.

Seventy-two municipal courses were under construction by Dec. 1, 1990, as opposed to 63 at the end of

1989. Thirty-six new municipal courses had opened in 1990 by last Dec. 1, one more than opened in all of 1989.

Continued on page 45

Beard urges: Speak out on benefits

By Peter Blais

Dr. James Beard exhorted superintendents and others at December's Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show to speak out on the "unfounded" attacks against the turfgrass industry.

Although turf is beneficial in many ways, it is coming under severe pressure at local, state and national levels by special interest groups ranging from tree and ornamental organizations to water conservation interests to anti-

pollution forces. "Trees, shrubs and turf go together," Beard said. "We've got enough problems from other groups without the tree and shrub people coming out against turf. It
Continued on page 48

Beard declares: Inform the misinformed

Continued from page 1

doesn't make sense. Unfortunately, they don't have the facts and the turf group does. A lot of the stuff they put in the newspaper is being proven incorrect and their credibility is going down the drain."

"It's important you speak out on behalf of the turfgrass industry and its contributions to counter some of the unfounded accusations and fantasies concerning turfgrass. If you people don't start doing it out in your own communities, I don't know who is."



If anything, it's man who wastes water. And that's where the solution is, not in cutting back on turf areas.'

— Dr. James Beard

FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS

Turf has many functional benefits in addition to being attractive, the college researcher said.

Among them are soil erosion control; dust stabilization; heat

dissipation; noise abatement; glare reduction; reduced runoff of precipitation; ground water discharge; entrapment and biodegradation of pesticides and other chemicals; atmospheric pollution control; con-

version of carbon dioxide emissions; safety in vehicle operation; facility security for military and other key installations; reduced fire hazards; reduction of noxious pests.

Turf opponents tend to focus on a single issue when they attack the grass industry rather than looking at the whole picture, Beard said.

Specifically, turf is the most inexpensive and durable ground cover available, Beard said. Recent Pennsylvania State University studies show lawns absorb rainfall six times better than a wheat field and

four times better than a hay field, being exceeded only by a virgin forest in its ability to trap water. A study of a 200-acre Eastern U.S. golf course showed it contributed more water to the water table than it extracted for irrigation.

Turf is especially valuable in urban areas as a filter for the chemicals and residues that wash off the streets and eventually into ground water. Turf also uses much less water than trees, shrubs or flowers.

"Where are the great grass lands of the world? They are located in the semi-arid climates. The extensive tree growth is in the higher rainfall areas. If anything, it's man who wastes water. And that's where the solution is, not in cutting back on turf areas," Beard said.

The overall temperature of urban areas is 10 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than surrounding rural areas. Grass, through the cooling process of evapotranspiration, helps dissipate the higher heat levels and cool urban areas. On a typical August day in College Station, Texas, irrigated turf temperature was 88 degrees, dry bare soil 102 degrees, unirrigated turf 126 degrees and artificial turf 158 degrees, he said.

"The value of evaporative cooling is very, very substantial. No other surface offers that type of capability. It's been calculated that a football field has the cooling capacity of a 70-ton air conditioner. The cooling capacity of turf can result in substantial energy savings," Beard said.

Being a rough surface area, turf absorbs noise and reflects light in many directions, reducing glare. A 70-foot grassed area mowed at four inches along a roadway reduces noise by 40 percent, Beard said.

Turf is very effective in trapping runoff and airborne particulate matter. "Nothing, other than a virgin forest, is better," Beard said.

Turf's extensive, fibrous root system adds organic matter to improve the soil. That supports living organisms in soil that reduce pesticides and improve ground water quality. Most of the nitrates added to soil are taken up by the fibrous root system, except when the plant is dormant.

Nuisance pests like snakes, rodents, chiggers and mosquitoes are reduced in maintained turf areas. They prefer higher grass and woodlands, reducing the need for pesticides and other chemicals to control them in maintained turf areas. Organisms living in turf areas also provide a food source for birds.

In terms of economics, lawns have a positive impact on employees that translates into higher productivity, Beard said.

Holland, the most densely populated and one of the more productive countries in the world, makes extensive use of turf, trees and ornamentals, Beard pointed out.

"Then you go to other countries that are far, far less productive and harmonious," he said. "You see the



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Beard ——— Navy to build course in Lemoore NAS

By Peter Blais

The U.S. Navy plans to seek bids from private companies to build and operate an 18-hole, championship golf course at the Naval Air Station at Lemoore near Fresno, Calif.

If Congress approves the project, which Navy Golf Program Manager Roger Patrick expected it to do in late January, the Navy will send out requests for proposals on the course, clubhouse and driving range.

The master jet base at Lemoore was selected for this unusual joint

military/civilian venture because of the base's stable population, the area's shortage of public golf opportunities and the availability of land along the base's perimeter, which could allow for civilian access to the course.

The Navy hopes the project will excite private developers, despite their lack of interest in renovating and managing the course at the Naval Air Station at Cecil Field near Jacksonville, Fla.

"Things just didn't match up at Cecil Field," Patrick said. "What the industry wanted back was more

than we were willing to give up."

The major sticking points at Cecil Field involved greens fees, civilian access and the timetable for renovations.

"We wanted the capital improvements up front rather than phased in slowly. The course did 47,000 rounds last year, so it wasn't a fire sale. The course will just make the improvements itself," Patrick said.

The Cecil Field project became less attractive to private developers because courses recently built in the Jacksonville area diluted the

market, Patrick said.

Too many courses shouldn't be a problem at Lemoore, where the nearest public course is a 45-minute drive.

Building a new course eliminates any capital improvement problems. And the possibility of civilian access should make Lemoore more attractive to private developers, Patrick said.

Golf is a profitable business for the Navy. The service's 59 courses showed a net profit of \$5.2 million in 1990, up 16.5 percent from the year before.

RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

Recreational benefits of turf include better health of participants, protection against injury and a low-cost playing surface.

A \$1 million injury lawsuit has been filed against a town because it didn't maintain adequate turf to protect the plaintiff from injury. The cost of maintaining the turf would have been far less than the lawsuit, Beard argued.

The cushioning effect of natural turf has not been duplicated on artificial turf. Grass still supplies greater protection against injury, and at a much lower cost than artificial surfaces, Beard said.

In urban areas, town officials often contend they cannot afford to build recreation areas for inner-city youth because it is too expensive.

"But in the long term, what happens when you put these kids out on the street day after day after day. There's something about green grass that has a positive impact on the attitude of people versus hard, concrete streets.

"We say we can't afford green, recreational areas. And yet we'll turn around when a certain percentage of those people become part of the criminal element and spend great amounts of money putting them in jail for many years.

"What about some front-end investment to protect these kids and save the expense of ever having to put them in jail."

ORNAMENTAL BENEFITS

Turf provides ornamental benefits, complementing trees, shrubs and ornamentals. That's why, Beard said, he finds it so frustrating when the tree, shrub and ornamental people work against the turfgrass industry.

"They need to get back with us in speaking out on the overall benefits of landscaping instead of having active programs trying to reduce one segment of the industry," he said.

Other ornamental benefits include improving beauty and aesthetics, mental health, social harmony, work productivity, physical health and quality of life, especially in urban areas where 85 percent of Americans live.

"Properly maintained lawns and recreational turfs contribute a diverse array of benefits that make turfgrass one of the best friends of urban environmentalists and greatly enhances the quality of life," he concluded.

"...Watertronics saved us money and time."



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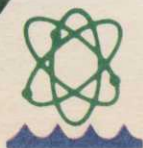
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