

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## Congress controls fate of military courses

By PETER BLAIS

The battle brewing over control of the military's 240 golf courses could be settled in early 1993.

That's when Congress is likely to act on Sen. Dennis DeConcini's (D-Ariz.) bill to turn operation of the facilities over to private management companies and open them to the public.

Management companies, most notably American Golf Corp., are lining up behind the idea, claiming DeConcini's Senior Government Officer Benefit Limitation Act will provide public golfers with more places to play, improve services at the government layouts and make more money for a fiscally strapped federal government.

The Pentagon is generally opposed, arguing that opening the courses to private managers and public play would jeopardize security at sensitive military installations, deprive service men and women of a well-deserved benefit and reduce funding for non-profit activities currently subsidized by golf course revenues.

"Golf courses are something the military is involved in that they don't need to be," said Shannon Brown, a DeConcini staffer.

Countered David Moffett,

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## Subsurface injection

The race is on!

By MARK LESLIE

Gentlemen, start your engines. From Saskatchewan to Nebraska researchers are racing to market the first workable piece of equipment to inject liquid chemicals below the surface of the turf.

Ransomes America of Lincoln, Neb., displayed a prototype of its Liquidator at the last international golf conference, and hopes to have a working model at January's show. Rogers Innovative Inc. of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is testing its Liquid Pulse Injector (LPI) at the University of Guelph and intends to unveil it at the Green Industry Expo in mid-November in Indianapolis. And Pattison Brothers Agro Ltd. in Lemberg, Sask., hopes for positive test results so that it can display its Spoke Injector at the Canadian Turfgrass Conference and Show in late November.

Meanwhile, Toro has made adjustments to its HydroJect aerifying unit to render it useful for injecting chemicals just below the surface.

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Rogers Innovative Inc. created this wax-cast image by shooting molten wax into the ground, then washing the soil away to illustrate how pressure fractures the ground. While this cast is 18 inches deep, chemicals would be injected 1-2 inches below the surface.

## BIG-small partnerships in vogue

By HAL PHILLIPS

Aeromix Systems Inc. of Minneapolis and Otterbine/Barebo Inc. of Emmaus, Pa., have a lot in common. Both firms are members of the golf course industry, providing complete lines of water aeration products. Both are small — Aeromix has 24 employees, while O-B counts 27 on the payroll. And both have been approached by The Toro Company to form partnerships, whereby Toro would mar-

*'Toro doesn't have five years to develop an aeration line. They need it today.'*

— Peter Gross, president Aeromix Systems Inc.

ket and distribute their products.

Here the similarities end, however. Otterbine/Barebo turned down the offer and

Aeromix accepted it. Last spring, Aeromix and Toro agreed to offer a line of aquatic systems products and services under the Toro brand name. Financial terms were not disclosed.

This sort of BIG-small relationship has become increasingly common in the golf course industry, as petite companies seek the marketing and distribution power offered by megafirms — and these

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## Fazio part of \$10 billion Malaysian deal

By MARK LESLIE

A \$10 billion theme park, centered around eight golf courses, is about to be undertaken in Malaysia, according to sources.

An Italian developer reportedly has brought together the Italian and Malaysian governments and private money to build the facility.

It is expected to eventually include 24 hotels with 1,000 rooms each. Develop-

ers, who have been working on the project for the past 18 months, expect the park to draw 150,000 people a day.

American golf course architect and builder Jim Fazio of Juno Beach, Fla., has been contracted to organize the golf construction. He will design two courses and sign others to design the six remaining layouts on the 300,000-acre

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Jim Fazio

## Deere honored for mower design

CHICAGO — The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design has recognized three John Deere mowers for their excellence in design, as part of the museum's Good Design program.

The three mowers included the F1145 commercial front mower, the LX188 lawn tractor, and the model 320 lawn and garden tractor.

The Chicago Athenaeum Museum defines the art of design in a multi-disciplinary fashion. Architecture, industrial and product design, graphics and urban planning are all taken into account. The museum sees its mission as the advancement of public education about the value of good design, and how design can have a positive effect on people.

"John Deere human-factors engineers, working with our industrial design partners, have been practicing ergonomics for decades," said Myron McCunn, manager of Advanced Machine Concepts at the John Deere Technical Center in Moline, Ill. "That's the science and the art of designing machines that are comfortable for people to operate. We strive to make the practical also aesthetically pleasing."

More than 200 designs were submitted for the 1992 Good Design award program.

•••

In other John Deere news, the company has announced a warranty extension. Beginning with the 1993 models, the warranty period will be two years, unlimited hours for John Deere F900 series wide-area front mowers and the F1145 front mower. The warranty for personal use continues unchanged: two years, unlimited hours.

## Royalties from NuMex Sahara benefit NMSU

LAS CRUCES, N.M. — Royalties continue to accrue from sales of a seeded Bermudagrass developed at New Mexico State University.

Third-year sales of NuMex Sahara, sold exclusively by Farmers Marketing Corporation of Phoenix, have generated royalties of \$102,187 for New Mexico State. The New Mexico Crop Improvement Association (NMCIA) recently accepted the check

at NMSU's Gerald Thomas Hall.

"The major portion of that royalty will be distributed back to NMSU's Agricultural Experiment Station for research and other distribution within the College of Agriculture and Home Economics," explained Charles Glover, MMCIA administrative officer.

NuMex Sahara is designed for use on golf courses, sports arenas, parks, play-

grounds, military bases, cemeteries, home lawns and highway rights-of-way. The grass has been planted in 17 states and more than 40 countries.

The Bermudagrass variety is noted for its drought tolerance, dark green color and medium fine texture. NuMex Sahara, which was developed after more than 20 years of NMSU research, was designed not to grow as tall as other Bermuda strains.

## BIG-small partnerships

Continued from page 1

megafirms look to use their name recognition to carve a larger piece of a growing market.

Does this sort of agreement make the golf industry healthier? Or does the one-stop-shopping mentality threaten competition?

Answers, of course, depend on who's issuing them.

"It's great for us — we make money," said Peter Gross, president of Aeromix. "A company like Toro, this behemoth, can do a lot of things very well. But there are a lot of niche markets they can't reach very well. Entering into the partnership with us is a way for them to get at those niche markets."

"Toro profits indirectly by our profiting and expands its involvement in a field it's already involved with."

Gross indicated the recognizable red & white of Toro was very important to the agreement. "How do you compete with the Toro brand name?" he asked rhetorically.

According to Charlie Barebo, president and CEO of Otterbine/Barebo, Toro approached his firm about "seven or eight years ago" looking for a partnership or buyout agreement. O/B declined and now finds itself competing with the Toro brand name.

It that intimidating?

"Hell, yes!" Barebo said with a laugh. "Here we are, a family-owned business up against a company selling \$1 billion worth of product. I don't feel threatened by it, but I'm alerted by it. It's made us more competitive. It's made us a better company."

"The big advantage we have, as a small company, is we make decisions very quickly and implement them very quickly. We also have a loving relationship with our distributors. Now, not all of our distributors would say that. But we consider them family, and we're going to use that to beat the hell out of Toro."

Barebo is quick to point out, however, that all firms reach agreements of this type, though not necessarily on the same scale. The relationship between O/B and its distributors is also a partnership, he pointed out.

"Seventy percent of all our distributors are also Toro distributors, all independently operated," he added. "And the feedback we're getting is, they're happy with our product and service. Many aren't taking on the Aeromix line."

Gross and Barebo disagree on many things, but they agree the golf industry will witness the creation of similar partnerships with increasing frequency.

Last spring, Toro added Bio Humatics, a bio-tech liquid fertilizer manufacturer, to its list of "junior partners." This year alone, biosys — a small producer of biological pesticides — has forged separate marketing relationships with three heavy hitters in the chemical industry, Ciba-

Geigy, Archer Daniel Midland and Sandoz.

"The bottom line is, it's an efficiency strategy," explained Adrienne Ste. Marie, product manager for Palo Alto-based biosys. "By aligning ourselves with Ciba-Geigy, for example, we reach more people. There are 50 people in our company, but only two salespeople. Ciba-Geigy has 18 to 20 [salespeople]."

Ste. Marie also indicated the alliance with Ciba-Geigy gave biosys instant credibility. If an established company like Ciba-Geigy invests time and money, customers can be sure biosys isn't selling snake oil, she said.

Before joining biosys, Ste. Marie worked in the pharmaceutical industry, where BIG-small partnerships thrived. While they've been more common in the bio-tech portion of the golf course industry, expect to see more BIG-small agreements in the turf and machinery sectors, she said.

Barebo already sees this phenomenon sweeping the American economic landscape. In Barebo's 13 years with the company, O-B has been with four different banks. "And all of those relationships dissolved because these little banks were purchased by big banks," he said.

"I think it's definitely a trend," said Gross. "All you have to do is look at today's world. They just built a Walgreens next to my house. They sell pizza now!"

"You have to realize you can't develop all this stuff on your own. There isn't enough time in the marketplace anymore. Toro doesn't have five years to develop an aeration line. They need it today."

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