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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Pebble Beach Co. takes effluent plunge

By HAL PHILLIPS

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — The Pebble Beach Co. has seized the effluent initiative by financing a \$34 million reclaimed water project that will eventually irrigate every golf course on Monterey Peninsula.

The undertaking will provide approximately 800 acre-feet of reclaimed wastewater to irrigate the courses and other open space areas in Pebble Beach. Included on the project checklist are a new tertiary treatment plant, improvements to the

existing plant, new pump house, new storage tank and 7.5 miles of pipeline weaving its way through some of golf's greatest golf courses.

According to Ted Horton, director of golf course operations for all eight Pebble Beach Co. courses, the project was not foisted on anyone.

"The water situation here has been very tight, by virtue of seven years of drought," Horton explained. "The company

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Effluent pipe is laid along the 14th fairway at Pebble Beach Golf Links.

Field burning on decline in Oregon, but not in Idaho

By HAL PHILLIPS

SALEM, Ore. — Grass growers and government agencies here are working to create new markets for the tons of straw that had been ritually burned each fall until legal restrictions made field burning an increasingly less viable option.

An Oregon Department of Agriculture program will soon dole out nearly \$250,000 in "seed money" in hopes of creating alternative uses for this leftover straw. The department has already received proposals to conduct research on creating paper pulp, mulch, soil amendments and feed.

"The state is really trying to find a market for these guys who can't burn anymore," explained Bruce Pokarney of the Department of Agriculture. "I think the seed industry has been very

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Behind every great golf course architect...

By MARK LESLIE

America loves heroes. That's the case in golf course design as it is in politics and war. And, just as behind every great man there is a great woman, behind many great course architects are great lead designers.

Yet, who are these people?

Donald Ross is credited with designing more than 300 golf courses. But who ever heard of Walter B. Hatch or Henry T. Hughes?

Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s name is on

more than 450 golf courses. But who outside the industry has heard of Roger Rulewich? The marquee at more than 80 golf courses names Tom Fazio as architect. But who knows of Andy Banfield and Tom Marzolf. Or Jan Beljan and Dennis Wise?

The "man (or woman) behind the man" is often a major reason "The Man" is famous. But what are the rewards, why do they stay with "The Man," and when, if ever, do they move on?

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NOT-SO DANDY

Combating dandelions is the subject of this month's product feature on post-emergent herbicides. Page 20.

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Kemper, AGC wrangle over city contract

By PETER BLAIS

CHICAGO — "We don't operate like the rest of America," said Erma Tranter, referring to the political wheelings and dealings that seemingly pervade every undertaking, including golf, in the Midwest's largest city.

Tranter is executive director of Friends of the Park, a watchdog agency that oversees the Chicago Park District's activities.

She and losing finalist American Golf Corp. are upset about the park board's decision to forego a competitive bidding process for the contract to privatize its six courses, two practice ranges and miniature golf facility, which together lost \$403,000 last year.

AGC claims it offered the
Continued on page 34



A LEDGE WITH A VIEW

Eagle Crest GC, a new David Rainville design in Escondido, Calif., is the latest addition to GolfCorp's client list. Page 31.

Chicago management controversy

Continued from page 1

Park District a better deal than winning candidate Kemper Golf Management Chicago Inc. and was frozen out of the bidding process by city politics.

Park officials and Kemper contend both followed the rules and that Kemper's offer equaled or bettered AGC's.

Kemper President Steve Lesnik bristled at the political influence charges, stating Kemper's offer was within 10 percent monetarily and superior in terms of market-

ing and outreach to under-served golfers. Lesnik even claimed an AGC employee tried to bribe Kemper to drop its bid and then hired a lobbyist to contact all board members.

"AGC wants the entire municipal market to itself," Lesnik said. "We won this contract fair and square."

Jan Green, special adviser to AGC Chairman Craig Price, countered it was Lesnik who requested a meeting with an AGC executive and that any talk of a bribe was

"categorically a bold-faced lie. Mr. Lesnik has a way of greatly mistating facts. Our goal is to be the best management company in the U.S. We are aggressive. But we operate on a level playing field."

The controversy stems from the District Board's decision to send out Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) in December but never seeking more detailed Requests for Proposal (RFPs). Instead, it awarded a five-year contract April 12 to Kemper, over the objections of Tranter and AGC.

Tranter said the action defied city codes, which require competitive bids to ensure the best deal for the district, taxpayers and golfers.

"We support the RFP process and competitive bidding around the country," Green said. "Whenever you abrogate the RFP process, you do a disservice to golfers, taxpayers and the municipality. It's obvious in this case that a disservice was done to the people of Chicago."

Park officials and Kemper disagreed, contending a formal bid process wasn't required for a specialized service like golf course

management.

The District Board also said it did not have time to conduct the more formal RFP process with a spring opening looming for its golf facilities. AGC's Green countered that the RFP process could have been conducted in 72 hours.

Crain's Chicago Business on May 10 reported that the man who negotiated the contract for the district said he made a mistake. General superintendent Robert Penn failed to return several calls to *Golf Course News*, but told *Crain's*: "If I had it to do all over again, I would have done an RFP."

•••

Chicago is not the only city to ever rely strictly on RFQs and forego more formal RFPs.

"I've seen it before," said Brian Gaines, vice president of marketing with ClubCorp of America subsidiary GolfCorp, which ranks second to AGC nationwide in terms of number of public courses (35) managed. "It depends on the needs of the city."

Not requiring RFPs can give a local company an advantage over national firms in gaining a contract, Gaines and Green agreed. Local favoritism is just a fact of life for the AGCs and GolfCorps of the world, both said.

"It depends on the strength of the local companies," Gaines added. "If they are good, they have a leg up on outside competition because they interact with the decision-makers on a more frequent basis. If they aren't as qualified, that factor is negated."

"We often see local favoritism," Green said. "That's to be expected. It's just that in Chicago, it's more blatant."

"A RFP doesn't guarantee that a community will hire the best candidate. But it's the best system we have."

As for the contract itself, the Park District reported that over the next five years, Kemper has guaranteed the District:

- \$1 million in cash lease fees;
- \$1.2 million in capital improvements;
- \$250,000 in capital reserve funds — under Park District control — for golf course improvements;
- 50 percent of net operating income, which the District estimates at \$550,000. Kemper will also provide financial reporting and its own liability insurance.
- Limits on greens fee hikes, retaining much of the current staff and subcontracting work to minority- and women-owned businesses.

Green said AGC's offer, reportedly made four weeks before the contract with Kemper was signed, guaranteed an extra \$1.5 million over five years—\$2.5 million overall compared to Kemper's \$1 million — and equaled or bettered the other aspects of Kemper's bid.

Lesnik responded that Kemper's deal could potentially mean more money for the Park District than AGC's offer and was superior in other areas.



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