

Ariz. turfgrass research takes a legislative blow

By MARK LESLIE

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Arizona's green industry was "blind-sided" by two powerful legislators and saw the proposed assessment on golf rounds die in a state Legislature committee here. State Rep. Aldridge, R-PreScott, held the bill in committee until time ran out.

"We thought it was going to be the floor for a vote. It was a snafu that blind-sided us," said Mark Clark, president of Cactus & Pine Golf Course Superintendents Association. Similar to assessments that have been successful in the citrus and farming industries, the bill would have created a Commodities Group to fund turf research and public golf course development.

University of Arizona's Karsten Turfgrass Research Center would have been a major recipient. And Clark said, "That leaves our high-tech research facility hanging without any cash."

"It was an eye-opener. The scariest part was that the legislators

treated us very poorly," he said. "The worst part is not the bill itself. It's not the work that went into it. It was that a message was sent very clearly by our representatives in the state of Arizona that golf is not important enough to worry about. Had the cattlemen's association or cotton growers or Farm Bureau come up with this, they [legislators] would have bent over backwards to support it.

Green industry representatives who have actively backed the legislation were to meet to decide what to do now, if anything.

"It may die right here," Clark said. "Or we may start this again next year and it may be a slam-dunk. But we will need money for a lobbyist."

Clark said \$5,000 remains in the till, but a renewed effort next year will cost another \$40,000 or so.

A leading lobbyist donated his services this legislative term. To hire a lobbyist next year will cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

LIVERMORE, Calif. — The proposed Poppy Ridge and Wente Bros. golf courses have passed environmental impact studies conducted by Alameda County planners. The projects were found to have minimal effect on air quality, water and wildlife. Planners will compile a final analysis, with public input, to make recommendations to the county's zoning administrator. Poppy Ridge is a 27-hole Rees Jones design and the Wente Bros. proposal an 18-hole layout designed by Greg Norman.

CHICAGO, Ill. — The Illinois International Port District is creating a golf academy, practice facility, and course atop a landfill on the Southeast Side. The golf academy at Dick Nugent-designed Harborside Golf Links should open by May and the 27-hole golf course by spring 1995.

SCITUATE, Mass. — Architect Michael Hurdzan told the golf course study committee a course can be accommodated on a city-owned 120-acre site. Hurdzan offered three options — a full-size 18-hole course, an executive course with driving range or a nine-hole layout. The golf course would cost \$3 million to \$5 million. The proposal must receive a two-thirds approval at a May town meeting before plans can proceed.

MONROE TOWNSHIP, N.J. — The completion of a golf course here by December 1995 is one of many concessions made by Freehold-based U.S. Homes in order to receive Planning Board approval of changes to the original site plan. The former property owner, Union Valley Corp., aborted course construction after four holes. Further course construction could begin by early summer.

LA CROSSE, Wis. — A Common Council committee unanimously endorsed the Alden Corp. of Denver to operate the city golf course after the current lease on La Crosse Country Club expires in November. Alden group won the contract over five other companies. Alden's offer included \$895,000 in rent over five years, lower green fees for La Crosse residents, and continued maintenance at current levels.



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