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At Francisco Grande Resort & Golf Club in Casa Grande, Ariz., superintendent Juan Rascon (right) and head pro Kent Chase work together to shore up the bottom line. See this month's Public Arena, page 54.

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SIGN O' THE TIMES

GCSAA actively pursues public-access members

By HAL PHILLIPS

LAWRENCE, Kan. — To keep pace with changing demographics in the industry, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) is poised to more actively include superintendents at public-access golf facilities.

The GCSAA's newly formed Public Golf Resource Group met in October to discuss ways the association could reach out more effectively to superintendents at daily-fee and municipal golf courses, according to Chief Operating Officer Joe O'Brien.

"We talked about better providing services to our members in the public sector and attracting new members from it," said O'Brien. "The numbers speak for themselves."

Two-thirds of the nation's golf facilities are public access: daily-fee, municipal and resort. The percentage is climbing higher: From 1990 through 1993, 80

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Noise laws drown out bottom line

By PETER BLAIS

SOMERS POINT, N.J. — Rounds are down, overtime pay is up and the prospect of spending thousands of dollars on new equipment is looming at Greate Bay Country Club, all because of the town's noise ordinance here.

Up the coast at Greenwich (Conn.) Country Club, the grounds crew spent many days and lots of money creating a berm to muffle noise from its power equipment to try to keep ahead of the noise laws the suburban New York community is considering.

Farther south, Lochmere Country Club's revenues dropped the past two summers when it was forced to hold golfers off

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GOLF COURSE



EXPO
ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
NOVEMBER 11-12, 1994

A NATIONAL EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE FOR OWNERS, SUPERINTENDENTS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF FACILITIES

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Allied golf associations back Expo

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Hailing public-access golf as the fuel driving golf development and the game's key component, leaders in the industry have high expectations for Golf Course Expo.

The Expo, to be held at Orange County Convention Center here Nov. 11-12, is the only national trade show and conference targeting superintendents, managers and developers of public-access facilities. The U.S. Golf Association Green Section has helped develop the education

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MIRROR, MIRROR...

Who's the fastest growing management company of them all? A strong argument could be made for KSL Recreation, which owns and manages La Quinta Hotel and Resort, seen above. Sixteen months ago, KSL owned nothing. But after purchasing LaQuinta and other high-profile resorts, then acquiring The Fairways Group, KSL has established itself as a player in the ever-growing club management market. See page 43.

Experts decry inconsistent root-zone mixes

By MARK LESLIE

The contractor building a Texas sports field rejects the root-zone materials delivered for construction. The material is then trucked to a nearby golf course under construction, where it is accepted.

This incident, experts say, points to a problem infecting golf course construction: Sand and root-zone mixes shipped to project sites differ — sometimes wildly — from samples approved in soil laboratories.

"It happens all the time," said Dr. Norm Hummel of Cornell University, who spent a sabbatical year in 1992-93 checking the status of the nation's soil testing for the

U.S. Golf Association. "In most cases, it's not intentional. But I'm sure there are situations where some maliciousness is involved."

"This is a tremendous problem," agreed Glen Watkins, president of Root Zone Mix in Muleshoe, Texas, who does quality-control work on sports field and golf course construction. "It can be a total nightmare to go on a job and check the sand and, lo and behold, it's entirely different than what it is supposed to be."

In the wake of court cases over failure of golf greens, course builders and soil

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Indianapolis seeks to privatize muni layouts

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Four of the city's 11 operating municipal courses were targeted most in need of improvement or addition, but the price tag "in the millions" has been tabbed too costly.

City Parks Director Leon Younger said the city will seek proposals from private enterprise to make improvements at three of the courses in exchange for contracts to operate them for 15 years. The city already is negotiating with Ron West, the pro at Winding River. The others are Eagle Creek, South Grove and Riverside.

The pros pay the city a percentage of their revenues. Last year, the pros returned to the

city \$902,000 out of total revenues of \$6.9 million. Under current contracts, money is insufficient to make all improvements. Plans call for adding nine holes to Eagle Creek and Winding River.

The city hopes to install new irrigation systems, upgrade the greens and make new cart paths at South Grove and Riverside. Each project will cost more than \$1 million.

Indianapolis businessman James O'Connor has proposed buying all 12 municipal golf courses for \$25 million. One course, Coffin, is not in operation.

Noise laws

Continued from page 1

the course until 7 a.m. to comply with Cary, N.C.'s regulations.

"Noise ordinances are a growing problem. But they tend to sneak up on people in our industry because they are more concerned about air quality and pesticide issues," said John Gillan, executive director of the Professional Grounds Management Society. PGMS lists many course superintendents in its ranks.

Cary's leaders were targeting car stereos and construction

crews with their 7 a.m. ordinance. But a Lochmere neighbor noted the law also applied to golf courses, which traditionally sent mowers out as early as 5:30 a.m. to get ahead of golfers.

Lochmere labored under the regulation for a year and a half, Totten said. The first tee times were pushed back from 6:30 a.m. to 7 a.m., cutting into revenues and golfer satisfaction. Head pro Randall James explained the problem to the Town Council and in August it approved an amendment allowing golf courses to begin grooming greens at 6 a.m. from May 1 to Aug. 31.

The situation hasn't come to as happy a conclusion in Somers Point. The town passed its 7 a.m. noise ordinance four years ago with trash collectors and construction crews in mind, according to Greate Bay superintendent David Geyer.

Greate Bay continued mowing as early as 5:30 a.m., unaware the law applied to golf courses. A resident voiced concerns last fall. Geyer responded by keeping mowers away from areas where houses bordered the course during early morning.

The matter came to a head in mid-July when a summons was issued. The course went before the Council, seeking permission to begin mowing a half hour earlier during spring and summer.

The Council voted unanimously for the amendment on a first reading but later reversed itself under political pressure.

"It became sort of a David-versus-Goliath thing," said Geyer. "The little guy was out to slay us."

Nearby residents offered a minor compromise allowing mowing to begin early during the annual LPGA tournament and 10 yearly charity events.

But keeping mowers and golfers off the course until 7 a.m. reduced rounds and increased overtime pay, Geyer said. The extra labor time results from maintenance staff having to stop working while golfers play through.

Geyer is hopeful councilors will be more receptive to changes following November's election. He is also investigating purchasing quieter-operating electric greens mowers, a recent innovation. "Now that fall is here, the major complaint is leaves," Geyer said.

That's also the case in Greenwich, Conn., where local officials have limited use of gas-powered leaf blowers from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the week and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. A local group is even seeking a complete summer ban on blower use.

Greenwich CC superintendent Greg Wojick said the club received a noise-ordinance violation last summer. Police warned that next time, the equipment operator would receive a \$75 fine.

"We'd gotten some complaints in the past and built that berm to try to muffle any noise," Wojick said. "But it didn't seem to help much."



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