

Browner looking to put the kibosh on regulation as usual?



Hal Phillips,
editor

Believe it or not, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is bending over backwards to make points with the American business community. How else can we explain the spate of market-friendly directives spilling forth from the desk of Carol Browner, who has changed her stance somewhat? After storming into office as one of the more visible FOBs, running to the agency rooftop and shouting all the traditional liberal rallying cries for all to hear, Browner's office is now talking about softening its labeling restrictions (see page 39).

Could it be that Browner and her agency have been dragged into the Clinton Administration's headlong rush to the center? Does this sea change have anything to do with... Politics!?!?

Call it what you like, but a little birdie in Washington has informed me that Browner has also announced a new policy allowing small businesses, like golf courses, to right past environmental wrongs. The Common Sense Compliance Policy, detailed by Browner in a speech to the White House Conference on Small Business (WHCSB) last month, sets guidelines for the agency to reduce or waive penalties for small businesses that make "good-faith" efforts to correct past violations under most EPA statutes.

"With this new program of incentives for small business," Browner told her WHCSB audience, "the Clinton Administration makes a commitment to reward their good-faith efforts to find and fix environmental problems. We aren't interested in giving irresponsible polluters a break. We do want to help honest business owners comply with the law and run their business as cleanly and efficiently as possible."

Apparently, this policy is part of Clinton's Executive Memorandum on the Waiver of Penalties and Reduction of Reports, which gives federal agencies the ability to waive penalties for violations by small businesses, under certain conditions.

Do you believe her? I say, it doesn't matter. If your course has

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VIT bailed out on Audubon

I know my *New American College Dictionary* is 32 years old and that English is a living, evolving language. But something troubles me here.

My 1963 dictionary in part defines "commitment" this way: The act or state of giving in trust or charge; the act of committing, pledging or engaging oneself.

The modern revision of the word reads more like: "I will stay committed until it is no longer personally convenient."

Well, it looks like we have a case in point and, low and behold, it is right in golf's own camp. Virginia Investment Trust, the apparent buyer of the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, S.C. (see story page 3), has

apparently reneged on a commitment with the Audubon Society of New York (ASNY) that the Audubon would be involved if VIT ever bought the property. VIT and New York Audubon were partners in a winning bid on the course last year, but that purchase was nixed this winter by a bankruptcy court judge. In the second go-around of the bidding process VIT dropped Audubon as a partner, won the bid and apparently plans to proceed with no outside environmental expertise.

"There will be no environmental organizations involved," said Beverly (Boody) Anderson, a spokesman for VIT which owns Hogan, ANS Sporting Goods and other Kiawah golf courses.

And although the Ocean Course had previously joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, when asked if VIT would follow through with that commitment, Anderson replied: "No, I don't think there will be any plans either way in that regard."

This all despite a written agreement which states in part that if VIT's The Ocean Course (TOC) acquires an ownership interest in the course "either pursuant to the RTC's



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

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Letters

MOBILIZING THE INDUSTRY

To the editor:

Just a short note to thank you for running your article "Leslie Fund to Benefit Cleary Worker's Family" (May 1995) to publicize the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey's effort to solicit support for Bob Leslie's family after his tragic death. The emotional and financial assistance from turfgrass industry friends following tragic circumstances is very powerful when mobilized in such a fashion. As you know, our personal experience confirmed this. My family and I were strengthened immeasurably by similar industry support following our son's accident several years ago.

Once again, thanks for taking a supportive role.

Edward C. Horton
Vice President,
Resource Management
Pebble Beach Co.
Pebble Beach, Calif.

NETLON & TRAFFIC

To the editor:

In the article "Traffic control: Take your course to the next level, Otis urges", in your March, 1995 issue, the next-to-the-last paragraph mentions Netlawn fibers. It said Dr. Trey Rogers of Michigan State University states that he has found that using a mulched tire product as a soil amendment reduces traffic damage, as do Netlawn fibers.

While our product does indeed reduce traffic damage — along with providing a number of other benefits — the correct product name is "Netlon mesh elements". In Netlon Advanced Turf, the Netlon mesh elements are blended with a selected growing medium to form a stabilized turf rootzone.

The unique Netlon mesh elements act as "springs", with a flexing action that creates and maintains voids along the length of the mesh filaments. This "self-cultivating" action ensures that Netlon Advanced Turf root zones are healthier than those associated with ordinary turf, with a built-in resistance to soil compaction.

It is this combination of benefits that makes Netlon Advanced Turf an ideal solution for cart path and foot path wear, the heavy use of tees, spectator sites, surface parking areas and other problem areas of golf course turf.

Advanced Turf is well known and accepted in Europe. It has been used in many premier golf courses in England. Installation in the cart paths of St. Andrews is a prime example. Within the United States, Netlon Advanced Turf has undergone extensive successful testing by Dr. James Beard at Texas A & M.

Turf Management Specialist Noel Jackson of the University of Rhode Island is currently conducting testing in cart paths and tee boxes. In addition, the system is being installed in strate-

gic areas at golf courses across the country.

Stephen H. Guise
Sales representative
Netlon Ltd.
Fullerton, Calif.

Ed. We regret the error.

APPRAISE & CONSENT

To the editor:

I read with great interest the commentary in your May issue by Mr. James E. McLoughlin (p. 55) regarding the alleged shortage of qualified and credible consultants to perform feasibility analyses for golf course properties. As you can imagine, I strongly disagree and offer the following rebuttal:

It is my opinion that Mr. McLoughlin's opinion stems from the inability of many in the industry to consider appropriately designated and specifically qualified real-estate appraisers for feasibility assignments. As golf has become a "fad" industry to many, those with limited qualifications simply "hung a shingle" in search of feasibility consulting assignments. Real estate appraisers (good ones) perform the necessary detailed analysis on a regular basis. A comprehensive feasibility analysis is only part of a well done highest and best-use analysis done in every appraisal assignment.

Mr. McLoughlin should become familiar with my colleagues in the Society of Golf Appraisers (SGA). Those of us that are mem-

bers and have the SGA designation have submitted to rigorous qualifications and most of us have experience performing feasibility analyses, market studies, impact studies and highest and best-use analyses as well as appraisals. Each SGA member is an MAI member of the Appraisal Institute, which in itself identifies a high level of education and qualification in the real estate analysis profession. While there are "bad eggs" in any profession, I question Mr. McLoughlin's statement that there "may be fewer than five people across the country with the experience to generate a meaningful feasibility report." While the profession is a small one, I can immediately think of at least 10 individuals (not all of them SGA members) with considerable feasibility analysis experience.

I have not met with or spoken to Mr. McLoughlin and welcome the opportunity of doing so to see if I would qualify as one of the "fabulous five." Additionally, I welcome the opportunity to introduce him to SGA and its membership qualifications.

In a market where many users choose only the lowest fee, quality sometimes gets lost in the shuffle until it's too late. Like any quality product, professional and adequate consulting services take time and cost money. You can't buy a Cadillac for the price of a Chevy and you won't find one at the Chevy dealer's lot.

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Course owners must cooperate to survive & thrive

By MIKE TINKEY

Are you interested in an effective formula to improve your bottom line?

Golf course owners and operators are making a significant positive impact to their bottom line working together in cooperative marketing, purchasing, research and governmental and regulatory affairs. Also, cooperative communication is building strong and effective bridges to decision-makers in the public and private sectors that are yielding additional positive results.

Clay Brittain, chairman of the board of the Myrtle Beach National Golf Co. — which owns 153 golf holes in Myrtle Beach, operates three hotels and is actively involved with his family in the travel, tourism and hotel industry — attributes working cooperatively with the local businesses in your industry as one of the keys to success.

"Working with others doesn't necessarily mean you don't compete," he says. "When you make the golf industry successful you have a better chance to be successful yourself."

He is proud to be one of the original organizers of the Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday, which is widely considered to be the largest and most effective golf marketing group in the country today. The Myrtle Beach cooperative effort attracts more than 2.5 million golf rounds a year and the number of courses in the area has grown from one in 1960 to more than 100 by 1997.

Each tax dollar spent on golf advertising produces \$74 in spending by golfers. Working together, owners have realized group health insurance savings of 18 percent per employee with increased benefits. These are examples of cooperative efforts in South Carolina.

Mike Hughes, the Executive Director of the National Golf Course Owners Association, noted that "the answer to how a small state like South Carolina can become a golf powerhouse, lies in

two words: mutual cooperation.

"Joint efforts have resulted in tens of thousands of added rounds, a positive environmental image, a common voice to defeat poorly researched legislation and regulations, effective purchasing programs and research on operations. Of course, the success of Myrtle Beach is legendary, all because they have worked together."

Examples abound and new projects are increasing rapidly due to word of mouth and the facilitating efforts of organizations such as the NGCOA, regional, state and local groups of course owners. Examples of

other marketing successes are the business development efforts of other destinations such as Pinehurst, Hilton Head, Jacksonville, the Great Smoky Mountains, Ocean City. Organizing is taking place in Wisconsin, Phoenix/Scottsdale, the Monterey Peninsula, Atlantic City, the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, and more.

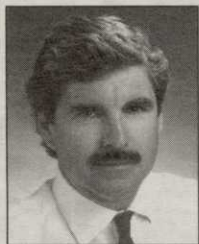
A number of these areas are actively seeking to implement electronic tee time reservation systems. Also, state owners' efforts in Florida, Ohio and South Carolina have been successful in defeating proposed new taxes, implementing workers' compensation programs and public awareness campaigns of the economic impact of

golf operations to a state's economy.

On a local level for example, Hank Johnson, executive director of the Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association (Hilton Head and surrounding areas), has been actively involved in representing owners' interests with regard to noise ordinances, wetlands legislation, water resource allocation, international marketing and purchasing.

Whether you are working cooperatively to book more golf business further in advance for an improved yield per round, or purchase goods and services smarter for your facility, or gather information to assist you in running your operation more efficiently, a systematic approach is essential. Important ingredients include

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Mike Tinkey

Mike Tinkey has more than 20 years of experience in the resort, club and hospitality business. He is director of the NGCOA Smart Buy Program and president of Sports Management & Marketing Services, a consulting company specializing in golf and tennis resort and club operations.

Letters

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Last, but certainly not least, Mr. McLoughlin suggests a national certification program for golf consultants. As we in the appraisal profession have learned all too well, more governmental intervention is not the answer. The answer is finding the right people and giving them the necessary tools to perform their job. These services require experience, independence, and objectivity. The best consultants will not "rubber stamp" a project and the smartest will not seek that rubber stamp. If this is done, the experienced people will become more easily identified and the industry will benefit as a result with better projects coming from better planning.

Laurence Hirsh, president
Golf Property Analysts
Harrisburg, Pa.

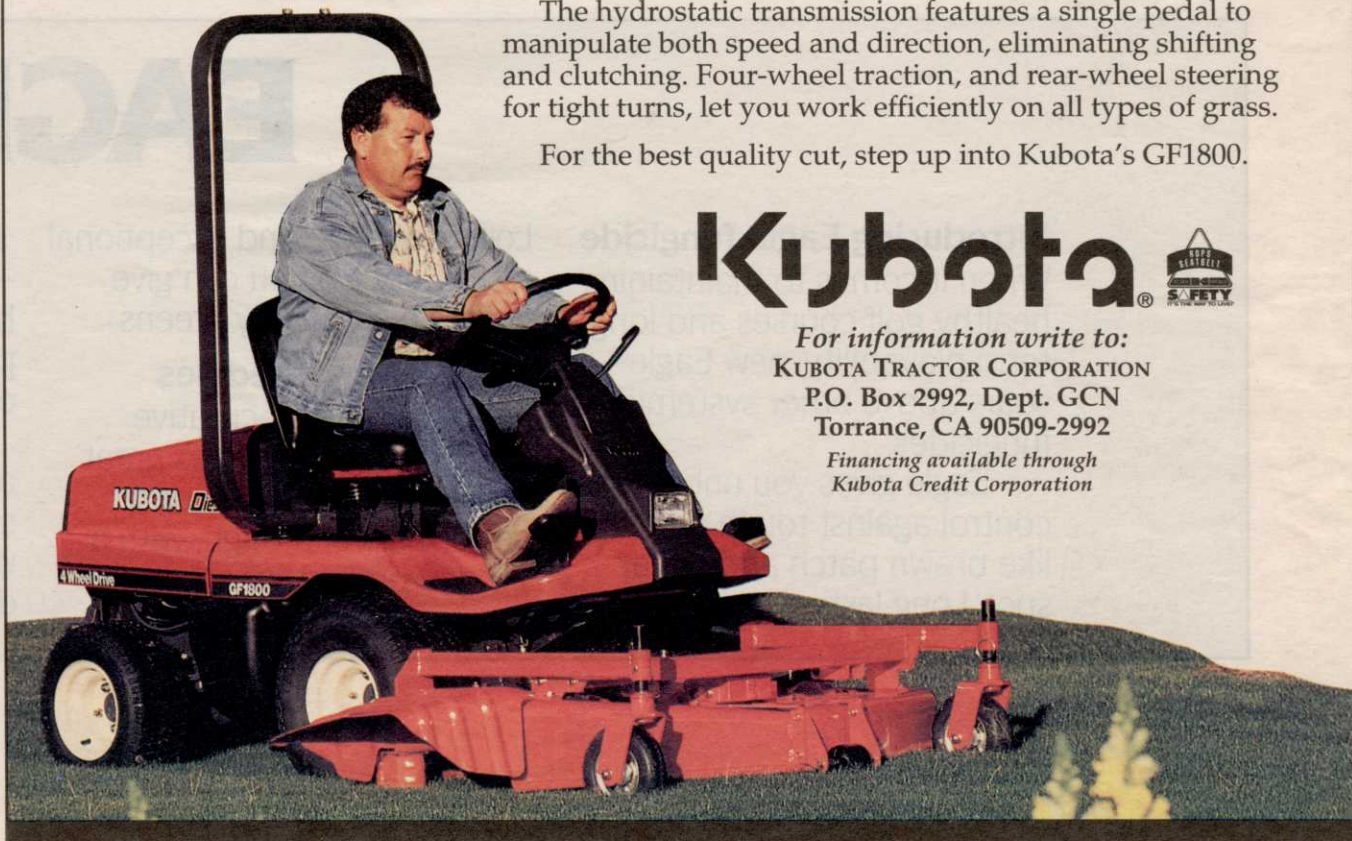
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