

Reverse the curse: Turn income-depleters into income generators, or...

... How to save money even when dealing with monopolies!

By TERRY BUCHEN

The old cliché that there are two things that are certain in life, death and taxes, is obviously quite true and one more should be added to the list: All golf courses must get their electricity from a monopolistic electric power company and none of us has a choice. Having dealt with

many different electric power companies, I have learned first and foremost that they are reluctant to volunteer information that would help anyone save money or what services that they have available. But here are some major money-savers.

MONTHLY ELECTRIC BILLS

At least once a year I have the power company do a rate survey



The Savvy Superintendent

of our entire operation, including the pumphouse, maintenance building, clubhouse and any other facilities that are on separate electric meters. Quite often after the survey results are known, our rates have been reduced because we have used more electricity than the year before. Examples include the pumphouse, since we experienced a drought

and used more power. Each power company has different rules and regulations. So, pry it out of them and ask many questions because they will usually not volunteer information. The biggest question many golf courses have are the demand charges that pumphouses have to pay even during the "off season" in the transition zone and cool-season courses. These charges are substantial and power company representatives should be asked about their

regulations to find out if any further savings could result.

ELECTRIC TRANSFORMERS

One big way to save money is to buy your own transformers for your entire club operation. We did it at Double Eagle, purchasing all of the 480-volt, three-phase transformers and putting them all on one electric meter. By doing this, we did not have to pay any demand charges on our irrigation pumphouse, which saves us about \$800 to \$1,000 per month when the pumps are not being used in the off-season.

After two years, we had paid for the transformers and are now pocketing savings. We bought our transformers during construction of the club, which is much easier than at an existing club.

When talking with power company officials on existing clubs, ask about turning in your existing transformers and purchasing your own. They don't like to hear these kinds of questions because it takes away from their revenues, but many times, throughout the country, the rules do allow buying your own transformers. Some power companies will assign your course a permanent supervisor, who can monitor your operation better to help you save as much as possible.

Put a pencil to it to see if you can save money at your course. When you install your own transformers, you will have to perform and pay for routine maintenance, which is minimal, and for fuses when they blow out, which isn't very often.

One further note: If your course is having many power failures, especially on the irrigation pumphouse, it is best to have an electric company supervisor assigned to your operation who can help get the power turned back on, especially after lightning storms, because sometimes they "forget" that grass cannot survive long without water. This happens quite a lot on rural courses. Do not assume they know you have no electricity.

DEALING WITH NATURAL GAS

On many new development courses with housing, the owner must pay for and install natural gas lines for the houses and course — its maintenance building, clubhouse, pumphouse, etc. With many natural gas companies, it is optional who retains ownership of the piping. Here is another way to make some money for your operation. When retaining ownership of the gas lines, you can sell tap fees for any further hook-ups and keep the fees as an income-generator. Usually at some point in time, you can sell the piping back to the gas company and make a profit.

NEW

SubAir™

Developed By and For the Turfgrass Manager



Without SubAir

One Year With SubAir

Double Your Green's Root Mass!

SubAir's full, rich oxygenation, temperature moderation and water removal system produces roots that are whiter, larger in diameter with easily twice the mass of roots maintained by conventional methods. In fact, the bottom profile of the root system virtually "re-explodes" with new growth.

SubAir's healthier, more resilient turfgrass requires less pesticides, fertilizer and labor.

SubAir is an environmentally friendly system that uses your USGA-Spec. greens' existing drainage piping to either pump air directly to the roots, or remove excess water, salt and unwanted gases.

SubAir™ - created by Marsh Benson - is available in either gas or electric portable models, or can be installed below-ground, quietly improving the turf above.

SubAirCredit provides financing to qualified customers for SubAir™ products and all related golf course construction.

Call (800)-333-2071

SubAir™

Developed By and For the Turfgrass Manager

SubAir, Inc., PO Box 910
7-13 Front St., Vernon, NY 13476

A pending patent application covering the SubAir™ system has recently been allowed by the U.S. Patent Office.



Portable SubAir



Below Ground SubAir

Former Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Mike Bavier, far left, and former Canadian Golf Superintendents Association President Gordon Witteveen, far right, stand with students, from left, Hiram Hield of Lucaya Golf Club, Ishmael Roberts of Ruby Golf Course and Sherwin Bastian of Emerald Golf Course.



Former U.S., Canada presidents export expertise

BAHAMAS — Former Golf Course Superintendents Association President Mike Bavier and Canadian Golf Superintendents Association founder Gordon Witteveen taught a two-day workshop here for the superintendents and crews of the island's three golf courses.

Called "The Magic of Greenkeeping," the seminar attracted 32 greensmen, including superintendents Sherwin Bastian of Ruby Golf Course, Ishmael Roberts of Princess Resort's Emerald Course and Hiram Hield of Lucaya Golf Course.

Bavier, of Inverness Golf Course in Palatine, Ill., was GCSAA president in

1981, while Witteveen is in charge of the five Metropolitan Board of Trade courses in Toronto and was president of the Canadian GSA in 1969.

The pair have spoken in countries around the world.

The seminar features practical secrets of greenkeeping and stresses the importance of catering to the whims of discriminating golfers.

"Mike and I are avid golfers, and we were impressed with the courses there and their condition," Witteveen said from his office. "The very same golfers who play in the Bahamas in the winter are our customers in the summer."

Savvy Super

Continued from previous page

SEWER LINES

Sewer lines are another utility that should be explored. With many sewer companies, golf course developers have to pay for installation of the sewer piping. But the good news is that the developer can recover some of their costs by collecting "tap fees" from any entity that hooks up to it. The ownership of the piping is usually turned over to the sewer company, but the tap fees many times turn over to the developer who paid to have it installed.

SOUTHEASTERN PROGRAM SET

TIFTON, Ga. — The 49th annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference has been expanded from two to three days and will be held at the Rural Development Center here, May 1-3. May 1 will center on discussions of research and May 3 will be a full-day calibration workshop, while May 2, will be devoted to various turfgrass topics. Speakers Tuesday morning will include University of Georgia Drs. Bob Carrow, Al Smith and Rick Brandenburg. Dr. Lee Burpee will reveal new fungicide technology while Dr. Gil Landry will talk on strategies for improving turf winter-hardiness. Golf course designer and author Tom Doak will speak on minimalistic architecture and Tom Delaney, director of state government affairs for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, will address pesticide issues. More information is available from Jeanne Werner, Rural Development Center, Tifton 31793; 912-386-3416.

NYSTA AWARDS

The New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) awarded eight \$500 scholarships to students at the grand finale of the NYSTA Turf and Grounds Exposition. Cornell University winners were Jason A. Straka and Christopher Hennes. Gregory Wall and Ryan M. Paschal (posthumously) were the two winners from SUNY Cobleskill. The University of Massachusetts' two winners were Robert Alonzi Jr. and Christopher Caporicci. G. Michael Elston of SUNY Delhi and William R. Michalski of Alfred State College were also awarded scholarships.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



Always read and follow label directions. Curalan is a trademark of BASF Corporation. © 1993 BASF Corporation. JJ8930 CR 4 006

With Curalan, Long Lasting Control Is Par For The Course.

Finally, there's a turf treatment that works as hard as you do to keep your golf course looking its best. It's Curalan™ fungicide. With Curalan you can control eight tough turf diseases including brown patch, dollar spot, leaf spot, Fusarium patch and snow molds three to four times longer than other fungicides — up to 28 days.

And that's not all. Curalan's long lasting control is specifically designed to work on any kind of turf, at any stage of its growth, as a preventive or curative treatment.

So, whether you want to keep spots, patches or molds from invading your turf, or you need to clear up an existing problem with brown patch or dollar spot, a

treatment with Curalan can do it. This year, go for a new course record in disease control. Call 1-800-878-8060.

Simple Solutions To Complex Problems

BASF