

# Golf Course Marketplace

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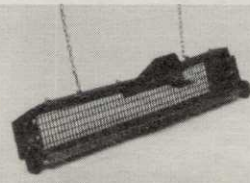
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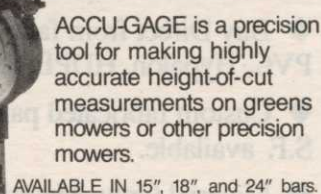
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## NGF/Thor Guard

Continued from page 1

"If there's a way we can provide our membership more value, we'll do it. If that's a departure from the way NGF has conducted its business in the past, then it is a departure."

It could be argued that NGF has always provided discounts to members on NGF-derived market reports. In addition, the foundation has for several years offered members life insurance coverage through FAI Insurance, Inc. of Florham Park, N.J.

However, never has the NGF arranged for member companies to provide discounts for member facilities.

Under this new program the NGF — a non-profit organization charged with fostering the overall growth and vitality of golf — will also establish itself as a clearinghouse for lightning-related information and literature for its 4,000 member golf facilities.

Virtually all segments of the golf industry are represented among the NGF's 6,000 members: manufacturers, distributors, retailers; course facilities, designers, and builders; trade media and most of the game's national associations.

While only one manufacturer of lightning prediction systems, Thor Guard, is counted among the NGF membership, Florine maintained the NGF is not endorsing Thor Guard or its product line.

"It's an affinity program," he explained. "Let's say MCI was the official telecommunications company of the NGF. They would provide a discount to our members and we would promote MCI through our efforts, like providing them our list of members and allowing MCI to call on them."

"In fact, we're having conversations with various telecommunications companies," said Joseph Beditz, president and chief executive officer of NGF. "If we can create some mutually beneficial scenario between members and an outside company, then it's win-win. And our members have told us that's what they want."

"Like most trade associations, we face real challenges about finding and retaining members. We need to be sure that we aren't lost in the wash; that we're there with value that facilities and companies can receive for their [NGF] membership."

Florine is familiar with the applications of licensing and affinity, having come to the NGF from the PGA of America, which has member discount programs with Mastercard and Oldsmobile, among others.

"You can do it with rental cars, phone services or lightning predictors," Florine said. "One of the most popular methods recently has been credit cards — getting their logos on a credit card. Waiving the initial fee. Affinity programs are a way by which associations provide added value to their members."

"What you're going to see is quite a few more of these relationships. In our effort to provide more membership value, we will be structuring more partnerships."

Florine said the Thor Guard program is a sign of things to come at NGF. Other firms are "informally" discussing similar discount programs with the NGF, he said.

Beditz noted that the NGF has a dual role with regard to the industry and its members.

"It's important to delineate that we are not just a foundation but an association, as well," he said. "We are a 501c6, basically a trade association. But we're also a 501c3, which is a foundation."

"Certainly, our members are important to us. They provide us the majority of our revenue base. We couldn't do many of the things for the entire game of golf without the support of those members."

"What we're interested in, essentially, is making sure we have solid member-

Continued on page 69

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## Inside Info

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Editor Peter Blais at 207/846-0600



March

7-9 — *Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference and Trade Show in Monroeville.* Contact Eric Oesterling at 610-837-1402.

8 — *Professional Turf and Plant Conference in Huntington Station, N.Y.* Contact Maria Cinque at 516-454-0900.

8 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Irrigation Specialists in Mamaroneck, N.Y.\**

8-9 — *GCSAA seminar on Golf Course Restoration, Renovation & Construction Projects in Palm Springs, Calif.\**

11-14 — *46th Canadian Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show in Ottawa, Ontario.* Contact 800-387-1056.

14 — *GCSAA seminar on Human Resource Management in Minneapolis*

15 — *GCSAA seminar on Maximizing Job Satisfaction in Minneapolis*

16 — *Turfgrass and Landscape Ornamentals Field Day and Southern Florida GCSA Turfgrass Exposition in Ft. Lauderdale.* Contact 305-475-8990.

22-23 — *GCSAA seminar on Golf Course Construction Techniques and Management in Springfield, Ill.\**

30 — *GCSAA seminar on Maximizing Turfgrass Disease Control in Phoenix, Ariz.\**

30 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Spray Technicians in Lake Harmony, Pa.\**

April

4 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Irrigation Specialists in Corpus Christi, Texas.\**

11 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Irrigation Specialists in Slippery Rock, Pa.\**

13 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Spray Technicians in Johnstown, Pa.\**

18 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Irrigation Specialists in Oregon City, Ore.\**

May

2-3 — *Two half-day workshops on Microscopic Identification of Turfgrass Diseases at Cook College, Rutgers University in Brunswick, N.J.* Contact 908-932-9271.

24 — *GCSAA Technician Training for Equipment Managers in Lake City, Fla.\**

July

26 — *University of Georgia Turfgrass Field Day in Griffin, Ga.* Contact 404-228-7300.

August

6-8 — *Georgia GCSA Summer Conference at Sea Palms Resort on St. Simons Island.* Contact Karen White at 706-769-4076.

September

7-8 — *Southwest Horticultural Trade Show in Phoenix, Ariz.* Call 602-966-1610.

November

4-7 — *Georgia GCSA Annual Meeting at Jekyll Island.* Contact Karen White at 706-769-4076.

7-10 — *Turf and Grounds Exposition in Rochester, N.Y.* Contact 800-873-TURF.

9-10 — *Golf Course Expo in Orlando, Fla.* Contact Golf Course News Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

December

4-7 — *26th Annual Georgia Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show in Atlanta.* Contact 404-228-7300.

\* For more information contact the GCSAA Education Office at 913-832-4430.

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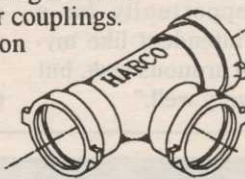
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## NGF/Thor Guard

Continued from page 67

ship benefits. And we think aggressive pricing for our facility members is a good thing. Not unlike what the NGCOA [National Golf Course Owners Association] is doing for its members."

Indeed, the NGCOA has aggressively sought membership discounts through a national account system, recently renamed the Smart Buy Program. So far, NGCOA members receive discounts on Yamaha golf cars, seed product from Pickseed, credit card services through Nabanco, long distance service from AT&T, legal resources through Dallas-based Page & Addison P.C., printed materials — mainly scorecards — through Massachusetts-based On In Two Publications, and insurance through CNA.

Added Florine: "We'd love to have a dozen, member-benefit programs similar to the Thor Guard arrangement because not everyone might be able to take advantage or afford a lightning prediction system. It's good business and added value to a charter member [Thor Guard]. It's a benefit they are providing to fellow NGF members.

"If a lightning prediction firm came to me tomorrow and wanted to do what Thor Guard is doing, I couldn't be happier. That's what we want to do for our members. If we are able to effectively save one of our members at the facility level \$600 for leasing the Thor Guard system, they have basically earned back their membership dues, and then some."