

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Richard McNabb (right) is the latest to earn the prestigious Master Greenkeeper status. For story, see page 15.

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## GRADUATION REPORT

# Trained irrigation techs, mechanics in demand

By PETER BLAIS

Shovel jockey. Wrench turner.

Not particularly flattering titles for the people who fill the roles of irrigation technician and turf equipment manager. But if educators, course managers and others have their way, *shovel jockey* and *wrench turner* could go the way of *greenkeeper* in the near future.

With superintendents increasingly strapped to their desks by administrative duties, the cry is going out for college-trained irrigation and maintenance equipment specialists who can work with today's high-tech watering and turf maintenance equipment.

"I'd kill for a formally trained irrigation technician," said Ray Davies, head superintendent at Merced (Calif.) Golf & Country Club. "Irrigation is critical. When you look at a well-manicured golf course, it

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# RTC's Kiawah auction scheduled for May 19

By PETER BLAIS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The prestigious Ocean Course at Kiawah Island is scheduled to go back on the auction block May 19.

A dozen parties interested in becoming the new owners of the Pete Dye-designed layout and site of the 1991 Ryder Cup attended a bidder's conference here in early April. Among the potential bidders were course owners, management companies, local golf industry veterans and individuals with no ties to the golf business.

"Those who haven't been in the golf business before may see this as a chance to get into the industry in a big way," said Tom Harris, senior vice president of golf properties with CB Commercial, which is marketing the property through its 150 worldwide offices. "Those who weren't in the business seemed well qualified, financially, to enter it."

Financial capability is one of the requirements the winning bidder must demonstrate before the

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### A PEARL IN THE EAST

Dragon Pearl Golf Club, located outside Bangkok, Thailand, is one of the courses making a name for designer Jim Engh, who cut his teeth with IMG and Cotton Pennink. For more on a member of golf architecture's new breed, see page 45.

# Supers turn OSHA regs to their budgetary advantage

By MARK LESLIE

While state and federal legislators struggle with weighing the costs and benefits before passing new laws, golf course superintendents may actually save their clubs money following suggestions from safety experts like Occu-

pational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) personnel.

By investing about \$1,500 a year for four or five years, his former club saved \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year in insurance costs, said Ray Davies, now superintendent at Lake Merced (Calif.) Golf & Country Club.

Referring to his old employer, Virginia Country Club in Huntington Beach, Calif., Davies said: "We didn't have a negative attitude. Just the opposite. From my viewpoint, it saves you money in the long run."

Complying with OSHA standards is "something

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Mike Robinson

# Oregon ryegrass growers organize bargaining group

By HAL PHILLIPS

ALBANY, Ore. — Here in the Willamette Valley, the microeconomics of low carry-over inventory and a 1995 bumper crop have taken a back seat to the macroeconomics of floor prices, overproduction and their affects on the old standby, supply and demand. The result will likely be higher ryegrass prices this fall — maybe as much as 10 cents per pound, according to industry experts.

One reason? Seed growers here have organized the Perennial Ryegrass Bargaining Association (PRBA), which instituted a minimum price of 45 cents a pound in response to the gradual decline in perennial ryegrass prices. The PRBA has reserved the right to raise or lower that figure come August.

Seed dealers, those firms that market seed to golf course superintendents, view this development with mixed feelings. In time of poor supply, floor prices have little relevance. But in the long term, many

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## Ocean Course

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actual outcry auction, which will take place at the Omni Hotel in Charleston. The second requirement is ability to manage the course, either through personal experience or by hiring a qualified management company.

Management ability will be especially important at the Ocean Course, a former holding of bankrupt Landmark Land Co. and the last marquee golf facility being auctioned off by the Resolution Trust Corp.

The bankruptcy court nixed a proposed deal to buy the course for \$27,000,100 earlier this year when it determined the principals may not be able to follow through on the environmental mitigation efforts needed at the environmentally sensitive layout. The principals were Virginia Investment Trust (VIT), operators of Kiawah's other three resort courses and the Kiawah Inn; Kiawah Resort Associates (KRA) developers of the private Tom Fazio-designed course currently under construction and a major residential developer on the island; and the Audubon Society of New York.

The RTC has since agreed to complete the on- and off-site mitigation work itself, freeing any new buyer from that responsibility, Harris said. But the winning bidder for the 214-acre property, much of which is located within a unit of the Coastal Barrier Resources System, will have to demonstrate the ability to operate the environmentally sensitive site. The RTC plans to complete all mitigation work prior to the July 19 deadline for closing, two months after the winning bidder is announced.

A seven-member panel briefly addressed prospective bidders at the April 5 gathering. Among the panelists were Philip Maloney, a RTC attorney; Craig King of J.P. King Auction Group, the Gadsden, Ala.-based auctioneer who will conduct the auction; Jack Carney of Landmark Land Co.; Greg French, director of golf at the Ocean Course; Jack Rosenfield, a RTC real-estate representative; and Richard Searles of CRT Trust Advisors Inc., which has performed due diligence work on other RTC golf properties.

Panelists reviewed the information in the \$100 Detailed Information Package many of the bidders had previously received. They also explained that access to the due diligence library located in New Orleans would be available for a \$5,000 refundable deposit from qualified bidders. Bidders had until April 19 to qualify with RTC. Information in the due diligence library will be regularly updated until May 5, Harris said.

The Reserve Price reflects the amount the bankruptcy court had agreed to accept from VIT, KRA and New York Audubon GOLF COURSE NEWS

before that deal fell through. That differs from RTC's use of Derived Investment Values (DIVs), which are determined from 10-year cash-flow projections, in estimating values for other Landmark properties.

RTC will accept sealed bids until 11 a.m. on May 19. Bids will be opened that morning. Those bidding at least the \$27,000,100 Reserve Price will be invited back that afternoon to participate in an open outcry auction. Bidding will begin at the highest sealed bid. RTC will accept the highest cash offer.

In addition to the course, the

property includes a 12,000-square-foot clubhouse with restaurant, pro shop and cart storage.

The Kiawah Resort has the rights to 60 percent of all available rounds at the facility.

VIT had been managing the course, but RTC brought Landmark back to manage the property several months ago after the earlier deal fell through, Harris explained.

"The course and clubhouse are in excellent condition," he said. "The RTC has done a very good job maintaining all the courses it has taken over."

## ADAG tournament has new sponsor

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — four electric scooters, power Electric Mobility Corp. of wheelchairs and other personal mobility products, according to President Michael Flowers. In 1994, 42 teams of both able-bodied and disabled golfers participated in the tournament. At least 60 teams are expected to take part this year.



Michael Flowers

Electric Mobility manufactures the Rascal and Chauf-

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