

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Charging cars, irrigating at 'right time' saves

By TERRY BUCHEN

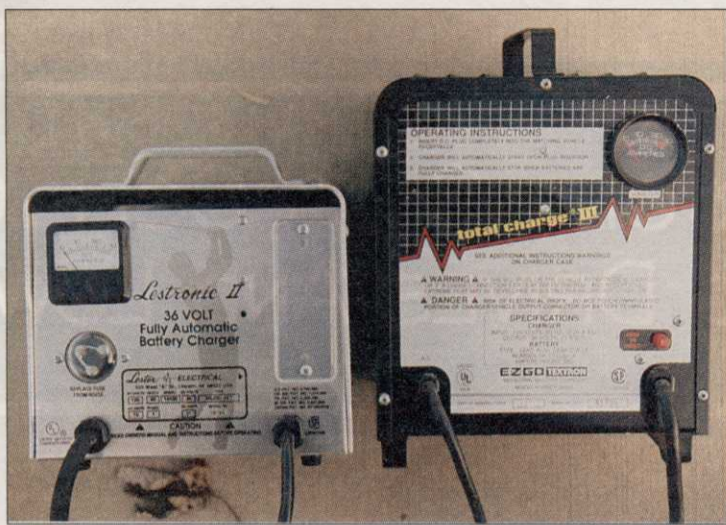
WESTERVILLE, Ohio — Power companies traditionally, in most parts of the country, review a golf course's electricity rates once a year to determine whether it qualifies for a lower rate structure. Charging electric golf cars and operating the irrigation system pumps and wells are the two areas of a course that usually use the most electricity. Let's take a closer look at how one golf course greatly reduced its golf car-charging operating costs.

Little Turtle Country Club, a Pete Dye design from the early 1970s, found a way to reduce its golf car-charging operating costs.

Little Turtle CC charges its golf cars from the clubhouse that had only one electric meter for the entire building. After conferring with Columbus Southern Power Co., the club found it could charge its cars during off-peak hours after modifying the electric system and following a few simple rules.

The criteria were:

- charging of the golf cars



The total re-wiring and new meter cost \$5,000, which was recovered the first year.

had to use more than one-third of the total power consumed in the clubhouse;

- a separate electric meter would have to be installed for the golf car chargers only; and
- the charging area would have to be wired separately from the clubhouse to the new electric meter.

The total re-wiring and new meter cost \$5,000, which was

recovered the first year.

Off-peak hours are from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. Monday through Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday and the seven usual holidays, said John L. Mead, owner of Little Turtle CC and partner in Xanadu Golf Ventures. "We installed a timing device that would turn on all of our golf car chargers not a minute before 9 p.m.



during the week, and this 10-hour charging period was ample to get our cars charged fully," Mead said. "Our usage was only 10 percent of the peak-demand rate, thus we saved 90 percent on our electricity rates. We did not have to pay any peak-demand kilowatts, as our rate structure for the basic kilowatt hours went from 5 cents down to 1.2 cents. The year before we re-wired our chargers, we spent \$64,000. The year after the modifications, we spent \$55,000 — thus a \$9,000 saving the first year of operation."

Little Turtle CC, he said, "had to commit to the power company for one full year at the off-peak charging procedure and had to get the company's full blessing on the type of electric meter and car-charging timing device before they would qualify us for the lower rates. We are very happy with our new car-charging procedure and it only proves that hard work pays off."

Buffer strips are multidimensional

Following last summer's extreme drought and deluges, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) reports that buffer strips were proven to be valuable in more ways than one.

Not only are buffer strips "incredibly valuable to the protection of surface water quality," the VTDEC said in its "Out of the Blue" newsletter, their root systems stabilize the earth. For those who live in areas where the August flood wreaked greatest damage, it was easy to witness some examples of the role that buffer strips played in protecting the water quality," the report said. "Buffer strips, vegetative shoreland areas filtered out major debris that was being carried down to the rivers and lakes... Buffer strips also helped stabilize the banks with their root systems."

In areas where buffer strips had been cut away from sections of a river or lake, VTDEC said, "shorebanks literally caved in and eroded away, adding nutrients and sediments to the water and, in some locations, forever changing the path of the water."

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