

MECHANIC'S CORNER

Texas State Tech introducing 1st golf mechanics degree program

WACO, Texas — The nation's first associate degree program in Golf Course Equipment Mechanics will be offered at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) here, pending approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The program will be offered as a specialization of the Golf Course & Turfgrass Management (GTM) program at Texas State. Golf course equipment manufacturers have reason to be enthusiastic about this program, which will allow them to hire

technicians who can maintain their equipment as customer service representatives.

"While working in industry," said GTM Department Chair Wallace "Tinker" Clift, "I saw the acute need for golf course equipment technicians. I believe

this program will create a win-win situation for everyone involved. Golf course managers and equipment dealers will be able to find skilled technicians who can maintain their equipment. We also estimate industry will pay these technicians

\$25,000-\$40,000 a year."

Students will take courses in both the GTM and Diesel Mechanics departments at Texas State Technical College for a program specifically designed to meet the needs of the turfgrass industry. Students will learn golf course maintenance as well as equipment maintenance. This will allow them to choose from a variety of positions working as technicians at golf courses, parks, athletic fields, and for lawn care companies, or equipment manufacturers.

In addition to being knowledgeable about landscape construction, turf irrigation and drainage, students will study engines, hydraulic and electronic systems, and reel maintenance. They will learn to maintain equipment by working on \$18,000 high-precision greens mowers, and equipment such as a 7-Gauge Self-Propelled Reel Mower, valued at more than \$35,000.

Students will also participate in three- to six-month internships either in a grounds maintenance environment or with companies that manufacture grounds maintenance equipment.

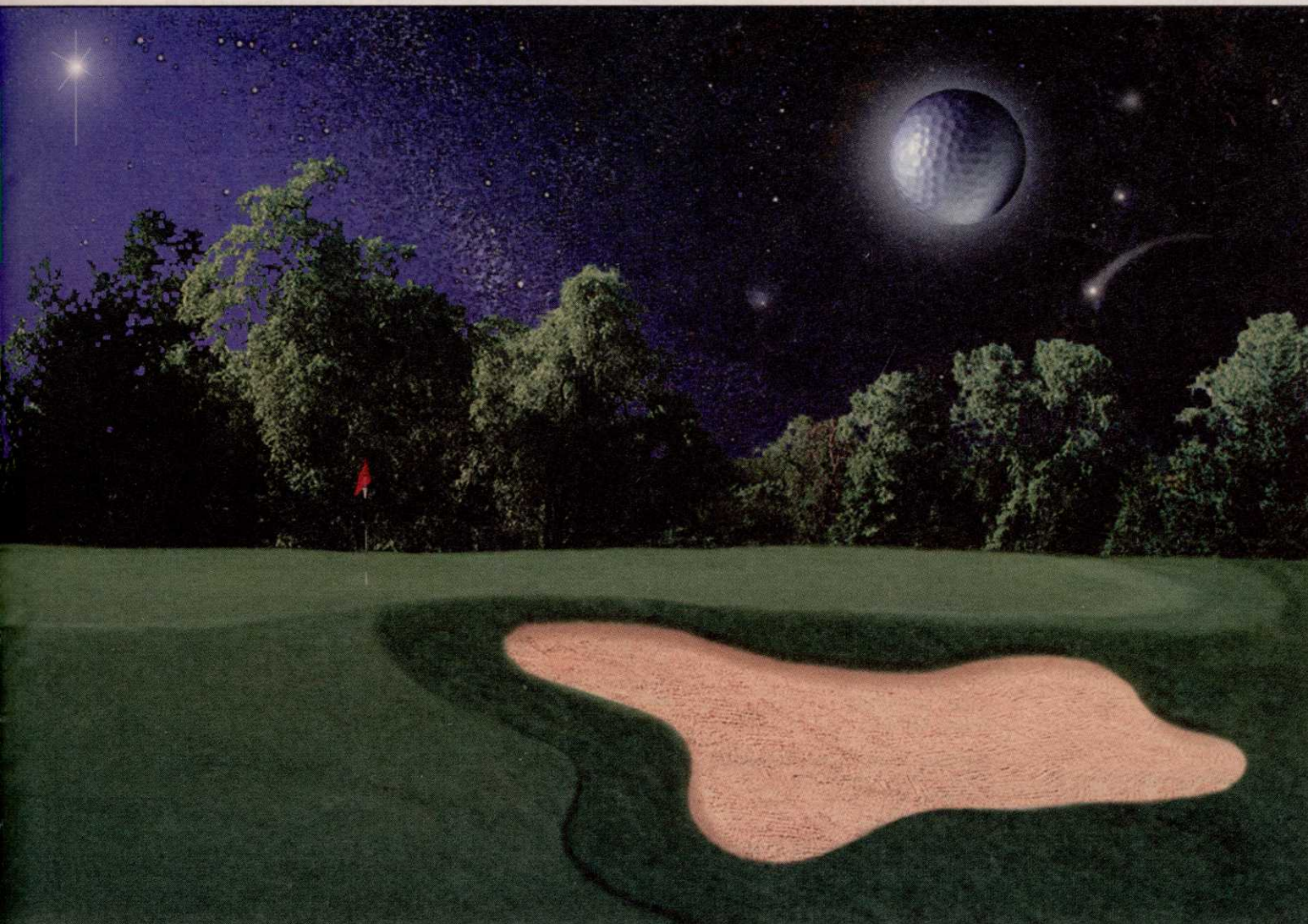
"Students will receive both technical training in the classroom and field experience in an approved work situation before they graduate," Clift continued. "Jacobsen [Division of Textron] has started a new program of fulfilling service contracts with golfing facilities, and many of these graduates may eventually choose to work into those positions. Jacobsen representatives approved the program's curriculum earlier this year. However, students will learn to work on all types of equipment no matter who manufactures it."

Students can complete the program in six quarters for either an Associate of Applied Science degree or a certificate of completion.

The program was developed using the DACUM (Develop a Curriculum) process, with the help of industry experts from across Texas who participated in panel discussions on industry needs. Companies such as Jacobsen Textron, Toro Company and Deere & Co. (manufacturers of John Deere equipment) will furnish TSTC with equipment and other assistance to develop the program.

Texas State Technical College is the only state-supported technical college system in Texas. TSTC has provided Texas and Texans with technical education and training for more than 30 years. With more than 40 instructional programs in critical and emerging technologies, TSTC is preparing a work force to meet the demands of business and industry.

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