

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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ROUNDS PLAYED BY FACILITY TYPE — 1996



PUBLIC ROUNDS ON THE INCREASE

From 1986 to 1996, approximately two out of every three rounds were played at public-access golf facilities. The most growth occurred at daily-fee facilities, where the number of rounds increased by more than 23 percent.

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Audubon jumps into course development

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y.—When Audubon International (AI) entered the world of golf, no one would have dreamed of the heights it is about to reach — no one except, perhaps, President Ron Dodson.



Ron Dodson

AI has created the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust to accept "real property interest" that will be used to facilitate development of Audubon golf

courses as environmental research and demonstration centers.

"We asked, 'Who better to implement our beliefs than us?'" said Dodson. "One of the criticisms we've had about our Cooperative Sanctuary System is that we

have no assurance that our

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One-stop equipment deals on rise

By M. LEVANS

BLOOMINGTON, Minn./LINCOLN, Neb. — As the industry sees more courses gathering under management umbrellas, the number of exclusive provider deals between management companies and manufacturers — including equipment, equipment maintenance and ancillary services — appears to be following suit.

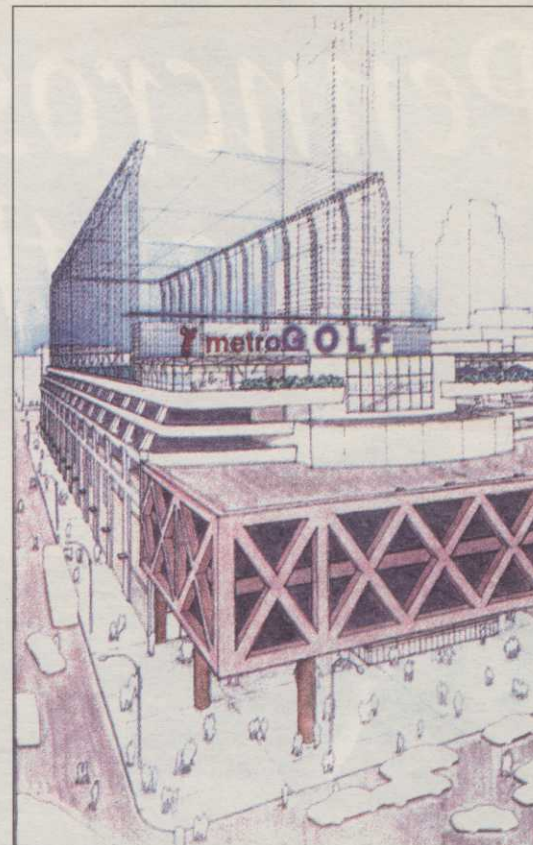
In the past month, both the Toro Co. and Ransomes America Corp. have added substantial new agreements to their growing list of exclusive arrangements.

Toro cut a five-year deal with Whitbread/Marriott

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TAKING GOLF TO THE STREETS

MetroGolf Inc., a Denver-based developer of golf learning centers in major metropolitan areas, has unveiled renderings of MetroGolf New York, a golf center to be built atop the Port Authority Bus Terminal located in the heart of midtown Manhattan at 42nd Street and 8th Ave. See story page 40.



ROLLIN' ROLLIN' ROLLIN'

A crew unrolls sod along a fairway of The Links at MonteLago at Lake Las Vegas Resort. Story p. 36.

Public Golf Forum sessions take shape

Maintenance Track: Technology steps into the spotlight

By MARK LESLIE

OAK BROOK HILLS, Ill. — Pioneering technology for quickly "mapping" a golf course to optimize irrigation and chemical and fertilizer applications is one of several topics in a full package of maintenance sessions planned for the 1997 Public Golf Forum here, Oct. 27-28.

Golf course superintendents around the country, taking advantage of special registration offers, are ex-



A NATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND EXPO FOR SUPERINTENDENTS, OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF FACILITIES

pected to attend the forum at Oak Brook Hills Resort for public-access golf course superintendents, owners, operators and developers.

Along with a half-day session on "Biological Controls: Current Status and Future Prospects," led by Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University, they

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Development Track: Player development can't be overlooked

By M. LEVANS

OAK BROOK HILLS, Ill. — Public-access golf courses are being developed in record numbers while player participation numbers remain stagnant.

Now, how are you going to develop a public course that will allow you to establish a solid customer base — and keep those customers coming back for more, giving you a faster return on your investment?

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Audubon golf courses on the horizon

Continued from page 1

program will continue when management changes at a member facility. Audubon courses is one way we can deal with that issue. Plus, we want to do long-term research, education and community-improvement projects.

"We truly believe that a well-sited, designed and maintained

golf course is good... The idea is to develop environmentally sensitive public courses that will have reasonable greens fees and with learning centers aimed for families... We're pretty excited about this.

"We have been talking with interested parties in the golf course industry who have ex-

pressed interest in financially backing the development of Audubon golf courses."

To accomplish the new golf course system, AI has created another not-for-profit organization that is "joined at the hip with AI" — Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust. The land trust, ac-

ording to Dodson, is to focus on golf and the environment.

Thus far, he said, just in conversations "testing the water" for this proposal, the trust has been

offered six properties, including one of 20,000 acres.

He cited a government agency in the West that has thousands of acres of property and wants to see public golf courses built as part of its recreational mandate. It has already required that any new courses built on its property meet Audubon Signature standards, Dodson said, "So, when I told them we could not only guarantee they would be Signature, but Audubon courses, they were very excited. They sent us a laundry list of properties to build courses on. We couldn't own them because it's government land, so we would have something on the order of a 50-year lease."

This venture is a greater step toward Audubon purity, Dodson said, because it ensures Audubon's programs in perpetuity.

AI hopes to help create a for-profit firm that will actually oversee design, construction and management of the new courses.

"As we see it, the hammer that AI will have over this development entity," he said, "is, first, we will be the landlord because we will own the land.

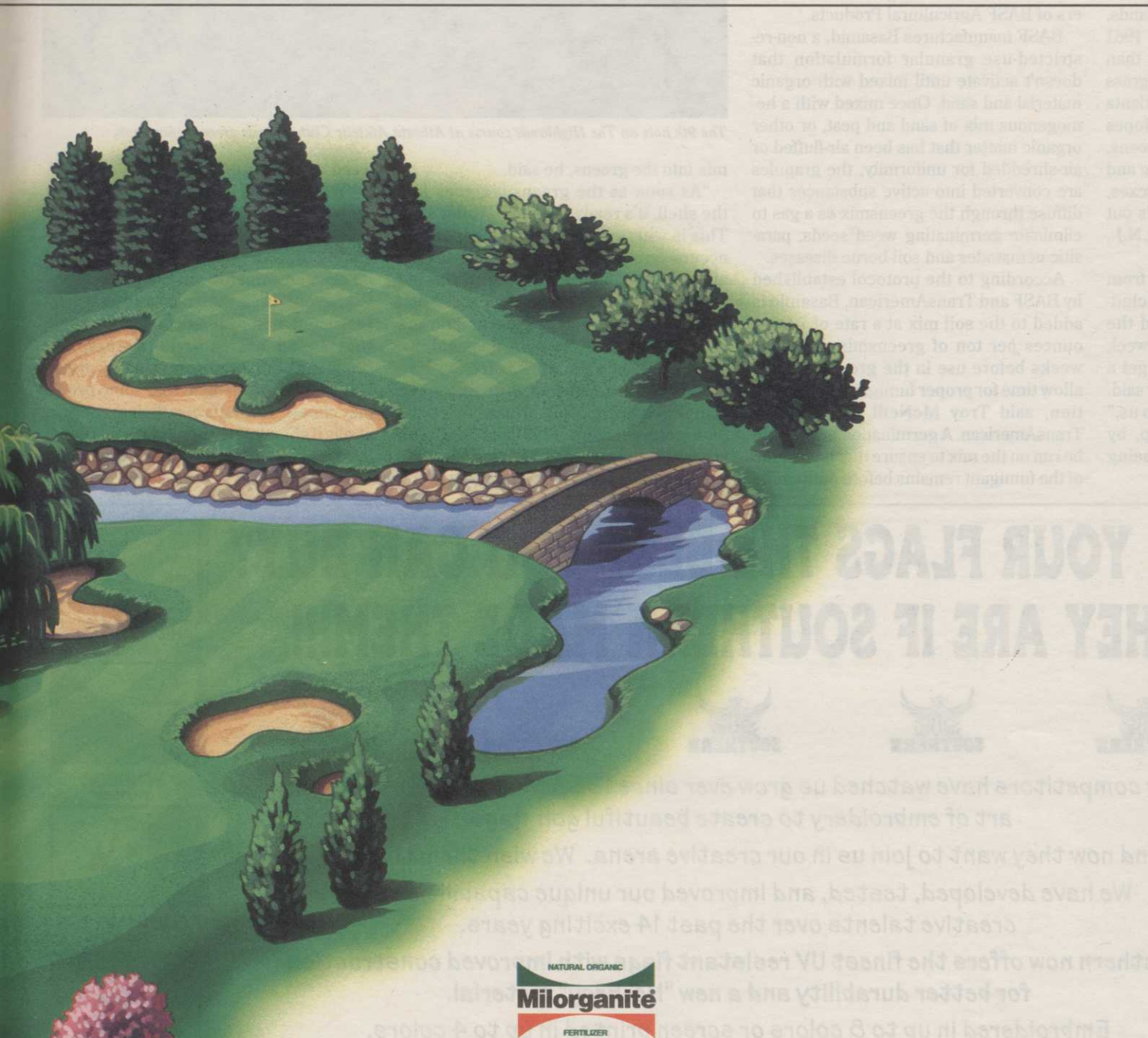
"And, second, our requirements that the company adopt the Audubon principles of sustainable resource management as part of its corporate structure. Since our environmental principles and programs actually will be written into their structure, it is much more than a simple license agreement."

Dodson hopes the U.S. Golf Association will endorse the project through its Public Golf Committee, and that it will consider contributing funding to develop and marketing and promotion program.

AI now will actively seek donations of property appropriate for these Audubon golf courses. Smaller parcels, too, can become part of the land trust, Dodson said.

"If someone owns an existing course and has, say, a 55-acre wetland complex that the government wants maintained in a certain way, the land trust can accept the land and take care of it," he said.

The project speaks volumes to a larger issue as well, Dodson said, adding: "Think of all the open-space and water issues that have been positively impacted by appropriate development. Inappropriate development causes pollution and all sorts of ill effects. But appropriate development yields jobs, open space and wildlife habitat that are actually protected long-term through economic development."



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