

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIPS KEEP GROWING

SELKIRK, N.Y. — Started in 1991, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System for Golf Courses (ACSS) now has 1,984 active members, while the Audubon Signature Program, created in 1994, has 66 facilities under its wing. According to Signature Program Director Nancy Richardson, 59 courses are in the planning and development process leading to certification and Signature status. Seven are fully certified and one former certified course has been dropped from the program. Among regular ACSS members, the retention rate is about 89 percent and no course has lost its certification, according to Audubon International President Ron Dodson. "We are having an increase every year in the number of people joining the program who are working toward certification," he said. "Our retention rate is high and our participation rate is growing."

Job-hunter's perspective

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petencies in these areas.

An astute employer knows this is the major objective in the process. It does an employer no good to identify the best applicant and not be able to interest the candidate in taking the position. A key portion of any benefit package is the value of opportu-

nities created by the position. You need to know what aspects of the position have value to you — such as educational opportunities, renovation projects, construction, or special challenges like major tournament preparation or environmental oversight.

Success here is based on your understanding of your own career

development and how this job can influence your career. The employer needs to know that you value the position and that it meets your needs. Otherwise they soon will be on the market for a new superintendent, because you have moved to a more suitable job.

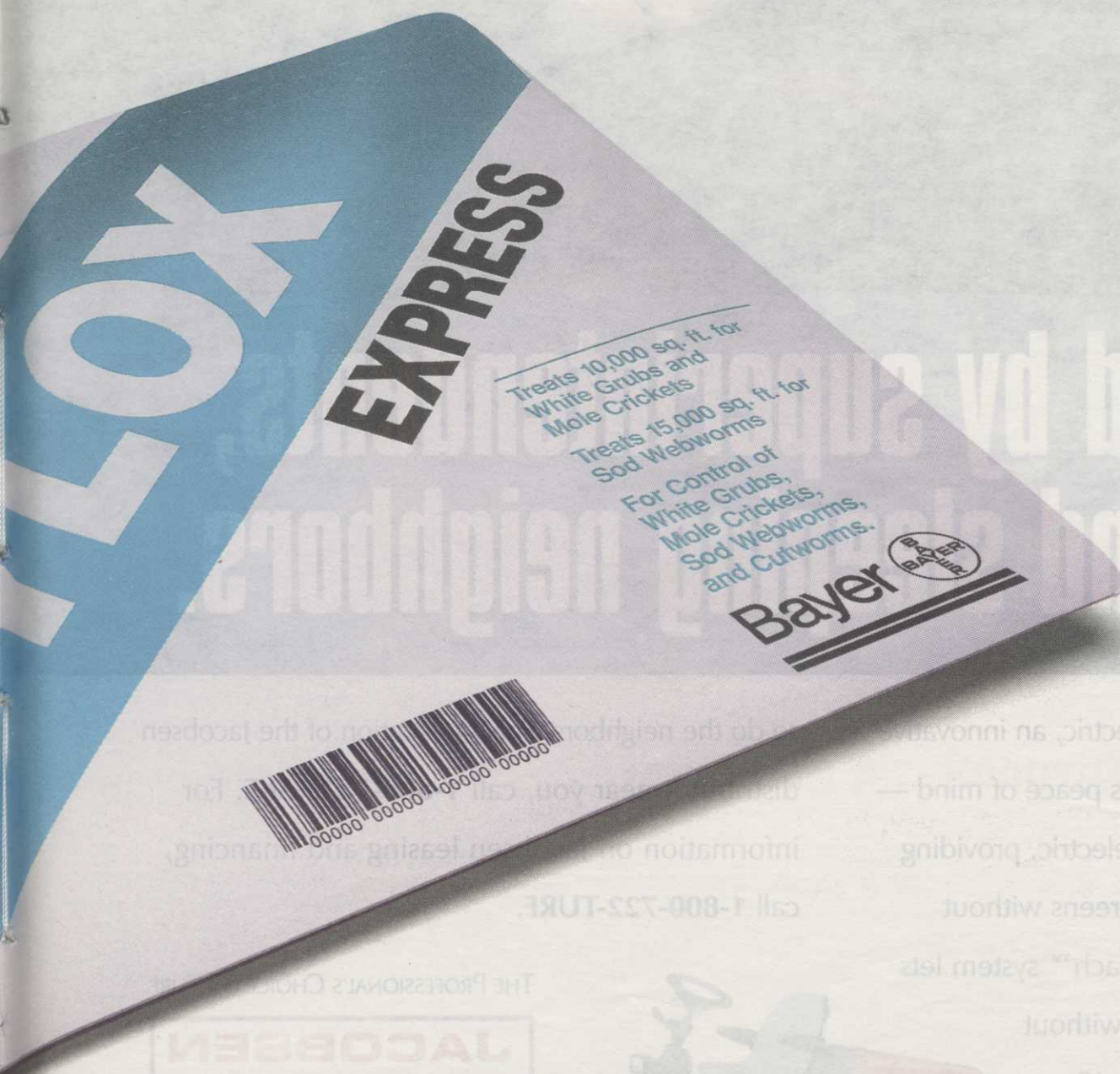
If you are the best candidate, you should know why. A key to pro-active interviewing is enlarging the question the employer asks to encompass the competencies you know are important and that differentiate you from others. For example, if you are questioned on your knowledge of pesticides and their use, you could segue into a discussion on integrated Pest Management and the abilities you have to reduce the severity of disease infestations by using appropriate cultural methods and managing the micro-environment of the greens — measures that reduce chemical use and save money. Most questions can be a launching pad to communicate your understanding of their course and you value.

Do not wait for them to ask you the questions you feel are most important. It is very likely that they will not be addressed if you don't bring them up yourself.

Now the critical step. You are in the best position to influence the circumstances of this new position — before you are offered the job. What will you need in the way of resources and support to meet the demands of the position — and be successful? You have done your homework and know the problems that previous superintendents have faced. If they are attributable to infrastructure such as irrigation, equipment or inadequate staffing, then now, in the interview, is the time to address the issues. It is even more important that fundamental questions related to the level of maintenance or financial problems be addressed at a time when they employer still owns the problems. After you accept the responsibility of the position, you will be in a less powerful position to effect change; and by identifying the hidden structural problems in the organization in advance, you will avoid inheriting problems which are beyond your power to solve.

One final key to successful interviewing is to change the perspective you bring to the process. Try seeing yourself as a consultant who has a great understanding of the needs of the employer. Knowing their problems and their resources, putting on the "consultant hat" gives you the detachment to convincingly illustrate how your management ability, coupled with their resources, can accomplish their objectives. You can then show your value, not just tell about your skills.

Showing is always more powerful than telling. To use a golf analogy: Telling about yourself is like "driving for show." Showing your problem-solving ability is like "putting for dough."



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