

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

US-UK Internships a Boon

English, Irish, Scottish students intern in U.S., while Americans go abroad 13

New Products Galore

A special section features new hardware, chemicals, accessories, drainage items, turf and seed 29-36



KEY WEST CHALLENGE

The Key West Golf Club (GC) float, above, graced the streets of this Florida Keys outpost during a recent parade. Key West GC's Rob Johnson, head superintendent at the southernmost golf course in the continental United States, is the subject of this month's Super Focus on page 18.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

New England Conference review 13
Tools of the Trade at CC of Charleston 15
USGA Green Section turf tips 17

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Grand Tour Scholarship winners chosen 3
Kemper, Fazio team on Virginia SGA project 5
Jed Azinger puts family name on design map 43

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Casper to manage New York Country Club 5
Bergstol starts Empire Golf Management 49
Starwood adds to management staff 51

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Simplot's Burk outlines expansion strategy 55
ABT sells companies, continues business 55
Novartis close with Meridian registration 56

PERIODICAL



CAR AND UTILITY VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS WEIGH IN ON OIL SHORTAGE. SEE SPECIAL SECTION ON PAGES 38-41.

BREAKING THE MOLD

K-State opening Colbert Hills as crowning jewel

By MARK LESLIE

MANHATTAN, Kan. — The hot buttons are all being pushed and on April 29, Kansas State University will unveil la piece de résistance: Colbert Hills Golf Course.

Colbert Hills is the crowning jewel on Kansas State's pioneering turfgrass management program, a curriculum that has been tailored to prepare students for club management as well as superintendent positions.

University officials be-



Kansas State University's Colbert Hills Golf Course.

lieve it also sets the standard in other areas:

- The 27-hole facility will include a nine-hole par-3 course that will serve as a "living laboratory" for researchers and students. Sitting in the Transition Zone, Colbert Hills "has all the cool-season and all the warm-season grasses," said Director of Golf Course Operations and

General Manager David Gourlay.

- The nine-hole track will also be the National Academy of the First Tee program, named after Tiger Woods' father Earl, a K-State alumnus.

- Colbert Hills is in the final stages of becoming a Silver Signature Audubon Course.

Continued on page 24

SUNY-Delhi program eyes 'whole team'

By MARK LESLIE

DELHI, N.Y. — Calling it "a blueprint" for other schools, State University of New York (SUNY) at Delhi is instituting a curriculum in which aspiring golf course superintendents, club managers and club professionals will be taught together under a new Department of Business Administration and Golf Course Management.

"What we hope to achieve in the 21st century is to get out of the box,"

Continued on page 12

John Deere set to open new factory

By A. OVERBECK

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — After nearly a decade of double-digit growth and continually outgrowing several manufacturing facilities, John Deere Vehicle Group is set to open a new \$30-million factory and headquarters here this summer. The 300,000-square-foot facility will house the manufacturing plant, a major design and engineering component and the sales and marketing team.

"The underlying reason for the facility is capacity

Continued on page 40



Large trees and classic bunkers are trademarks of Harding Park Golf Course.

Harding Park faces new life, Tour

By DOUG SAUNDERS

SAN FRANCISCO — The city of San Francisco has tentatively reached an agreement with Arnold Palmer Golf Management to lease the aging Harding Park Golf Course for 35 years.

Under the agreement, Palmer Management will spend \$15 million to completely renovate the ignored jewel that is located along the shores of Lake Merced, just a stone's throw from the venerable Olympic Club. The goal is to bring the layout up to tournament standards in order to host the PGA Tour Champion-

ship in the fall of 2002.

Harding Park Golf Course was built in 1925 and is one of four public courses in San Francisco. Harding Park also includes a nine-hole executive course. The Fleming nine was named after its designer, Jack Fleming, who was a superintendent for the Department of Parks and Recreation and was a driving force in making the game of golf available to city residents.

During its 75-year history, Harding Park has hosted many amateur events, including the 1937 and 1957 USGA Public

Continued on page 52

Freddy Bird photo

K-State

Continued from page 1

• Conceived by PGA Senior Tour star and K-State graduate Jim Colbert, the facility was announced as being the first TPC-operated university course — although operation has been contracted out to Fore Star Golf.

• A pilot program for internship residents is being operated at the course.

Excitement and high expectations over K-State's revamped turfgrass program have already more than tripled enrollment, from 40 to 130.

"This is the perfect scenario," said Gourlay. "We are teaching the students that opportunities exist. When they finish here, they will have training in point-of-sales, merchandizing, the pro shop, food-and-beverage, the golf course... They are positioned to do a great job."

Supporting the argument that golf course superintendents are naturals for course management, Gourlay said: "They already control the most costly part of the facility — the golf course. They run the biggest staff, have the most expenditures, know all the labor laws, deal with the public and are getting more and more educated all the time."

With some major players in the golf industry participating in the planning, K-State made waves in the late spring of 1998 when Colbert and university officials announced the project.

"We have the opportunity to make something very special happen in Manhattan, Kansas — something that will have a lasting impact on the world of golf and will enhance the golf program at the university where I began my career," Colbert said two years ago. He donated \$500,000 himself and raised millions from friends toward the \$10-million facility.

K-State built a partnership with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, PGA Tour Golf Course Properties Inc., Colbert and golf course architect and K-State alumnus Jeff Brauer of GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas.

"We took the original turf management option and tried to determine — through help from GCSAA, PGA Tour and faculty in three colleges here — what we needed to do to produce a better superintendent and one who had other career options, including managing the entire facility," said Dr. Jack Fry, who directs the program. "We have a minor in business built in, additional hours of communications and hotel and restaurant management courses."

Beginning this fall, Fry said, every student will have to do internships both inside and outside the clubhouse.

"They will get two views of the golf course profession," he said. "We think that's good, even for the superintendent, because oftentimes they get stuck down in the 'shop,' so to speak, and have no idea what the rest of the operation involves."

The College of Business, the College of Agriculture and School of Human Ecology are all involved in the curriculum, along with turfgrass management. And

Fry gave special credit to the central administration, "from the top down, who encouraged us — in particular Bob Krausse, the vice president for institutional advancement."

Keystones to the program are the 18-hole and nine-hole courses, which sit four miles from campus.

"We would not have had the program without the golf course," Fry said. "The biggest

portion [of it] will be internship out there, students working. It will be an excellent on-site facility for them to learn how to manage a golf course.

"Secondarily, we are going to have a classroom facility there and we will be able to take classes like golf course operations and turf management and landscape maintenance classes there and have laboratories where we will focus on a given

thing on a given day."

A number of environmental projects will be carried out as well, involving students and faculty in wildlife surveys, tracking birds, and studies on water quality, insects, soil structure, pesticide movement, and other related subjects.

A Toronto native who has held superintendent/general manager jobs at Summerlea Golf Club in

Continued on next page

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PATENT PENDING

Gourlay, job well suited

By MARK LESLIE

MANHATTAN, Kan. — “This job was written for me,” said David Gourlay of his position as director of golf course operations and general manager at Kansas State University’s Colbert Hills Golf Course here.

At a facility where the emphasis is put preparing students to

be course managers as well as superintendents, Gourlay has already lived the aspiration after 16 years in the industry.

A graduate of Texas A&M following a two-year associate degree at Guelph University and one year at Penn State, Gourlay:

- first worked at the all-women Ladies Club of Toronto, where

there was no general manager, just an accountant;

- was superintendent/general manager at Summerlea Golf Club in Vaudreuil-Dorion, Quebec, near Montreal; and

- was superintendent at Ottawa (Ontario) at Eagle Creek when new owners fired the golf pro and general man-



David Gourlay

ager, “so I ended up running the whole thing for a couple of months.”

Active in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, interested in research and having grown in two courses, Gourlay jumped at the chance for the Colbert Hills position where the superintendent would double as

general manager and Audubon International would be involved from the beginning of construction.

“Being on the cutting edge is a perfect fit for me,” the Toronto native said. “I had just had Summerlea certified and had won a GCSAA [Golf Course Superintendents Association of America] Environmental Steward Award. I love research and did a lot of it at Texas A&M for Dr. [James] Beard. It was a natural tie-in for me. And they were looking for a GM and superintendent.”

Meanwhile, the Jeff Brauer-designed golf course was an attraction as well.

“It’s not a traditional Kansas golf course,” Gourlay said. “It’s located in the flint hills, so it’s pretty rolling. There are 100-foot elevations everywhere. You cannot believe it.”

The 18-hole course contains more than 100 bunkers and all its green are U.S. Golf Association-spec.

K-State program

Continued from previous page

Vaudreuil-Dorion, Quebec and at Eagle Creek in Ottawa, Ontario, Gourlay said the golf courses were built to meet all needs.

“It’s unique here,” Gourlay said. “We’re in the transition zone and we have everything.”

The championship course has zoysiagrass tees and fairways; L-93 bentgrass greens; Kentucky bluegrass roughs bordering the fairways; fescue roughs outside the bluegrass; and native Kansas prairie grasses and some buffalograss outside the roughs.

On the par-3, for research purposes, each green has a different bentgrass: A-4, G-2, Penncross, L-93, Providence, Cato, Putter, SR-1020, Dominant Plus.

The par-3’s fairways have various varieties of perennial ryegrasses, dwarf Kentucky bluegrasses, turf-type tall fescues, and some blends of each of bluegrasses and tall fescues.

Meanwhile, the driving range tees boast Bermudagrass.

“The students coming out of here will be the most prepared for the industry because of the grasses, the affiliation with Audubon, working in conjunction with some of the tournaments we will have, and because we have the National Academy of First Tee,” Gourlay said.

As Gourlay left to speak to a class on “So You Want To Be a General Manager” he added: “More and more people are doing it [moving into general manager jobs]. There are a multitude of reasons. One is economics. A lot of clubs can’t pay top dollar to all three — the pro, clubhouse manager and superintendent. So, some superintendents are getting the opportunities. There are a lot of qualified superintendents who can jump into that position if that is the direction they want to take in their careers.”

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