

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION  
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 7  
JULY 2000 • \$7.00

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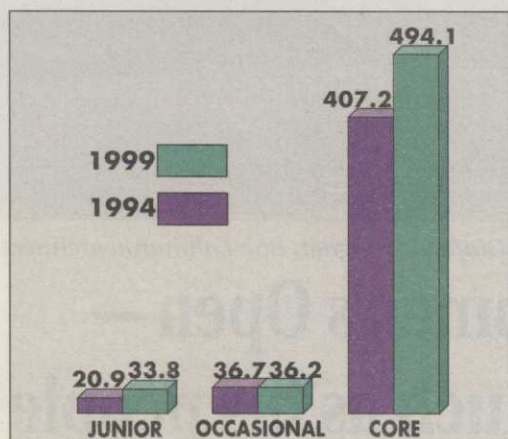
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### Zoysiagrass spotlight

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### TOTAL ROUNDS PLAYED (MILLIONS)



Rounds played in 1999 reached the highest point ever (564 million), according to the 2000 edition of the National Golf Foundation's Golf Participation in the U.S. study. For more on the NGF study, see story on page 3.

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### PERIODICAL



Architect Tom Fazio on site at the Virginia State Golf Association's Independence Golf Club. When the course opens next summer, it will have a 9-hole Kid's Course. For more on this story, see page 19.

## Eco-terrorists strike Pure Seed test farm

By JAY FINEGAN

HUBBARD, Ore. — An underground eco-terrorist group styling itself the Anarchist Golfing Association attacked Pure Seed Testing Inc. here last month, smashing into greenhouses, overturning and stomping on experimental grass plots, scattering identification labels, and spray painting such slogans as "Nature Bites Back."

Crystal Fricker, director of research and new president, estimated damage at about \$500,000, but said the value of projects destroyed in the raid could easily have run over \$1 million. "It's hard to put a value on it," she said. "We've lost years of research."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation swung into action quickly, assigning 10 agents to the case. At press time, no arrests had been made.

The vandals stole onto the 110-acre research farm



Damage to Pure Seed's experimental grass plots.

during the night. "They hit two different greenhouses and went across 70 acres of the farm, hitting different nurseries, pulling up plants, cutting the heads off plants, and dumping 200 pots of ornamental grasses collected from around the world," Fricker said. "They left little clues that they had been everywhere — golf balls embossed with their insignia: a circle-A anarchist symbol,"

Continued on page 5

## dot-coms primed to revolutionize market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

While the buzz surrounding the launch of several Internet-based business-to-business ventures earlier this year has faded, work behind the scenes continues as these high-tech companies clamor to define strategies, attract vendors and buyers and get up and running. In the meantime, web-savvy superintendents are beginning to embrace the concept of purchasing goods on-line.

New players have also burst onto the scene in recent weeks, bringing the total of superintendent specific



Rhonda Knipp

Continued on page 25

## Jack's back in Monterey

By ISAAC HILLSON

MONTEREY, Calif. — In the charged atmosphere of the weekend before the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, Jack Nicklaus made some noise a few miles east as he unveiled his latest course design.

Pasadera Country Club is set inland, just east of Laguna Seca Public Course and a few miles from the ocean. Cut into the familiar brush-covered hills of the California countryside, the course caters to the recently rich forty-something retirees of the booming San Francisco Bay area and offers some relief from the unpredictable fogs of the coastal areas of the Monterey Peninsula.

Continued on page 21

## Destructive beetle spreading fast through Northeast

By JAY FINEGAN

BRETTON WOODS, N.H. — An unusually pernicious turf-destroying beetle, the European chafer, is marching briskly through Northeastern states and appears poised to extend its range. Speaking to superintendents

from Maine and New Hampshire at the Mount Washington Hotel here, entomologist Stanley R. Swier said the chafer can do "a phenomenal amount of damage."

Swier also expressed concern that the insect may be on the verge of a breakout phase. "The chafer will lay its eggs in potted nursery plants, and these plants will be shipped around the country," he said. "They can also be carried by cars and trains. They emerge by the millions in late June, and they'll fly right into vehicles. When you look at



European chafer depositing eggs.

the routes of major highways and rail beds, you see the chafer following those tracks. It's getting a free ride from place to place."

The brown, inch-long beetle, a native of central Europe, first appeared in the United States in 1940, when it turned up in Newark, N.Y. Its advance from there had been gradual. Now, however, the insect has spread as far north as Portland, Me., and southern Canada,

Continued on page 10

## Course owners, IRS negotiate

By A. WASHBURN

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), working with the national accounting firm KPMG, met here recently with officials of the Internal Revenue Service to seek more favorable tax treatment for golf courses. At issue was a 45-year-old tax regulation dealing with real estate depreciation which, course owners contended, failed to account for the construction and maintenance costs of modern layouts.

Revenue Ruling 55-290,

Continued on page 30

## e-revolution

Continued from page 1

e-commerce initiatives at press time to four.

### GREENTRAC.COM

Greentrac.com, which launched at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Show in February, is up and running and has posted strong numbers in its first 90 days of operation, with \$10 million of closed transactions. The Newport Beach, Calif.-based company uses a bidding model to help match buyers with sellers on-line.

"The electronic request for proposal (eRFP) is a buyer driven tool," said Rhonda Knipp, vice president of sales and marketing. "A superintendent can go in and fill out a form detailing exactly what they want to buy and then it is automatically submitted to registered vendors that match that product category."

Vendors can then submit bids on orders and superintendents then select the one that best fits their needs.

According to Knipp, buyers don't always go for the low bid.

"The buyer may be price motivated, but there are also delivery concerns, terms of the agreement and brand and product familiarity that come into play," she said.

Greentrac.com currently has 785 members, which breaks down to 448 buyers and 337 vendors. Since the site went live, they have closed 297 eRFP's. The site covers all product categories, from maintenance and pro shop to food and beverage items.

While the site has an average of 60 to 70 new users a week, vendors have been tougher to add said Knipp. "The national companies are slower to embrace us because of the implications for their channel or sales organization," she said. "But the eRFP's give them access to leads and allows companies to track staff and distribution activity and see where they are getting bids." Vendors are charged four to six percent on each transaction.

Going forward, Knipp is setting her sights on building the e-auction section of the site.

"We need to take more  
Continued on next page

## Industry formulating e-commerce strategies

As business-to-business Internet sites continue to reshape the U.S. economy, the golf course industry is struggling to develop proper e-commerce strategies. Many manufacturers and distributors are torn between signing on with a dot-com company or starting their own e-commerce sites, while also try-

ing to figure out how to use the Internet as a sales tool without eating into existing sales and distribution channels.

To cover all the bases, Lesco, which is pursuing agreements with different e-commerce sites, is also planning its own e-commerce site.

"The difference between

Lesco and the other dot-com ventures is that we have a business model that has reached out to the golf courses in this country," said Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Wayne Murawski. "Our concept is enablement. It allows customers more access to us. We plan to integrate e-business into our

bricks and mortar business."

By taking the middle ground and building its own web site and joining up with other dot-coms, Murawski expects to expand Lesco's geographical reach and grow its customer base.

However, according to superintendent Marc Davison at Green Bay (Wis.) Golf and Country Club, e-commerce must be kept simple.

Continued on page 28

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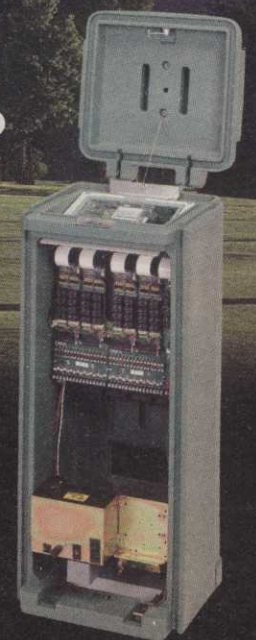
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Continued from previous page

time to build a base of marketable items so it becomes a drawing place for buyers," she said.

**GOLFSAT.COM**

San Diego-based Golfsat.com also debuted at this year's show, but has not gone live with its site.

"We are focused on building a true e-commerce business," said Chief Executive Officer Mike Scott. "That means embracing

the existing distribution structure that is out there and creating software and capabilities to enable a distributor to log onto Golfsat through a control center and put up and take down product information and pricing."

A new version of Golfsat.com's site will be launched at the end of this month featuring technical information and access to university research. The company's 1.0 software is due to be up and run-

ning in September.

"At that point we will have our five beta sites begin purchasing from a select group of beta distributors," said Scott.

While Scott thinks larger ticket equipment items will eventually be bought on-line, the site will initially target commodity items, such as fertilizer, chemicals, small power tools and replacement parts.

"Larger ticket items won't hap-

pen right away," he said. "But a distributor can now [with golfsat.com] take his salespeople out of the low margin commodity transactions and allow them to focus on higher margin, value added sales."

**PROFESSIONAL GOLF COMMERCE**

Denver-based Professional Golf Commerce (pgcgolf.com) recently added golf course maintenance specific equipment and supplies to its product listings.

The site also provides pro shop goods and will soon expand its coverage to the food and beverage sector.

According to President and Chief Executive Officer Kirk Sanders, the company is taking a different approach to setting up its superintendent-driven module.

"It is a different market. We are going to let them [vendors] dictate how they want this process to occur," he said. "The beauty of our model is that we don't focus on price; we are not forcing vendors to compete because these suppliers have worked hard to maintain pricing and provide value added services."

On pgcgolf.com, vendors will be able to access customers directly, decreasing mailing and customer service costs and ultimately increasing savings and profits, said Sanders.

The site already has more than 350 members and 57 superintendents signed on, but will not start to collect a membership fee until the first transaction. "Until we aggregate the critical mass of suppliers, we will waive the fee," said Sanders, who anticipates having the superintendent part of the site up in the next 60 to 90 days.

**GOLFBUSINESS.COM**

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) announced June 9 that it has teamed with Apollo Real Estate Advisors to form golfbusiness.com, a vertically integrated marketplace for the golf course industry. The site, which brings 4,000 buyers and 40 sellers from the organization's Smart Buy Network into the fold, will go live Sept. 1, according to Michael McLaughlin, vice president of operations. The site will cover food and beverage, pro shop and maintenance goods.

"This will not just be an interchange," said McLaughlin. "We will be doing our own distribution. We will process orders and place them via vendors or go through logistics relationships."

This way, a course will deal with one vendor and get one set of purchasing orders and one monthly statement to streamline accounting he said. †



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**SyncroFlo  
adds MESA**

NORCROSS, Ga. — SyncroFlo, Inc. has added Pleasanton, Calif.-based MESA Energy Systems to its list of pump station service agents.

MESA, an EMCOR Group company, will service SyncroFlo golf, irrigation, commercial and municipal installations in California.