

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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INSIDE

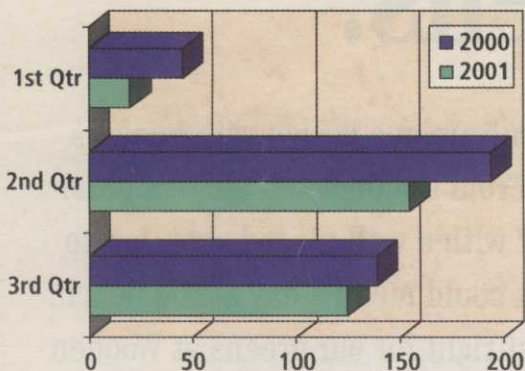
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TOTAL GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT BY QUARTER



Golf course construction numbers slipped dramatically in 2001. While development levels may continue to decline, opportunities still exist. See story on page 3.

Source: National Golf Foundation

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PERIODICAL



2001 Newsmakers

2001 Newsmakers

John Deere making move to become one-stop shop

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — John Deere closed its acquisition of Richton International, the parent company of Century Rain Aid, in October adding the final piece — for now — to its newly created John Deere Landscapes division. The formation of the new division began with the buy out of McGinnis Farms earlier in the year.

The company's bold moves bring it closer to becoming a single-source supplier for the golf course industry. In addition to its primary business as a manufacturer of turf care equipment, John Deere has instantly acquired the commanding position as the largest distributor of irrigation supplies in the country and now has a significant interest in providing golf courses with landscape supplies, fertilizers, chemicals and seed.

While John Deere Landscapes' president Dave Werning is working on consolidating



Dave Werning

Continued on page 27

2001 Newsmakers

IGM finishes year with strong growth rate

By JOEL JOYNER

CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance has become one of the leading golf course maintenance outsourcing companies in the United States this year showing a strong level of growth in a market hampered by a sluggish economy and a decrease in rounds played. The company came away with an impressive list of accomplishments for the year and maintains a strong outlook heading in to 2002.

IGM is a wholly owned subsidiary of Meadowbrook Golf, a golf course developer, owner and management firm headquartered here at ChampionsGate. The company merged with Meadowbrook in February 1998 enabling IGM to eventually manage all golf courses owned by Meadowbrook. IGM maintained about 30 courses before they were bought out. Today, they have 96 courses under their care with an objective to keep on growing. The company acquired more than 40 courses this year.



Scott Zakany, CGCS

Continued on page 11

2001 Newsmakers

Troon Golf to top 100 courses by year's end

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Troon Golf has had another banner year in 2001 with its portfolio on target to top 100 golf facilities. While the golf course industry continues to slow, the company is adding staff and management contracts worldwide. Looking forward to 2002, Troon Golf chairman and CEO Dana Garmany expects another year of record growth.

Golf Course News: 2001



Dana Garmany

was another strong year for Troon Golf, how many courses did you add to your portfolio?

Dana Garmany: We have added 19 facilities worldwide so far this year, 16 of which are in North

Continued on page 22



Jeff Roke, Arnold Palmer and Brad Schmidt look over course plans

2001 Newsmakers

Palmer's Arbor Links Golf Course set to open in June

By GARY BURCHFIELD

Nebraska City, Neb. — Construction is finished and the grow-in process is underway at Arbor Links, the new "laboratory-type" golf course built by Landscapes Unlimited in Nebraska. The unique course is a three-way partnership between Landscapes Unlimited, Palmer Course Design Company and the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Grand opening is set for the week of June 23, 2002, in conjunction with a three-day "Golf and the Environment"

Continued on page 18

Penn A-4: something to
look forward to at
Wooden Sticks

Number 2, Wooden Sticks
Uxbridge, Ontario
Brian Haus, Superintendent
Ron Garl, Architect

“Penn A-4 is picture perfect for our Wooden Sticks greens.”

“The **Wooden Sticks** experience has golfers of all skill levels arm pumping, cursing, and coming back for more. Eight holes on this unique course draw inspiration from

“Number 2 hole is a truly unique design with bunkers surrounding the green. From the elevated tee, it’s possible to land on the target with a well-placed shot, but to miss short or right could mean a day at the beach.

“Penn A-4 is just right for our greens at Wooden Sticks. With the variety of putting surface sizes, shapes, and contours we have, Penn A-4 is asked to do a lot of things including: grow in deep shade, adapt to our severe climate changes, repair scuff and ball marks resulting from public play, and to be the reward at the end of some challenging approaches.

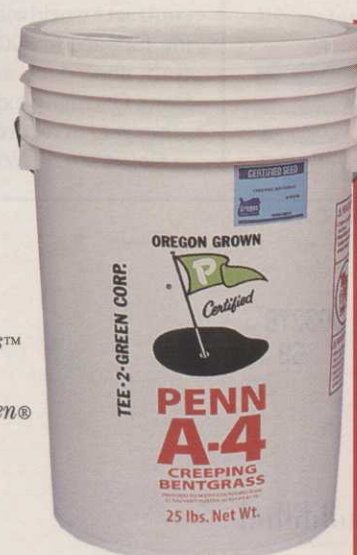
“The new Penn A-4 creeping bentgrass does it beautifully.”

Brian Haus, Superintendent



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As development numbers dip, opportunities still exist

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JUPITER, Fla. — A slowing economy, flat golfer participation rates and over-saturation of certain markets has led to the lowest level of golf course construction since the early 1990s. According to the National Golf Foundation, course openings for 2001 will likely fall below 400, down from 524 in 2000. As of Sept. 30, just 233 18-hole equivalents had opened.

While golf course developers, builders, architects and lenders knew the euphoria of the last six years could not last forever, many are now wondering what impact the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 will have on the already slowing market. Given the time lapse between construction starts and course openings this can be a difficult ques-

tion to answer, but industry experts said that development will continue to slow over the next two years.

“There will be a lag that will begin in the middle of next year and beyond where you will start to see construction starts go down,” said Troon Golf CEO Dana Garmany. “Projects that are under construction will be completed even if the owner has to spend more of his equity, but starts will go down 25 to 40 percent in 2002 and 2003. Then we will have a lag as projects begin to start again.”

Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America also believes planning will be off, but has not seen any projects put on ice yet. “Planning will fall off. This is an era of extreme caution because people are just not sure what is going on,” he said. “However, a lot of the projects that were in the hopper for next year and those coming this spring are still going. People are still going to play golf and where there is demand, developers will find a way to finance it.”

PUBLIC GOLF MAY FILL THE VOID

According to golf course builder Joe Neibur, lower interest rates make building municipal and affordable courses more inviting. “The private club market will slow down because people are not going to write a check write now,” he said. “But the interest rates, especially those for municipal bonds, are much lower making affordable public golf more

a reality. If we don't see more of those types of projects I would be surprised.”

Damian Pascuzzo, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, is striving to get this exact message out. (see story page 15) “The NGF tells us there is a pent up demand of 20 million additional golfers out there who would play if they had more access to affordable golf. Municipalities and small land owners can fill this void.”

THIRD QUARTER DEVELOPMENT NUMBERS NEW FACILITIES

Type	In Planning	Under Construction	Completed
Daily Fee	43	52	59
Municipal	10	10	8
Private	20	13	9
Total	73	75	76

Source: National Golf Foundation

Turf field day showcases new Fazio course, national “super-sod” alliance

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Tom Fazio's latest golf course design here, Briggs Ranch Golf Club, highlighted the Bladerunner Farms Turf Field Day Oct. 5. The event also showcased the formation of a national “super-sod” alliance between three leading turfgrass companies: Bladerunner Farms, Gardner Turfgrass and Patten Seed.

The Briggs Ranch course, opened this fall, is the first golf course ever to use

at the event. Featured speakers included Ronny Duncan, developer of SeaShore 1 Paspalum, and Dr. Ken Diesburg, a zoysiagrass expert and turfgrass researcher from the University of Southern Illinois.

SUPER-SOD ALLIANCE

The event also kicked off the formation of a national alliance between three regional turfgrass producers. Each company will oversee a regional network of farms and growers of specialty grasses: Bladerunner Farms, based in Potteet, Texas, will serve the Central region; Gardner Turfgrass, headquartered in Westminster, Colo., will cover the West; and Patten Seed, out of Lakeland, Ga., will take responsibility for the Eastern United States.

The alliance gives customers the selection and competitive pricing of a national company with the service and quality of a family-owned business, according to Doguet. “This allows us to maintain the



Bill Rogers (left) and golf course architect Tom Fazio (right) discuss their latest project, Briggs Ranch Golf Club in San Antonio.

wall-to-wall Zeon Zoysia that covers the entire course except for greens. The private club is situated on a 2,500-acre property with a community now under development in the scenic Hill Country approximately 20 minutes south of downtown San Antonio.

Zeon Zoysia was only one of several varieties on display here for the field day. (see chart, page 5) “We wanted to give people a chance to see these new grasses in their working environment instead of in a booth at a trade show,” said Bladerunner Farms' president David Doguet.

Fazio delivered the keynote address



Super-sod alliance — (from left) Stan Gardner, David Doguet and Ben Copeland join forces

quality and service of our individual operations with the power and reach of a national company behind us,” added Ben Copeland, president of Patten Seed.

Continued on page 5



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Lesco to expand distribution through independent marketer program

STRONGSVILLE, Ohio — In a move to expand distribution beyond its 228 service centers and 78 Stores-on-Wheels, Lesco has launched an independent marketer program designed to allow their proprietary products to be sold through existing distributors and marketers of green industry supplies. The company has identified 500 markets where it would like to establish these independent marketer agreements. At press time, Lesco had yet to sign any such agreements.



William Foley

"This is designed to allow our products to be sold in areas we do not cover," said William Foley, chairman, CEO and president of Lesco. "They will have access to all products including Novex, Poly Plus sulfur-coated urea fertilizers and combination products, and the CommercialPlus line of application and mowing equipment."

According to Foley, this move will help Lesco expand market penetration despite a period of slowing growth. The company saw net income for

the first half of 2001 fall 78 percent to \$1.9 million and the company's stock has slid to \$9.80 down from a 52-week high of \$15.25.

"This has been a tough year," he said. "But this initiative will leverage our technological capabilities and proprietary technology and allow us to grow

more than we could have with service centers alone."

The program will allow Lesco to expand its geographic presence relatively cheaply by funneling products through independent marketers that already have distribution infrastructure in place.

The company will provide

each marketer with support including national advertising, store merchandising, presentation guidance and in-store signage and marketing materials. Marketing partners will also have access to the company's online order entry system, customer service, technical support and market train-

ing programs.

"We're making sure that our independent marketers receive the same level of support and training, and have the same degree of customer service and technical expertise as our own lawn care and golf associates," said Foley.

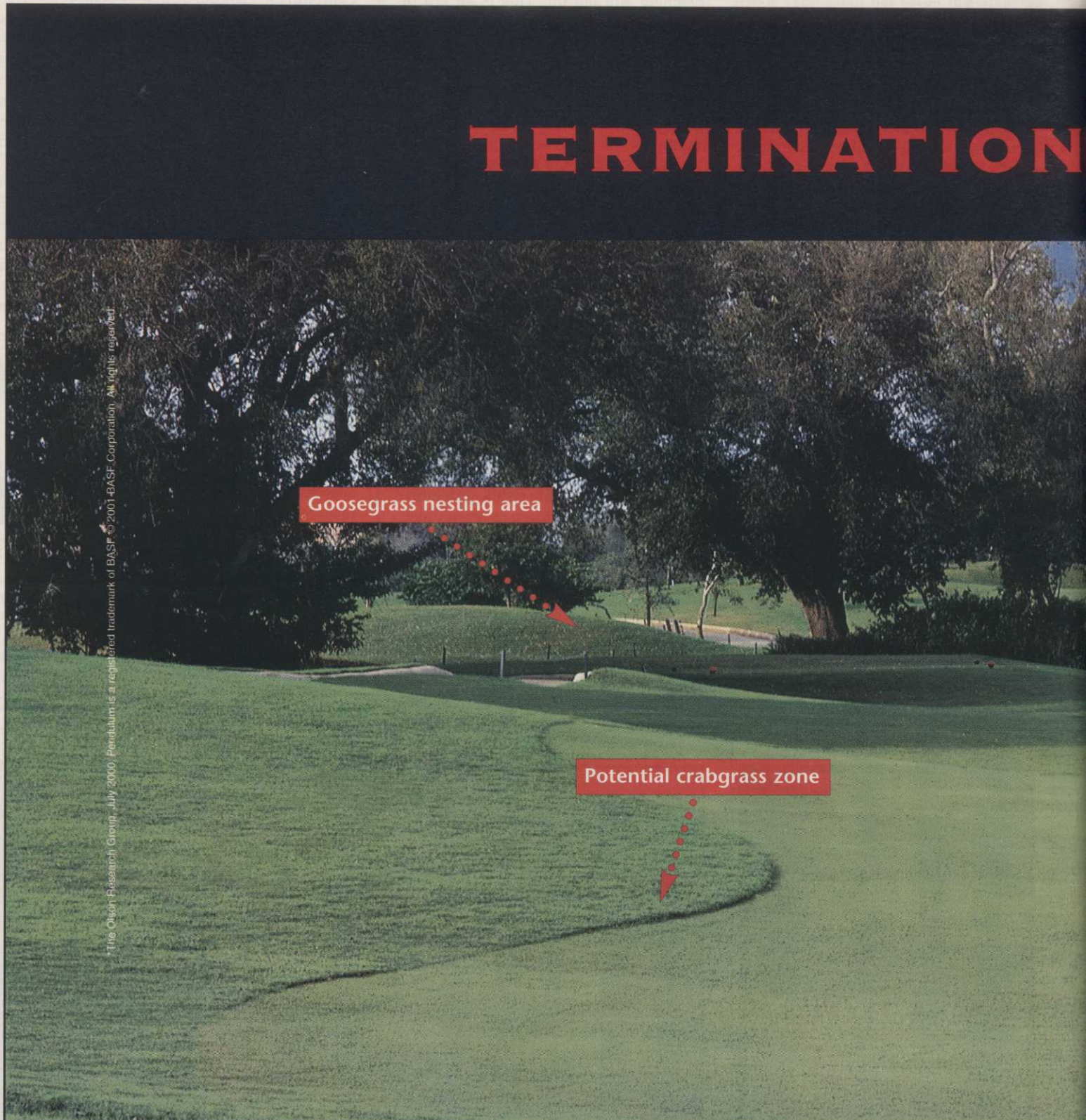
— Andrew Overbeck

Ocean Ridge plans to add fourth course

SUNSET BEACH, N.C. — Ocean Ridge Plantation, a 2,000-acre residential community here that features three championship golf courses, is planning to add a fourth course, according to director of golf Tom Plankers. The course will be accompanied by an upscale practice facility and a golf school designed to rival any along the Southeast coast. Construction is expected to begin in 2002.

The Ocean Ridge courses currently feature the three "Big Cats" — Lion's Paw, Panther's Run and Tiger's Eye. "The additions will continue to enhance Ocean Ridge's growing reputation as one of the best golf facilities along the Grand Strand and throughout the southeast region," said Plankers.

The course will be designed by Tim Cate who will be working on his seventh solo project which includes the Panther's Run and Tiger's Eye layouts. The Lion's Paw Golf Links was designed by course architect Willard Byrd.



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CGF awards over \$100,000 in scholarships

OAKVILLE, ONTARIO, Canada — The Canadian Golf Foundation announced its list of scholarship winners for the 2001 academic year. Over \$100,000 was awarded to 37 Canadian students in recognition of their achievements in the classroom and on the golf course.

The scholarships, which are

each valued at up to \$5,000 per year, assist young golfers and those pursuing careers in the golf industry with the cost of education while attending a college or university. Qualified candidates must maintain an "A" average, demonstrate success in golf at the local, provincial and national level, participate in ex-

tra-curricular activities and give back to the sport in some way.

SOME TOP AWARDS

The Jack Nicklaus Award is a non-monetary recognition given for outstanding academic achievement to the top graduating student in the CGF program each year. This year's recipient is Michael Roberts of Waterloo,

Ontario, who recently graduated from Wichita State University.

The Turfgrass Agronomy/Management Scholarship was created to develop expertise in golf course maintenance and may be applied towards an undergraduate or graduate program in turfgrass management at a recognized college or university. The award this year went to Daniel Tremblay at Laval University in Laval, Quebec.

The Landscape Architecture Scholarship was established to



foster interest in the design and development of golf courses. The recipients for 2001 are: Chad Dennis Murphy at the University of Illinois in Winnipeg, Manitoba.; Peter Horn Tidakwente at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario; and Oliver Tubb at the University of Guelph in Stirling, Ontario.

CGF academic scholarships are awarded to full-time students pursuing a college education in Canada or abroad. They may be renewed annually up to a maximum of four years of undergraduate study, though renewal applications are assessed in competition with new applicants. The CGF program has been funding students since 1982.

NOT GERMINATION.



Poa annua alert

Sod alliance

Continued from page 3

With a network of growers, the alliance will be able to deliver locally adapted turfgrasses from family-owned farms in each region. "We saw some really great synergies with the three companies," said Stan Gardner, vice president of Gardner Turfgrass. "Each of us shares a track

NEW TURFGRASS VARIETIES DISPLAYED AT THE FIELD DAY:

- Jamur Zoysia
- Baby Bermuda
- Reveille Texas Bluegrass
- Sealsle 1 Seashore Paspalum
- Density Buffalograss
- Zenith, VJ and Y2 zoysiagrasses.

record of providing new varieties, developing new skills and staying on the edge of what's happening in turfgrass."

Bladerunner Farms, founded in 1993, offers patented zoysiagrasses, Bermudagrasses and buffalograsses. Gardner Turfgrass, operating since 1970, provide non-allergenic hybrid Bermudagrasses, Reveille Texas Bluegrass and soil-less turfgrasses. The Patten Seed Co., with nearly 50 years in the industry, maintains their signature centipede grass, Centi-Seed. A family and employee owned corporation, Patten Seed is also one of the world's largest growers of zoysiagrasses.

Some specialty grasses available through the alliance include: Reveille Texas Bluegrass, Zeon and JaMur Zoysias, Zenith Zoysia seed, and Density Buffalograsses. ■

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BASF

Big Golf Inc., coming soon to a golf course near you?

The consolidation trend in the golf course industry continued unabated in 2001 and it shows no signs of easing up for 2002. While there are fewer companies left to buy up, especially on the chemical side of the business, there is little doubt that slowing golf course construction and economic uncertainty will add more fuel to the merger and acquisitions fire.

This year alone Dow AgroSciences snapped up Rohm and Haas and Bayer made a play for Aventis CropScience. Last year, AstraZeneca and Novartis combined to form Syngenta and BASF purchased American Cyanamid.

The trend reaches beyond the chemical companies. On the distribution side, Royster Clark bought Pro Source One. Heller Financial entered the golf lending business by purchasing a portfolio from Bank of America and was then subsequently bought out by GE Capital. (See story page 19) On the management end, Golf Trust of America and Family Golf Centers fell by the wayside and GPS companies forged alliances with golf car manufacturers.

The most interesting and far-reaching set of acquisitions this year, however, belongs to John Deere. The company bought up landscape supplier McGinnis Farms and then purchased Richton International, the parent company of irrigation distributor Century Rain Aid.

As this month's front page story outlines, the newly formed John Deere Landscapes



Andrew Overbeck, editor

division is not only the largest irrigation distributor in the country, but it has also taken the unprecedented step of getting into the seed, fertilizer and chemical distribution business. No other turf equipment maker can offer this breadth of services, and the company has not ruled out purchasing other companies to expand its product offering further.

The possibility of one big golf company that meets all of a golf course's needs from turf equipment, golf cars, agronomic supplies, course management and maintenance services, etc. is edging closer to reality. But as customers in any industry would point out, this will not be possible unless companies can continue to offer high quality products and services.

is very little competition. I hate to say that ten cents here and ten cents there helps us make our decision, but every superintendent, owner and management group is looking at every dime right now."

According to Doug Larson, superintendent at Manufacturers Golf and Country Club in Fort Washington, Pa., chemical companies have changed over so rapidly lately that he has lost track of which distributor representative he is dealing with. "There is a lack of continuity more than anything else," he said.

While they see the benefits of a single source golf course supplier, superintendents also said it could erode their freedom of choice.

"If I am an owner and can spend money with one company, that makes sense," said Scott Cybulski, superintendent at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club. "But I am constantly searching for some obscure product or machine."

Larson agreed. "I have never been a fan of buying one brand," he said. "I have a hodgepodge of equipment and I have a hard time believing that someone who offers a one-stop shop could have the best products of each category. I don't see it happening."

While industry consolidation is inevitable in a free market economy, companies need to bear in mind that serving customers is just as important as pleasing shareholders. When

companies come together to broaden the scope of products and services there is an opportunity to increase both market share and customer satisfaction. As the consolidation trend continues to march through the golf course industry, let's hope that the version of Big Golf Inc. depicted in our editorial cartoon never comes to fruition.



SUPERINTENDENTS WEIGH IN

According to superintendents I spoke with, many have already been impacted by the effects of consolidation.

"What we are seeing initially is that there are definitely some service issues," said superintendent Neil Thraikill at Silverhorn Golf Club in San Antonio, Texas. "And there

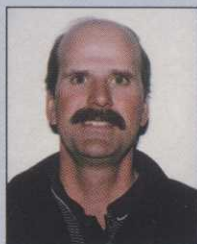
Remembering turfgrass fundamentals is crucial to success

As I sit in my office on this cold October morning, preparing to write this commentary, I am surrounded by technology. As I tap the computer keyboard, I see my fax machine, Palmpilot, and answering machines – and this is just in my office.

During my 25 years in this business, the turfgrass industry – from maintenance equipment to irrigation controls and turf varieties – has gone high tech. While these high tech developments are all great for our industry, superintendents need to remember the fundamentals and cultural practices of turfgrass management.

BACK IN THE DAY

When I first started working on a golf course we used to topdress greens by hand. Our topdressing machine consisted of three guys, a trailer full of a 1:1 sand/soil mix, and three large shovels. When I saw the first self-propelled topdresser, I thought I had seen it all. Now we have topdressers big and small, and for greens and fairways. I am happy that no one decided to topdress fairways when we were using the shovel technique.



Kevin Ross

For us older guys, "computer" was hardly a household word when we started in the business. Now we sit at a computer and tell it what we want to irrigate with the click of a mouse. The only mouse we knew years back were the ones in our maintenance barn, eating our low-tech grass seed. With my first central control system it took a while to build my confidence that a mouse click could program the system. It just didn't seem right not to inspect the course and visit each satellite for programming.

The largest technology leap, however, has occurred with turfgrass varieties. Whoever thought we would have a "gene gun" that would be capable of transforming a selected species of grass? The new "superbents" have also pushed the conditions envelope. Did we ever think that we would have bentgrass available that could withstand a cut of one-tenths of an inch? Thirty years ago we had Penncross and didn't consider that anything might be better.

BACK TO BASICS

Let's go back to the irrigation system. Water management is the single most important fundamental practice for turfgrass managers.

Continued on next page

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GCN MAILBAG

"The Ode to Interseeding"

Editor's note: Kevin Downing, superintendent at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla., penned this poem and posted it in the clubhouse for the edification of his members.

Now is the time to heed
Hence we have planted
the seed
Golfers beware...
No Greens have been
mowed
No Cups have been
placed
We water to settle the
thirst,
As we wait for those
seeds to burst.
One week from now...
We can start to cut...
So once again you can
begin to putt.

GPS doesn't keep pace

To the Editor,
Having just played my first round on a course with GPS installed, I must say that on the first tee I was thinking it was a great way to speed up play. (Speed of Play focus, GCN October 2001) But by the seventh hole I was cussing the system

because while we were supposedly "keeping pace", we had waited on every tee ball and approach shot since the second hole. Since the group ahead of us was within acceptable times, they saw no need to allow us to play through. This resulted in a four-and-a-half hour round instead of the three-and-a-half hour round we would have played.

Some work needs to be done.
Sincerely,
Vance Voth, Mann & Co. Architects & Engineers
Hutchinson, Kan.

Personal Ranger a hit

To the Editor,
I just finished reading the speed of play articles from the October issue. Here at

Balmoral Woods we too have implemented the Personal Ranger pace of play system. For a relatively low cost, it has improved our pace of play and it is easy to use and understand. I highly recommend it for all golf courses.

Sincerely,
David Mortell, General Manager
Balmoral Woods Country Club
Crete, Ill.

Fundamentals

Continued from previous page

Why? The grass plant is composed of approximately 80 percent water, so without it you have no turf. In many cases, with too much water, you also could have no turf or poor quality turf. I believe the best water managers still rely on an invention from even before my time - the hose. I know many superintendents who basically shut-off their high tech irrigation system during the summer stress months, and use the fundamental practice of hand-watering to manage their turfgrass. Imagine that, high tech computers and all those fancy heads, and the greatest invention, the hose, is relied upon the most.

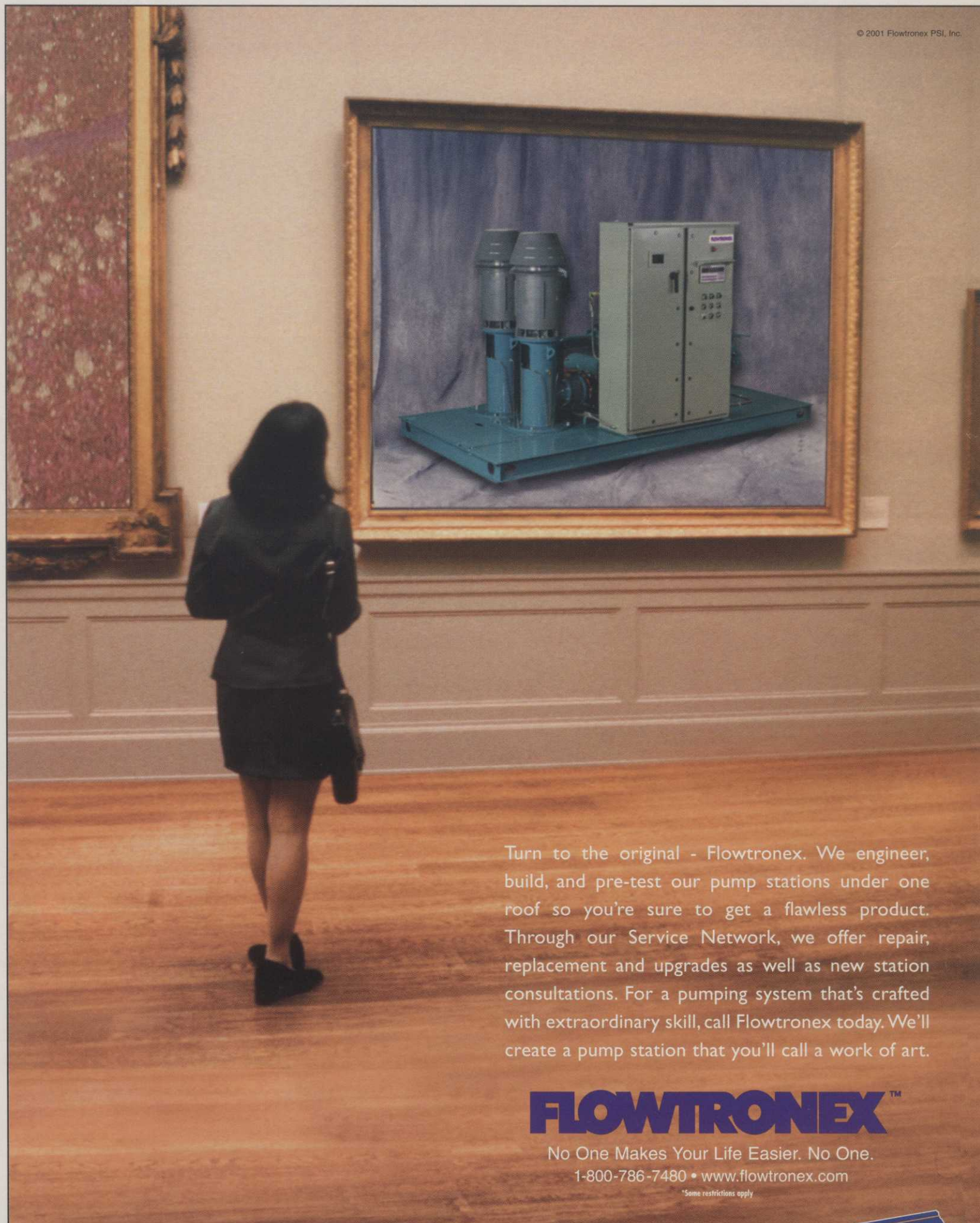
No matter how high-tech mowers may get with robotics and lasers on the horizon, the basics of mowing will still be an important fundamental. Mowing frequency, height of cut, equipment selection, and mowing technique all contribute to proper turfgrass fundamentals.

Using good sound fundamentals gives you the benefit of growing quality turf without injecting practices that could kill turf. Sure we all want to look on the chemical shelf for the magical bottle of *Poa be Gone*, *Crabgrass Destroyer*, or *Disease-Not*, but it's the fundamentals that are the building blocks for healthy turfgrass. Let's welcome turfgrass technology with open arms, but let's not lose sight of coaching our turf through good sound fundamentals. ■

CORRECTION

An article on new irrigation products (GCN, November 2001) incorrectly identified Signature Control Systems' president Brian Smith as Bruce Smith. We regret the error.

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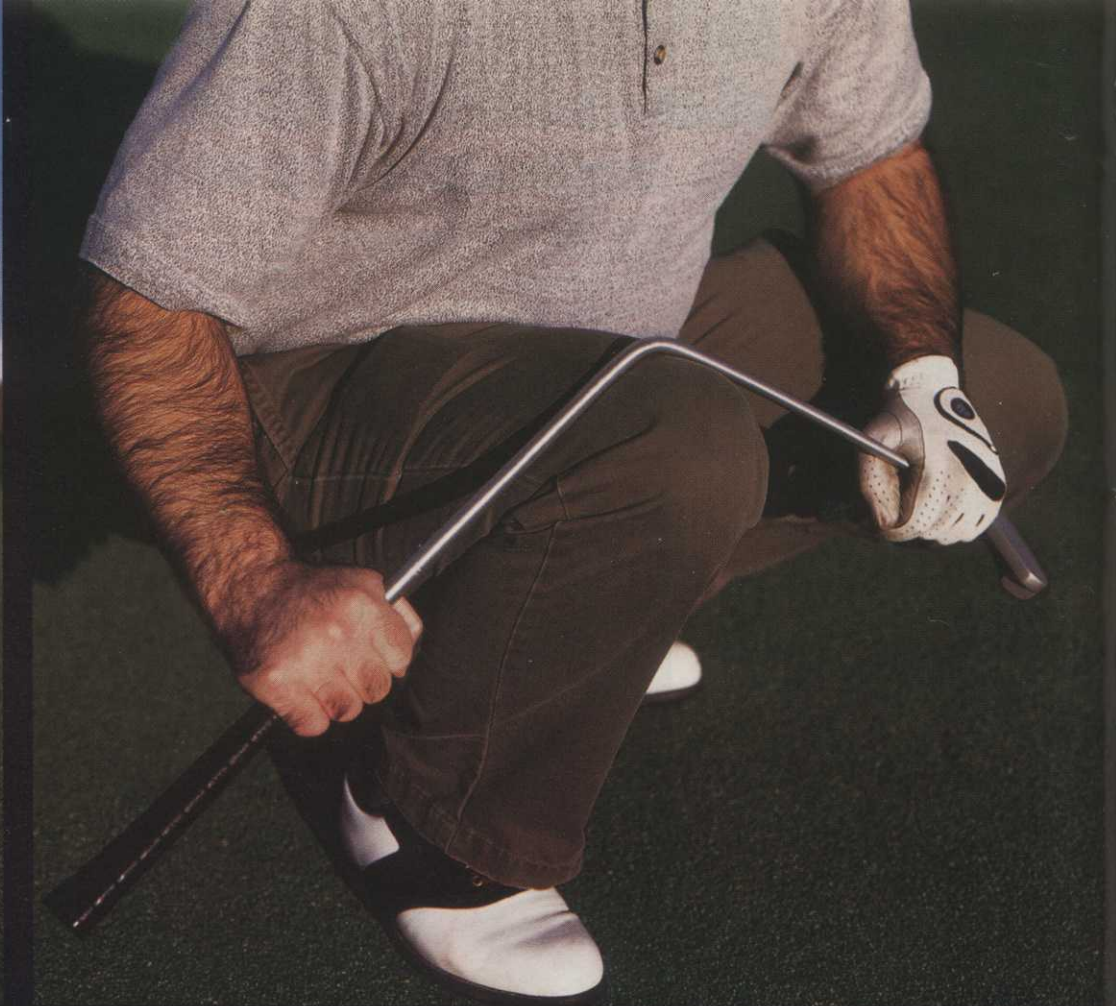
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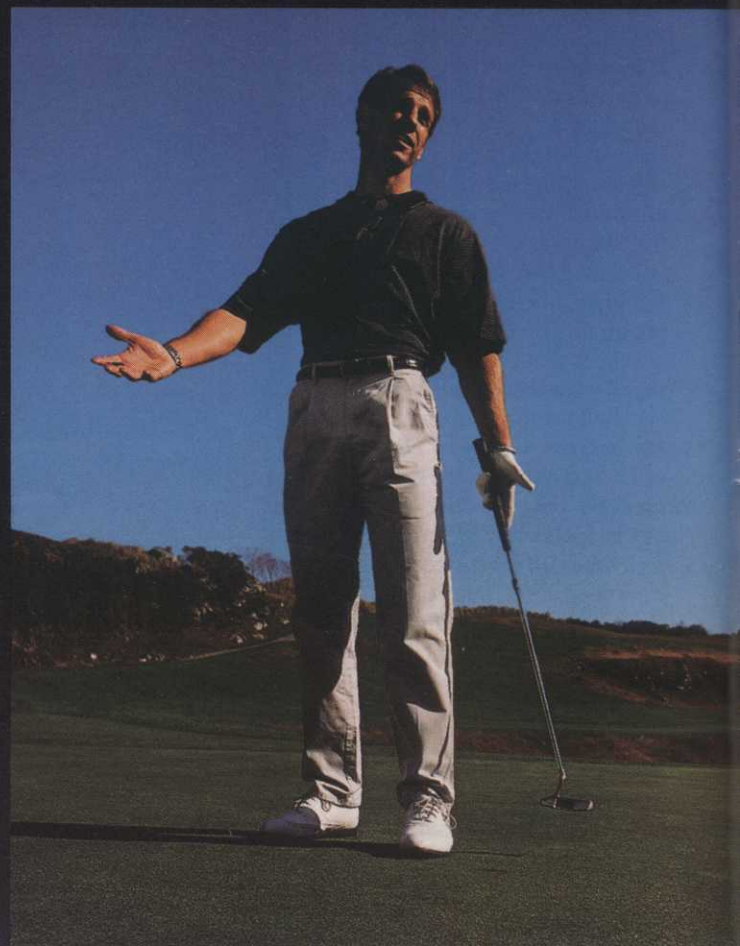


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BRIEFS

CORNELL OFFERS SHORT COURSES

ITHACA, N.Y. — Cornell University has announced the start of their 2002 short course season. The one-week turfgrass management short course will be held here in January and in the Lower Hudson Valley area in February. Fundamental principals of soil management, grass identification, selection, establishment and primary care will be covered. Also, a new Organic Turf Management short course will be held in late January and focus on establishing and maintaining turf relying on fewer chemical inputs. Registration forms for these courses can be obtained by contacting Joann Gruttadauro at 607-255-1792.

GCSAA APPOINTS BORMAN

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's CEO Steve Mona has named Chuck Borman as the organization's chief operating officer. Borman, who has been the executive director of the Carolinas GCSA since 1998, had previous experience on the GCSAA staff as the director of membership and coordinating advisor. As COO, Borman will oversee GCSAA member programs and services in areas of education, research, environmental stewardship, career development, membership/chapter services, communications and publications.

2001 Newsmakers

Winterkill, drought and floods dealt hard lessons in 2001

By JOEL JOYNER

HOUSTON — Mother Nature was both forgiving and unforgiving to superintendents in regions throughout the country this year. Winterkill, drought, disease, and floods dealt some hard lessons and reminded superintendents that there's only so much that can be done when faced with the unleashed force of nature.

WINTERKILL

Superintendent Michael Wing at the 18-hole golf and ski resort, Sugarloaf Golf Course in Kingfield, Maine, started the 2001 season off with 14 greens severely damaged from winterkill. In the mountainous, western part of the state the golfing season is limited and soil temperatures make it a tough region to grow close-cut bentgrass.

"With a new construction course, you normally grow-in greens 12 to 18 months before play is allowed on them," said Wing. "We tried to do it in four weeks."

The course, usually open around mid-May, delayed its opening to the first of June. The greens were cultivated and

end of June to the first week of July," he said. "We got the last two back by the middle of July."

George Hamilton, agronomist at Penn State, paid a visit to the course in the spring to access the damage. "He said he had never seen anything like it," said Wing.



Randy Dayton

Fall preparations for this winter were altered slightly, mentioned Wing, but nothing radically different. "Unfortunately, I don't think there's a cure-all for this kind of damage," he said. "The best thing you can do is have a good, healthy stand of turf going into the winter. We've hardened the turf off with some high-potassium fertilizers and tried to keep any water on the surface of the greens to a minimum."

The greens were verti-drained in October and dormant seed was used in areas where there is quite a bit of *Poa annua*. "Chances are we'll be under enough cover to kill the *Poa*," explained Wing. "I've also placed permanent covers on all the greens for added protection. Hopefully, next spring, the covers will get soil temperatures up quicker to help the germination of the dormant seed."

"I've been here 18 years, and it's rare to come through the winter in real good shape," he said. "But this spring was one of the worst."

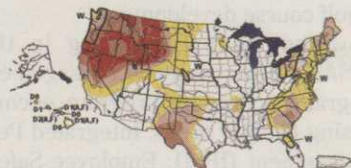
FLORIDA DROUGHT

Florida has spent the past three years in a drought. This spring didn't look very promising to most superintendents who were faced with phase two and phase three water restrictions. However, by late summer and fall, the state was on the

Continued on page 12

U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR

Red, brown and yellow areas show drought-affected areas. The "bulls-eye" on Florida has disappeared this fall following a three-year period of drought.



Source: National Drought Mitigation Center, Lincoln, Neb.

overseeded a number of times, according to Wing. "With the exception of two, we had the greens back into condition by the

2001 Newsmakers

WOLF-Garten striving to ready laser mower

By JOEL JOYNER

BETZDORF, Germany — WOLF-Garten introduced its prototype laser mower, the Zero, in Europe earlier this year (*GCN* January). The company is now refining the "revolutionary" machine in order to take the product to the worldwide marketplace.

Bringing down the price is the primary objective for the company. "The price, at the moment, is too expensive," said Hubert Bihner, manager for motorized products. "We've dis-



The "Zero" will be marketed worldwide.

cussed it with our European suppliers, and we believe that in one or two years it may be more viable.

"It's possible in that time to reduce the price from 60,000 German marks [about \$27,500] — for just the laser cutter itself — to between 10,000 to 15,000 marks [about \$4,600 to \$6,900, respectively]," Bihner said. "Once that is achieved, then we'll start to bring the machine to the market. At the moment, there's no chance because the mower would be around 100,000 marks [approximately \$45,800]."

WORKING TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

Ten years ago, Bihner explained, costs for the same laser cutting system

Continued on page 12

2001 Newsmakers

Superintendents initiate innovative plans to get golf courses Audubon certified

By JOEL JOYNER

CHICAGO, Ill. — Audubon International provides information and guidance to help preserve wildlife habitat and protect natural resources, but superintendents are the ones who make it a reality by implementing innovative plans to make golf courses more environmentally friendly.

Superintendents fulfilled Audubon International's environmental mission this year by protecting bald eagles and creating trout spawning channels, establishing buffer zones and native areas, identifying and attracting wildlife, and sharing their environmental message with their communities.

This year has shown an impressive turn out in the number of courses striving to get

their courses registered and certified with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP). There are now more than 300 golf courses worldwide that have met the challenging but rewarding certification process.

SEA MARSH AT SEA PINES

Identifying wildlife and maintaining 600 acres of preserved land at the Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, S.C., has helped superintendent Jim Cregan at the Sea Marsh course (*GCN* May) reach certification. The course has gone above and beyond certification requirements by having 100 percent of their landscape plans native and buffering as much as 25 percent of their shorelines.

"Members and people in the area know

Continued on page 13



Jerry Kienast



Brain Bossert

2001 Newsmakers

GCSAA to launch Internet venture by year's end

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Despite industry objections and the general unwillingness of superintendents to purchase supplies online, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has finalized its e-commerce strategy and plans to roll out the refined Web site before the end of the year.

When the association announced its e-commerce intentions in late April, the industry and superintendents bristled at the idea that the GCSAA would profit from the venture at the expense of its members. In order to gauge response, the association held a 90-day pilot program that was followed by a series of industry feedback meetings. By late summer, the association had abandoned its net market strategy (that would have levied a percentage fee on all transactions) in favor of a more traditional storefront model that protects existing distribution channels.

"People had it in their minds that the GCSAA had already decided what they wanted

to do with e-commerce," said Bryce Gartner, senior manager for Internet services for the GCSAA, who stepped into his role during the end of the pilot program. "The industry and superintendents had opinions on where they thought we should take this. Since the pilot,



Bryce Gartner

we have changed the approach and gotten a more favorable response."

According to Gartner, the storefront model will preserve existing relationships between suppliers, distributors and superintendents.

"We are not trying to cannibalize the distribution channels or affect relationships," he said. "We are trying to take advantage of the traffic on our site and be the third party that helps our industry partners get together with buyers in a way that gets the local distributor involved

Continued on page 13

Tools of the Trade...at Steve Cook's Oakland Hills CC

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — The Oakland Hills Country Club's South Course, called the "monster" by Ben Hogan when he won the 1951 U.S. Open, was to have played host to the 2003 Ryder Cup. Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the PGA of America decided a shift in scheduling was in order for future Ryder Cup matches. The event was postponed until 2004.



Steve Cook

"We don't know the dates yet, sometime between mid-September and early October of 2004," said Steve Cook, superintendent. "Our renovation projects are still going through, and we'll finish the projects we had going this fall. The 2002 U.S. Amateur we're hosting will proceed as planned."

The club has hosted two PGA Championships — 1961 and 1972 — and six U.S. Opens with the latest in 1996. It will be the first Ryder Cup match here for the Donald Ross-designed layout. "Our Ryder Cup committees are still meeting and planning," Cook said, "and the PGA representative is on-site. Instead of being here two years, he'll be here three years now."

Earlier this year, Cook distinguished himself by becoming one of the 31 worldwide certified Master Greenkeepers with the British International Golf Greenkeeper Association. Today, Cook is wrapping up a \$2 million renovation project at Oakland Hills. A new irrigation system was installed, green banks and surrounds were regrassed, and all the bunkers were renovated with new drainage and sand.

Preparations for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Ryder Cup included finding seating for 15,000 people. "We decided to use the first hole on our North Course — which serves as the driving range when we host the U.S. Open — and ended up doing some remodeling work there," said Cook. "We built a new tee for the players, added new bunkers and regrassed everything. The bleachers will sit on the regular tee box area and surround the new tee in a horseshoe-shaped seating area."

Next year's U.S. Amateur will be a nice trial run for the Ryder Cup event at the club. "There won't be as much activity as there will be for the Ryder Cup," said Cook. "Postponing the Ryder Cup to 2004 will probably



Oakland Hills' greens are well maintained to keep a 10 foot normal green speed.

be a positive thing for the club. Members will now get the course back for a year or more with no disruption. For my staff and I, we get a chance to take a breather, refresh, and absorb what lessons can be learned from hosting the Amateur."

In 2008, the club will again be hosting the PGA Championship. "With ball flights these days, we may need to look at making some changes to the course down the road to toughen it up a little bit," said Cook.

COOK'S TOOLS

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FAIRWAY MOWERS: 12 Toro — 8 3200s, 4 5100s
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VERTI-CUT REELS: 3
AERIFIERS: 6 — Ryan Greensaire, Cushman GA 60, John Deere 1200
TOPDRESSERS: 3 Toro
GROOMING REELS: 6
TOURNAMENT SPEED ROLLER: 1 Salsco
REEL GRINDER: 1
BEDKNIFE GRINDER: 1
IRRIGATION PUMP STATION: Flowtronex, 2,100 gpm

IRRIGATION SYSTEM: Toro SitePro
GOLF CAR FLEET: EZ-GO, electric
FLAGSTICKS: Standard Golf, 7' white
COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES: Pentium 4
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A GOOD STAFF**

CAN NOT LIVE WITHOUT: A good staff
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TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING(S): 13,500 sq. ft.
ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF: 50,000
NORMAL GREEN SPEED: 10'

IGM super receives GCSAA certification

LAKELAND, Fla. — Michael J. Swinson, the Brooksville, Fla. regional superintendent for International Golf Maintenance, has earned an environmental certificate from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for completing a specialization program in golf course development.

Swinson is participating in the GCSAA's Environmental Management Program, a training program encompassing five key areas: Integrated Pest Management (IPM); Employee Safety and Right-To-Know; Water Quality and Application; Golf Course Development

and Storage; and Disposal and Recycling. He received certification in the IPM portion of the program back in 1998.

"I've always felt that it's important to stay abreast of any changes in our industry," said Swinson. "I try to take advantage of the courses offered by the GCSAA. The golf course development program helps me make decisions in the purchasing of alternative turfgrasses for tough conditions."

Swinson was promoted to a regional superintendent position this past July and takes responsibility for a total of 111 holes including the four courses at World Woods, and Brooksville Golf & Country Club.

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IGM Q&A

Continued from page 1

IGM's executive vice president Scott Zakany, CGCS, was one of the founding members of IGM back in September 1994. *Golf Course News* recently caught up with Zakany at the company's new headquarters at ChampionsGate.

GCN: To what would you attribute to the success of IGM's growth this year?

Scott Zakany: The main thing we did this year – our biggest challenge – was to take over all the courses maintained internally by our parent company, Meadowbrook Golf. That was approximately 40 facilities. The transitions have all taken place as smooth as can be expected, except for a couple of isolated cases that will be finalized before the year is out. IGM has taken on 47 golfing facilities this year altogether.

GCN: Is there a goal set for IGM in terms of growth for 2002?

Zakany: We're looking to keep the same growth percentage rate. Obviously, we started off higher in our first three years. But between 10 percent to 20 percent increase per year is our target which is fairly aggressive. We're looking to acquire a new club per month.

GCN: What challenges do you foresee IGM encountering in the future?

Zakany: With all the recent world events, there's certainly going to be an economic challenge industry wide for 2002. There are clubs evaluating their maintenance programs and thinking they can manage things better and cheaper themselves. We've already received some fallout with some clubs and boards that were borderline to start with. On a day-to-day basis, they feel they can make cuts in the budgets where with us on a contractual basis they can't. At the same time, IGM might see a lot of high-end clubs next year looking to reduce their expenses by signing with us.

GCN: IGM has a strong position in the Florida market, particularly in central Florida, where do you see the company taking other solid positions in the United States?

Zakany: About half the courses we maintain are in Florida. We're looking to expand in the markets we already have a presence in. We have several facilities in the Midwest and Northeast, some in the Atlanta area, several in California and we're just starting to operate in Las Vegas.

GCN: Meadowbrook recently signed an exclusive five-year supply agreement with Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products. How do you see this effecting IGM's current operations and its ability to attract future clients?

Zakany: From IGM's standpoint, we've already had an agreement with Textron. We've expanded it to basically encompass Meadowbrook with equipment. By tying everything together, we're able to be a little bit more aggressive on our pricing and pass the savings on to our customers.

GCN: What does IGM look for in a course before signing a maintenance agreement?

Zakany: What gets us excited is the potential of a course and the owners desire to get it there. We can make improvements, and we like to see the owners wanting to make those improvements.

GCN: How many course evaluations has IGM undertaken so far this year prior to signing any maintenance agreements?



A safety meeting at IGM

Zakany: On average, we probably do about three to four proposals for every job that we get. We're running anywhere from 25 percent to 35 percent closing margin on proposals to contracts.

GCN: What advantages does IGM have to offer a course considering outsourcing their maintenance programs?

Zakany: We have a large support mechanism in place with key personnel in our corporate offices as well as in regional superintendent positions. There's a team of experts supporting our on-site superintendents coupled with the consistencies of our operations.

GCN: How does IGM maintain manage-

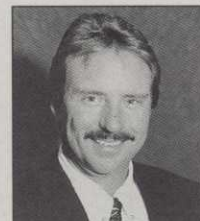
ment and communication abilities with or between various courses?

Zakany: We have a computer at every location and exchange a lot of information via the Internet. There's internal message postings and chat areas for our superintendents. In addition, we get superintendents together as a group once or twice a year for human resource, product and corporate office updates. On top of that, we meet monthly with our regional superintendents, and they disseminate information back to the on-site superintendents. A regional manager

Continued on page 30



Gregory Hofstetter, CGCS, vice president of operations



Greg Plotner, CGCS, vice president of business development



A course site evaluation

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Foul weather

Continued from page 9

road to recovery.

"It seems like it has been raining forever," said Kevin Downing, superintendent at the Willoughby Golf Club along the southeast coast in Stuart. "In early October, the South Florida Water Management District relaxed the water restrictions. They've pretty much rescinded all the phases of the program. Even though we didn't have any major storms this year, we had enough sporadic rainfall through the fall to relieve the pressure on Lake Okeechobee [a main reservoir in South Florida]."

A number of courses, businesses and homeowners were cited for water use violations during the restrictions. "Water control is something that will not permanently go away in Florida," said Downing. "I think the drought situation was positive overall in getting awareness levels up, especially with individuals learning the capabilities of their watering systems."

"It also helps promote legislation to regulate water use for the future of the state - not only golf," he said. "Golf course usage represents a little less than two percent of water usage in this area, according to the water management district. We're just more visible."

Zero mower

Continued from page 9

alone ranged to as much as \$160,000. One of the biggest issues in bringing down the price has been working to focalize the laser using power efficiently.

"It requires a lot of power at the moment," said Bihnrer, "about six to 10 kilowatts to cut the grass. We're working to bring it down to around one kilowatt. It will make it a very small and efficient system."

The Zero mower will be marketed worldwide, according to Bihnrer. "But we'll start it off in Europe first to solve any issues with safety regulations," he said.

Developed on the chassis of a Mercedes Smart Cabriolet—a two-seat convertible—the laser mower comes with Internet capabilities and is approved for use on public roads. The machine is known as the Zero because of the vehicle's features. There's zero noise emitted because grass is cut by lasers rather than rotating blades. There is zero disposal since grass clippings are chopped and dried in a siltidry process and redistributed to the turf as tiny particles. There are zero exhaust emissions from its environmentally-friendly engine with a catalytic afterburning of fuel. Also, there are zero problems with thatch and mold formations due to the special drying process. ■

Most of the state received at least normal rainfall for the summer, according to assistant state climatologist David Zierden at the Climate Prediction Center in Tallahassee. "In north Florida and the panhandle, we had Tropical Storm Allison come through and drop nearly 12 inches of rain in the Tallahassee area," he said. "Shortly after that, Tropical Storm Barry came through with another strong rainfall event. On

top of those storms, we've had our normal afternoon thunderstorms."

The only lingering effects of the drought is that, in some areas of the state, aquifers and lakes fed from aquifers remain below normal. "They're not at the critical levels we had this spring," said Zierden, "but they still bear watching. The worst areas for that are in north-central Florida, like Ocala and

Gainesville."

In October, the state entered its dry season. "That's just the normal climate," explained Zierden. "The peninsula, from about Ocala southward, stays fairly dry averaging two to three inches of rain a month. It's certainly not time to let the guard down and stop water conservation measures."

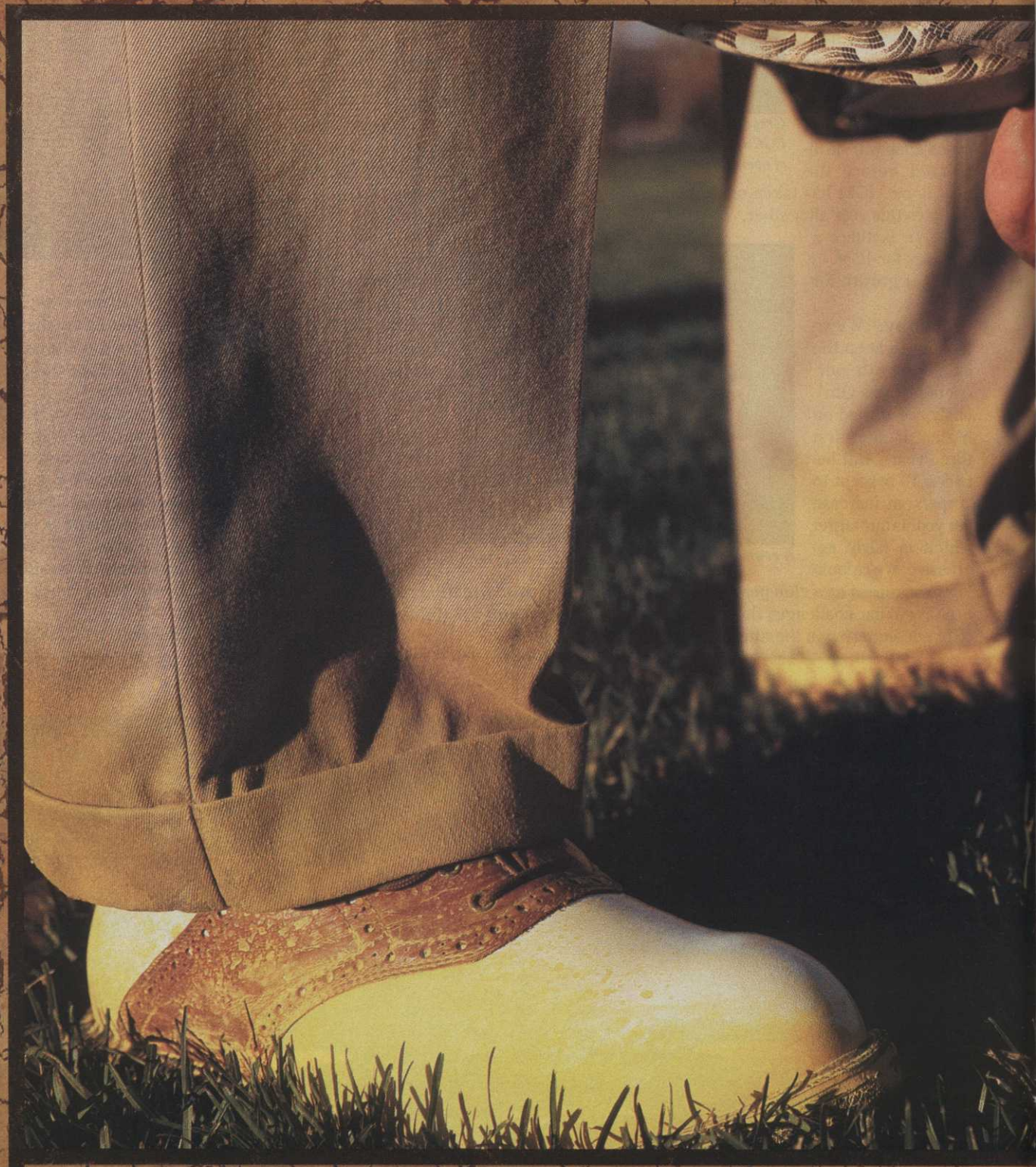
The phenomenon of El Nino and La Nina effect rainfall pat-



Tropical Storm Allison left a mess at the Northgate CC in Houston.

terns in the state, said the climatologist. "They were the main

Continued on page 28



THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO SAY ABOUT HERBICIDES THAT STAIN. AND

GCSAA launch

Continued from page 9

in the process."

PRICING UNVEILED

The GCSAA's Internet program will offer suppliers and distributors relatively cheap Web exposure.

"We want to assist companies which have not built a Web presence yet and those companies that have," Gartner said. "The pricing will also be based on the

number of products listed so that it is attractive to both large and small companies."

Participants will be charged a flat, annual "space" fee of \$2,500 that includes hot links and keyword search capabilities. From there, the pricing will be divided into "single" and "multi" tiers based on the number of groups or levels in the storefront.

The base single-tier storefront, which is geared towards individual

suppliers and distributors, will cost \$2,000 and allow for 500 product listings. The more listings in a storefront, the more it will cost a supplier. For example, 1,500 listings will cost \$4,000. The standard multi-tiered storefront, which is set up for larger companies that want different sections to manage individual distribution channels, will cost \$5,000 per year. Companies will also be charged a yearly maintenance fee of 20-percent of

the total storefront cost.

"What we have done is taken how contracts between suppliers and distributors are written today and made it electronic," said Gartner. "Companies can manage business through this site the same way they do it today."

DRUMMING UP SUPPORT

The next challenge for Gartner and the Internet services team is to drum up support for the storefront model. While most compa-

nies are happier with the storefront concept, some are not convinced that the Internet will be an important player in the short term.

"I don't know if this change will cause more people to participate or not," said Kim Ross, director of marketing and e-commerce for Simplot Turf and Horticulture. "Superintendents don't seem to be transacting online. We are not implementing e-commerce on our site right now, but we will evaluate everything on a case-by-case basis."

At press time, Gartner said that they had yet to sign agreements with any companies, but that there were "three or four that had expressed interest."

However, he is optimistic that the site can be launched this year. "We need to have critical mass before we launch it," Gartner said. "But we are in discussions with companies and we feel that we can do it by the end of the year." ■

Audubon

Continued from page 9

that we are striving to put nature first here," said Cregan. "Our relationship with the environment and community awareness about the things we do on the golf courses are important."

Cregan has been adding flower beds to both the Sea Marsh layout and the Ocean Course, which



Maintenance workers tend to one of the many flower beds at Sea Marsh

was Audubon certified back in 1999, for the past four years. "We continued that project this summer with three more flower beds," he said. "We've added more native grasses throughout the property as well trying to make the courses as aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly as possible."

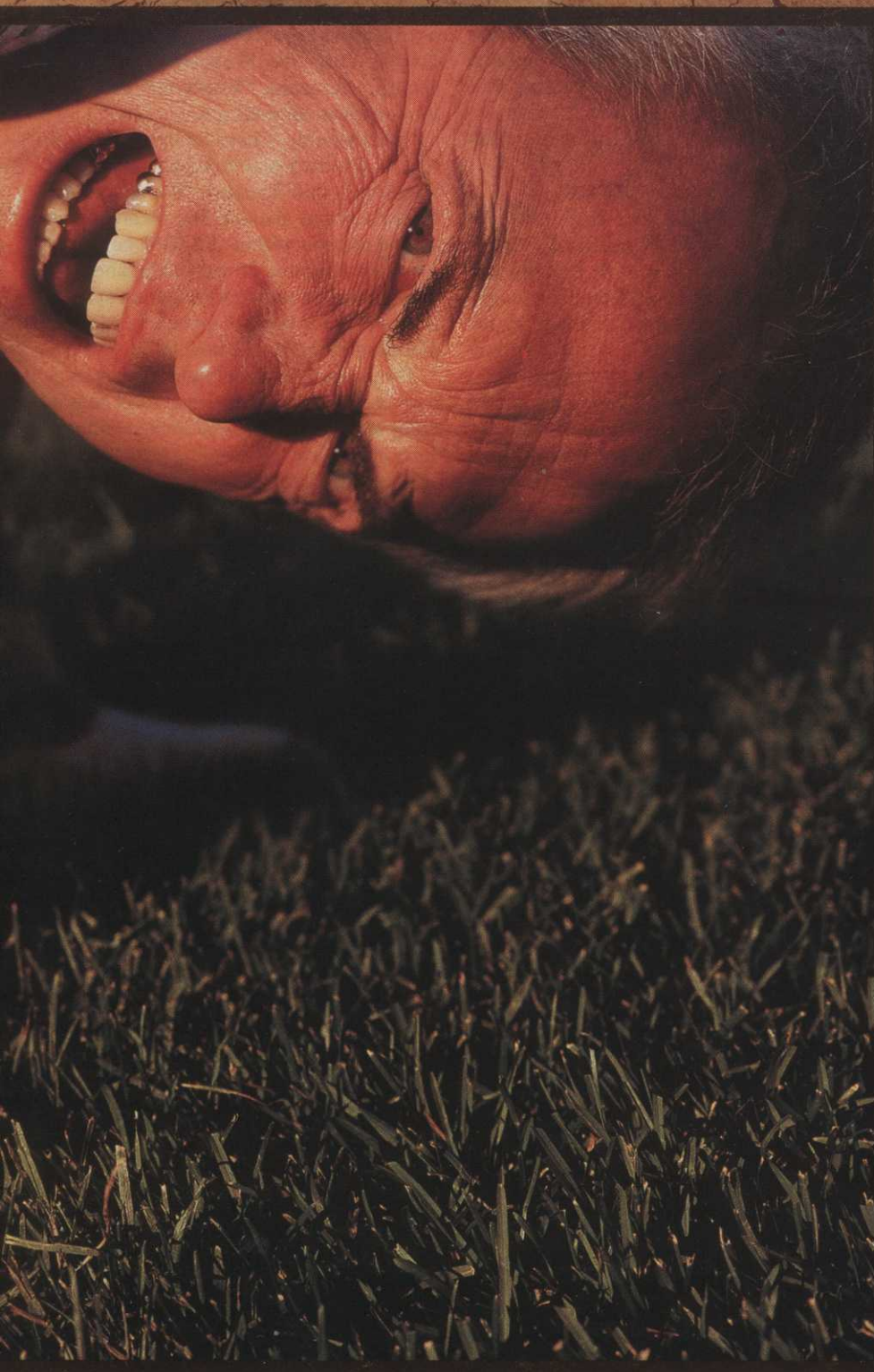
A third course at Sea Pines, Harbour Town, planned to register with the Audubon program this summer. "That hasn't happened yet," Cregan said. "The course superintendent will be tackling that this winter. Our fourth layout, a private course, just opened back up following its closure for the past year for reconstruction. The superintendent there also will be pursuing the program. The goal is to have all four courses certified by next year."

ASPEN GLEN GOLF CLUB

Superintendent Richard Eide, at the Aspen Glen Golf Club in Carbondale, Colo., converts his course into a 17-hole layout whenever bald eagles visit their nest

Continued on next page

DECEMBER 2001 13



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Environment first

Continued from previous page

high on a 150-foot ponderosa pine tree along the 10th hole fairway (GCN August). Adding two trout spawning channels on the property also contributed to Aspen Glen's certification. The club is owned and operated by Dallas-based ClubCorp.



A trout spawning channel at Aspen Glen GC

Built on land that used to be a potato farm and cattle ranch, the location of the eagle nest and tree has been recorded as far back as 1905. The current nest has been a home for migrating eagles since the 1940s. "We are allowed to go into the protection zone for maintenance reasons when the nest is occupied, but the hole is completely off limits for play," said Eide.

The course shut down for winter Nov. 11. "The eagles are usually a Thanksgiving bird," said Eide. "Although last year we saw them at the end of October, they haven't showed up yet."

Colorado's Division of Wildlife, Fish & Game made their annual visit to the property in October to inspect the two trout

spawning channels created along the Fork River. "We're trying to maintain the water flow," Eide said. "The river levels are so low at the moment that there's only so much that we can control."

The course also was maintaining weed intrusion in the channels. "But the Fish & Game people recommended we add more weeds," said Eide. "It creates a better habitat for the trout by providing cover and areas to hide."

Eide already has environmental projects lined up for next year. "We have tree plantings and a couple of major landscape projects in the planning stages," he said. "We'll be making the area down by the trout spawning channels as native looking as we can get it. It's been mandated and approved by the board, and our horticulturist will be drawing up a plan this winter."

Eide has earned three environmental stewardship awards from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

BRYN MAWR COUNTRY CLUB

Bryn Mawr Country Club superintendent Brian Bossert will be hosting a second Birdwatching Open on the course next spring (GCN September). "It was a lot of fun this year," he said. "We happened to figure out where our hawks were nesting on the property that morning and discovered some interesting spe-



A view of the eighth hole at the Bryn Mawr CC

cies of birds."

One of the projects that helped the

course reach certification was the installation of an equipment washing pad. Grass clippings are screened out and the water used to wash equipment goes through a treatment process before being emptied safely to the sewage system.

"Between the wash pad itself, the equipment and the lean-to housing for the wash area, the costs ran to as much as \$25,000," Bossert said. "No one was really kicking our butts to do it. The project was basically our own endeavor."

A monthly newsletter is distributed to members explaining environmental changes made on the course. "It discusses matters like native areas that we've let grow," said Bossert. "We want members to know that it's not because we've gotten lazy and don't feel like mowing those areas. We also distribute a lot of video aids and pamphlets from the Audubon to our members."

"For the most part, we were doing a lot of the right things," he said. "It was primarily a matter of documenting our practices and projects."

WILLOW RUN GOLF CLUB

At the Willow Run Golf Club in Pewaukee, Wis. (GCN April), the ACSF played an essential role in helping the facility better define the layout. The toughest part of the certification program for superintendent Jerry Kienast was simply finding the time to do everything.

"I originally resisted it like you wouldn't believe because of our budget restraints and the fact that we have a heavy workload already," Kienast said. "What changed my mind is that I'm an outdoorsman, and the changes we've made attracted wildlife considerably."

"When I first started here six years ago, we had one blue heron that would occasionally stop by each season. Last year, we had five blue herons that now live on the course permanently," explained Kienast.

Course ownership and management



The certification program made the layout more challenging at the Willow Run Golf Club

has changed hands twice since Kienast first joined the establishment. "I've worked with a private owner as well as a management corporation prior to being with International Golf Maintenance (IGM) and the Meadowbrook Golf Group," he said. "Everyone basically looked away up until now."

"For example, I have an irrigation system on the back nine that has hand-quick couplers," said Kienast. "It's absolutely ridiculous and ancient. We received one of five awards within the IGM company for environmental stewardship, and now they're buying us a new irrigation system that we are going to install. It's in the planning stages right now."

The course is looking to add another eight more acres of prairie grasses. "Also, considering our budget, we'll be implementing a fairly aggressive tree-planting program."

Kienast described the certification as a slow process. "Low budget, daily-fee courses should not try to do everything at once," he advised. "Small projects that gain the golfer's acceptance and shows that it benefits the environment as well as their play is the way to go. Some members resisted at first. But they've seen the big picture, and now they're patting me on the back. We've really turned this place around." ■

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BRIEFS

PALMER ANNOUNCES NEW DESIGN NORTH OF DES MOINES

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Arnold Palmer's latest project for the Palmer Course Design Company is called Big Creek located just north of Des Moines in Polk City, Iowa. The 18-hole golf course is to be developed and constructed by the Enebak Construction Co. based in Northfield, Minn. The company has previously worked with the Palmer design firm in Minnesota at the Tournament Players Club of the Twin Cities in Blaine, and at the Deacon's Lodge Golf Course in Breezy Point.

ROUTING STARTS AT SOMERSETT GOLF CLUB IN NEVADA

RENO, Nev. — The canyons, creeks and rocky outcroppings of the Sierra Nevada foothills will be the future site for the Somerset Golf Club. The design team includes U.S. Open champion Tom Kite and architects Roy Bechtol and Randy Russell. The routing for the 18-hole course, scheduled to open in 2003, was staked out in August to compliment the master-planned community located at the foot of Peavine Mountain. Plans call for approximately 2,200 residences on 2,076 acres with more than half of the property set aside for open space.

MILLER TO BUILD TWO IN UTAH

HURRICANE, Utah — SUN Realty and Johnny Miller are teaming up here in southern Utah to build the first of two Miller-designed courses at Outlaw Ridge Resort and Golf Community. The community will be designed as a destination resort with a hotel, spa, tennis center and a Johnny Miller Golf Academy. One of the Miller courses will be a private layout and the other will be a high-end daily-fee track. The project is located 40 minutes from Zion National Park and 90 minutes from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Construction on Outlaw Ridge is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2002.

FREAM OPENS FIRST NJ COURSE

CAPE MAY COUNTY, N.J. — Fream & Dale Golfplan has finished its first golf course in New Jersey. The Shoregate Golf Club at Ocean View will join south Jersey's golf market next summer. The layout, which was built for less than \$5 million, is just three miles from the ocean and features undulating fairways and challenging bunker placements.

2001 Newsmakers

Pascuzzo tackles technology, affordability issues

EL DORADO HILLS, Calif. — *The American Society of Golf Course Architects has taken a stand this year, issuing position papers on golf club and ball technology and affordable golf. GolfCourse News recently caught up with ASGCA president Damian Pascuzzo to discuss how these two interrelated issues are impacting the game of golf.*



GolfCourse News: Why has the ASGCA tackled these weighty issues this year?

Damian Pascuzzo: When I became president I sat down with my next two successors, Jay Morrish and Clyde Johnston, and came up with an agenda. We prioritized them and narrowed it down to the impact of golf club and ball technology on golf course design and the need for affordable golf. This allows the association to focus its efforts for the next three years.

GCN: Why is golf club and ball technology at the top of your list?

Pascuzzo: We don't make the rules and we don't make the equipment, but we certainly see the ramifications of the clubs and balls on today's golf courses. We can also see what it is going to do to tomorrow's golf courses if some checks are not put in place.

We are seeing a direct linkage between the ball flying farther and the increased acreage required to contain the ball not only in length but also in width. When the ball is hit badly it is now going farther left and right. As a result, the corridors that we create for golf have to get wider and that requires more acres which means that development and maintenance costs increase.

GCN: Is the art of the long iron dead?

Pascuzzo: I wonder: are we really seeing shot-making at its highest level today in professional golf? How do you design a par-4 where a pro has to play a driver, long iron? Part of the skill of the game is certainly gone.

GCN: What is the best solution to the problem?

Pascuzzo: Jack Nicklaus has talked about the idea of a tournament ball. As an organization I don't think we would support that. We don't want to see a stratifica-

tion of the game because one of the cool things about golf is the level playing field. We don't care if something is done to limit the clubs or the balls. Our point is that something needs to be done. We



ASGCA president Damian Pascuzzo

are bearing the brunt of this and we need to get people talking about this issue.

GCN: How does technology impact affordability?

Pascuzzo: Cost is the other part of the equation. We have had flat participation rates for the last four years and in the

Continued on next page

2001 Newsmakers



Pete Dye's Lost Canyons Golf Club outside of Los Angeles is one of the 19 new public tracks to open in California this year. The 17th hole is pictured above.

Public golf boom continues despite construction slow down

By DOUG SAUNDERS

Although golf course construction slowed in 2001, the trend towards public golf remained constant. According to the National Golf Foundation 72.5 percent of all facilities opened last year were daily-fee courses.

The continued popularity in the game, and the severe lack of quality public courses in many major population regions accounts for this steady figure. Large states such as California, Florida and Texas lead the way with new openings, and the trend towards public courses shows in the statistics. In Texas, all but three of the 37 courses

opening in 2001 were public facilities, in Florida, 32 of 40 openings were public, and in California, 19 of 26 new openings were geared towards public play.

This trend has given golfers who aren't members of private clubs the enjoyment of playing on courses just as good as the ones behind the hedges and gates. It has also forced a distinct shift in the trends among golf course architects.

"Fifteen years ago 90 percent of the golf courses that I designed were for private golf clubs and today 70 percent

Continued on page 17

2001 Newsmakers

Boston's Quarry Hills nears its decade-long goal

QUINCY, Mass. — Seeding was completed this fall on the first nine holes of Quarry Hills, the 27-hole course being built atop the Quincy and Milton landfills a mere six miles from downtown Boston. The course is using fill material from the capital city's massive "Big Dig" highway



Nine holes at Quarry Hills will open in spring

project. The first nine holes of the John Sanford-designed layout are scheduled to open in June 2002, with the remaining 18 ready for play in 2003.

"We've got seven holes seeded and may

Continued on page 17

Kintyre Course adds to Turnberry's splendor

AYRSHIRE, Scotland — This summer, renovation work was completed at the Troon Golf-managed Arran Course at the Westin Turnberry Resort. The new layout, now called the Kintyre Course, was designed by Donald Steel and incorporates portions of the old Arran course as well as a new stretch of land on Bains Hill.

The upgrade was undertaken to bring the course up to the standards of Turnberry's more famous Ailsa Course which has hosted three British Opens.

While the Kintyre Course has less of a links feel than the predominately seaside Ailsa Course, it offers a stern test of golf. The fairways are less forgiving as is

the thicker gorse that swallows up errant tee shots. The new track features 11 completely new holes, including the eighth and ninth holes that criss cross each other.

In addition to the new layout, the resort has also added a Colin Montgomery Learning Center and the nine hole Arran Academy Course.

— Andrew Overbeck



The 18th hole at the new Kintyre Course at the Westin Turnberry Resort



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REELCRAFT

Pascuzzo Q&A

Continued from previous page

meantime the equipment is getting more expensive, the green fees are getting more expensive and it is taking longer to play. There are a lot of people competing for our recreation dollars and potential golfers and some existing golfers are making other choices. There is a direct connection between technology and the lack of affordable golf.

GCN: Where is the ASGCA going with its affordable golf initiative?

Pascuzzo: We are actually calling it practical golf. We are in the process of developing a book that talks about practical golf—meaning what is practical for your budget and for the site. In some cases this might be a par-3 course, a six-hole layout, or an executive track. The book will have case studies on practical golf and should be ready by the GCSAA show in Orlando.

This is a personal issue for me because I grew up in Los Angeles playing these small par-3 courses on 30 acres that had push up greens. It cost \$1.50 to play and the facilities are still around. I went back last year and it costs \$5 to play nine holes and they do 50,000 rounds a year.

GCN: Who are you trying to reach with this message?

Pascuzzo: We feel that there are a lot of people out there in the public sector, park and recreation directors, public works directors, that may have 20 or 50 acres that they could build a golf facility on. Many don't think they could have golf because there is not room for 18 holes, but we want to make them aware that there are alternatives.

If we can educate the public sector and get some of these courses in the ground then all of a sudden you have an inexpensive place for people to learn the game. We don't have enough entry level facilities. This might not make sense for the private sector, but it makes sense for park and rec. departments because they can build a par-3 course with push up greens for \$300,000 and break even.

If we don't get more people into the game and get them to a comfort level to play 18-hole, resort courses then the game will continue to suffer. ■

Public golf

Continued from page 15

of my work is on public courses," explained golfing great and course designer Jack Nicklaus at a recent course opening. "Muni golf used to be a \$10 round at the park. But with the surge in affluent golfers that will pay \$80 to \$150 for green fees it is economically feasible to build quality courses for this market. The modern golfer likes to travel and play a variety of courses, so I think this trend will continue," he said.

CALIFORNIA BOOM

While golf course development is contracting, the opportunity to build high-end public facilities near large, under-served metropolitan areas will continue to exist. The southern California region, for example, had been severely under-served with daily-fee facilities. Last year alone, eight such courses opened throughout the region.

One facility, Lost Canyons, boasts two courses and is part of a master plan with hotels.

"Our initial studies showed a need for public courses in the north Los Angeles area. Our goal is to provide a high-end resort that would service both the regional golfer as well as the corporate market," explained general manager Jay Colliatie.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, six courses opened and all

projects have proved to be strong successes. The City of Alameda invested \$8.1 million to completely renovate Monarch Bay, its 18-hole course, in order to attract the more affluent golfer from the San Francisco region.

"We have a great piece of property and have a large population to draw from. We have been able to keep rates low for our resi-

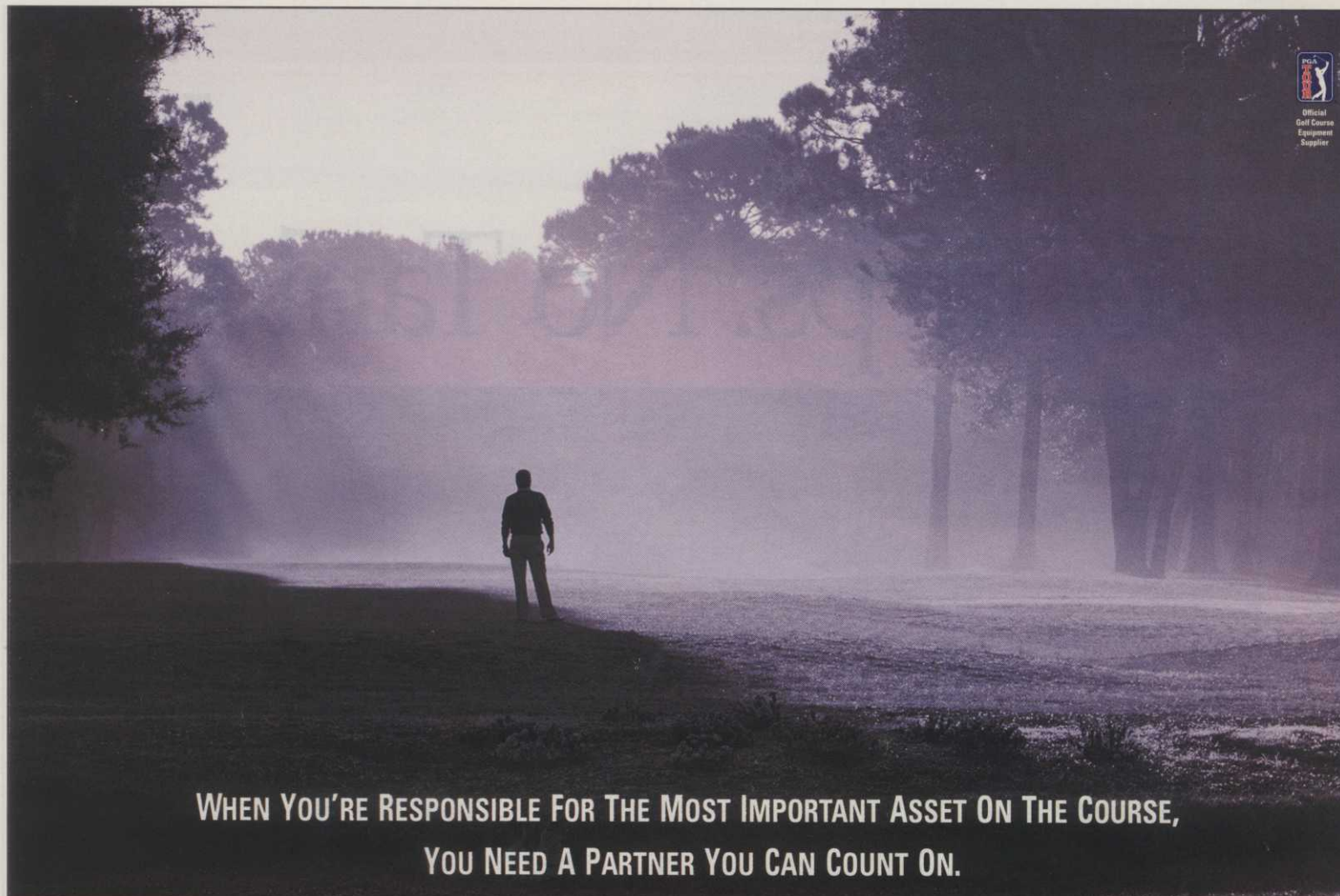
dent players and have a great course at \$70 for the non-resident. We have done 135,000 rounds since March at our nine hole and 18 hole courses," said general manager Donald Zauner.

The reasons for building a daily-fee facility are varied. Golf can be the vehicle for real estate sales, to fill hotel rooms, and even save open space. One course, Roddy Ranch Golf Club in Antioch, Ca-

lif., served the latter purpose for rancher and rodeo legend Jack Roddy. Roddy built a public course on 300 acres of rangeland and now sees more income from green fees than he ever saw from raising cattle. Roddy has developed his own management team in-house to guide the course, and the revenue has allowed him to hold on to the rest of his 2,100-acre ranch.

"We use a very simple three-

part approach here," said director of golf Kevin Fitzgerald. "We offer to the public a quality product, affordable rates, and the best customer service possible. Our numbers have shown to us that it is an effective strategy." ■



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Quarry Hills

Continued from page 15

do some dormant seeding on the last two," superintendent Gary Kessener said in mid-October. "The bridges are being completed on the Quincy and Milton sides. And we may just have 300,000 to 400,000 cubic yards [of the 7.9 million total cubic yards] of fill left to be placed next spring. The last of the material, about 100,000 cubic yards, will be delivered from the Big Dig by Dec. 31.

"The biggest challenge," Kessener added, "remains the scrutiny we're under. The Conservation Commission, Army Corps of Engineers, gas extraction, union issues. It's the whole atmosphere."

The 540-acre project has been under constant government, regulatory and public review since local developers Chick Geilich and Bill O'Connell first proposed the project 10 years ago.

"It's the most challenging project I've ever been involved with," Sanford said. "But it will provide golfers with an exciting layout and beautiful views of the Boston skyline, harbor and surrounding hills. And it's located just 10 minutes from the center of one of this country's largest cities." ■

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Arbor Links

Continued from page 1

conference at Arbor Day Farm's Lied Conference Center in Nebraska City. Arnold Palmer will be present for the official course opening and is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the conference.

Palmer Course Design donated its design services for the

course. The lead designer was Erik Larsen, who also designed the Players Club at Deer Creek Course in Omaha and Dakota Dunes in South Dakota.

"We felt the Arbor Links project was an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of blending golf course development with environmental considerations," said Stacy Katz, marketing coordinator for Palmer

Course Design. "Mr. Palmer views this project as a living environmental classroom, which can benefit the entire golf course industry in the future."

A THREE-PRONGED MISSION

The course is being developed with a three-pronged mission of quality construction, environmental sensitivity and affordable golf for players, said Brad Schmidt, Landscapes Unlimited's general

manager. Landscapes Unlimited will operate Arbor Links Golf Course, which lies in rolling terrain on a 300-acre stretch of unused farmland, not far from the Missouri River. The Arbor Day Foundation is leasing the property.

The new course was built with minimal disturbance to the existing environment, yet changes were made where necessary to

fit the overall environmentally based design. Dead or drying trees were replaced, in some cases with nearly mature trees. Table Creek, which was named by Lewis and Clark nearly 200 years ago, was restored where it runs through the course.

Original oak and hickory stands have been restored, along with flowering meadows and native stands of birch and aspen. Native grass buffer zones will help protect the creek and its tributaries. The area is in a climatic transition zone, which allowed planners more leeway in selecting vegetation materials. Turfgrass specialists from the University of Nebraska helped choose native and selected turfgrass varieties and will continue to monitor soil and water quality when the course is opened.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Schmidt said many firms have signed on with the Arbor Links project, with in-kind contributions of services or products. The firms are listed as "founding members" and include John Deere Landscapes, Toro Co., Flowtronex, Hancor, Tee-2-Green, Turf-Seed, Stock Seed Company, GreensMix, Green & Bio Tech and Profile Products LLC, which furnished erosion control matting for the entire course. Boething Treeland Farm provided new trees and most came from the firm's northern California nursery.

Chris Aden, general manager of Arbor Day Farm, a National Historic Landmark, said the new Arbor Links Golf Course, associated with the farm, will provide an outstanding environmental education site. "This entire project will serve as a model for future golf course development," he said. "For many people, golf is their most immediate interface with the natural environment."

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE

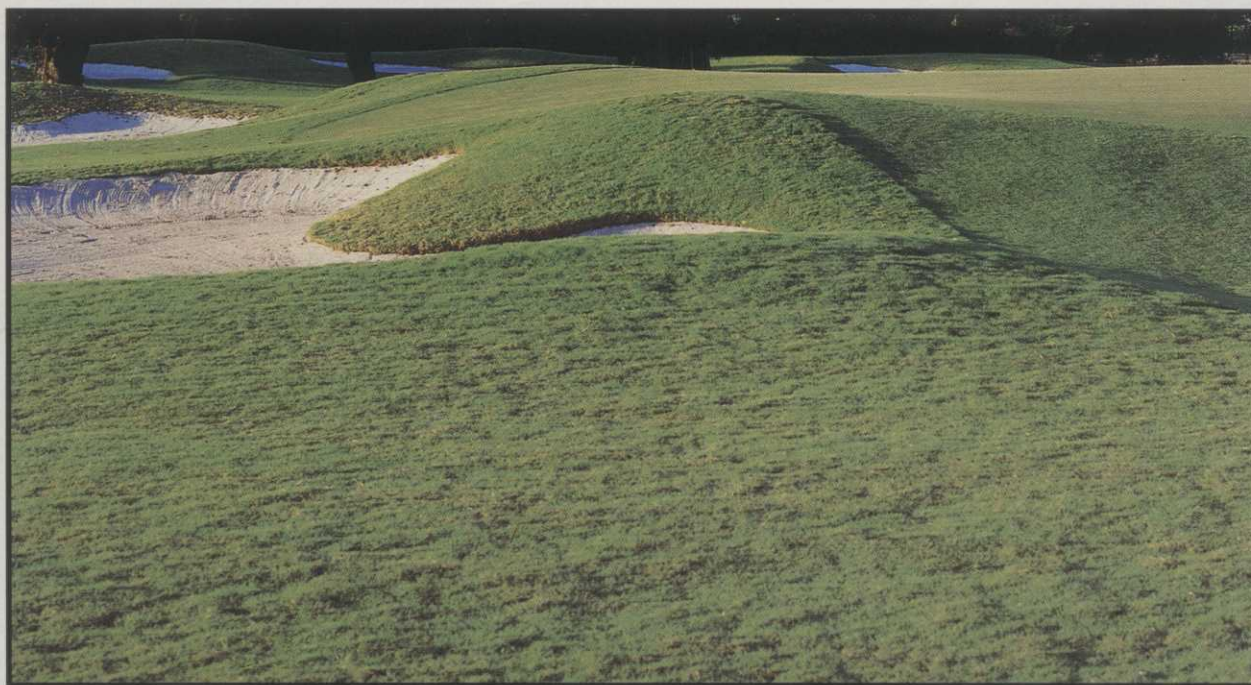
A national Golf and the Environment Conference will be conducted in conjunction with the grand opening of Arbor Links Golf Course at Nebraska City. Paul Parker, executive vice president of the Center for Resource Management in Salt Lake City, said the conference was switched from another location this past summer to the Nebraska City site next summer.

"We just felt that the environmentally friendly focus of Arbor Links Golf Course design and construction was a natural tie-in for our fourth Golf and the Environment Conference," said Parker.

"The key topic, based on the focus of Arbor Links, will be environmental education and what is being done to implement it and what can be done to make it better," Parker added. ■



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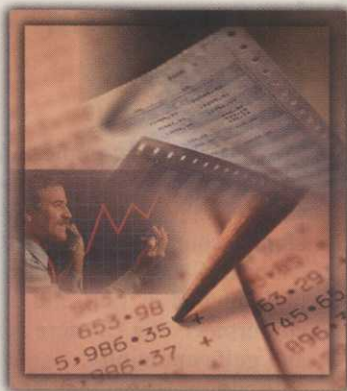
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BRIEFS

WE-KO-PA NAMES LESSIG

FORT MCDOWELL, Ariz. — Jeff Lessig has been named general manager of the new We-Ko-Pa Golf Club here on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation located just east of Scottsdale. In addition to his duties as director, Lessig will serve as chairman of the communications committee for the PGA of America. An 18-year veteran of the Arizona golf scene, Lessig last served as the director of golf at SunRidge Canyon Golf Club in Fountain Hills. The Scott Miller-designed course is scheduled to open this month.



Jeff Lessig

LEICHT, LOPEZ JOIN THUNDERBIRDS GC

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Golf Properties announced the selection of Greg Leicht, head golf professional, and Patricia Lopez, group & tournament sales manager, for the new 27-hole, daily-fee Thunderbirds Golf Club in Phoenix, Ariz. Leicht was previously tournament director and golf professional at the Phoenician Resort Golf Club here in Scottsdale. Prior to joining Western Golf Properties, Lopez was an on-camera reporter for KAUZ-TV in Wichita Falls, Texas, and an assistant assignment editor and planning producer for KPRC-TV in Houston. Nestled at the base of South Mountain, the Thunderbirds Golf Club opened for play last month under the direction of Brad Kirkman, general manager and director of golf.



SANCTUARY GC ADDS PATZWALD

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Phoenix-based SunCor Golf has announced John Patzwald as the new director of golf for the Sanctuary Golf Course here at Westworld. Patzwald, a veteran of the management company, served most recently as head golf professional at Coral Canyon Golf Club in St. George, Utah. Prior to working at Coral Canyon, he was an assistant golf professional at SunRidge Canyon Golf Club in Fountain Hills, Ariz. He will be responsible for overseeing all operations of the golf club.

2001 Newsmakers

GE Capital completes Heller Financial buy out

By PETER BLAIS

CHICAGO — Heller Financial, a \$20-billion commercial lender that entered the golf financing market this spring, may become an even bigger player in the golf lending industry now that GE Capital has acquired the Chicago-based firm. "We think it [GE purchase] could be a boon," said Heller golf division vice president Rick Nekoroski, who oversees Eastern operations for Heller's Golf Lending Group. "GE is a huge company."



Christy Lockridge

Earlier this year, General Electric Co.'s \$370-billion financial division, GE Capital, made a tender offer to purchase all shares of Heller stock for \$53.75 per share. The total price of \$5.3 billion is 2 1/2 times Heller's book value, said Heller Financial director of marketing Karen Pomazal. The completion of the GE deal was announced in late October.

It's uncertain what changes the purchase will mean for Heller's golf division, which has a portfolio of roughly \$200 million in golf loans. Pomazal said the name Heller Financial will likely change

by year's end. "GE has made no specific decisions about which Heller product lines will be retained," she said. "But as for the golf division, I would be surprised if it went away."

Heller Financial first considered entering the golf lending market when Bank of America announced it would stop writing golf loans in October 2000, Nekoroski said. Heller launched its golf division and immediately became a major player when it agreed to purchase \$185 million of Bank of America golf loans earlier this year. That deal officially closed in September.

"We viewed that as a strategic purchase," explained Christy Lockridge, director and product manager of Heller's Golf Lending Group. "Golf is an under-served market which is a major premise of much of Heller's business, whether it be in real estate, corporate finance or otherwise. We tend to take a counter-cyclical approach. We like to go into under-served markets, understand those markets, focus on middle-market lending and underwrite sound business plans. We



Inverrary Country Club in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., is one of the courses in Heller Financial's growing portfolio.

felt there's opportunity in golf course lending, particularly with the loss of Bank of America."

Heller has completed five individual deals since Nekoroski and John Seeburger, who oversees the group's Western operations, left Bank of America to join Heller. Of those deals, four have been acquisitions and one refinancing. They are spread throughout the country. "We've been very selective to date," Nekoroski said. "But Heller is very committed to the golf business."

HELLER'S GAME PLAN

"Since the group started we've looked at more than \$1 billion in potential transactions," Lockridge said. "The problem is, we're pursuing a very specific base. We're targeting low- to mid-level, daily-

Continued on page 21

2001 Newsmakers

ClubCorp moving ahead with Bear's Best concept

By JOEL JOYNER

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — October marked the soft opening here of ClubCorp's first Bear's Best branded golf course. A joint venture between Dallas-based ClubCorp and Jack Nicklaus' North Palm Beach, Fla.-based Golden Bear International, the Bear's Best Las Vegas layout will be followed by a second Bear's Best opening in Atlanta next year.

The branded concept will apply to each course with one unique difference. Nicklaus will create two separate 18-hole layouts by selecting his favorite holes to be replicated



ClubCorp's Richard Ellis and Dave Richey examine Bear's Best plans.

from the nearly 200 courses he has designed.

"We're working very closely with the host clubs," said Dave Richey, ClubCorp's senior vice president, development. "They have graciously embraced this entire idea and are proud that Jack has selected a hole from their

Continued on page 23

2001 Newsmakers

Intrawest Golf posts strong 2001 growth

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Despite the bear market in the golf course industry in 2001, Intrawest Golf has managed to post strong growth numbers and push forward with its strategy to develop its Raven-branded golf clubs.

"We have added five new courses to the portfolio this year," said marketing manager Ben Keilholtz. "In addition we el-



Intrawest has rebadged Hawthorne Valley Golf Club in Snowshoe, W. Va., as The Raven Golf Club at Snowshoe Mountain.

evated one of our existing courses to Raven status. These new courses account for more than 20 percent growth and bring our course total to 23."

The company announced this fall that it intended to expand its Raven brand through third party management contracts (GCN Nov. 2001) and signed its first such agreement with The Resort Group to manage Cabo San Lucas Country Club in

Continued on page 20

DECEMBER 2001 19

RDC purchases the Golf Club at Cypress Creek

BEDMINSTER, N.J. — RDC Golf Group, headquartered here, announced that it has purchased the Golf Club at Cypress Creek located in the Tampa suburb of Ruskin, Fla. The seller of Cypress Creek is a subsidiary of GATX Capital Corporation, but the financial terms are not being disclosed. The 18-hole course is a 6,800-yard, semi-

private golf club designed by Steve Smyers and was built in 1987. The recent transaction was the continuation of a two-course purchase by RDC Golf from GATX Capital, the company acquired Tusawilla Country Club in Winter Springs, Fla. in 2000.

Cypress Creek represents the third acquisition in RDC's expanding portfolio in

the past 18 months. "RDC continues to seek attractive acquisition opportunities," said Matthew Galvin, executive vice president and principal. "Our goal is to add an average of two to three courses per year if we see the right opportunities." The company owns and operates seven golf courses and country clubs at six locations from New Jersey to Florida.

Intrawest on the move

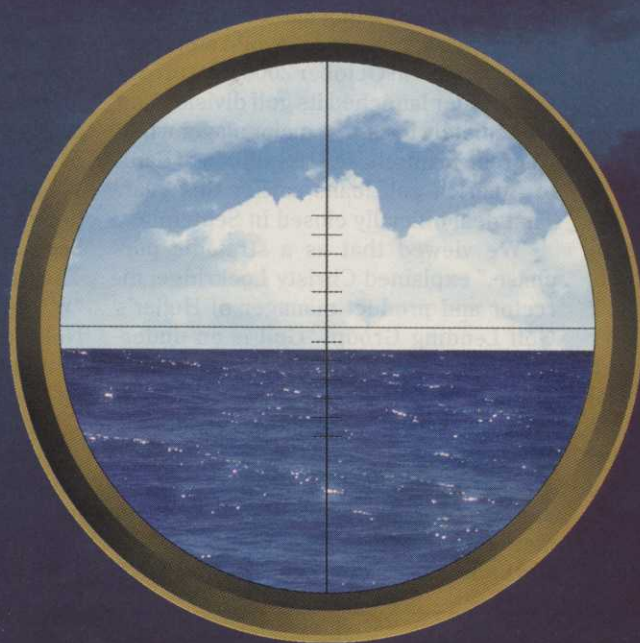
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Mexico. Upon completion of capital improvements, Intrawest will rebadge the Pete Dye-designed course The Raven Golf Club at Cabo San Lucas. The club opened in 1994 and is the centerpiece of a 750-acre resort and golf community.

In addition to adding Cabo San Lucas, the company also rebadged its Hawthorne Valley Golf Course in Snowshoe, W. Va., as a Raven property. The Gary Player-designed course is now known as The Raven Golf Club at Snowshoe Mountain.

"The rebadged course opened on April 12 and has been successful in its first year. It confirms our intentions to expand the Raven brand to many new

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- Santa Rita Golf Club, Corona de Tucson, Ariz.
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- Shark's Tooth Golf Club, Bay County, Fla.
- Coyote Moon Golf Club, Truckee, Calif.
- Trilogy Golf Club at Power Ranch, Gilbert, Ariz.

markets," Keilholtz said.

SUCCESS IN A TOUGH YEAR

According to Keilholtz, Intrawest clubs fared well during an economically challenging 2001. "We have had a number of successes at many of our golf facilities," he said. "Most notably our Raven at South Mountain facility in Phoenix saw a reduction in rounds from the previous fiscal year, but was able to increase overall revenue. In addition, our Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Destin, Fla. saw an increase in rounds, a huge win in an area of the country that was seeing a decrease in round totals."

Keilholtz credits these accomplishments to the experts on the Intrawest golf team that was bolstered this year by the additions of Tom Collopy, vice president for strategic development; Mark Cupit, vice president for golf course construction; Jim Lanctot, director of revenue management and product development; and Brandon Cajthaml, employee experience manager.

For 2002, Intrawest Golf expects a similar growth curve, but will look to add courses where it already has existing facilities. "We will continue to look at new markets, but we want to cluster facilities and take advantage of the synergies that our existing courses provide," Keilholtz said. ■

— Andrew Overbeck

GE Capital's acquisition could make Heller Financial a bigger player

Continued from page 19

fee and semi-private courses. We're looking for experienced borrowers with financial backing and a sound business plan. We want stable markets where we can loan 50 to 75 percent of value. Many of the deals we've reviewed were new construction or a residential developer who was putting in a golf course. Those projects just didn't fit our box [niche]."

Added Nekoroski: "We are staying focused on stable courses run by the industry's best operators. Like the rest of the lending world, we're being a bit more conservative these days.

'We think it [the GE purchase] could be a boon.'

— Rick Nekoroski

Golf is a management-intensive, cash-flow business. When things get tougher economically, you want very strong managers running the properties."

HEALTH OF THE GOLF INDUSTRY

According to Nekoroski, golf course construction and overall operating revenues have slowed from the record levels of the past few years. The industry had a late spring, but a fairly healthy summer and fall.

Some golf markets have too many courses, Nekoroski conceded. "But we look at deals one property at a time and evaluate it for what it is. Some properties feel an impact from an oversupplied market. Others have good operators who can compensate for market pressures and maintain their numbers. At the right debt level, there's a deal to be made at any course."

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have not changed the company's business plan, Lockridge said. "Our plan was always to focus on the lower- and mid-level courses in drive-to locations...The economy will affect our courses more than any perceived terrorist threat."

Textron, Financial Corp., Citicapital/Associates First Capital, DaimlerChrysler Capital and Heller are the major players in the golf course lending market, Lockridge said. Together, golf-specific lenders control about 30 percent of the golf course lending market while banks and insurance companies handle the remaining 70 percent.

"We've seen a real shake-out in the number of golf course lenders in the past 12 to 24 months,"

Seeburger said. "Many weren't golf specific and some, particularly the banks, have sworn off golf. A lot of the refinance business that was going to the banks is filling in behind [our] acquisitions now.

"Acquisitions are still slow because there's still a gap between sellers and buyers. The

market is getting much more realistic. Sellers have moved quite a bit, but haven't adjusted their expectations to where buyers are just yet."

THE FUTURE

Seeburger believes the acquisition market will pick up in 2002. "We've had an explosive growth in the number of new courses

over the past three to five years and that's really starting to tail off," he said. "Once that happens, things should stabilize on the operation and revenue side of the business. Everyone will get a good idea of where they stand. Expectations will stabilize and you'll begin to see more transactions."

Golf course values have decreased recently, leading to a few more sales, Nekoroski said. "Values have dropped 15 percent [in the past year] but need to drop another 10 percent before significantly more activity takes place." ■

Peter Blais is a media relations consultant and freelance writer living in North Yarmouth, Maine.



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Troon Golf's Garmany outlines growth strategy

Continued from page 1

America. That gets us to 94 courses total and we expect to add to that by the end of the year.

GCN: What markets did you target this year?

Garmany: We have an overall strategy to grow into new markets. For example, this year we added courses in Oklahoma and Tennessee which don't fit into any of the regions we were in before.

We also focused on the Midwest adding courses in Indianapolis, Minneapolis and northern Michigan. We are excited about this market because we have customers in this area that come play our southern courses in the winter. We wanted to take advantage of that existing customer base to expand the Troon brand. In tough times it is easier to keep your current customers than to get new ones.

We were also active in Japan this year,

which is the second largest golf economy in the world. We have spent the last two years putting infrastructure in place and anticipate adding more contracts there by the end of the year.

GCN: What financial role does Troon Golf play in these new acquisitions?

Garmany: This year we had a financial interest in about one-third of those deals and we hold a minority interest in almost all of them. That is a little higher than usual, but I think we will see that involvement continue because we have seen that a small investment made this year gains a lot more for us than it did last year.

With the economy being down some people have used our capital as a mezzanine financial piece. We don't mind putting money in to have some skin in the deal, but we don't normally want to own a property outright. We are like the smaller version of a hotel company in our acquisition strategy. We normally enter into a joint venture with the owners as opposed to outright ownership. We do own a few things but right now anything new would have to have a tremendous upside.

GCN: How does this strategy affect your management operations?

Garmany: It aligns us with the owner, because if we put money in then we are not passive investors. We are going to make sure that our management contract is longer and stronger.

GCN: Does this ownership/joint ven-

ture mix provide a buffer for Troon Golf during challenging economic times?

Garmany: Sure. Our model is less impacted than a company that owns assets outright. Someone who owns 100 percent of a property will feel the profit stress. Companies that bought properties based on 1998, 1999 or 2000 valuation models are going to be in trouble because they bought something based on valuations going up and now it is going the other way.

GCN: With market valuation falling and new development slowing, how has Troon continued to grow?

Garmany: We have found that when the market is going downwards, it is even easier to get contracts because people



Robinson Ranch GC in Santa Clarita, Calif. was one of the courses added to Troon Golf's portfolio in 2001.

are looking for every edge they can get. If business is going great, and properties are growing at an average of 10 or 11 percent, a trained monkey might be able to produce five-percent growth. So when things go south, owners are looking for an edge. In addition to our 1.8 million Troon customers who are loyal to our products and our courses, we provide marketing, management and agronomic expertise.

GCN: While other management com-

Continued on next page

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Troon

Continued from previous page

panies are cutting their staff, Troon Golf has kept adding staff. Why?

Garmany: There is a very simple way to stop growing in this business and that is to start getting bad results at your properties. Troon Golf is coming out of six years of double-digit growth, but 2001 has been quite challenging. What we have been able to do for our owners this year, and the reason that we have kept growing, has been to perform ahead of the market.

GCN: 2001 was already a challenging year before the events of Sept. 11. How have the terrorist attacks impacted business?

Garmany: As a company we are growing more this year than last. However, some of our properties are not doing as well as they did last year. Our properties in the Sunbelt were impacted by the slowing economy and then by Sept. 11. Places that depend on people flying in will not do as well. I don't think these will track as negatively as hotels or airlines, but they will not do much better.

We are delaying our corporate budgets from October to December this year because we want to have a little bit more data to forecast into 2002. In September "fly in" golf ran roughly 60 to 80 percent of normal and hometown clubs were 88 to 95 percent of normal. The tourism market has come back to 80 to 85 percent in October and hometown clubs are on par. But we are not sure whether these numbers will be in place for a couple of months or whether it will get better or worse. We will debate this into next year. Is it over? Right now it is pure speculation.

GCN: What are the growth plans for 2002?

Garmany: We expect to grow at the same levels or more than last year. We will add 33 to 34 courses worldwide, 25 of which will be in North America. By the end of this year we should have added 28 to 30 courses and have more than 100 in our portfolio.

We will continue to grow internationally concentrating on Japan, Australia and Europe. We'll add an office in London and focus on expanding in the United Kingdom and other markets. We want to be a global company and the world leader in golf course management, so it is important to be in these locations.

Growth will be measured, however. We need to keep building on the Troon brand. It is important to only take on properties that fit. If we wanted to be the largest golf course management company in the world we would be by now if we simply took every opportunity that we were given. ■

Bear's Best

Continued from page 19

course to be replicated. They pretty much have pledged their support any way they can."

Convention trade in Las Vegas and Atlanta's strong base of *Fortune* 500 companies made the locations attractive for establishing Bear's Best facilities, said Richey. Future club locations

may be developed within cities like Dallas, Los Angeles, Chicago or Washington D.C. "Other locations are being considered, but our main focus right now is on the Las Vegas and Atlanta courses," he said.

GRAND OPENINGS

The purpose of the soft opening is to introduce key people in the Las Vegas area – local golf pros, casino managers,

destination management companies and members of the chamber of commerce – to the club. They will have opportunities to play complimentary rounds at the course continuing through this month, according to Richey.

"The actual grand opening will probably be in late spring or early fall of next year," he said. "We'd like to coordinate it in

conjunction with the grand opening of the course in Atlanta. We're thinking we might try to have Jack open both courses in the same week."

The Atlanta course is expected to be open for play this summer. "For the most part, 16 holes are completed, grown in and ready for play," Richey explained. "We've got a county issue right now with a sewer line that they

Continued on page 29

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BRIEFS

NORTH AMERICAN GREEN PROMOTES LAWSON

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Robert Lawson has been promoted to national specifications manager by North American Green. Lawson joined the erosion control blanket manufacturer in 1990 as a regional sales manager. In his new position, he will work with government agencies, national construction companies and multinational engineering firms in developing specifications and applications for the company's erosion control products.



Robert Lawson

DOW AGROSCIENCES NAMES WOOLEY

INDIANAPOLIS — Chris Wooley has been named marketing manager for turf and ornamental insecticides at Dow AgroSciences. He will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of marketing products such as MACH 2 turf insecticide, Conserve SC insect control and Curfew soil fumigant. Wooley joined the company in 1998 and most recently was the communications manager for the Midwest crops business.



Chris Wooley

BASF APPOINTS LARSON

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — Steve Larson has been appointed to the position of senior sales specialist for BASF turf ornamental and pest control. In his new position, he will provide sales support and technical advice to golf course superintendents and regional distributors. Larson, who previously served as technical sales manager for the professional division of the Scotts Co., has more than 23 years of sales experience in the turf and ornamental industry.



Steve Larson

2001 Newsmakers

Pursell's FarmLinks dream becoming a reality

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Construction at Pursell Technologies Inc.'s FarmLinks golf course at Pursell Farms is in full swing and is officially set to open in spring 2003. The course will serve as the centerpiece of the PTI Tour, a program devised by company president and CEO David Pursell to introduce superintendents to its high-tech line of polymer coated fertilizers.

The company's new headquarters and the lodge officially opened this year and attention has turned now to finishing the 18-hole course that will be a living laboratory and testing ground for PTI products.

"We are in full scale construction now and the Landscapes Unlimited folks are out there and the Hurdzan, Fry team is making frequent trips," said Pursell. "The course is completely routed and the dirt work is underway."

"The golf course is going to be more spectacular than I once thought," he continued. "We will have three par-3s that have over 50 feet of elevation change and some great par-5s that get up into elevation."



David Pursell

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

In addition to educating superintendents about PTI products, Pursell has teamed up with the Toro Co. and Club Car, who have supplied equipment and other monetary support for the opportunity to showcase their products and services at the course. Other partners include Simplot Turf and Horticulture, Flowtronex, Chipco, Harrells and Honours Golf.

"We have been very choosy with the companies that we have gone after," Pursell said. "We have been working closely with Toro in the irrigation design for the course. Club Car is involved in the design of the golf car facility and Toro is also working with us in the design

of the maintenance complex."

To date, the process has been very collaborative and dynamic, according to Pursell.

"We are trying to get with all of our partners and look at the plans with them," he said. "We want them to end up with a facility that they want to bring their customers to and showcase their products as



The 17th hole under construction at PTI's FarmLinks golf course

well. They will be able to demonstrate equipment and do research. This course will answer to us, not to a membership."

When the course opens, Toro will have a staff person on site to demonstrate its turf equipment and irrigation products and

Continued on page 26

2001 Newsmakers

Textron goes orange as part of new branding strategy

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ORLANDO, Fla. — As part of a company-wide strategy to focus its product portfolio and build strong global brands, Textron Golf Turf & Specialty Products announced that it will adopt orange as its flagship color in order to visually unify its equipment line.

Since 1998, the company has marketed its four major brands (Jacobsen, Cushman, Ryan and Ransomes) in various brand identity colors. All Cushman turf vehicles and Ryan aerators will now wear Jacobsen orange, while Ransomes mowers will be integrated into the Jacobsen brand as of Nov. 1. The Ransomes brand will continue to be sold in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

"As a business unit of Textron we stepped back and examined where we fit in," said chairman and CEO Greg Hyland during a press conference at the Bay Hill Club, here. "Jacobsen is a powerful brand that we want to use to increase market share,

profits, customer and employee loyalty, and customer satisfaction."

WHY ORANGE?

TGT&SP decided to phase out the Ransomes brand because it never



Vice president of product management Peter Whurr with a freshly-painted Jacobsen Turfcut 600

achieved acceptance in the marketplace. According to research conducted by the company, superintendents said — by a three-to-one margin —

Continued on page 26

2001 Newsmakers

Syngenta's online services evolving

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GREENSBORO, N.C. — While turf and ornamental market leader Syngenta Professional Products spent 2001 working on providing the golf industry with new chemistry, it also embarked on an ambitious online initiative to provide its customers with value-added information and technology services. The Web site, www.greencastonline.com, was announced at the GCSAA show in Dallas (GCN April 2001) and tweaked during the course of the year before formally being introduced this fall. (GCN November 2001)

The primary feature of the site is Pest Outlooks, an online insect and disease prediction service. The service was developed in partnership with Warrenton, Va. — based Pest Forecasting Group, Inc. and was field-tested throughout the year. While the Pest Outlooks service is largely seasonal, the site also features weekly Golf Notes that are available year-round.

TWEAKING THE SITE

After gauging user response from its initial launch, Syngenta is now in the process of tweaking the site, said golf market manager Joe DiPaola.

"There are a number of things that are being evaluated," he said. "The whole idea is to provide information that makes it easier to be more effective and environmentally

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Club Car lays off 25 workers

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Reacting to slow economic conditions in the golf and travel industries, Club Car announced the first personnel reduction in the company's 39-year history. The layoffs affected 14 employees locally and 11 in branch offices.

The company's largest customers are golf courses and re-

sorts that use its golf cars, hospitality and food-and-beverage vehicles. "We regret having to take this action," said Phil Tralies, Club Car's president and CEO. "Unfortunately, the severity and length of the economic downturn forced us to make the decision."

Tralies said that the company

in recent months had reduced expenses, including curtailing marketing and advertising programs, and instituted hiring restrictions in an effort to avoid reducing personnel.

"The health of our business is a function of the health of our customers' busi-



Phil Tralies

nesses," he said. "It's been an extremely challenging year for many of our customers, and the tragic events of Sept. 11 only made conditions more difficult. Since Sept 11, we have seen a number of accounts delay decisions to place orders."

Club Car employs more than 1,000 people worldwide with the majority of those here in the Augusta area. The affected employees in the area worked in manufacturing, engineering, information technology and sales and marketing. Employees affected at branch offices throughout the U.S. provided sales and service to Club Car customers. No branch offices were closed.

greencast

Continued from previous page

sound. As we move along, you will see more aspects of the site become customized."

Currently, Pest Outlooks utilizes weather data from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, historical data and pest models to identify weekly climatic conditions that favor outbreaks of a variety of diseases and insects. While the information available now is regional in scope, DiPaola is working on providing more localized data.

"We are looking at the possibility of enhancing this with local data," said DiPaola. "We met with Chicago-based Interactive Pest Group that is collecting data from area courses. We are discussing how we can work together to enhance the viability of this system going forward."

Another possible add-on to the site would be the integration of Global Positioning Systems to track, record and measure the use of pest control products.

"GPS lets you know where you are, what you did and in what weather conditions," said DiPaola. "Having that be a part of your data record automatically would be highly advantageous."

MEMBERSHIP NECESSARY

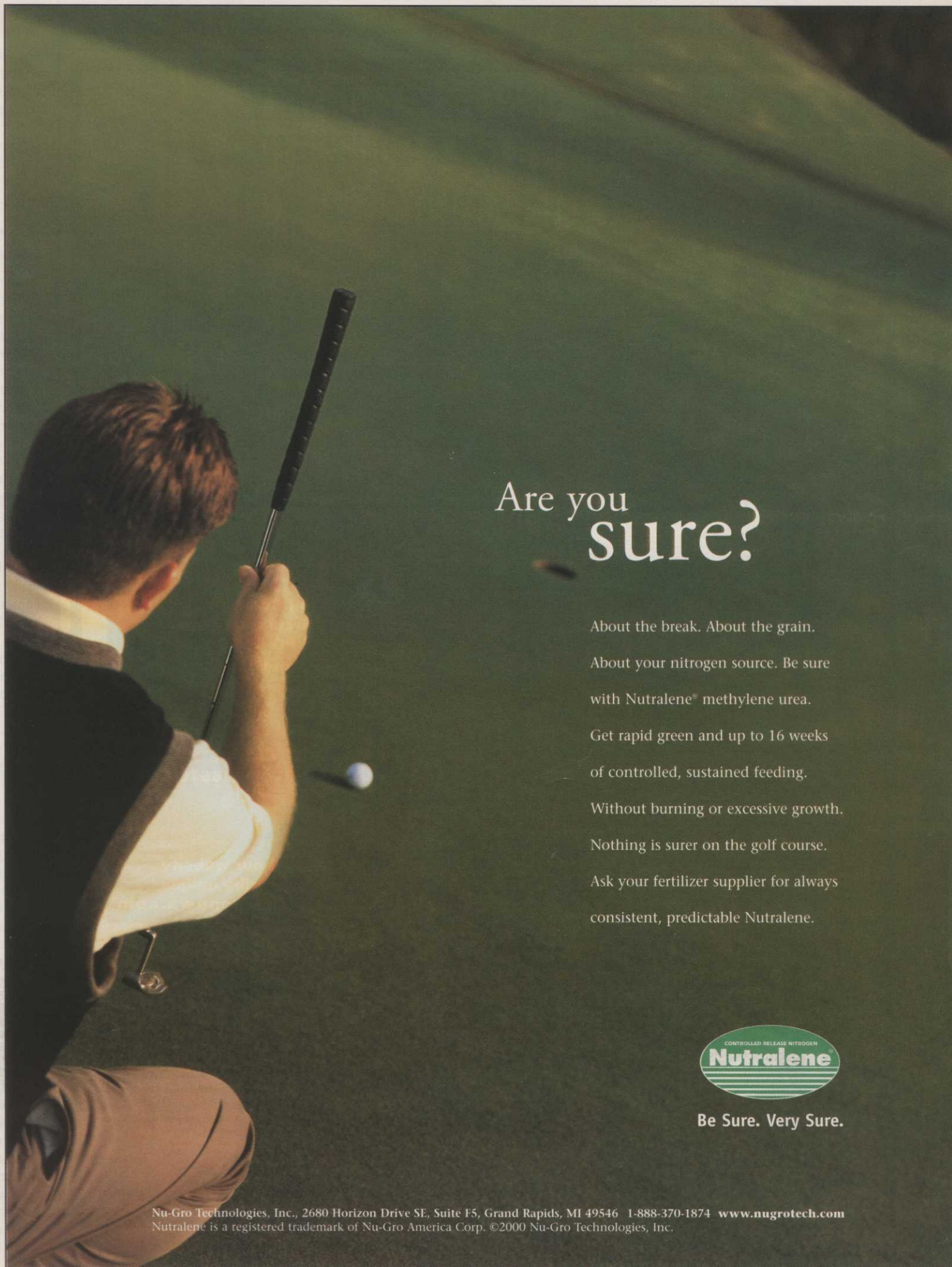
Before superintendents can use the features on the site, they must first log on and agree to become a member of Syngenta's Green Partner program. Initially, the site will be available to everyone, even non-Syngenta customers. While some portion of the site will always be available for free, DiPaola said that access to some of the features would have charges attached.

"Down the road, as we start to add more aspects to the site that are more technical and expensive, access will be tiered," he said.

While there is no firm timetable on the additions to the site, DiPaola is looking forward to introducing the service to more superintendents in 2002.

"We got a lot of information back from this season," he said. "This service is not designed to tell people what to do or what not to do. It is designed as a series of tools to help them use their professional experience and other tools to make better judgements on how to manage their facilities." ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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Textron drops Ransomes brand, paints all equipment orange

Continued from page 24

that they would be more receptive to Ransomes-style products if they were branded Jacobsen.

According to executive vice president David Rivers, brand and color are a very important marketing tool. "Color is the key visual identification," he said. "And brand still influences purchasing decisions. We wanted to link our brands with a common family color. This will not diminish their individual leadership in their categories. Jacobsen, Ryan and Cushman

each have a strong and unique heritage and product position which we are committed to preserving."

The rebranding strategy by TGT&SP is a continuation of its move to consolidate its manufacturing and management structure. In late December 2000, it closed its Jacobsen factory in Racine, Wis. and moved that operation to its newly expanded plant in Charlotte, N.C. In addition to the state of the art facility that employs 300 workers, the company has also moved its corporate headquarters to

the site allowing engineers, manufacturing managers, product management and executives to be located in one place.

PRODUCT CHANGES

In addition to the color and name changes under the brand restructuring, some product consolidation may also be considered.

"We are still completing our product rationalization," said Peter Whurr, vice president of product management. "The products will have to meet superintendent's needs and dollar value."

NEW COLOR, NEW NAMES

- Ransomes AR-250 articulating mower is now the Jacobsen AR-2500
- Ransomes E-Plex II electric greens mower is now the Jacobsen E-Plex
- Ransomes G-Plex triplex greens mower is now the Jacobsen G-Plex
- Ransomes LF-250 fairway mower is now the Jacobsen LF-2500
- Ransomes 700 Series is now the Jacobsen Turfcut 600 Series rotary mower
- Cushman Groom Master is now the Jacobsen Groom Master

He also pointed out that the company is trying to get all products on a common platform at its new manufacturing facility in Charlotte.

For now the major changes will be in name and color, with one exception. Cushman vehicles will still be available in green per customer request. ■

FarmLinks

Continued from page 24

gather feedback from superintendents.

"The chance to spend time with customers is a key part of our strategy," explained John Wright, Toro's director of marketing. "This will add to our existing programs, but to get feedback from small groups like this will be very effective. We will demonstrate existing, new and prototype equipment at Pursell Farms."

Fred Palmer, Club Car's vice president of national accounts, echoed Wright's sentiments. "It is an honor to participate in this project," he said. "It is going to be a place where partners can do research and get actual feedback from superintendents on real equipment in real time."

Club Car will be providing golf cars, utility vehicles, beverage cars, as well as camouflaged ATV's for use in hunting and off-roading.

STRONG 2002 OUTLOOK

FarmLinks will be the ideal testing ground for PTI's new line of coated pesticide products. While the company introduced its POLYON-coated acephate product this year, it is currently in talks with other chemical companies to use the technology on new products.

"This is getting a lot of interest from other chemical companies," said Pursell. "We will have a testing ground right outside my office. We will still do university testing, but it means a lot to go out on a working course and have sales, marketing and research and development people right there. It will give everyone an idea of what we need to do to be successful."

2001 was a good year for PTI, and Pursell expects more of the same for 2002 despite a slowing economy. "We are a niche marketer," he said. "We are selling value and long term benefits. We will have the facility to demonstrate that one or two applications of our product are equal to four to six of others. If we can do that, it will help us even in a down economy."

Developing a golf course has also been beneficial to the marketing knowledge of the company, said Pursell.

"Walking in the shoes of a golf course owner has provided a unique perspective," he said. "The better you understand the market, the better off you are going to be. This has been well worth the expense." ■

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HA01

Landscapes division expands golf market position

Continued from page 1

and combining the business, he does not rule out more acquisitions.

"We think that if we get ourselves to understand what superintendents need in terms of irrigation, nursery stock, fertilizer, seed and pre-emergents we can make it easier for them to do business," he said. "As they identify other things that they want us to supply we will put that under consideration. This is going to be more of a customer pull, not a product push."

ADDING MORE?

However, Werning is excited about the prospects of adding to the business. "If I am a superintendent, do I want to manage accounts with multiple companies? If we can provide quality service and products and all they have to do is call one place, manage one relationship, and pay one bill it would make their lives easier," he said.

Aaron Wetzel, national sales manager for John Deere's golf and turf division, also recognizes the opportunity to expand its presence in the golf market. "If that [more services] is what the customer is looking for and the business makes sense for us, then there is no place to stop," he said. "Can you do that in today's environment? No. But in the future, who knows."

Adding more services and becoming a larger player in the golf market is contingent on John Deere's ability to capitalize on its new position and provide quality products and services at a value price, said Werning.

SUPERINTENDENTS SET THE BAR

Superintendents have already set the bar for John Deere Landscapes.

"We have already gotten feedback," Werning said. "They are very interested in the options John Deere Credit will provide and our new abilities to assist the needs of the golf courses. But they want to have expertise in each area."

"We can't send out one guy who has to know about seed and fertilizer, the layout of the new irrigation system and then has to fix an engine on a mower," he continued. "We'd love to see that guy, but we need to make sure the expertise is still there. We are working to figure out the best way to approach that."

Werning said the majority of staffing and location issues have been sorted out. The company will have 215 locations across the country, and is planning to continue its growth in 2002 with 10 locations set to open in the spring.

However, how the landscape, irrigation, golf and turf equipment and credit divisions will work together is an ongoing process.

"We are in the discovery phase

right now," said Werning. "We are talking about all the possibilities, but we want to do it in a way that makes it easier for courses to run their business." He expects to have everything sorted by the GCSAA show in February.

LEVERAGING FINANCE POSITION

The opportunities are especially strong when it comes to

John Deere Credit, the financial arm that paved the way for the company's strong entrance to the turf equipment market.

"John Deere Credit played a major role in expanding the equipment business and it could do the same here," said Werning. "There is no timeframe on that, but we are working to put a pack-

age together that would make sense for golf courses."

While new construction is potentially a big money maker for this new venture, the company will also focus on renovation work.

"There are a lot of courses where John Deere already has a

strong customer relationship and in some cases those courses are already using John Deere Credit," Werning noted. "If they are looking to do irrigation renovation work or buying landscape products on an annual basis, we might be able to expand that existing relationship." ■



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Mother Nature

Continued from page 12

cause of the drought," Zierden said. "All that's over, and ocean temperatures in the Pacific are back to normal. From that, we expect normal rainfall for at least the next nine to 12 months."

HOUSTON FLOODING

In the Houston area, Tropical Storm Allison landed a punishing blow dumping nearly three feet of rain that stirred deadly floods. The damage and extensive clean-up process was something superintendent Randy Dayton at the Northgate Country Club will not soon forget.

"We've had weed pressure and insects -



Hoses and squeegees were required to remove layers of silt from greens at the Northgate CC.

especially mole crickets - on the course all summer that got washed in with the silt and infested areas covered by the flooding," said Dayton. "We used MSMA [herbicide] to help control the crabgrass and goosegrass. All we could do was keep trying to suppress them."

Trimec was applied to areas with broad-leaf outbreaks, but grassy weeds were the bigger challenge. "The cooler weather is helping us out now, but there were locations this summer we had to battle it out with weeds. There's a weed called Johnson-grass which is commonly used along roadsides, and we had that all over," described Dayton. "It grows so fast it can look like corn growing out on the golf course. It took a couple of applications of MSMA to control, surprisingly. It's a really tough weed."

The course, situated along the banks of Cypress Creek, lost some large areas to erosion. As much as 10 feet to 15 feet of property slid down into the creek, according to Dayton. "The flood washed away ground underneath the creek banking that we had not noticed before," he said. "There wasn't much we could do about it. Areas just started dropping off into the creek 30 feet below."

The course was flooded again in October following a storm that delivered five inches of rain. "There was no damage, but we're constantly seeing more and more erosion," said Dayton. "I don't think the course can take much more. We suspect that with the increase in development, particularly in the western parts of Houston, it takes less and less rain before the creek starts overflowing."

"The Cypress Creek watershed, once prairie land that could absorb the water, is now rooftops, roads and parking lots," Dayton explained. "I think the flooding here will just keep getting worse."

The longest lasting effects from Allison was the damage caused to the pump house. "We fixed everything visually to the pump station, but we ended up with internal problems with the control system," Dayton said. "It was a good two months before our irrigation system was back to normal. With a Houston summer, we ended up seeing the effects of the flood on areas that weren't even flooded." ■

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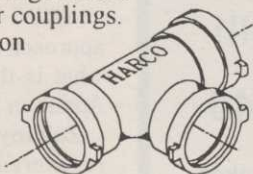
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Bear's Best

Continued from page 23

want to run under a couple of holes, so we're going to let them do that first before we finish the last two holes."

Total development costs – including course construction, clubhouse and maintenance equipment – amounted to \$21 million for the Las Vegas facility. "Las Vegas is an expensive place to build with all the rock in the area," mentioned Richey. "The Atlanta project will be in the \$14 million range."

MARKETING APPROACH

A fore caddie system will be in place at the two courses. "They will be able to provide strategy for players as well as any background information on individual holes," said Richard Ellis, managing director of Bear's Best. "On each tee, there also will be signs marking the hole that's been replicated. Our Web site, www.bearsbest.com, offers a detailed description of each hole at both the Las Vegas and Atlanta layouts.

"We want to make sure that people who experience the Las Vegas course know that there's more than one," Ellis said. "The bag tags we give players when they arrive, hats and even menus are labeled Atlanta/Las Vegas. The course in Atlanta will be identical, all except the hole selections. Clubhouse, carpets, everything in detail will look the same at each establishment." ■

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IGM attitude

Continued from page 11

is on the properties every two weeks. If something pops up like some unfamiliar turf disease, there are digital cameras at every site. Superintendents can take an image of a problem and submit it to the office so that a group of experienced people can evaluate it. That way we can diagnose or dispatch someone to visit the course immedi-



IGM employees doublemowing a green

ately. Nine times out of ten, we can solve any problems before anything gets out of hand.

GCN: How would you describe IGM's approach concerning the environment, and what is the company's involvement with Audubon International?

Zakany: Every one of our courses are registered in and actively pursuing certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. We have seven clubs certified to date. Basically, our whole business and maintenance approach is based on principals established by Audubon International: Integrated Pest Management, Best Management Practices, water conservation, and applying pesticides where needed rather than making blanket applications. We try to work in concert with the environment.

GCN: What incentives does IGM offer to future superintendents?

Zakany: We're working with various colleges and universities on intern development programs. We're striving to involve



Hole placement by an IGM staff member

young, up-and-coming, assistant superintendents in the company to offer them training and experience. We try to promote from within the company as much as possible. We feel we have a strong training program and job security that allows superintendents an opportunity for upward mobility. This coupled with a good insurance program, 401K plan and other benefits seem to attract and keep good superintendents.

GCN: What does IGM look for in recruiting a superintendent?

Zakany: We look for attitude, and management and people skills. Obviously, they need to have a turfgrass background – and it's great if they've worked at various facilities – but we look for someone who has a good personality and work ethic and can get along with their employees. Whatever they may be lacking agronomically, we can definitely support and help them on that. We prefer that to someone who knows everything and is not receptive to change. IGM is team driven. We're not looking for any "I" guys. ■

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