

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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First Nat'l sees rise in volume

By DEREK RICE

MARTINSVILLE, N.J. — Despite an economic downturn in 2002, First National of America Inc. has not seen a decrease in the number of golf course loans it has made, according to Jerry Sager, First National's president.



"Either we're dull and boring or incredibly wrong. We do about the same lending volume each year," he said. "We did a little more volume, surprisingly enough, this past year than the year before, and I know everybody else wasn't doing stuff."

Sager attributes this increased volume to First National's commitment to look at loans for projects on Native American land (GCN, April 2002), as well as the company's track record as a national lender for golf projects.

"We opened up a new lending market because we're doing Native American stuff now, which we did not do before. So that's

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2002 NEWSMAKERS

Drought concerns linger into winter



State water restrictions forbid the irrigation of roughs this summer at Dauphin Highlands Golf Course in Oberlin, Pa.

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WESTFIELD, N.J. — Moderate to extreme drought conditions gripped 45 percent of the country this summer, leading to widespread water restrictions and maintenance headaches for superintendents. While some areas have gotten relief from fall rains, water use is still being regulated in other parts of the country and concerns over long-term water shortages are looming large.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 29 states had significantly be-

low average precipitation and this year. This past June through August was the warmest since the 1930s.

"This was the hardest year I have ever had to maintain turf," said Chris Carson, superintendent at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, N.J.

Superintendent Bill Wall at Dauphin Highlands Golf Course in Oberlin, Pa., agreed. "The last two years have been the most difficult years I have had, and I have been in central Pennsylvania since 1975," he said.

Parts of Pennsylvania and all of

New Jersey were placed under water restrictions early this spring after an unusually dry winter.

"In March we had our water cut back to 50 percent of the

Continued on page 10

2002 NEWSMAKERS

NGP buyout nearly done

By DEREK RICE

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — When National Golf Properties (NGP) announced in February that it would merge with its sister company and largest tenant American Golf Corp. (AGC), the immediate reaction was not positive. Many industry insiders claimed the deal was merely an attempt to bail out NGP's major shareholders and thought either bankruptcy or breaking up the company would be more appropriate.

After several months of negotiations and rumor-fueled speculation, NGP found a buyer in a group led by Goldman Sachs and Starwood Capital (GCN,

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Bayer to sell fipronil product line to BASF

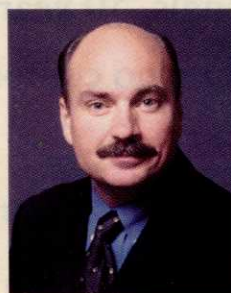
By ANDREW OVERBECK

MONTVALE, N.J. — BASF agreed Oct. 28 to buy certain assets including fipronil insecticides and several fungicides from Bayer AG, clearing the way for full regulatory approval of Bayer's acquisition of Aventis CropScience and the creation of Bayer Environmental Sciences. Officials from both companies would not discuss the specifics of the pending transaction.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission granted approval to Bayer's acquisition of Aventis CropScience in June, but required the divesti-

ture of acetamiprid and fipronil to be completed by December (GCN, July 2002). The deal, worth a reported \$1.16 billion, would beat that deadline and includes buy-back license agreements that would allow Bayer ES to market certain products and retain trademarks. The FTC and the European Commission must still approve the transaction.

Dan Carrothers, head of the



Dan Carrothers

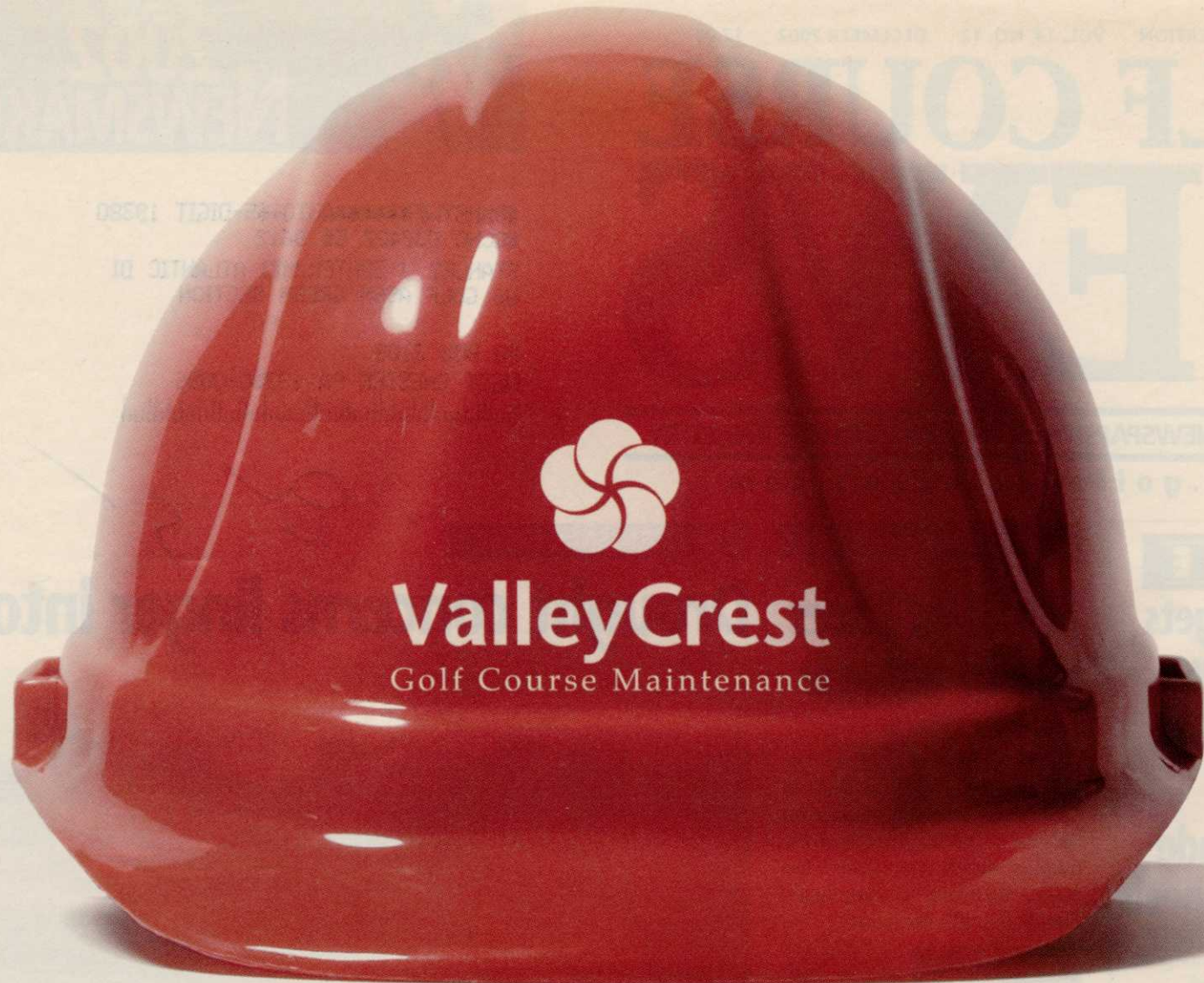
U.S. green industry business for Bayer ES, anticipates the deal to be completed by early December.

"Until that time, we are still operating under the FTC guidelines of 'hold separate,'" said Carrothers. "We

cannot fully integrate the sales force until the divestment has occurred."

While acetamiprid is being

Continued on page 18



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The First Tee announces scholarship program, 2002 successes

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — At its fifth annual meeting in late October, The First Tee, in conjunction with Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., and 13 additional colleges and universities, announced that 28 scholarships will be available to First Tee participants beginning in 2003-2004.

"We have established an exemplary Scholarship Advisory Committee that will oversee the administration of The First Tee Scholars Program, and we look forward to announcing our first scholarship recipients next year," said Dr. William Crouch, president of Georgetown College.

The announcement stems from Crouch's surprise announcement at last year's meeting. At that meeting, Crouch said his college would donate two first-year scholarships to qualified participants of The First Tee. Kansas State University, one of the 13 schools to match Crouch's pledge, made the same com-

mitment the next day.

"Dr. Crouch is a champion of The First Tee, and his ability to successfully challenge 13 other universities and colleges is astounding," said Joe Louis Barrow Jr., executive director of The First Tee. "We are thrilled to offer this new Scholars Program, and look forward to identifying additional colleges and universities who have the same dedication and commitment to youth and education that these 14 schools do."

The First Tee also announced at the conference that it had exceeded its goal for the number of new affiliates added this year by



Joe Louis Barrow Jr., executive director of The First Tee; Dr. William Crouch, president of Georgetown College; and Kelly Martin, managing director of organizational development for The First Tee, announce formation of a scholarship for First Tee participants at the organization's fifth annual meeting.

30 percent. At last year's meeting, the organization set a goal of 75, but has added 107 since then.

The organization has also opened 115 new facilities this year, slightly lower than the 120 projected last year. However, Barrow said, the organization is on track to achieve its goals.

"We are confident that with the continued efforts of our chapter leadership, along with the commitments from our corporate partners, we will reach our 2005 goal," he said.

— Derek Rice

TranXit GTA labeled for bermuda greens

VALDOSTA, Ga. — Griffin LLC has received approval from the Environmental Protection Agency for TranXit GTA herbicide to be used on bermudagrass greens.

TranXit has been labeled for use on fairways since late summer 2001 (April 2002 GCN), and is formulated for the removal of *Poa annua* before overseeding and for removal of perennial ryegrass during the spring transition. The company held off on its request for a greens label so it could get more use data.

"The ability to use TranXit on bermudagrass putting greens makes this product an even more valuable and versatile tool for golf course superintendents," said Owen Towne, business director of Griffin's Specialty Products Group.

When applying TranXit to bermudagrass greens prior to overseeding, a two-ounce per acre rate should be used. For *Poa annua* control on non-overseeded bermudagrass greens, TranXit should be applied at one-ounce per acre.



The second hole at the Landings Club's Palmetto Course.

The Landings Club gains certification for last two courses

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Landings Club has received certification from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System for its Plantation and Palmetto courses. All four of the development's other courses, Marshwood, Magnolia, Oakridge and Deer Creek, have already been certified by Audubon International.

"We have achieved certification on all

six of our courses in four years," said Allan Pulaski, director of golf and grounds maintenance. "We did two courses a year in 1999, 2000 and 2002. We took a year off to renovate the Magnolia course in 2001."

The first layout at the Landings Club opened in 1974 and course development continued until the sixth course opened 1991.

According to Pulaski, the hardest part of

achieving certification was protecting the large amount of wildlife areas and dealing with both brackish and fresh water systems.

"It was challenging because of the broad diversity of the property and the abundance of wildlife and habitat that had to be documented," said Pulaski.

— Andrew Overbeck

Columbia Seeds seeks to empower distributors and growers

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Tom Pape and Scott Harer have left Seed Research of Oregon to form Columbia Seeds, a new company that more directly links growers with distribution channels.

The two longtime seed industry executives saw a need to remove the overhead associated with larger seed companies and to bring product to market in a more efficient manner. In five years, the company expects to be doing between \$20 million and \$25 million in sales.

"Margins are being squeezed in all facets of the supply chain and we saw a need to link the distributor and the grower together with a smaller marketing company and not get involved doing shipping, handling and packaging," said Harer, who most recently served as sales manager for SRO. "We are going to



Tom Pape



Scott Harer

let others who are experts in those facets of the business handle it. It will allow us to bring product to market faster with a more competitive price."

Columbia Seeds opened for business Oct. 7 and is funded by outside capital. Several distributors and seed growers are equity partners.

"We have formed a grower group and all the cleaning, processing and blending will take place on the farm. We will ship it all from the same location," said Pape, who previously

served as managing director of operations and national accounts for SRO. "We will also have several distributors as partners so everyone will be linked. We have cut out the seed company in the middle and empowered the distributors and growers. We will manage the flow and do the marketing."

Not having research and development and breeding programs in-house will also drastically reduce overhead.

"There are many breeding programs out there resulting in ample opportunity to acquire regionally adapted material without funding your own program. You can't afford to have all your money tied up in invested capital and assets. It won't pay," said Pape.

Columbia Seeds has signed agreements with two independent breeding programs to source new turfgrass varieties.

"We will be marketing Dr. Virginia

Lehman's new L-03 bentgrass. She developed L-93 for Lofts Seed and this is an improved variety. We will be the primary marketer of that product," said Pape. "We will also work with Dr. Steve Whitten's breeding firm, Apex, on several tall fescues and perennial ryes."

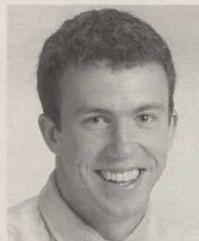
Pape said Columbia Seeds will form strategic alliances with other Willamette Valley seed companies to market their varieties and that they will have a full line of cool-season, and possibly some warm-season, turfgrass varieties.

Pape and Harer are working now on finalizing a distributor network and signing independent sales representatives to handle sales across the country.

"We have already sold a few loads of seed and by spring we will have expanded our distributor network," Pape said. "By fall we'll really be good to go."

Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Even the political spin doctors, who as I write this are working overtime to squeeze percentage points out of close mid-term races, would be hard-pressed to put a positive spin on the year the golf industry had in 2002.



Andrew Overbeck, editor

The year served up healthy portions of economic uncertainty, drought conditions, flat rounds numbers and declining golf course construction figures.

Several articles in this month's Newsmakers edition chronicle these big picture stories that characterize the challenges the industry faced over the last year.

Drought conditions plagued almost half the country this year (see story on page 1), ushering in water restrictions and disastrous agronomic consequences. The aforementioned economic woes led to shrinking course revenues and tighter maintenance budgets for most courses. More than 80 percent of courses in the country will spend the same amount or less on maintenance in 2003 than they did in 2002 (see story on page 6), making extravagant maintenance programs a daydream for many superintendents.

Course construction figures are also set to come in lower for the second year in a row. The luster of the "if you build it they will come" years has quickly faded as new golf course financing

backs out of the market.

The golf business has taken its lumps this year, that's for certain. But in some sectors there appears to be reason for optimism.

In this month's commentary (see below) Larry Hirsh takes a stab at what it will take to bring the industry out of its collective funk. After close consideration, he sees signs that the industry is on the brink of a resurgence. Wall Street money is coming back into golf, valuations are nearing bottom and troubled properties are bound to start changing hands soon.

Furthermore, in managing editor Derek Rice's survey of management companies, he discovers that several have grown, and the instability caused by the financial travails of National Golf Properties and American Golf Corp. are coming to an end (see page 1).

Another promising trend to emerge from these tough times is that more golf courses are being run like a business. Superintendents, whether they like it or not, are becoming better at managing

others in the industry, to find something positive about the slowdown in golf course construction. With fewer courses being built, supply is coming back into balance with demand. As the in-



expenses and most are paying just as much attention to rounds played as they are to agronomic issues. An opportunity exists to improve profit margins as golf course managers, owners and superintendents work better together as a team.

And leave it to me, and many

industry has tightened and financing has become more difficult, more often than not, the courses being built are more economically feasible projects.

A return to reality, both in terms of economic principles and fiscal responsibilities, will make for a healthier industry.

The big issue holding back recovery is debt financing, or lack thereof. Textron remains the industry leader after the Bank of America departure. GE Capital and GMAC Mortgage are staking positions, but to date show no indication of "replacing" the market share of B of A. Daimler Benz is also out of the picture, leaving commercial banks as the best source of financing for many projects. These banks, however, are typically less than enthused about golf, and if they're interested at all, it's usually with many restrictions. Typical terms preclude new construction, require stabilized cash flow and often personal guarantees from borrowers. Often, the only way a borrower qualifies is when he/she doesn't need the money.

Given all this doom and gloom, however, I think the golf industry may have hit bottom and is on the rebound. There are several reasons for this:

- Many undercapitalized projects are struggling under high debt loads and are eager to sell, often at bargain prices. This produces buyers and eventually supports higher prices.
- Markets that have been overbuilt are seeing motivated sellers who have had enough with the intense competition. This creates demand.
- The preponderance of upscale daily-fee facilities in some markets has opened up opportunities in the affordable daily-fee and private segments and the market perception that opportunity exists.
- The apparent interest of Wall Street and the institutions should signify equity (and maybe debt) capital is on the way. With the stock market as volatile as it has been, real estate is often a safe haven and yields on golf courses (though not exactly pure real estate) exceed those on traditional investment grade real estate.

Golf still has "sex appeal." Whether the traditionalists like to admit it or not, golf is still attractive to captains of business and industry. It fuels tourism in many cases and what golfer doesn't dream of building his/her own course? Those with the resources can do that.

I do believe that any recovery will be slow and that the golf industry will have to become more market-specific in its analyses and that any industry of such a non-essential nature will be subject

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Guest Commentary

Golf industry needs a shot in the arm

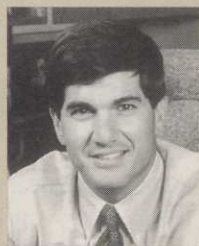
By LAURENCE A. HIRSH

When the brain trust at *Golf Course News* called and asked me to discuss the current state of the golf market it raised an interesting and often asked question: Where are we right now? Since nobody can confidently predict the future, we're all speculating, but it's just that type of speculation that creates market evolution to begin with.

The last four years have seen much change in the golf industry. Many players have departed the business, resulting in consolidation. Some courses have ceased operation and many clubs are struggling for members. Play at many daily-fee facilities has declined and there is great concern that the game is not growing. Combine this with declining sponsorship of PGA Tour events and you have a golf industry that needs a shot in the arm.

My sense is that it may be forthcoming.

In recent months, I have seen a renewed interest in acquisitions (albeit at lower prices) and in many cases by the Wall Street and institutional interests that fueled the industry through the '90s. The recent acquisition of the National Golf Properties portfolio by investors represented by Goldman-Sachs is one example of this, and I have been contacted by two such parties actively considering pursuit of golf course acquisitions. Additionally, several of the players who survived the shakeout seem to be snooping around again – for bargains.



Laurence A. Hirsh

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Life imitates 'art'

In any business, it pays to be aware of popular culture. Some may argue, but as evidence, I point to an Oct. 26 incident in Aurora, Colo.

Four men cut security chains and hot-wired 23 golf cars at Kennedy Golf Course. In two hours, the vandals had done \$10,000 damage, leaving one car at the bottom of nearby Cherry Creek.

Golf car thefts are nothing new. In fact, Kennedy GC has had at least five car-theft cases this year. But in most cases, all the vandals want to do is joyride. This particular instance is most disturbing because of the seeming desire to simply cause damage.

So the question becomes, "Why the change in attitudes?"

The answer, more than likely, is "Jackass: The Movie," which was released, not coincidentally, on Oct. 25. The movie is the big-screen version of the recently cancelled MTV series, which features a group of guys doing things that no one in their right mind would ever think of, such as being covered in meat and barbecued. It should go without saying that these are not the kinds of things one should try at home.

One segment in the movie features the group driving golf cars wrecklessly around a course, crashing into each other and jumping over bunkers and water hazards. At one point, one of the cars flips over, destroying the canopy and knocking its occupants out cold.

The lesson is this: either be sure your golf car storage area is secure or become the victim of the next "Jackass"-inspired vandalism.

But hey, it could be worse. John Rocker's slasher film "The Greenskeeper" could have gotten more play nationwide.



Derek Rice

A Midsummer's Nightmare

Editor's note: Superintendent Tony Bertels penned these lines about the harsh weather that impacted conditions at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in Olathe, Kan., this summer. Things got so dry that Bertels' water source dried up, forcing him to purchase \$60,000 worth of city water. His poem originally ran in the Heart of America GCSA's August newsletter.

By TONY BERTELS

Out of troubled slumber
I awake in desperation;
Another day of soaring temps
With no hope of moderation.

"It's going to be a scorcher!"
Says the radio in my truck.
I grudgingly drive on to work
As I curse such foul luck.

No matter how I irrigate
Or spray or fertilize
I can't help but watch my golf course
Go south before my eyes.

My rough is slowly fading.
The greens are all on edge.
The whole damn place is turning
Into a mighty stand of sedge!

Oh! The ragweed all seems healthy
As do the goose and crab.
And the knotweed in the fairways
Could push me to rehab.

And that sunny disposition
Which my chem.-reps all possess
Is enough to turn me violent
As I try to check my stress.

I have a sinking feeling
That Mr. Skunk and Master Coon
Will soon be farming shallow roots
By the light of summer's moon.

Those rotten little varmints
Could cut me so much slack.
They can dine on all the grubs they want.
Just put the turfgrass back!

If these are truly "Dog Days"
It all seems quite clear cut.
The golf course is my master
And I am just its mutt!

It's all about my frame of mind
As I tread from week to week.
And there's something to remember
If things become too bleak.

You see, every dog must have his day.
And fall will finally dawn.
Then, I become the master
While the course becomes my pawn!

Hirsh: Golf market comeback imminent

Continued from page 4

to the volatile nature of the economy.

One area of particular concern is that of secondary market private clubs. Many of this type seem to be struggling more than other market segments. Many smaller communities are no longer able to support their clubs and in those with multiple clubs, the competition for members has become so intense that entry fees have dropped to levels which provide no encouragement for members to "stick it out" during lean times. These clubs, along with "second-tier" private clubs in even the primary major markets have experienced some problems. Membership levels are declining due to com-

petition that is either newer or cheaper. In many cases, these clubs have been forced to become either semi-private or daily-fee, or have been hosting more outside functions to make up for declining membership. This is particularly troublesome in those markets where residential developers build private clubs as amenities to their developments and create additional supply in markets with limited depth.

In closing, it is my opinion that while there is evidence of recovery, certain things need to occur first:

- We need to see the ultimate results of the Golf Trust of America and NGP situations. What will happen with the rest of

the GTA portfolio and what courses from the NGP portfolio will be spun off?

- Debt financing needs to become more available in the marketplace.

- Some courses will close and help balance out supply and demand. This does not imply that we will end up with fewer courses, only that those which were ill conceived in the first place or their locations are now too valuable for golf should be put to alternative uses.

- Sellers need to realize that golf is not just a real estate investment, it's a business and as such will require a higher rate of return, and a correspondingly lower value.

Let's all watch and see what happens next.

The Point-Counterpoint feature, which usually runs in this space, will return in the January issue.

Shouldn't your Grounds Crew look as groomed as your greens?



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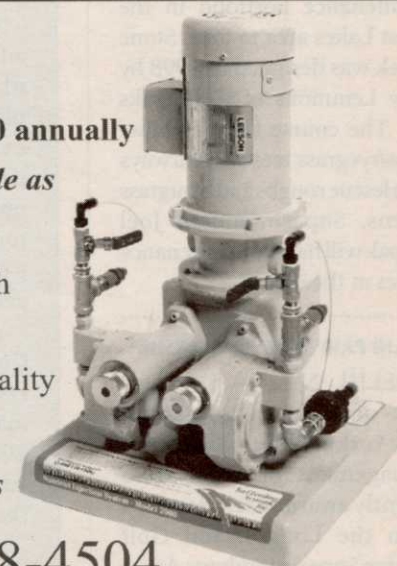
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MAINTENANCE



BRIEFS

USGA RELEASES "MAKING ROOM FOR NATIVE POLLINATORS"

FAR HILLS, N.J. — The United States Golf Association has released a new book, "Making Room for Native Pollinators: How to Create Habitat for Pollinator Insects on Golf Courses." Written by Matthew Shepherd, pollinator program director for the Xerces Society, the book is a result of a grant provided through the USGA's Wildlife Links program and is targeted to golf course superintendents, course officials, and environmental consultants to help manage out-of-play areas on the golf course. By taking some simple steps to establish patches of native wild flowers and nesting sites, golf courses can provide an important refuge for bees and other pollinating insects, which in turn helps maintain healthy plant communities.

VALLEYCREST GOLF NETS STONE CREEK GOLF CLUB CONTRACT

MAKANDA, Ill. — ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance has signed a partnership to perform golf course maintenance for Stone Creek Golf Club here. Under the agreement, ValleyCrest will provide professional maintenance services for the 18-hole daily-fee golf club. The addition of this facility is the company's first in Illinois and increases the company's maintenance portfolio in the Great Lakes area to four. Stone Creek was designed in 1998 by Jerry Lemmons of Golf Links Inc. The course features bluegrass/ryegrass tees and fairways with fescue roughs and bentgrass greens. Superintendent Joel Tyrapak will handle maintenance duties at the course.

DELHI PAIR WIN SCHOLARSHIP

DELHI, N.Y. — Two students of the State University of New York at Delhi's golf course management program were recently awarded scholarships from the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association. Brian Macmillan and Christian Munoz were awarded \$750 each, recognizing them as outstanding students pursuing a career in golf course management.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

More superintendents taking organic approach

By DOUG SAUNDERS

TRUCKEE, Calif. — The interest in organics has increased this year on many fronts other than in the golf industry. The Food and Drug Administration recently announced new guidelines for the labeling of organic products for the marketplace after years of discussion. More organic products are appearing in stores, which increases public awareness about trends in the agricultural industry. More public awareness leads to more concerns on how to best protect our environment.

But for the golf maintenance industry, the talk of organic methods for the golf course is tempered by several factors. Foremost is the desire to present the best possible conditions in order to attract the playing public. Second are the economic factors that have to be weighed as golf course superintendents are continually juggling their budgets in order to satisfy the needs of their golf course and the demands of their course managers.

Can an organic approach sat-



Old Brockway near Lake Tahoe has adopted an organic maintenance program.

isfy these two primary demands?

Over the last several years more organic fertilizers and products have been introduced to the golf market but the decision to use

them is a difficult one for course managers as there is little track record on their effectiveness.

"The bottom line in the discussion about the pros and cons of

the use of organics on golf courses is that the turf itself knows no difference in nutrients that come from organics or from synthetic

Continued on page 9

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Courses face cost-cutting pressure

By ANDREW OVERBECK

An uncertain economy and flat or declining rounds played numbers have placed increasing pressure on the bottom line at courses



across the country. According to a *Golf Course News* poll, 56.3 percent of courses will see maintenance budgets for 2003 remain the same, while 25 percent will see them drop (See page 8).

As more budgets come under pressure, superintendents are forced to produce the same turf conditions with fewer resources.

"You have to cut costs

Continued on page 8

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Compost tea shows promise

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WOODBURY, N.J. — As more superintendents study organic golf course maintenance practices, compost tea has emerged as viable alternative to a chemical-only approach.

While the compost tea technique has been around for

more than a century, today's higher-tech version "brews" compost to create a concentrated "tea" that delivers beneficial microbes and low levels of nutrients to turfgrass.

Evidence at this point is strictly anecdotal, but superintendents using compost tea report less disease pressure, less need for fer-

tilization and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

Last February, *Golf Course News* interviewed Woodbury (N.J.) Country Club superintendent Charles Clarke about the results he had gotten after two years of using compost tea. Clarke stuck with his compost tea regimen this year and recorded a third successful season with his "home brew"

Continued on page 19

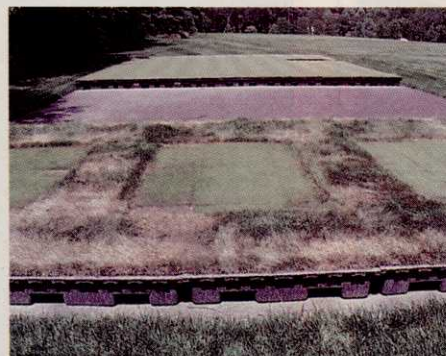
2002 NEWSMAKERS

Roundup Ready bentgrass still on track

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. and Monsanto are pressing forward with the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. The transgenic turf has created a buzz throughout the golf industry this year because it would allow superintendents to control weeds with Roundup without damaging the bentgrass (see related story page 18).

Since gaining approval from the



Roundup Ready trials are ongoing at several courses

Oregon Department of Agriculture in July to set up an 11,000-

acre control area for the production of the transgenic turfgrass, 400 acres have been planted and will be ready for harvest in July 2003.

However, the two companies cannot market Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass until they receive approval from the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health In-

spection Service (APHIS). That

Continued on page 18

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

McDonough battles water restrictions at Keswick Club

By DEREK RICE

KESWICK, Va. — Despite severe water restrictions mandated by Virginia's governor, Keswick Club superintendent Peter McDonough has managed to keep his course looking green.

Proclamation 33 placed water restrictions on everyone in Virginia, not just golf courses, and runs through June 30, 2003 unless, as McDonough said, "we get grand amounts of moisture."

By October, many businesses in the area had closed their public restrooms and some restaurants were using disposable plates, cups and utensils in an effort to conserve water. Signs were posted on nearly every corner reminding residents to be wary of the amount of water they used.

What would help the most, McDonough said, is a few days of steady, soaking rain.

"We've had plenty of golf days, so a little overhead irrigation isn't going to hurt anybody here," he said.

As the president of the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association, McDonough said he feels it is his duty to lead the way in identifying ways for superintendents to conserve water. For example, he increased the height of greens and fairways to keep

them from burning up during the hot, dry summer months.

"We did all the right things this summer that we were advocating to the Mid-Atlantic PGA, the Club Managers Association of Virginia and the Virginia State Golf Association," he said.

McDonough and the Virginia GCSA sent out notices to those other associations to help get the word out to the golf public that water restrictions were going to be necessary. Because this was just before the governor's office issued its proclamation, it enabled the VGCSA to show the state that superintendents were already taking steps to reduce water use.

"We were able to say, 'Look, we've been in voluntary compliance on restrictions and water cutbacks before the order,'" McDonough said. "That really helped us in getting some exemptions, which were only given in the first 48 hours after the order. So if you didn't get your exemptions in the first two days, it wasn't going to happen."

Moving forward, McDonough said he hopes to follow the example of superintendents associations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who have worked with their respective states in shaping water-use guidelines (see story

on page 1).

"Our long-term goal is to follow their example," McDonough said. "I've seen their water-monitoring agreements with their respective states, and I've submitted those into the drought coordinator's office to say, 'We can partner with this so everybody is on the same page because we're definitely going to be good stewards of the land.' We're going to hammer out what it's going to take to make everyone live within the range they have to live within."

RENOVATION CALLS

The Arnold Palmer Signature course at Keswick Club does about 15,000 rounds a year through its membership as well as guests at the upscale Keswick Hall at Monticello next door. However, a renovation project coupled with home sales on and around the course should drive that number steadily higher in coming years, McDonough said.

"Lengthening this course is something I've wanted to do for some time, so I'm excited to be able to get into it," he said. The renovation will add about 400 yards to the layout.

At press time, renovation work was slated to start on Nov. 18, but McDonough expected some permitting delays. McDonough expects the course to open next spring for a while before shutting down for regrassing in the summer.



Peter McDonough

MCDONOUGH'S TOOLS

GREENS MOWERS:

10 Toro Greensmaster 1000

TEE MOWERS:

3 Toro Greensmaster 2100

FAIRWAY MOWERS:

2 Toro Reelmaster 6500-D

ROUGH MOWERS:

1 Toro Groundmaster 5800, 3 Toro Reelmaster 3100, 3 Toro Groundmaster 322

IRRIGATION SYSTEM:

Rainbird Nimbus

GOLF CAR FLEET:

Club Car electric

FLAGSTICKS:

Standard

COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES:

Dell

PRIMARY HERBICIDE:

Ronstar



The 18th hole at Keswick Club in Keswick, Va.

RIDING BUNKER RAKE:

3 Toro Sand Pro 3020

TURF UTILITY VEHICLES:

6 Toro 3200, 4 Toro 2100, 4 Club Car

VERTI-CUT REELS:

Toro

AERIFIERS:

3 Toro Greens aerator

TOPDRESSERS:

1 Toro 1800

REEL GRINDER:

1 Express Dual

BEDKNIFE GRINDER:

1 Express Dual

IRRIGATION PUMP STATION:

Syncroflo, 1,350 gpm

PRIMARY INSECTICIDE:

Mach 2

PRIMARY FUNGICIDE:

Heritage

PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER:

Lebanon Country Club

CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT:

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ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF:

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NORMAL GREEN SPEED:

10' - 10.5'

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Superintendents doing more with less

Continued from page 6

but you still have to keep the course green and clean," said Sam Hocutt, superintendent at Pawleys Plantation in Pawleys Island, S.C. "We cut costs this year by watching our insecticide use closely. Because of the drought we didn't have as many mole crickets so we were able to use half rates and save the other half for next year. We controlled army worms by doing a two-ring perimeter around the fairway instead of spraying the whole fairway."

to balance the budget because of lower payroll increases and good price competition on chemicals, fertilizers and other supplies. Specialty chemicals and equipment have gone up in price, Robinson noted.

However, Robinson also said there is a reluctance to modify the budget once it has been put

in place.

"If I have a new idea or a new product that we didn't consider in the budget process, I don't bring it up," he said. "Before, I may have mentioned it, but right now it isn't even an option."

That said, Robinson has done his part to trim costs out of the budget.

"We have been converting our out-of-play roughs to native

grasses that don't take as much water," said Robinson. "It helps with the drought and it means we don't have to mow out-of-play areas. It reduces our cost per acre from \$2,000 to \$500."

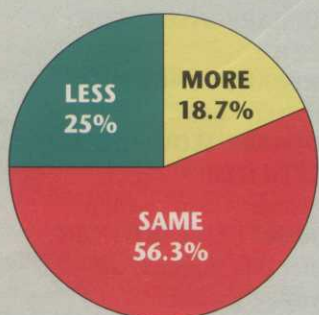
In the short term, superintendents seem to have a handle on managing constrained budgets. However, in the long-term some worry about events out of their immediate control.

"Things are closer to normal now," said Hocutt, "but if we go to war with Iraq then I'm pretty sure we'll have a new scenario because there will likely be a cutback in golf. You have to look into the future when planning a budget. Gas recently went from \$1.27 a gallon to \$1.47 a gallon so now I have to redo my budget and plan for around \$1.50 for gas." ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS POLL

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How will your 2003 budget compare to last year's?



James McNair, superintendent at Orchard Valley Golf Course in Aurora, Ill., anticipates a budget similar to last year's.

"We had a slow spring because of weather but revenue was up in August and up significantly in September and October," he said. "Overall our play was down two percent."

While he plans on having more of a capital budget to buy some new equipment this year to replace 10-year-old greens mowers and other aged machinery, McNair got through this year because he had a good mechanic.

"Sometimes it is Band-Aid and Duct tape," he said. "It puts a greater load on the equipment technician but we do the best we can to keep things running around here."

Cutler Robinson, superintendent at the private Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach, Va., is part of the 18.7 percent that will see a budget increase next year, although it is a modest one.

"We will have a small increase of three to four percent," said Robinson. "We are doing well and we filled our membership to its limit of 300 members a year ago. Our play and revenues have been similar to projected and our expenses have been similar to projected."

Robinson said he has been able

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Golf courses explore organic options

Continued from page 6

methods," explained USGA Green Section agronomist Patrick Gross.

Still, with all of these variables there are golf course superintendents around the country who have made the philosophical commitment to an organic approach to course maintenance. The choice to use organic methods is driven by

same desire to develop the healthiest stand of turf possible in order to make the plant more disease resistant. In theory, a healthier plant has less needs for insecticide and herbicide applications.

The big difference in the organic approach is that the primary drive to stimulate healthier turf begins with the concept of doing all that is

possible to alter the chemical structure of the soil itself.

"I look at myself as a dirt farmer," explained Mike Kozak of Lahontan Golf Club in Truckee, Calif. "I believe that the necessary nutrients for plants are available in every acre of land. My job is to unlock these nutrients from the soil so that they are available to the plant. Synthetic applications go directly to the plant but

can have a detrimental effect on soil structure over time."

Around the country some superintendents have begun to look to organic fertilizers as an alternative because of increased environmental concerns. Dave Laurie is the superintendent at Old Brockway Golf Course, an 85-year-old nine-hole course located near the shoreline of Lake Tahoe, Calif., one of the most scruti-

nized environmental regions in the nation. The lake's water clarity has become a hot issue in the last 20 years, and Laurie and course owner Lane Lewis decided six years ago to take a more proactive approach to deal with the course's impact on the environment.

"We have undertaken a complete refinement of our facility to control how we affect our ecosystem," said Laurie. "We have developed filtration ponds to capture all of our runoff. We have installed a new irrigation system to reduce our water usage. And we have undertaken a total commitment to an organic fertilization program in order to improve our soil structure."

The commitment is important as it takes years of a concerted effort to realize the benefits of an organic approach. For course manager and owner Lewis, he had to weigh the extra cost with the eventual benefits.

"It is more expensive for us to maintain the course organically and we have to make the golfing public aware of what it is that we do here so that they understand and appreciate our approach," Lewis said. "I feel that over time we will be able to lower our fertilization rates to a point that we will see an economic benefit."

"We have also found golfers who play here regularly because of our no pesticide approach," he continued. "Both Dave and I see this approach as turning back to the roots of course maintenance rather than being on the cutting edge of a new concept."

While these mountain courses have an advantage in that they don't have a large list of pathogens to combat, there are courses in other micro-climates that have begun to find benefits to the use of organic fertilizations. Don Paul, CGCS, at De Laveaga Golf Course in Santa Cruz, Calif., maintains an 18-hole course near the coast where he must deal with such pathogens as dollar spot, yellow spot and snow molds.

"I have been creating an intense IPM program over the years and the use of organic fertilizers is a part of that program," said Paul. "I am going to expand my plan by including compost tea, which I will use to try to increase microbial rates to try to control snow mold, which I deal with during the cold foggy mornings in the winter. I think that the industry is going to make a more pronounced turn to organics in the future. I just seems like the right thing to do for me." ■



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2002 NEWSMAKERS

Consistent demand needed to bring drought-resistant turf to market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CORVALLIS, Ore. — As drought gripped much of the nation this summer, many superintendents demanded to know what progress turf breeders were making in the development of drought-resistant turfgrass varieties.

In fact, in a *Golf Course News* poll in July, 66 percent of respondents said turfgrass that offered drought tolerance would provide the most benefit (see graph at right).

According to turf breeders, work on drought-resistant varieties is ongoing, but bringing them to market will require consistent demand.

"When I started in this business 20 years ago, I thought we would be up against the wall and that drought resistance would be the major issue," said Seed Research of Oregon's Leah Brillman. "But drought-resistant varieties will never make it in the marketplace if courses don't make it a priority in their selection process and value the trait in the long-term."

RESEARCH IS ONGOING

That said, Brillman is working on several drought-resistant turfgrasses.

"We are working with Advanta Seeds and Dr. Ronnie Duncan at the University of Georgia to find drought-resistant tall fescues and perennial ryegrasses," she said. "We have a whole series of new bluegrasses and hybrid Texas by Kentucky bluegrasses from Rutgers University and we are working on drought tolerance and seed production yields on them."

However, Brillman said there is no one variety to turn to when it comes to drought resistance.

"A lot of people are interested in these new varieties, but you have to be careful because they have trade-offs depending on where you are," she said. "The hybrids may look good in Oklahoma but some get bad disease in New Jersey. In New Jersey, courses may be better off with a turf-type tall fescue and we continue to do work on those."

Jacklin Seed's Doug Brede said his breeding program has had good success with two tall fescues.

"We have been testing our experimentals and varieties at locations across the country, including Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Idaho and California for the

past decade," he said. "Two tall fescues, Quest and JT-99, have shown more durability during the drought this year."

Quest was bred from components that survived drought and high disease pressure at a sod farm in Maryland and JT-99 was bred from components that performed well during drought in New Jersey. Both were entered in the 2001 tall fescue NTEP trials.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

No matter the selection, courses will generally have to make aesthetic trade-offs when going with drought-resistant varieties.

"When you put them in the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program trials they don't win the beauty contest," Brillman said. "They are not as dense, soft or as dark green."

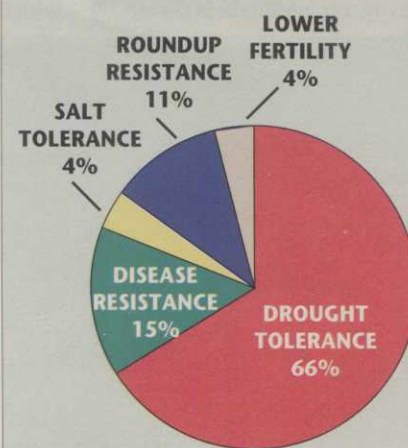
However, if researchers could find the gene that determines drought resistance in tall fescue, they may be able to more easily incorporate it into existing turfgrasses making quality concerns a moot point.

"It would be great because you would use less water and less fertilizers and fungicides," said Brillman. "It would be an net environmental gain."

GOLF COURSE NEWS POLL

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As turfgrass breeders continue to make improvements, which characteristic would provide the most benefits?



Water restrictions seen as long-term problem

Continued from page 1

historical usage and in June it was changed to 80 percent of our allotment, which is a huge difference."

Some Pennsylvania counties forced courses to reduce historical usage by 30 percent.

Superintendent and green industry groups played a big part in shaping regulations in both states.

"Eighty percent of allotment was a very good solution from everyone's perspective," said Carson.

"We pressed hard to have an equitable distribution of water and it has worked. In August after continued heat and drought, they changed the regulations again but decided to crack down on homeowners watering lawns. They left golf courses alone."

"Restrictions helped reduce water use," he continued, "but they were not so draconian that we lost a lot of turf because of them."

Wall thought restrictions in Pennsylvania were reasonable as well.

"Here government worked," he said. "We went in there and discussed it with state officials and it was not all one-sided. They collected input from everyone and came up with a reasonable plan."

Working out reasonable restrictions, however, was only half the battle.

"It stayed dry through August and the people who got hurt were the ones with

reduced resources," said Wall. "When you have to reduce an already reduced supply by 30 percent, it is a problem. We did a lot of hand-watering to increase efficiencies and tackle hot spots."

Even courses in parts of the country that didn't have state mandated water restrictions had problems when they flat out ran low on water.

"Our water is captured from runoff from the course and the surrounding development and once its gone I have to buy potable water,"

said Tony Bertels, superintendent at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in Olathe, Kan. "That gets pretty expensive. We purchased 60 days of water, which costs \$1,000 a day. It's a budget-breaker."

Billy Lewis, superintendent at Carolina National Golf Club in Bolivia, N.C., had to buy nearly \$60,000 in water last fall to complete overseeding after his lakes dropped five feet. This summer, a series of low-pressure systems hung just off the coast, bringing timely rains that held his water buying to just under \$10,000.

LONG-TERM WATER SUPPLY CONCERNS

As courses move into winter and fall rains moderate drought conditions, Carson cautions that courses should remain vigilant about addressing ways to save and conserve water.

"As soon as the rains come, people forget about these issues," he said. "That is

'As soon as the rains come, people forget about these issues. That is a mistake.'

— Chris Carson

2002 NEWSMAKERS

El Niño to impact winter weather

CAMP SPRINGS, Md. — After a spring and summer where nearly half of the United States experienced drought, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicted that a moderate El Niño will provide only some relief to dry areas this winter.

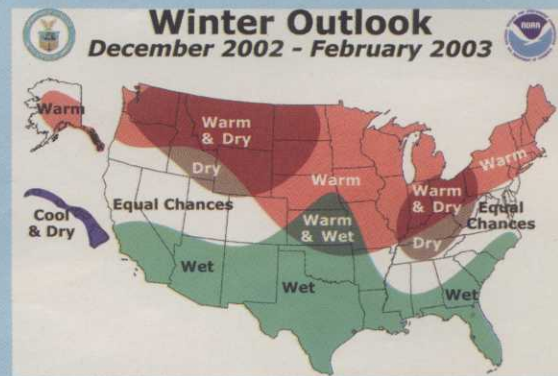
While the influence of the El Niño will be much weaker than the last one in 1997 and 1998, its effects will continue to be felt into early 2003. In general, the disturbance will bring only moderate relief to the Southwest and southern and central Plains states but below-normal rainfall will persist in the Northwest, Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Ohio Valley.

NOAA's 2002-2003 winter outlook predicts:

- Below-normal precipitation in the Northwest including Washington, northeast Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, western parts of North Da-

kota, and northwest South Dakota.

- Precipitation will be below normal in the Ohio Valley states.
- In the southern parts of the United



States, from central/southern California to the Carolinas, precipitation is expected to be above normal.

- Temperatures are expected to be above normal across the northwestern, mid-western and northeastern states.
- Temperatures are also expected to be above normal over southeastern parts of Alaska. Below-normal temperatures and precipitation are expected in Hawaii.

a mistake. There needs to be a unified program and protocol to make sure that restrictions make sense. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is very concerned about existing use and future use of water because we are such a densely populated state."

Wall said he now assumes that each year is going to be a drought.

"I have incorporated more wetting agents into my budget," Wall said. "I am also modifying our irrigation system with 50 more quick couplers so every point of the golf course is within reach of 150 feet of hose."

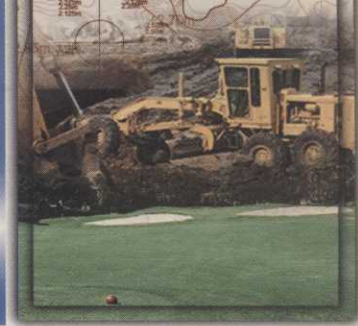
Both Bertels and Lewis are looking to get more water from other sources.

"Since there is not a lot of water close to the surface here, we are considering working with the adjacent airport to build a five acre lake to augment our water supply," said Bertels. "They have a big watershed area we could use and gravity feed it into our lakes."

Lewis is banking on effluent water to fill his water needs down the road.

"We have 800 lots sold, so we should pick up quite a bit from effluent and that should alleviate the problem," he said. ■

DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



BRIEFS

WEITZ COMPLETES ROSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Weitz Golf International has completed construction of Rose Creek Golf Course in Edmond, Okla. The Arthur Hills-designed course, which also features a large practice and teaching facility, will open for play in early summer 2003. Rose Creek is being developed by The Melrose Co., based in Hilton Head, S.C.

JACOBSON FINISHES PHASE I OF INDIAN LAKES RENOVATION

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Golf course architect Rick Jacobson has completed the first phase of a \$5 million 36-hole renovation at Indian Lakes Resort in suburban Bloomington. He also broke ground in early October on Phase II of the project, which will turn the 1960s-era resort into an upscale, state-of-the-art golf complex. Phase I involved a complete makeover of the front nine of the resort's West Course.

WEISKOPF RESTORES GREENS AT TROON NORTH MONUMENT

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Renovation at the Monument Course at Troon Golf's Troon North Golf Club has been completed. Tom Weiskopf, who originally designed the course with Jay Morrish, restored the greens to their original specifications over the summer. The most major change Weiskopf oversaw was widening of the long, narrow green on the 14th hole to provide additional pin placements behind the front green side bunker.

OHIO COURSE RENOVATION NEARLY COMPLETE

ATHENS, Ohio — Architect Barry Serafin's transformation of the Ohio University Golf Course has been mostly completed, with greens and tees growing in and fairways being seeded. The course has been closed this year to allow the builder, Quality Golf of Sunbury, to construct the final phase of Serafin's plans. University officials hope to reopen the course in June 2003.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Downing's Willoughby GC reborn after renovation

Editor's note: This is the final installment in a series of articles on the renovation at Willoughby Golf Club by superintendent Kevin Downing. After six months of work, the club reopened on Nov. 1.

By KEVIN DOWNING, CGCS

STUART, Fla. — Sitting in the men's locker room on opening day can really provide you with direct feedback on the successes or failures of a project. After having the membership removed from their home club for six months, there are anxious moments while listening to folks comment about their first impression of their new and improved course. Let me share with

you some of the comments that we have received and some that any golf course superintendent can expect to hear after a reconstruction or renovation.

EXPECTATIONS

As I explained in a previous article, we believed most of the comments or opinions would likely be about things that the golfers could actually see or experience. It is only reasonable that most people would render an opinion about an improvement or modification rather than comment about improved drainage or better turf texture. The first four or five groups in the clubhouse commented about the usual things such as green speeds, bunker consistency and tee leveling, which were

major objectives of the overall project. As expected, nobody commented about the new underground tubing, the fairway drainage or the new zeolite-to-sand ratio

in the greens mix. The moral of the story is to make sure you spend adequate time and energy to make visual enhancements to the course.

Our design modifications were

Continued on page 13



The ninth fairway at the recently reopened Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

PGA Village to proceed - maybe

By DEREK RICE

SAN ANTONIO — The cyclical saga of the proposed PGA Village here continued through late October, with the San Antonio City Council unanimously approving a new agreement with Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corp. to build the golf resort on environmentally sensitive land above the city's aquifer recharge zone.

The resort would include as many as three courses, a golf education center, two luxury hotels and several thousand residential units, all built on 2,861 acres.

Earlier this year, opponents of the plan collected enough signatures to force a referendum on the issue, which led the PGA to withdraw from the project.

The groups' opposition to the plan is based on two factors. Because of the location of the site, there is concern that chemicals from the golf course could find their way into the city's drinking water. While that is a major concern, Enrique Valdivia of the Smart Growth Coalition, one of the groups that opposed the project, told *Golf Course News* in June that the major opposition stems from

Continued on page 13

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Builders weather low construction demand

By DEREK RICE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Golf 20/20's first annual report, released earlier this year (*GCN*, Sept. 2002), projected that there would be 285



Lee Hetrick

course openings, one of the smallest numbers in years. If that number holds true, this will be the third consecutive year that openings have declined, which doesn't paint a rosy picture for the construction industry.

Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, said while the market has slowed down, the accredited builders in the association are finding work.

"All my guys are busy right now," he said. "Construction isn't at the volume where it used to be, but if you've established your credentials to where people know who you are and that you can bring a project in under budget, then I think you're OK."

One of the challenges, Hetrick said, is the ability to bid competitively without losing money.

"The bidding is very competitive," he said. "It's a whole new world out there for some of these guys."

Hetrick said renovation work is helping to keep some in the industry busy as they try to

Continued on page 22

HIGH-PROFILE RENOVATION



Architect Tom Fazio points out some of the changes at Augusta National to Jim Nantz and Ken Venturi of CBS Sports prior to this year's Masters.

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Without a doubt, the most talked-about renovation of 2002 was the lengthening of Augusta National. The public got to see the result of Tom Fazio's much-anticipated renovation during the 2002 Masters in April.

But last year's renovation isn't the end of it, according to published reports, Fazio is working on lengthening the fifth hole, known as "Magnolia," a 435-yard uphill dogleg-left, in time for the 2003 tournament. According to the *Augusta Chronicle*, the tee has been moved back 15 yards while the fairway bunkers have been moved forward 80 to 90 yards. The entire fairway will also be shifted right to create a more daunting dogleg.

Neither Fazio or Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson have spoken about the changes, but Johnson said in April that "we are going to address the weakness of the fifth hole."

First National

continued from page 1

changed a few things for us," Sager said. "I also think, because we've always been there and haven't stepped away from golf, our volume may have changed a little bit. We continue to do a lot of construction lending and a lot of development lending."

In general, Sager said 2002 was a good year for lenders.

"I don't think it's been a bad year for golf course lending at all," he said. "I think it's been a difficult year for people who used to

be in the golf course business and decided for whatever reason they didn't want to be in that business anymore."

BUSINESS 101

The reason many lenders may be skittish about golf course financing, Sager said, is that the wrong type of person is looking to own and operate courses.

"The biggest problem we see in the industry is that golf should be run by business people, not by golfers," Sager said. "When you start having golfers involved and they fall in love with properties and overpay, it's no different than if you over-

pay for a class A office building or you overpay for a franchise restaurant. You can't raise the rent high enough in an office building or charge enough for a pizza or a hamburger to make enough money to cover debt service or cover overhead."

Where some of the companies who have left the business have gone wrong is in not looking at the industry as a business, Sager said.

"Golf is a business, and I think that's where so many people on all sides of this industry have made huge mistakes," he said. "They look at golf as a sport or a

hobby, and that's fine if you're the consumer. If you're on the other side, golf's a business and you need to make money and you need to manage your operations well."

Sager said many people who get into the business of owning a golf course are either a single investor or a group of investors who are looking to own a course for the prestige they feel it will bring.

"Those are not the people who understand chinch bugs vs. dollar spot, they don't understand the problems with the irrigation system, they can't do the lease vs. buy analysis on the golf course and all they want to do is have the best golf course in their area," he said. "Unfortunately, that's not how you make money on golf. You make money on golf exactly as you do in a coffee shop. It's how many cups of

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1 My primary title is: (check one only)

- A. Golf Course Superintendent
- F. Course Owner
- L. Golf Course Management Company Executive
- B. Green Chairman/Grounds Director
- C. Director of Golf/Head Pro
- D. Club President
- E. General Manager
- K. Assistant Superintendent
- G. Builder/Developer
- H. Architect/Engineer
- I. Research Professional
- Z. Others allied to field: (please specify) _____

2 My primary business is: (check one only)

- 21. Public Golf Course
- 22. Private Golf Course
- 23. Semi-Private Golf Course
- 24. Municipal/County/State/Military Golf Course
- 25. Hotel/Resort Course
- 26. Par 3/Executive Course
- 27. Practice Facility
- 29. Other Golf Course (please specify) _____
- 30. Golf Course Management Company
- 31. Golf Course Architect
- 32. Golf Course Developer
- 33. Golf Course Builder
- 39. Supplier/Sales Rep
- 99. Other (please specify) _____

3 Number of holes:

- A. 9 holes
- B. 18 holes
- C. 27 holes
- D. 36 holes
- F. More than 36 holes
- Z. Other (please specify) _____

4 Purchasing involvement: (check all that apply)

- 1. Recommend equipment for purchase
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'If we lend \$200 million in the marketplace and Textron does \$200 million, between the two of us, we still control less than a 20 percent market share.'

— Jerry Sager

coffee you can serve when people are going to work. How many guys can you get off the tee in a given number of daylight hours with decent weather and make money?"

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

While many in the industry may shy away from loans, Sager said there are still plenty of opportunities out there for both lenders and borrowers to succeed.

"If you do the right loans and you're prudent in your due diligence as a lender, you'll make money and your borrowers will make money and do well," he said. "If a borrower comes to us with a logical, solid transaction in golf, we will do the deal."

As evidence, Sager pointed to the 14,000 or so golf properties in the United States that are not private equity clubs, which he said have an average value of around \$5 million.

"That gives you a \$7 billion real estate marketplace," he said. "If you assume that only a third of those change hands or finance themselves each year, that gives you a \$2.3 billion dollar market every year looking for some kind of financing on their golf course."

Even with that kind of opportunity in the market, Sager said, no one in the industry has ever taken more than a 10 percent stake in that, leaving the vast majority of those loans to be completed locally, below the national scope.

"If we lend \$200 million in the marketplace and Textron does \$200 million, between the two of us, we still control less than a 20 percent market share," he said. "So all the rest of this lending in the golf world never came up on anyone's radar, they never came to a golf course industry symposium, they never joined the National Golf Course Owners Association. They are the small regional banks scattered around the country where a local guy walked in and did his \$3 million loan locally because he presented it as a business with the right opportunity for the bank to be his partner." ■

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HA02

Renovation

continued from page 11

focused on green surfaces that needed more cupping space with the new ultra-dwarf turf or just a few holes that were improved by rethinking course strategy. The bunker complexes were all adjusted to create a better playing surface in conjunction with some nice visual enhancements to the bunker faces.

"The major focus of our renovation was our greens and tees, so I fully expected to see the effects of those changes," said John Ginnetti, vice greens chairman. "However, I was delighted to see the dramatic changes that have resulted from the work done on our bunkers. The strategic placing of a few fairway bunkers and the facing of bunker edges with sod has given many of our holes more character."

GROW-IN

Our particular grow-in was more challenged by the utilization of personnel rather than the agronomic needs of the turf. Our staffing requirements necessitated a rollback of approximately 25 percent of our team, until it was time to start gearing up for the reopening. We probably didn't accomplish as much as I would have liked, but our major thrust centered on the playing areas and in particular the holes where we performed major construction. After creating two or three priority lists and focusing on all the details, you

must once again stay on top of the grooming issues because that is what everybody will notice.

MEMBER SATISFACTION

Even though our area was predominantly involved with the re-construction, it was also extremely important that the entire golf team catered to the membership that was in residence. Our pro shop staff and club staff stayed abreast of the members' needs by arrang-

ing a reciprocal program and continued to coordinate special events. Even though these folks had to deal with tractors, bulldozers and various other inconveniences, the entire process was well coordinated and stayed very close to the original timetables. Always take the time to share progress reports with members because the informed individual can become your best ally.

FINANCIAL

Cost accounting and accurate budgeting can also be a success indicator of a re-construction project. I would strongly advocate the golf course department introduce a vehicle to stay current on expenditures throughout the project. My administrative assistant kept me current during the entire process just to help minimize any surprises near the

end of the job. Our performance rating is sometimes measured on financial success rather than how many putts are made or how well they like the new tee signs.

The time and effort involved with planning and implementation really does become enormous when you look back on a job. But to share in the excitement when the players finally get back on their course is something very special. ■

PGA Village

continued from page 11

tax breaks the city extended to Lumbermen's. According to Valdivia, more than \$50 million in public funds would have been available to the developer.

"That area of San Antonio is booming and has seen a lot of development over the last 20 years," he said. "The notion that you need to offer someone an incentive to build there is pretty counter-intuitive."

The new agreement replaced the tax incentive with an agreement that the city would not annex the property for 15 years, which would still provide a substantial financial benefit to Lumbermen's.

On Oct. 27, the day after the city council approved the latest deal, opponents organized as Save Our Aquifer filed a motion in federal court to freeze the plan until a citywide vote could be held.

From the beginning, the process has been one of ups and downs. Each time one side has appeared to gain a victory, the other side has come back with a victory of its own. Just when it looked as if the PGA and Lumbermen's would look elsewhere for a site, the city council came through with a new plan. ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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MANAGEMENT



BRIEFS

EVERGREEN ACQUIRES FIVE CLUBCORP PROPERTIES

IRVING, Texas — Evergreen Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL) has acquired five Texas-based properties from Dallas-based ClubCorp as part of its efforts to expand its portfolio. Included in the transaction, terms of which were not released, were Plantation Golf Club in Frisco, The Golf Club at Fossil Club in Fort Worth, The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch in Katy, Greatwood Golf Club in Sugarland and Clear Creek Golf Course in Houston. The acquisition brings to 40 the number of facilities owned or operated by EAGL. West-brook Partners, which owns EAGL, provided funding for the transaction. ClubCorp recently announced it would reduce operating expenses by \$20 million because of the economic slowdown.

TROON HIRES DELLANZO TO HEAD EUROPEAN DIVISION

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Management, development and marketing company Troon Golf has formed a European division, based in Milan, Italy, to be headed by Paul Dellanzo. In his position, Dellanzo will oversee Troon's facilities and seek out new business opportunities throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Prior to joining Troon, Dellanzo held hotel and golf positions with Starwood Hotels and Resorts and Pevero Golf Resort in Italy.

CIMARRON HILLS NAMES WILLIAMS HEAD PRO

GEORGETOWN, Texas — Todd Williams has been named head golf professional at the Jack Nicklaus-designed Cimarron Hills, located near Austin. At Cimarron, Williams will oversee golf operations and will create all golf programs including tournaments and instruction. Prior to joining Cimarron, Williams managed golf operations for Maroon Creek Club in Aspen, Colo. He also spent seven years at the La Quinta Resort and Club in La Quinta, Calif.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

2002 an up-and-down year for management cos.

By DEREK RICE

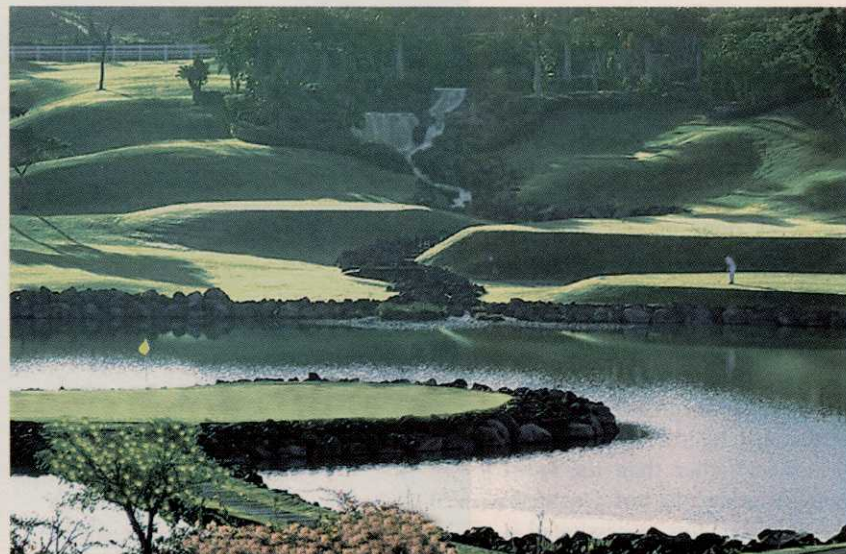
In the 18 months since *Golf Course News* last published its management company listing, there have been many changes in

Name	# of facilities*
American Golf Corp.	258
ClubCorp	117
Troon Golf	85
KemperSports Mgmt	59
Meadowbrook	43
Evergreen Alliance Golf	40
Palmer Golf Management	34
Mariott Golf	27
Gotham Golf Partners	25
ClubLink	24
Intrawest Golf	22
LinksCorp	22
Billy Casper Golf Mgmt.	20
Crown Golf Properties	18
IRI Golf Group	17

* - As of Oct. 31, 2002

the industry. Several companies have either gained or lost a significant number of courses in their portfolio, while others have emerged on the scene or closed their doors.

There is no question that the flattening of rounds played numbers and the sagging economy have caused problems for the golf industry. Most notable among management companies struggling to get by have been American Golf Corp. (AGC) and Golf Trust of America (GTA). At press time, AGC was in the midst of a buyout and merger with National Golf



The 17th hole at the Pete Dye-designed Big Island Country Club in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, which is one of six courses Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Intrawest Golf added to its portfolio this year.

Properties, while GTA's shareholders were expected to approve the company's latest plan for liq-

uidating its assets at the company's annual meeting in
Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Meadowbrook on track for growth in 2003

By DEREK RICE

CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla. — Capping off what has been a busy year, Meadowbrook Golf Inc. has teamed with The First Tee to found the inaugural First Tee program in Philadelphia. At press time, the Meadowbrook-managed Franklin D. Roosevelt Golf Club (FDR) was to break ground in November with an eye toward a May 2003 opening.

Meadowbrook has been through a lot of changes, both in its programs and its management team, this year. The hiring of industry veteran Don Rhodes as vice president of acquisitions and

development completed a nearly top-to-bottom change-over among its leadership.

"Everyone has turned over here," said Don Rhodes, who joined the company in September. "Apollo [Real Estate] has cleaned house and I'm the last guy of the new team. [CEO] Ron Jackson is a good guy for this company now. He's not a golf guy. He has run big compa-



Mike Kelly

nies before."

The same month Rhodes was hired, long-hinted-at financing came through for the company in the form of its Honors Fund, backed by Apollo.

"We've taken a look at what we're doing strategically and how we're going to grow both geographically, as well as in product type," Kelly said in the April 2002 issue of *Golf Course News*. "We've got a very clear plan for the next three to five years as to how we're going to approach that."

In addition, Meadowbrook increased its focus on both

Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

InVicta continues growth, expansion plans

By DEREK RICE

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. — InVicta Club World Alliance, an alliance of owners of golf, business, yacht, athletic and spa facilities, and International Club Alliance (ICN) have teamed to allow members of each organization access to the other's networks.

Currently, ICN comprises about 200 clubs around the world, and InVicta will soon

have a similar number.

Earlier this year, InVicta teamed with Strachan Management Ltd. (*GCN*, June 2002) to market and expand its program into Canada.

InVicta's program teams 10 to 20 golf course owners in a local alliance that is tied into the worldwide alliance. Members receive reciprocal playing privileges at private clubs as well as preferred pricing and advanced booking at daily-fee clubs. This alliance allows owners to drive

members to their facilities, said James Hoppenrath, InVicta's president.

The trouble, Hoppenrath said, is getting independent owners and operators to buy into the alliance as a marketing tool.

Hoppenrath said InVicta has many more plans for expansion in 2003. These may include partnerships with a financial institution and perhaps some golf

Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Gotham Golf Corp. closer to realization

By DEREK RICE

NEW YORK — In September, First Union Real Estate Equity and Mortgage Investments and Gotham Golf Partners LP amended their merger plan, which they announced earlier this year (*GCN*, April 2002), bringing the long merger process one step closer to completion.

The amended plan fixes the total consideration shareholders may receive at \$2.33 and eliminates the possibility of that amount being further reduced in the future. Earlier, each First Union common share was to be converted into the right to receive \$2.20 in cash plus, at the shareholder's discretion, either an additional \$0.35 in cash or approximately 1/174th of a \$100 note. In addition, First Union common shareholders would receive the right to purchase common shares of Gotham Golf common stock for \$20 per share.



Continued on next page

Management cos.

Continued from previous page
November.

The biggest gainer in number of courses under management since GCN's last management company list has been Troon Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz. The company has added more than 30 properties, with more coming on line almost monthly. KemperSports Management has been the number-two gainer, increasing its portfolio by 17.

Meanwhile, AGC has been the biggest loser, dropping more than 36 in that same timeframe. Meadowbrook Golf has dropped 12, but is looking to reverse that trend through a series of changes and new financing (see story on previous page).

For the most part, however, companies' portfolios have remained steady over the last 18 months (see abbreviated management company list on previous page).

The complete 2002 *Golf Course News* management company list will be available on our Web site in December. The goal is to keep the list updated on a regular basis. A printed version, similar to that found in the June 2001 issue, may follow as space allows. ■

Meadowbrook

Continued from previous page

marketing (GCN, Sept. 2002) and customer loyalty. For its marketing initiative, they teamed with Scottsdale, Ariz.-based In One Advertising & Design and Edmonds, Wash.-based Cybergolf to bring its initiatives online.

"From what I've heard from our customers, they need help, and they need help particularly from a marketing standpoint," Kelly said. "What they are now being forced to do, and haven't necessarily had any experience with, is learning how to market their property, develop strategic relationships, advertise and how to develop a public relations campaign.

"Owners are struggling with that, and I mean really struggling," he added. "When we talk to people, that's primarily one of the main topics."

Recognizing that customer loyalty is essential to golf course operations, Meadowbrook introduced Honors Club in September. The program offers a consolidated membership and loyalty program that is recognized at several Meadowbrook courses across the country.

While the number of courses Meadowbrook manages has fallen slightly since June 2001 (see related story on previous page), the company hopes double the size of its portfolio, which currently comprises 43 courses, in the future. ■

Gotham Golf

Continued from previous page

Neil Koenig of First Union said the amended plan brings the merger closer than ever to finalization.

"The structure of this is very different from what originally started out last summer (2001)," he said. "Nothing ever got this far along or this specific."

In April, a source close to the

negotiations told *Golf Course News* the deal was expected to close sometime before the end of the third quarter. Koenig said the delay in completing this deal, which has been in the works for more than a year, is par for the course and that the two are committed to the merger.

"A special committee of certain board members deemed this to be the best alternative [for First Union]," he said. "It's more of ev-

eryone agreeing on an ultimate structure because there are a lot of different pieces that come along with the transaction and how to deal with each of them individually was very difficult. That just takes time."

First Union has issued a proxy statement to shareholders that details the transaction, but has not set a firm timetable for completion, which would make Gotham Golf Corp. a publicly traded company. ■

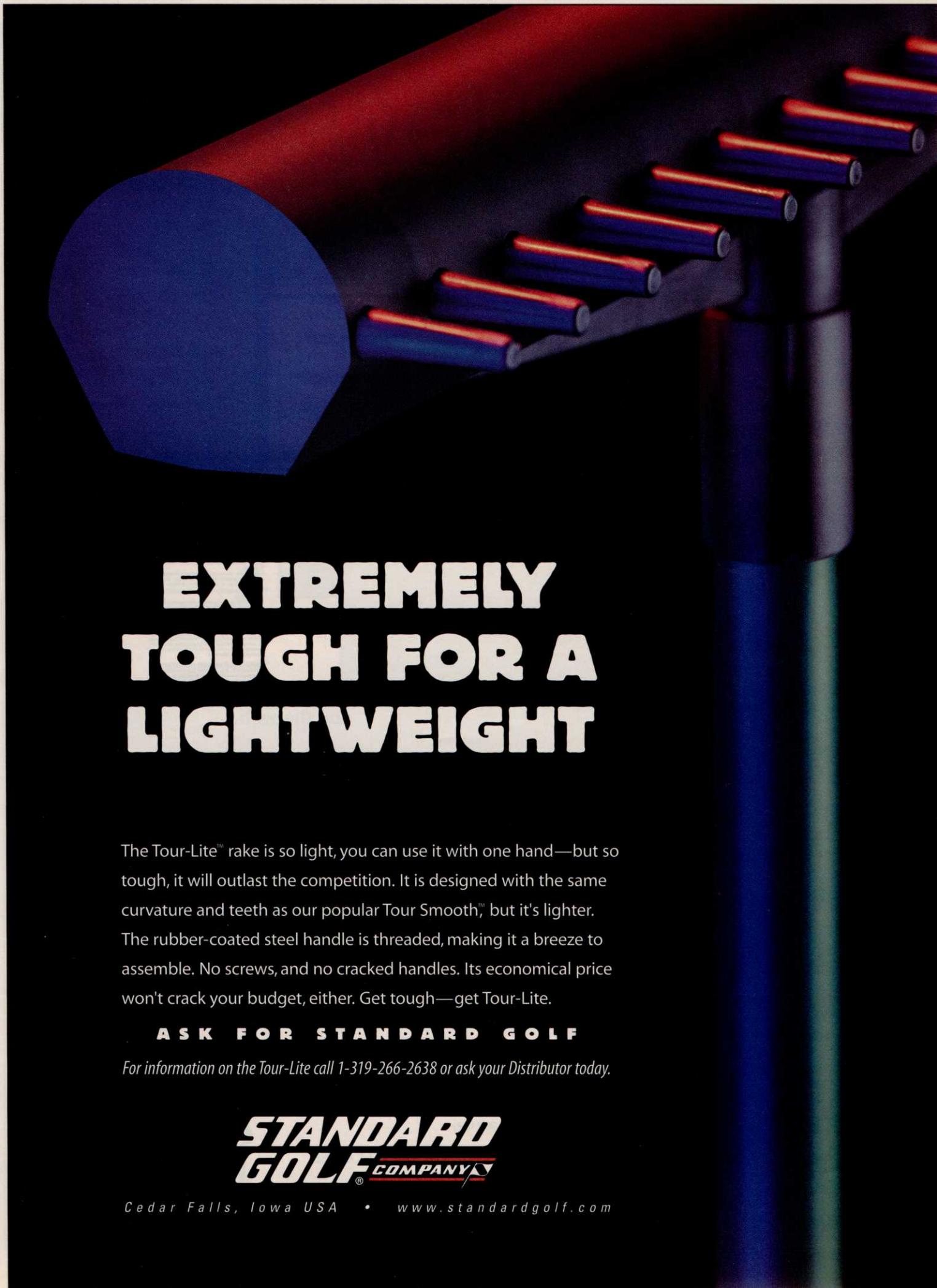
InVicta Alliance

Continued from previous page

course management companies.

"All of these efforts will provide participating club owners with additional membership sales, rounds and revenues, along with numerous other long-term competitive advantages," he said.

Hoppenrath said 2003 should be a big year for the alliance. ■



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National Golf

continued from page 1

October 2002). At press time, the deal had not been finalized, but proxy statements had been sent to shareholders, leaving their approval as the only hurdle left to clear.

An industry source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said there should be no reason for share-

holders not to approve the plan.

"NGP has been struggling for more than a year now," the source said. "The price Goldman and Starwood are offering for shares is very competitive, so I don't see why they wouldn't want to approve it."

While this may be true, the source said, there may still be many shareholders who are going to lose money, but they don't own enough to block the transaction.

"The people who bought in at \$5 a share are going to be a lot happier about this than the ones who got in when it was around \$20 a share," the source said. "But what are you going to do? David Price (NGP and AGC founder and chairman) and the rest of the executives control a substantial portion of the company."

Representatives from NGP, Goldman and Starwood did not return calls seeking comment.

The buyout deal, announced in mid-September, came just in time for Price, who earlier had pledged shares of NGP as well as a second deed of trust to convince the company's lenders to extend its forbearance agreement through the end of March 2003 (see timeline at right). On Sept. 30, Price would have had to replace the deed of trust with cash, and Oct. 15 was the deadline for replacing his shares with cash. ■

NGP 2002 timeline

Feb. 8: NGP reaffirms restructuring efforts and announces a forbearance agreement with Bank One NA

Feb. 13: NGP and AGC announce plans to merge; terms of potential deal are not disclosed

Feb. 15-21: Several class-action lawsuits filed against NGP, claiming the company misled investors about its financial health

March 19: Cliffwood Partners, NGP's largest outside shareholder with a 9 percent stake, announces opposition to merger and proposes NGP find other managers to replace AGC, rather than complete the merger

April 1: NGP announces terms of the proposed merger

April 23: NGP president James N. Stanich resigns

April 30: Bank One extends NGP's forbearance agreement for the second time; over the next two months, the two will continue to sign two-week extensions until agreeing on a longer extension - through March 31, 2003 - on June 28

July: Rumors abound regarding a potential buyer or financing agreement for NGP. Reports cite Westbrook Partners, Blackstone Group and eventual buyers Starwood Capital and Goldman Sachs as potential saviors

July 23: AGC enters into a restructuring agreement with its lender, Bank of America; NGP and AGC chairman David Price pledges 3.6 million shares in NGP and a deed of trust with the understanding that cash would be substituted by Sept. 30 for the deed and by Oct. 15 for the shares.

Aug. 2: AGC announces it has satisfied the conditions of the restructuring agreement with Bank of America announced July 23

Sept. 16: NGP's board of directors and its independent committee approve the sale of the company to an investment group led by Goldman's GS Capital Partners and Whitehall Real Estate Fund, along with Starwood Capital. As part of the \$1.1 billion deal, the group says it will also purchase the outstanding equity interests of AGC. An early 2003 closing date for the deal is set.

Sept. 18: In conjunction with the buyout agreement, NGP enters into an amended and restated merger/reorganization plan with AGC

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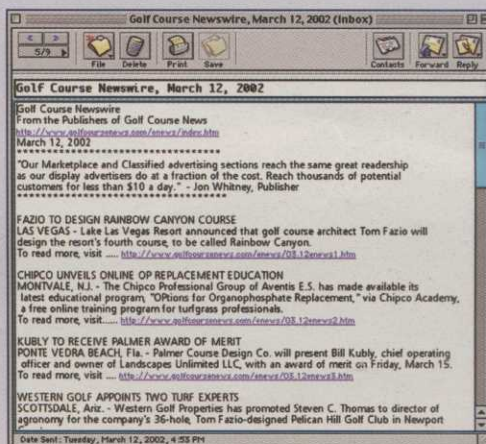
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- Practice Facility
- Other Golf Course: _____

GOLF COURSE NEWS
NewsWire

SUPPLIER BUSINESS



BRIEFS

LESCO REALIGNS SALES TEAM

CLEVELAND — Lesco has appointed Steven Cochran to senior vice president, sales. Cochran previously held the position of senior vice president, marketing and strategic sourcing. He will now lead the company's sales organization. Dana Wilson has also assumed a revised role with responsibility for the opening of new stores and other sales and growth opportunities. The company has not yet named a replacement for the marketing and strategic sourcing position.

BECKER UNDERWOOD ACQUIRES TWO

AMES, Iowa — Becker Underwood has purchased rhizobium inoculant producer Urbana Laboratories and seed coating specialist Seedbiotics. Terms of the acquisitions were not announced. Urbana Laboratories, based in St. Joseph, Mo., produces nitrogen-fixing rhizobium inoculants for legume crops. Seedbiotics' coating and polymer operations in Caldwell, Idaho, are strategically positioned for the forage and grass seed industries.

HOWARD FERTILIZER ADDS SIX

ORLANDO, Fla. — Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Co. has enhanced its business strategy by adding six new sales representatives during the past year. Howard's new sales professionals include: Bob Hess and Chris Brown, who handle the central Florida area; Tom Price covers northeast Florida; Brent Chapman manages southwest Florida; Cris Cook oversees the Tampa area; and Mike Rinaldo serves the Sarasota market.

AIR-O-LATOR GETS ONLINE

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Air-O-Lator, a manufacturer of fountain and aeration products for the professional golf maintenance industry, has joined the GCSAA's Golf Super-Market with a fully e-commerce-enabled storefront. Air-O-Lator and 35 other industry manufacturers have a presence on the site that allows customers to view, research and buy products online.

Lesco to strengthen sales, add stores-on-wheels

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CLEVELAND — When Michael DiMino replaced Bill Foley as president and CEO of Lesco in April, he outlined a simple strategy for bringing the company back into the black. DiMino immediately focused on leveraging the large amount of capital that Lesco had invested in manufacturing facilities by improving the company's selling and distribution capabilities.

The new CEO is in the process of implementing a new hub-and-spoke distribution system that will allow for overnight or next-day delivery to its 227 service centers and 77 stores-on-wheels. DiMino has also bulked up the sales staff by adding 54 representatives and plans to add even more services centers and stores-on-wheels in 2003.

So far DiMino is optimistic that the new structure will pay off in the

long run. Despite flat sales, third quarter 2002 results showed improved earnings, up to \$9.1 million from \$2.0 million in 2001.

"Although sales are flat, we are hitting all of our financial objectives," said DiMino. "Lesco is doing well from an overall profitability standpoint which is vastly improved from last year."

According to DiMino, superintendents will hear more from Lesco in the coming months.

"We have set up five zone vice presidents and our sales team is moving together again,"

said DiMino. "We are going to add more stores-on-wheels and 20 to 30 stores. And we have added golf sales representatives who will have a truck and a laptop and will be able to service golf courses. They will see more of Lesco."

The beefed-up sales force will

focus on the underserved areas on the West Coast, and in the Midwest.

Adding salespeople, stores-on-wheels and service centers is central to the company's success, added DiMino. The company expects that adding to sales

Continued on page 19



According to president and CEO Michael DiMino, Lesco will be adding to its 77 stores-on-wheels.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Adaptive car makers await final DOJ ruling

By ANDREW OVERBECK

When the U.S. Access Board released revised programming guidelines regarding golf course accessibility in early September, it did not include a provision requiring golf courses to supply adaptive golf cars for handicapped players.

The Department of Justice will eventually adopt the guidelines of the U.S. Access Board and then issue regulations regarding adaptive golf cars. In the meantime, whether courses have to provide the special cars remains voluntary, unless they are forced to by a lawsuit.

The fact that there are still gray areas in the interpretation of what courses are required to do under the American with Disabilities Act has not put a damper on some adaptive car makers' enthusiasm for the market.

Roger Pretekin, president of SoloRider, the company

Continued on page 19

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Foam marker, Toro 4500-D top new product list

Editor's note: Back in February, Golf Course News asked intrepid contributing writer Kevin J. Ross, CGCS, to scour the GCSAA show floor in Orlando, Fla., for innovative new products. The list he compiled appeared in our post-show issue in March. Ross has revisited his picks to see which products made the biggest impact in 2002.

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

While you certainly could not label 2002 a banner year for equipment debuts, some pieces of new equipment remained very hot topics throughout the year.

The neatest product of the year was the miniature foam marking



Salvarani North America's foam marking kit for walk spreaders

kits for walk spreaders from Salvarani North America. This foam marking kit technology has been available for years for use

with boom sprayers, but this was the first year that the technology was miniaturized for use with

Continued on next page

2002 NEWSMAKERS

YGC to unveil new vehicles in '03

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEWNAN, Ga. — After opening its new \$31 million manufacturing facility in June and rolling out its new G-MAX golf car, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) is gearing up for another set of new product introductions in 2003.

"We are more than surprised

with the results of the new G-MAX line," said vice president Bill Szarowicz. "It has been a difficult year, but we have had a great response based on where the market is now."

"But we built the factory not just for golf cars," he added. "We will be rolling out some exciting new products that will expand

the Yamaha Golf Car business. We will be introducing new vehicles in June 2003."

Six new models are slated to be introduced next year and utility vehicles will be included in the product mix.

"We will be expanding our utility vehicle line. We feel we have a good medium-duty vehicle in the G21, but there is a spot in our lineup where we

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2002 NEWSMAKERS

Turf-Seed continues research on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass

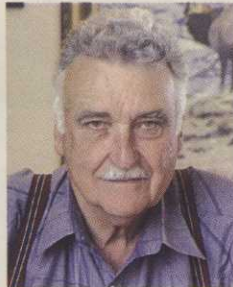
By ANDREW OVERBECK

HUBBARD, Ore. — The development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass by Scotts and Monsanto has been a contentious issue, as detractors here in the Willamette Valley contend the transgenic turf will ruin the country's primary bentgrass production region.

Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, has been the most vocal, predicting earlier this year that the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) approval for open pollination of Roundup Ready bentgrass in an 11,000-acre control area in Jefferson County would be a "disaster" (GCN, Sept. 2002).

"As a result of this control area, I expect to see genetically-altered turfgrass banned in the United States," he said. "My goal is to try not to get it banned."

Rose is concerned that production fields in the Willamette Valley could be contaminated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, which have strict regulations on genetically modified organisms.



Bill Rose

There is also resistance from groups in the United States like the International Center for Technology Assessment, which is pressing the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to deny Scotts' and Monsanto's petition for approval of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. In a petition filed in August, the group called Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass a "superweed" and

said the transgenic turfgrass has the potential to cause ecological and economic disruption because it could contaminate other stands of turf. The organization is also petitioning the USDA to list Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass as a noxious weed.

Rose, however, is trying to avoid the above scenarios by developing Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass that is male sterile, reducing the chances of any cross-contamination. In October, researchers said that they had a male sterile bentgrass plant.

"We found a number of plants that are

transgenic that are proven to be male sterile," said Rose. "The results in October look very good, but we will wait until January or February for another generation to confirm it."

After confirmation, Rose said, the next step will be to conduct field-testing and that will require getting a permit from the ODA.

Rose's company Pure Seed Testing is also working on getting a turf label for its naturally Roundup tolerant Aurora Gold hard fescue and Pure Gold and Tomahawk RT tall fescues that are already on the market.

According to Pure Seed president Crystal Rose-Fricker, the company is waiting for an approval from Monsanto so it can release recommended safe Roundup rates that can be applied to the turf without harming it.

Rose-Fricker said work is also progressing on naturally Roundup tolerant creeping fescue, chewings fescue, slender creeping fescue, perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bentgrass.

Scotts, Monsanto preparing to resubmit Roundup Ready bentgrass petition

Continued from page 6

process hit a snag in September when APHIS issued a "letter of deficiency." The request for more information prompted Scotts and Monsanto to withdraw their petition for approval Oct. 3.

According to officials from both Scotts and APHIS, the withdrawal is an expected part of the approval process. Neither side, however, could specify exactly why the petition was withdrawn.

"We anticipated that they [APHIS] would request more information and additional data," said Scotts spokesman John Bosser. "They have asked for more data for a couple of the trials and tests concerning the biology of the plant. So we have withdrawn the petition and we will resubmit with additional data early next year. It is just a formality and we are still looking at an introduction in 2004 or 2005."

Bosser said since 1998 close to 40 percent of the petitions to APHIS have been withdrawn in order to submit additional data and then resubmitted. In fact, Monsanto's original petition for Roundup Ready corn was withdrawn in October 1997 before finally being resubmitted and approved in September 2000.

COLLECTING GOLF COURSE DATA

While Scotts and Monsanto work on

gaining additional data for APHIS, Wayne Horman, director of seed sales and marketing for Scotts, is overseeing testing at individual golf courses across the country. In addition to university testing, APHIS allowed 12 courses to begin on-site testing in 2001 and approved 18 more testing locations this fall.

"We added 11 more courses this fall and we will add seven or eight more next spring in areas where it was too late to seed because of cold weather," said Horman. "Courses are placing the turf in their nurseries so they can compare it to varieties that they are using today. The data we have gotten so far is favorable."

"The courses that started testing last year are monitoring the grandparents of the variety that will eventually come to market," he added. "The new courses are testing turf that is more like the variety that will come to market."

In addition to on-site testing work, Horman is also conducting education sessions with superintendents.

"The educational phase is moving forward and we have done sessions explaining the technology and what it can do," said Horman. "There is interest from superintendents, some have already asked me when they can buy it. But we can't sell or market it until APHIS approves it." ■

Ross reviews new products of the year

Continued from page 17

walk spreaders. One has to wonder what took so long for us to have these.

When it comes to iron, the debut of the Toro 4500-D/4700-D was probably the most talked-about new mowing unit. By learning from the faults of previous large out-front turf rotaries and increasing engine horsepower, this unit has performed very well for many courses.

Another mower which drew high interest this season was the Jacobsen LF 1880 fairway unit. Although not available for the better part of the season, demo units were out in force, and the feedback among superintendents was generally positive. The concept of this fairway mower falls between the triplex and fiveplex. It was being marketed toward high-end facilities with close-cut fairways. It has 18-inch cutting units that are very similar to a greensmower, and follows turf contours very well. We will have to wait until next year to see whether this machine will make a true splash in the fairway marketplace.

Although not new, two pieces of equipment still seem to be the talk of the industry.

The Toro Flex 21 may still be the hottest mowing unit on the market. In its second full season, this mower started to dominate the walking greensmower market. One major reason for this (besides the concept of the machine) was the lack of

mechanical problems since its debut. This season, Toro also offered attachments for the unit, from brushes to groomers. These additions now offer even greater benefits for this mower.

The second unit that seemed to be on



The Toro 4500-D out-front rotary mower tackles the rough.

the tip of everyone's tongue, especially those with newer bentgrasses, was the Graden Dethatcher.

As superintendents increasingly scrutinize their thatch management plans, this unit seems to fit into that plan. It offers the use of one-, two- and three-mm blades and adjustable depth of up to one-and-a-half inches, all depending upon the level of aggressiveness desired on green surfaces. Some courses even combined the Graden with the aerification operation to achieve very high thatch percentage removal. ■

Bayer divests fipronil

Continued from page 1

developed for the greenhouse industry, the fipronil divestiture will directly impact the golf market. Current fipronil products include Chipco Choice, Top Choice and Fire Star.

"We have the right to negotiate licensing back the products, but there is no guarantee," Carrothers said. "But the opportunity for a co-exclusive is part of the negotiations."

If licensing back the products doesn't pan out, Carrothers said Bayer ES would still have a very strong product line.

"It is not critical to our business model," he said. "Our portfolio is still extremely strong. We have products like 26GT, Merit, Compass and Bayleton that will make a huge impact in the golf market."

Bayer ES also has three insecticides, two

herbicides and four fungicides in development right now.

Three of the new products are currently in the registration process with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Those being reviewed include: Triton, a broad-spectrum fungicide; Lynx, a sterile inhibitor fungicide; and Revolver, a post-emergent herbicide that removes cool-season turf from warm-season turf.

"When we look at our project review, we look at what diseases and pests are controlled and what the unique selling proposition is," said Carrothers. "Then we look at whether the active ingredient is compatible from an EPA perspective. All of this is being looked at to make sure we come out with new technology that our customers want and need. We need to bring new solutions to superintendents to help them more effectively manage their courses." ■

Adaptive market waiting to take off

Continued from page 17

that manufactures Club Car's adaptive golf car is convinced adaptive cars will become required.

"Golf courses are required to provide access under the Access Board guidelines," said Pretekin. "And courses must be designed to have easy access by wheeled vehicles. The only way courses can legally not provide access is if it is economically prohibitive or if it fundamentally alters the characteristics of the game or the facility."

SoloRider has already sold 500 adaptive cars, 250 of which have been placed on golf courses. The company recently signed a deal to provide all TPC courses with adaptive cars.

E-Z-GO's adaptive car, the Eagle, went into production two months ago and marketing communications coordinator Ron Skenes said there is a growing market for the vehicle.

"We think the demand

for these types of vehicles is going to grow and there are going to be more courses wanting to offer them as an option to handicapped players on down to those who may just have a bad back," Skenes said.

The vehicle is being manufactured by Eagle Products and distributed by E-Z-GO.

Yamaha is looking to enter the adaptive car market as well.

"We are probably going to team up with someone else [an adaptive car manufacturer] that is already out there," said Yamaha Golf Car vice president Bill Szarowicz. "There is no need to reinvent the wheel."

However, not all manufacturers are viewing the market with such optimism.

Several smaller manufacturers have gone

out of business and veteran adaptive golf car maker Golf Xpress recently pulled out of the market and is looking for a buyer of its assets.

Fairway Golf Cars, in Brookfield, Wis., is expanding its manufacturing facility, but is taking a much broader approach to the market by offering an adaptive car, a power caddy and a new single rider fleet model which it is set to unveil next summer.

"There are two challenges with the adaptive market at this time," said president Cole Braun. "There is not a definitive rul-



Fairway Golf Cars has expanded its product line beyond adaptive cars

ing from the Department of Justice, and second, the golf industry has not had a good year so they are not going to invest money in something that they can't see an immediate positive return on."

In the face of these challenges, Fairway Golf Cars has placed its adaptive car, the Spirit, on 40 courses nationwide including municipal courses in Indianapolis, Branson, Mo., Lincoln, Neb., and Portland, Ore.

"The adaptive market is still solid, and there is a need there," said Braun. "But we also want to revolutionize the way people move around the golf course and give owners another option. The new single-rider fleet model and the power caddy provide that option." ■

With new factory online, YGC set for a busy '03

Continued from page 17

could have a heavy-duty and a lighter-duty vehicle," said YGC's division manager of new business development and off-fairway vehicles Jon Bammann in the June issue of *Golf Course News*.

Szarowicz also said new products will be unveiled that "enhance the off-fairway division."

YGC's new 220,000-square-foot factory is making the product line expansion possible.

"The plant is going crazy," Szarowicz said. "The efficiency rate is up, and production numbers are up. So far it is exceeding expectations. We are also looking at implementing a build-to-order system. This gives us the ability to react faster. Before when we shared space with ATV manufacturing we couldn't do all of this."

New production technology has also made the G-MAX car better. The new facility features 17 robotic welding stations and a new multi-step frame coating system that includes immersion cleaning, immersion corrosion protection and powder coating.

According to Szarowicz, the new car has set itself apart from the field with its Tru-Trak front suspension and ergonomic Ergo-Shade sun top with integrated grab handles. The company will soon roll out its Genius fleet management system that uses any personal digital assistant to perform diag-

nostics via infrared.

CREATING FLEET OPTIONS

YGC also introduced its certified pre-owned program this year that is based out of a separate facility in Peachtree City. Szarowicz said hundreds of reconditioned units have already rolled off the line giving the company an opportunity to compete in a different market.



The new G-MAX, introduced in June, is the first of many new vehicles on the way from Yamaha.

"This brings the golf car out at a different price point and gives us an advantage at looking at ways courses can save money on their fleet," he said. "For example, some courses have chosen to mix and match. They may need 60 cars but would like 80. We now can offer 60 new cars and 20 certified pre-owned cars and they can get what they want at a lower price point. Golfers will never know the difference." ■

Compost tea brewing organic success

Continued from page 6

despite drought conditions and high disease pressure.

"It was a good year with compost tea," said Clarke. "We bought a bigger brewer and we were able to reduce fungicide use again. We only did five curative sprays for dollar spot control on the fairways as opposed to the usual 11 to 12. We also reduced fertilizer on fairways to two pounds of nitrogen.

"On the greens we had no outbreaks, but we did have dollar spot pressure," he continued. "We sprayed curatively and we were able to increase our spray intervals. Overall we reduced fungicide use by 30 percent."

Clark applies five gallons of tea per acre every seven days, but backed off to every 14 days this fall. He had no anthracnose, very little brown patch and pythium and had no algae on his greens.

"I am still tentative with compost tea," said Clarke, "and we are not chemical-free by any means. But we have been able to truly implement an IPM program and I attribute that to the tea."

Seeing Clarke's success, Todd Struse at LuLu Temple Country Club in North Hills, Pa., started a compost tea program this summer.

"We have a real bad anthracnose problem here and it is because of an imbalance in the soil chemistry," he said. "We want to reduce our budget by reducing use of chemicals, nematicides and fertilizers."

Since he is just beginning the program, Struse is applying compost tea at a 35-gallon-per-acre rate every week. While it was too soon to see results this season, Struse did benefit from another of Clarke's techniques - topdressing tees with compost during the winter.

"I put down a heavy layer on the tees in January and let it rain in and then blew off the debris," Struse said. "The compost provided enough nutrients so that I didn't have to fertilize them until September."

Clarke topdressed roughs, six tees and two fairways with compost last winter and noticed that it helped combat drought conditions.

"We have a mixture of bluegrass and ryegrass in the roughs and they went dormant later and bounced back earlier. The areas we didn't get to went dormant right off," he said.

Clarke plans to topdress the whole course this year.

COMPOST TEA CATCHING ON?

If compost tea provides at least some benefits, why aren't more superintendents aren't using it? Clarke said the lack of university research is the biggest problem.

"A lot of guys won't accept it until a Rutgers or a Penn State or an NC State says 'Yes this is the way to go.' Unfortunately this is a grass-roots thing and there is no one with the money to pay for a study," said Clarke. "So far, anecdotal evidence is the only way [information on] compost tea gets out there." ■

Lesco to increase sales capabilities

Continued from page 17

and distribution capabilities will help it grow sales in the six to eight percent range next year.

"We will continue to add salespeople, stores and stores-on-wheels," he said. "I have all the data and our return on investment is outstanding when we add sales capabilities. If we don't add, we'll die."

The hub-and-spoke distribution system is nearing completion with new centers already open in Westfield, Mass., and Avon Lake, Ohio. New centers in Atlanta and Chicago will be on-line by the beginning of the year and facilities will be added in Stockton, Calif., and Texas later in 2003.

"We have changed the profile of how distribution centers hold products and what services they provide," said DiMino. "We need to replenish service centers and stores-on-wheels from the local level instead of from distant distribution centers."

"Our five zone vice presidents are in place to put the right products on the shelves and decide where stores and stores-on-wheels go," added DiMino. "Their job is to drive the regional competitors crazy using the Lesco assets. We are a national player but we want to act like a local player."

REDUCING OVERHEAD AND CUTTING COSTS

DiMino, however, has also had to trim costs. He has reduced what he calls "corporate overhead" and manufacturing costs. Lesco also sold its troubled Novex fertilizer plant to KPAC Holdings Inc. in late October. The company has signed a supply agreement with KPAC and said the Novex products will continue to be available to Lesco customers.

"We will be able to produce it cheaper in this new structure than we were when we were producing it ourselves," said DiMino. "Novex will still be our product for greens and tees and hopefully for fairways soon as well. There will be no interruption in the supply." ■

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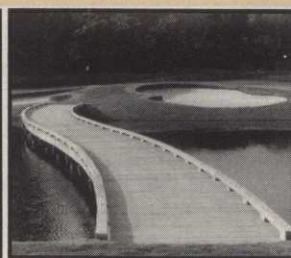
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Construction in 2002

Continued from page 11

weather the slowdown in not only construction, but in business in general.

"About five years ago when people started looking at the new starts and it started to wane, I think the smart guys went out and started to retool their marketing efforts toward renovations and helping superintendents and looking at the small projects that typically five years before that they wouldn't have even considered because there was such a demand for them to do full-scale golf courses," he said.

Both now and in coming months, Hetrick said builders face difficulty in finding af-

'Everybody is entitled to make a profit ... it really hurts the industry when it gets so competitive that people start buying jobs.'

— Lee Hetrick

fordable insurance and bonding for projects. He said the problem could get worse before it gets any better.

"If there's one issue that we have that's most difficult for builders to face today it's the bonding issue and insuring the project," he said. "That's the one that's going to be the biggest hurdle to get through. It's been described to me that we still haven't seen the bottom of the barrel in the bonding market from 9/11. You have to figure out how you can go out there and maintain a level of expertise and not have everything crater in on you."

What makes construction a particularly tenuous industry is dependence its on profits "trickling down" from developers to builders, Hetrick said.

"Everybody is entitled to make a profit," he said. "It really hurts the industry when it gets so competitive that people start buying jobs."

"Some jobs you have to let go by," he added. "The balance is extremely keen right now."

While it is difficult at the moment, Hetrick said the golf industry as a whole should begin to see an upturn in the near future.

"There are projects out there and they're finding funding. Everybody seems to be getting the work and maintaining some level of security for their employees," he said. "We all seem to be busy. Everybody seems to be getting the work and maintaining some level of security for their employees, so we're cautiously optimistic." ■

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NATIONAL GOLF ROUNDS PLAYED*

REGION	SEPTEMBER	Y.T.D.
NEW ENGLAND (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)	-7.1%	-3.1%
MIDDLE ATLANTIC (NY, NJ, PA)	-0.5%	-0.9%
EAST NORTH CENTRAL (MI, OH, IN, IL, WI)	2.6%	-4.6%
WEST NORTH CENTRAL (MN, IA, MO, KS, NE, SD, ND)	-0.2%	-5.9%
SOUTH ATLANTIC (DE, WV, VA, MD, NC, SC, GA, FL)	-1.6%	0.3%
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL (KY, TN, AL, MS)	-5.8%	-2.6%
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL (AR, LA, OK, TX)	1.6%	0.7%
MOUNTAIN (MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV)	-2.5%	-2.4%
PACIFIC (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI)	0.7%	0.3%

* The percentages above represent the difference in number of rounds played in the month of September 2002 to the number of rounds played in September 2001.
Source: Golf Datatech

Golf Course News STOCK REPORT (11/1)

Company(Symbol)	Price	Change(%) 10/402	52-wk range
Aventis (AVE)	59.20	4.2	48.00 - 77.53
Bayer AG (BAY)	18.76	-1.4	16.77 - 36.00
BASF (BF)	37.05	5.7	37.84 - 46.85
Central Garden and Pet (CENT)	19.99	11.0	6.60 - 20.00
Deere & Co. (DE)	46.39	0.7	36.60 - 49.98
Dow Chemical Co.(DOW)	25.99	-2.6	23.66 - 38.67
Golf Trust of America (GTA)	1.26	6.8	0.88 - 7.59
Ingersoll-Rand (IR)	39.00	13.7	29.69 - 54.40
Lesco Inc. (LSCO)	11.15	5.2	6.10 - 12.26
Monsanto Co. (MON)	16.53	12.1	13.20 - 36.35
National Golf Properties (TEE)	11.24	-1.7	4.30 - 15.83
Syngenta AG (SYT)	11.81	5.9	9.37 - 13.20
Textron Inc. (TXT)	41.00	17.1	31.29 - 53.60
Toll Brothers (TOL)	20.48	-2.3	14.28 - 31.80
Toro Co. (TTC)	63.86	10.0	41.91 - 64.22

YEAR-TO-DATE GOLF PROJECT ACTIVITY (MONTHLY CHANGE)

	NEW	ADDITIONS	TOTAL
PROPOSED	386 (-2)	66 (+3)	452 (+1)
IN PLANNING	381 (-7)	66 (-1)	447 (-8)
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	348 (NC)	177 (+1)	525 (+1)
COMPLETED	184 (+8)	95 (+4)	279 (+12)

Source: NGF

Renovation numbers

The National Golf Foundation's monthly Golf Project Report numbers do not include courses classified as reconstructions or renovations. This year to date, 51 renovated/reconstructed courses are under construction and 24 courses have opened.

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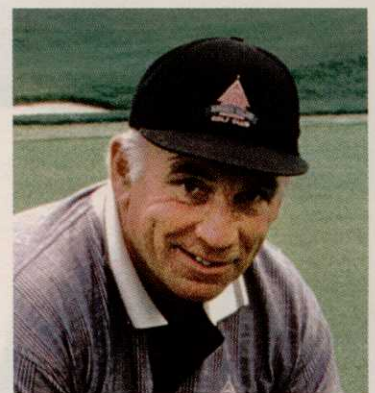
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Scott Schunter, Superintendent
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Ernie Amsler, CGCS, Superintendent
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