



BRIEFS

TGTSP NAMES CARLSON PRESIDENT

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products has appointed Jon Carlson to the post of president of its Turf and Professional Lawn Care business. Carlson will be responsible for all aspects of Textron's golf, turf and professional lawn care business, including sales, marketing, engineering and manufacturing. He will report directly to TGTSP chairman and CEO Greg Hyland. Prior to joining Textron, Carlson was senior vice president and general manager of Case Corp.'s North American agricultural business unit.



Jon Carlson

SYNCRIFLO RESTRUCTURES STAFF

ATLANTA — SyncroFlo has restructured its staff to handle the increase in its golf business. Jonathan Gaillard,



Jonathan Gaillard



Bryan Adams

who has been with SyncroFlo since 1998, has been promoted to project manager, golf and irrigation. He will manage several national accounts and continue to manage inside sales.

WALTER JOINS FMC

PHILADELPHIA — Jim Walter has joined FMC Corp.'s specialty products business as the turf and ornamental/general household pest segment manager. In his new role, Walter will be responsible for analyzing, developing recommendations for and implementing all marketing related activities for the unit. Walter previously served as the turf and ornamental manager for Rohm & Haas.

Harrell's merges with Wilbro to become Southeastern powerhouse

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Harrell's Fertilizer, based here, has become a regional force overnight following the completion of its merger with Norway, S.C.-based Wilbro Jan. 1. With the deal, Harrell's has added coverage in the Carolinas, Virginia, and eastern Tennessee to its existing service area of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and western Tennessee.

Harrell's will be taking over existing Wilbro accounts and will also gain a blending plant and distribution facility in Norway. Jack Harrell, Jr. will be the president and CEO of the new company and former Wilbro president

Harvey Williamson will serve as general manager of the Norway operations.

"We had been talking for two years about getting together," said Steve Wilson, director of marketing and communications for Harrell's. "The two companies are very similar, we both manufacture custom fertilizers and are distributors for PTI's POLYON product.

"The business philosophies are also

similar," Wilson continued. "The customers will not see any difference in operations or service. We will bring our small company philosophies to a larger company. We don't want to forget what has made us successful."

PROSPECTING FOR CUSTOMERS

With that in mind, Harrell's will not be



Harrell's new formulation and distribution center in Sylacauga, Ala.

cutting many jobs, keeping all Wilbro sales staff and only trimming extraneous accounting and office staff in Norway.

While Wilson said the current economic situation did not drive the decision, he did say the combined company will enjoy economies of scale in regards to purchasing.

"In this business you either shrink or

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Deere's financial woes to extend into 2002

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. reported worldwide net losses of \$320.1 million for the fourth quarter and \$64 million for the year ended Oct. 31. The company posted a net income of \$71.1 million last year. Deere expects losses to extend into the first quarter of 2002 and beyond.

Affecting results for both periods were after-tax charges of \$216.6 million caused by early retirement programs, the decision to exit the handheld consumer products business and the restructuring of certain manufacturing and marketing operations.

"Fourth-quarter results were adversely affected by production cutbacks aimed at driving more efficient asset levels and by continued weakness in our major markets," said Robert W. Lane, chairman and CEO.



For the quarter, net sales of all segments were lower than last year due to production cutbacks, continued softness in the economy and weaker foreign currencies.

Looking forward to 2002, Deere said that its first-quarter net sales will likely fall three to seven percent and that it plans to cut an additional 250 jobs at its headquarters.

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In other news, Deere & Co. has sold its Homelite consumer products business to TechTronics Industries Co. of Hong Kong. Under terms of the agreement, TechTronics will own the Homelite brand of handheld and power equipment. Deere said it will continue to market its John Deere Pro Series line of handheld equipment for commercial users.

LESCO's 3Q sales up, net income down

CLEVELAND — LESCO has announced record sales of \$144.1 million for the quarter ended Sept. 30. In the third quarter of 2000, the company had sales of \$139.6 million. Net income for the quarter, however, was \$300,000 — down from \$4.2 million a year ago.

The company cited the rising cost of raw materials, a competitive price environment and the attacks of Sept. 11 as reasons for the earnings downturn. Sales for the golf division in the quarter were flat, but down 17 percent in September. As a result of weak operating results, the

company is negotiating temporary relief from its lenders and is pursuing the refinancing of debt on a longer-term basis.

President and CEO Bill Foley is looking for better returns in the fourth quarter.

"In response to increased market competition and pressures on margins, we have continued to reduce costs," said Foley. "We have reduced our headcount by 60 people and discontinued 1,500 slow moving products in 2001. We also expect to benefit from increased sales and the lower urea costs that we have seen in the fourth quarter."

Toro closes two factories

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — In a continual effort to reduce production costs and improve asset utilization, Toro Co. has announced the closure of two factories in the last several weeks.

In early December, the company said that it will sell its Riverside, Calif., headquarters and plant and move all manufacturing operations, including golf-related irrigation products, to its facility in El Paso, Texas. Toro will leave its office operations in Riverside.

As a result of the plant closure and restructuring, 440 jobs will be eliminated. The move is expected to cost between \$6.4 and \$6.9 million in fiscal 2002 and provide an annual savings beginning in 2003 of between \$7 and \$7.5 million.

In addition, the company will close its Evansville, Ind., plant and shift manufacturing to its Tomah, Wis., and Windom, Minn. plants. The factory produced Toro and Exmark branded grounds maintenance and sports turf spraying equipment.

Toro said the closure will affect 94 employees and result in a cost savings of about \$2 to \$2.3 million beginning in 2003. Manufacturing will be phased out by June 15 and inventory and equipment transfers

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Aquatrols unveils five new products, severs Simplot ties

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CHERRY HILLS, N.J. — Like most companies in the golf business, Aquatrols has put 2001 behind them and is looking towards 2002 with more optimism. The company has reason to be optimistic since it is introducing five new products that will hit the market in February.

"We are much more excited about 2002," said vice president for sales and marketing Ron Gagne. "We have three new formulations for existing products and two brand new products that utilize new chemistry."

The company's Primer surfactant has a new Select formulation that will allow superintendents to fine tune rates based on course conditions. It is also available as a spreadable, water dispersal granular (SWDG). Its Aqueduct product is also available as a SWDG.

"This allows for lighter rates and the new granular formulation dissolves the minute water hits it," said Gagne.

NEW CHEMISTRY

Aquatrols has improved on its wetting agent technology with the introduction of Dispatch, which is seven times faster than its existing Infiltrax product.

"Dispatch completely overwhelms Infiltrax," noted Gagne. "It allows water to

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Whitepath takes home John Deere Int'l title

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The Whitepath Golf Club team from Ellijay, Ga., placed first in the fifteenth annual John Deere International Team Championship Golf Tournament posting a two day total of 102. The event was held here Nov. 15-18 on the Talon and Raptor golf courses at Grayhawk Golf Club.

A total of 35 teams from across the United States, Canada, Germany and Australia competed in the final event. This was the first year that teams from outside North America participated in the tournament.

As part of the tournament, John Deere contributed \$30 for each of the teams competing at

the local tournaments to either the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's "Investing in the beauty of golf" campaign, the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association scholarship fund, or the German and Australian superintendents associations. The company gave more than \$28,000 this year.



The winning team from Georgia's Whitepath Golf Club

Members of the winning team from Whitepath Golf Club were: Tony Smith, club manager; Tim Land, club president; Mike Brumby, superintendent; Lonnie Reece, golf professional; and Dane Hanger, representative of John Deere distributor, Georgia Turf & Tractor of Alpharetta, Ga.

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Toro closures

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will be completed 60 to 90 days later.

The two plant closures will result in a restructuring and other expense charge in the first quarter of between \$7.4 and \$7.9 million.

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In other news, the Toro Co. has finalized the integration of Goossen debris products into its equipment line with the first of two new blowers being shipped last month from its manufacturing facility in Beatrice, Neb.

The two new products, the Toro Debris Blower 400 and 600, are capable of clearing areas of leaves, twigs, pine needles, clippings and other debris.

The 400 unit is a compact unit that is tuned to clear small areas and is ideally suited to clearing dew from work or play areas in the early morning. The 600 unit has a 36-inch fan that produces 9,324 cubic feet per minute airflow and an air velocity of 153 mph. It features a bi-directional discharge allowing the user to change airflow direction instantly. ■

Harrell's buy

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you grow," he said. "We feel fortunate that we can expand our service area in a time when many companies are scaling back."

Wilson said 2001 was another year of growth for Harrell's and expects 2002 to be even stronger. Harrell's will look to add more sales volume in the new Wilbro territories by adding seed and chemicals to the existing mix of fertilizer products.

"We also intend to prospect and add to our customer base across the Southeast. We will look at each territory and see where more sales staff could be added," he said. ■