

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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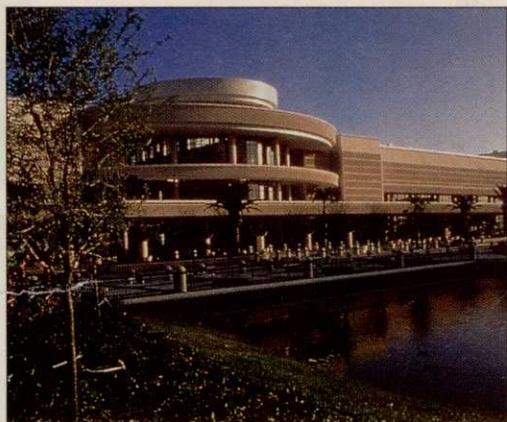
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GCSAA ORLANDO WRAP-UP

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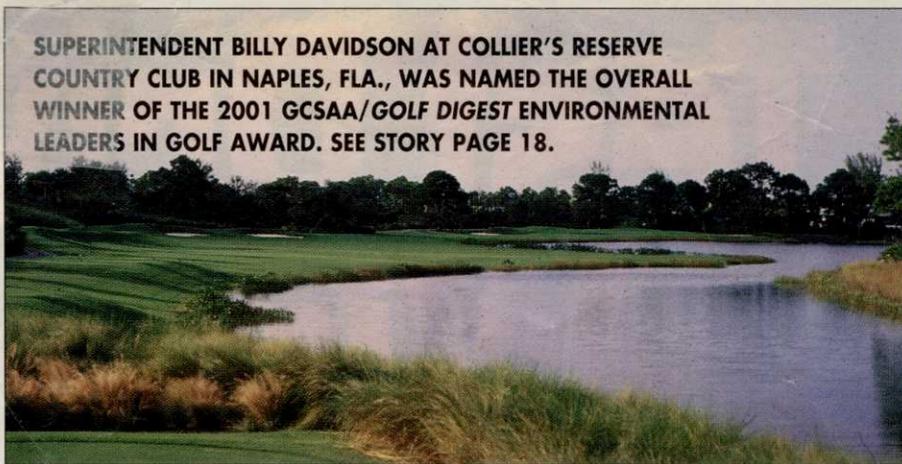
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PERIODICAL

SUPERINTENDENT BILLY DAVIDSON AT COLLIER'S RESERVE COUNTRY CLUB IN NAPLES, FLA., WAS NAMED THE OVERALL WINNER OF THE 2001 GCSAA/GOLF DIGEST ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS IN GOLF AWARD. SEE STORY PAGE 18.



Palmer Golf set to diversify portfolio

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ORLANDO, Fla. — After spending 2001 opening five courses and dealing with the financial realities of Sept. 11, Arnold Palmer Golf Management is moving full speed ahead into 2002 with a strategy to further diversify its portfolio.

The firm signed its first management contract of the year at Stone Ridge Golf Club in Bowling Green, Ohio, and is looking to add four more facilities before the end of the first quarter. In addition to management deals, Palmer Golf will be paying more attention to acquisitions and will be working more closely with Palmer Course Design.

"We want to have a diverse portfolio of owned, leased and managed facilities," said Palmer Golf president and CEO Tim Tierney.

With the addition of Stone Ridge, Palmer Golf now manages 30 properties across the country. The semi-private club opened in 1998 and features a 6,900-yard, links style layout designed by Arthur



Tim Tierney

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With financing scarce, builders grapple with equity gamble

By ANDREW OVERBECK

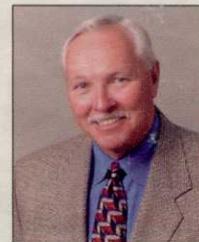
As golf course development financing has become increasingly scarce, more golf course builders, both large and small, are being asked to take equity positions in projects.

"It seems like seventy percent of the deals we see, the developer is looking for money," said Robert Steele, president of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based SEMA Golf. "More developers are trying to figure out how they can still have a golf course and not spend their money."

While larger, established companies such as Lincoln, Neb.-based Landscapes Unlimited and Colorado Springs, Co.-based Niebur Golf have been involved in the equity partnership and ownership game for some time, this trend opens up a whole new set of challenges for medium and small builders which take comparatively larger risks when they trade profits for an equity stake in a project.

WEIGHING THE RISKS

"It may look like fun," said Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of



Robert Steele

Continued on page 5

Newly elected Wallace determined to move GCSAA forward

ORLANDO, Fla. — Newly elected president Michael Wallace has taken the leadership reigns at a pivotal time for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. The association, which is feeling the effects of a slowing golf economy, will be tackling some weighty tasks this year from PDI implementation to the launch of its e-business initiative.



Michael Wallace

Wallace, who joined the staff of Fairview Farm Golf Course in Harwinton, Conn., Feb. 25 after being let go by Hop Meadow Country Club Simsbury, Conn., also has thoughts on how superintendents can balance a leadership position with the association while still maintaining their jobs. *Golf Course News* recently caught up with Wallace to discuss what goals and hurdles are in store for the GCSAA this year. *Golf Course News*: What are your goals for association this year?

Michael Wallace: The GCSAA is obviously poised. We just finished our 75th year as an association, and tremendous strides have been made in that period of time thanks to all those who have preceded me. The PDI implementation will be taking place July 1,

Continued on page 19

Bayer, Syngenta settle patent suit

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BASEL, Switzerland — Syngenta AG and Bayer AG have reached a settlement over a dispute concerning neonicotinoid chemistry, which was the subject of various legal proceedings in the United States, Europe and Japan.

The dispute arose in 1994 when Syngenta first filed for a patent for the neonicotinoid active ingredient thiamethoxam. Arguing that thiamethoxam was too similar to its neonicotinoid active ingredient imidacloprid (Merit), Bayer challenged the patent.

After enduring years of lawsuits and legal expenses in different venues around the world, both sides agreed in early January to settle the matter and move on.

Continued on page 26



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National Golf proposes merger with American Golf

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties announced tentative plans Feb. 13 to merge with its financially troubled partner and primary tenant American Golf Corp.

The announcement follows National Golf's earlier decision to suspend dividend payments. The company's stock has fallen more than 60 percent since mid-August.

The proposed merger is already facing potential roadblocks, however. Two class action lawsuits protesting the merger as financially and ethically unsound — sentiments that have also been echoed by numerous Wall Street analysts — have already been filed in United States District Court for the Central District of California.

The deal would combine American Golf and its affiliates Golf Enterprises, Inc., and European Golf, LLC. The combined company would be the largest publicly traded golf owner and

operator with a portfolio of more than 300 courses in the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Australia.

"This powerful combination allows National Golf and American Golf the opportunity to maximize the multiple strengths of all the combined companies on an international basis with the

goal of creating and growing the finest and most successful golf company in the world," said David Price, National Golf's chairman and a majority shareholder of American Golf.

National Golf's recently appointed independent committee will manage the proposed transaction. The company hopes to

close the deal by the end of the second quarter, but several conditions need to be met before the transaction becomes final.

While definitive terms of the proposed transaction have not been finalized, National Golf anticipates that current equity holders of American Golf will receive shares in a class of non-dividend

yielding preferred stock. In the meantime, National Golf has deferred current rental obligations of American Golf through March 14, 2002. As part of the deal, National Golf will also be seeking a major new equity investor in the combined company.



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Rain Bird teams up with Lesco

AZUSA, Calif. — Rain Bird's Golf Division and Lesco, Inc. have formed a limited distribution agreement that will make Rain Bird's ESR 70/90 and Eagle 700/900 rotors and replacement parts available to golf courses nationwide through Lesco.

The agreement, which became effective Jan. 15, will allow golf courses to purchase replacement



Lesco's display for Rain Bird's products

rotors through Lesco's 78 Stores-on-Wheels. According to Rain Bird, the distribution plan will give courses immediate access to the most common rotors, parts and tools.

In preparation for the launch, Lesco's entire fleet of Stores-on-Wheels is being re-merchandised with replacement parts, support literature, and rotor stocking assortments to accommodate the new Rain Bird rotor display. In addition, Rain Bird is providing training for the ESR and Eagle rotor product lines to Lesco's golf sales associates.

Tyler Enterprises is back in business

ELWOOD, Ill. — Masterblend International has purchased Tyler Enterprises, breathing new life into the troubled regional fertilizer formulator that suspended operation in August after its parent company was shut down by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Under the agree-

ment, Tyler will operate as a division of Cleveland-based Masterblend and will continue to have its corporate headquarters in Elwood.

Masterblend is a custom formulator of water-soluble fertilizers for the horticultural industry and has locations in Cleveland

and Chicago and sales in 19 countries. Tyler will be headed by Masterblend president Bryan Maxwell, and former Tyler sales manager Bill Davis will serve as general manager.

According to Davis, the purchase gives Tyler an opportunity to rebuild while also expand-

ing Masterblend's market. "As a division of Masterblend,

'We now have the financial reserves to do it right.'

— Bill Davis

we now have the financial reserves to rebuild this company

and do it right," he said. "There is tremendous synergy between Masterblend and Tyler because of our complimentary product lines and markets. We believe that we can use our strengths to create a company that will capitalize on the market gaps in the specialty turf industry."

Tyler, which had 22 sales representatives and operated in six states across the Midwest, is not yet back to full strength. It has hired back six sales representatives so far and has reopened its Milwaukee, Cincinnati and Elwood locations. While Tyler has sales representatives in Indiana and Kentucky, it has yet to reopen the warehouse and distribution centers in those states. Production, however, is in full swing at its Elwood plant, and the company said that it had been filling orders since mid-January.

NGF teams with NGCOA to collect data

JUPITER, Fla. — The National Golf Foundation and the National Golf Course Owners Association have launched two data collection initiatives to provide a variety of golf facility data for golf course owners.

In the first initiative, the NGF and the NGCOA are joining forces to conduct a national study of golf rounds played. The study is already underway and results will be available in April.

Mike Hughes, executive director of the NGCOA, said that his organization's interest in the study stemmed from requests from members for a better measurement of rounds played, a critical indicator of the health of the golf business.

The rounds played study will involve the distribution of a survey to every golf course in the United States. Facility operators will be asked to report their total rounds played activity over the 2000 and 2001 periods.

SHARING FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The NGF and the NGCOA are also creating an Internet-based data collection tool for golf facilities to use in tracking their own performance and comparing it to local, regional and national statistics.

The system, called NGF InfoNet, will allow users to share data confidentially, view information online and generate ad hoc reports. The firm has partnered with NemEx Inc., a Summit, N.J.-based Internet application service provider, to develop NGF InfoNet. The service will ultimately replace the data collection that the NGF has done over the past 20 years through its paper-based "Operating and Financial Performance Profiles of Golf Facilities."

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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Equity gamble

Continued from page 1

America, "but there is a lot more to it than meets the eye. It is a real leap of faith. The smart companies are doing due diligence because there are so many values and variables that change with every project."

For that reason, many builders are shying away from equity deals.

"We just don't have the wherewithal to put down \$500,000 toward a project," said Jeffrey Stein, president of Southport, N.C.-based Shapemasters. "Owners are trying to spread their risk and share the load, but golf courses don't offer a great rate of return in most cases."

Phil Garcia, vice president of Deerfield Beach, Fla.-based Ryangolf and new president of the GCBAA, said that while his company had been offered deals, he preferred to stick with his game plan — building courses for established developers.

"Although we have been approached more in the past 12 to 18 months, we would never mix the contracting expertise with ownership," he said. "We have been lucky to deal with repeating clients that are sizable, national developers that are just interested in the traditional contractor/owner relationship."

While development slows, however, more builders report that they are faced with either taking an equity position or not getting the job.

"I think it has cost us jobs," said Stein. "If you have two builders competing for the same job and quoting the same price, but one is willing to put in some sweat equity and the other is not, it is pretty clear. It will cost some people work."

SEMA Golf's Steele said he is looking more closely at equity deals in order to remain competitive.

"Owners have to get creative on financing because they need golf to drive real estate," he said. "So we are going to be forced into this. But we will be very selective on what we do."

Steele said SEMA Golf is in the process of working with a management group on two deals and is looking to partner on another project in Mexico.

ENTERING THE GAME

Indeed, some builders are embracing the concept, seeing the advantage of taking direct control of projects.

Two years ago, Sam Sakocius, president of Richmond, Texas-based SAJO Construction, took a 20 percent stake in Magnolia Creek Golf Links in League City, Texas.

"We knew that we wanted to stay within 100 miles of Houston because we understand that market," he said. "When the opportunity came along, we took an equity position in the project in lieu of profit on the job."

"It has worked out pretty well," he continued. "We have had to put some cash back into the project because the course is still in the ramp up stage, but it has proved to be a really popular layout."

Frank Hutchinson, president of GolfWorks Inc., is currently building a course in his hometown of Austin that he will own.

"Two years ago the original developer got us on board as con-

tractors and asked us to take an equity position," said Hutchinson. "Then the financing fell apart and they asked us if we wanted to own the golf course. So we started our own venture."

Both Sakocius and Hutchinson caution, however, that assuming equity positions or ownership is not for the faint of heart.

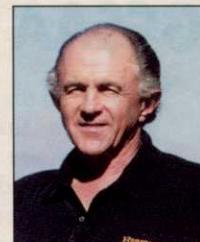
"I have taken three small equity positions prior to this and two of

them were not that good," said Hutchinson. "Had we jumped into the Austin deal two years ago, it probably would have hurt us very badly. I wound up hiring a separate group to handle it so they could evaluate things on a business level."

Sakocius cautioned that any builder getting involved in equity or ownership should only do so if they are in it for the long haul.

"If you take an equity position in

lieu of profits, it takes away from gross revenues," added Sakocius. "You have to think long term. Magnolia Creek has yet to produce revenues, and is not supposed to until after the third year or so." ■



Jeffrey Stein

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GCSAA Orlando exceeds expectations

With the golf economy in the doldrums, many in the golf course industry had low expectations for this year's GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando.

And for good reason. Many clubs and national management companies simply couldn't afford to foot the bill this year for their superintendents. And despite the fact that Orlando is usually a top draw because superintendents can bring their families, left over travel concerns from Sept. 11 kept some from bringing the wife and kids along.

In the months before the show, the GCSAA reported that preregistration numbers were off and started offering payment plans to potential attendees like a discount furniture warehouse trying to unload hide-a-beds during a President's Day blow-out sale. It didn't inspire confidence.

Readings from my own pre-show barometer suggested that this one might be a dud. As with past shows, my daytime dance card was packed, but my evenings were less so because fewer companies were throwing parties and hosting events.

So when I stepped off the plane in the Sunshine State I, too, didn't

know what to expect. Would the show floor be a ghost town? Would exhibitors start packing up at 11 a.m. on Saturday in frustration and go play golf?

Quite the opposite. On Thursday, perhaps due to some well-timed thunderstorms, the show floor was packed. Registration lines stretched out the door. While attendance numbers were down from Dallas, they still topped 20,000 according to the association, and exhibitors reported that booth traffic and business were exceeding their expectations.

As one exhibitor confided: "The numbers may not be as strong, but the customers are better."

And not to worry, families

floor, the *Golf Course News* booth was hopping. Perhaps it had something to do with the comfortable couches, but whenever I returned to our home base to rest my tired feet, I wound up having five conversations at once. It was great to hear from all of our friends in the industry. Other highlights from Orlando 2002 included:

- The *Golf Course News* Golf Course Builder of the Year Awards were a blast. In years past, everyone who showed up at the Golf Course Builders Association of America's annual awards dinner already knew who the winners were. This year a veil of secrecy shrouded the winners. The vibe prior to the awards ceremony was electric as I heard numerous speculative bets spreading across the ballroom. It made for a fun night, and I would have given out 20 awards if I could have. See page 20 for full stories on the winners.
- When it came to the parties,

less was definitely more. It turned out that it was not only nice not to have to hustle off to three or four fêtes in one evening, but that companies were also more creative this year. Pursell Technologies' late night pancake party at the



Andrew Overbeck, editor



Show numbers were down only slightly in Orlando

made it down. The kids were everywhere on the floor, some hunting down freebies, some collecting product literature and most looking pretty bored.

Just like the rest of the show



The flaming wallet trick was a crowd pleaser at the 'International House of Polyon.'

International House of Polyon was ingenious, and their corporate magician kept me up nights trying to figure out his baffling card tricks. Syncroflo hosted an outing to a mystery dinner theatre that kept everyone guessing. And the most creative party award must go to Arturo Castro's Spanish Systems which rented out a couple of rooms and hosted a cigar party complete with an expert Cuban cigar roller. Good times, good times.

GCN has added a new section called the "Databank." The section (see page 31) provides a monthly look at the golf course industry's leading indicators. In it you will find a stock chart of major industry players, monthly rounds data from Golf Datatech and monthly construction numbers from the National Golf Foundation.

Maintaining seasonal workforce is an annual battle

By JOEL JOYNER

It's not an uncommon struggle, particularly with a larger seasonal workforce, for superintendents to find and retain reliable and productive employees. Having good employees is essential to managing a successful golf course maintenance operation. For some superintendents, obtaining the right combination of workers to match their maintenance programs is a yearly challenge.

According to *Golf Course News*'s recently conducted two-part News Poll (see page 7), 55 percent of the golf course superintendents surveyed said that more than half of their workforce is primarily seasonal.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Location is one of the obstacles for maintaining a seasonal workforce, according to superintendent Kevin Goolsby at the Sportsman Golf Resort in Pensacola, Fla.

"I have trouble getting good employees because of my location from developed areas that have the workforce I need," he explained. "We are located along the Gulf Coast, and we depend on resort guests. I would like to find a great source for immigrant and migrant workers because of their excellent work ethics."

Economic factors also play a large role in the size and structure of several golf course maintenance staffs. Finding the right combination of employees and providing the right incentives are critical to running a smooth operation, according to superintendent Mark Lytle at the Salina (Kan.) Municipal Golf Course.



Joel Joyner

"We rely on seasonal employees for economic reasons," he said. "We use approximately 10,000 hours of seasonal employees and 6,000 hours are worked by full time employees."

"We give the seasonal staff free golf and reduced fees for golf car use to enhance their compensation each year," he continued, "and have been extremely successful with this program. The 10,000 seasonal hours cost us about \$65,000 per year. The 6,000 full time hours cost approximately \$90,000 per year with benefits."

Some of Lytle's seasonal workers have been with him for 12 to 14 years. "Most of them are retired and are very dependable, are never late for work, and are my most productive workers," he said.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DIVERSITY

Experimenting and diversifying within different pools of the workforce and finding the right combinations – retirees, students, interns, housewives, etc. – may prove beneficial.

Blackberry Patch Golf Club in Coldwater, Mich., runs a high maintenance operation with minimal financial resources, according to superintendent Pamela Smith. Smith has successfully put together a team that combines seniors and students.

"The senior staff is critical to our department," she said. "They are quick to learn the operation of the equipment, are always dependable, and bring a wealth of knowledge and life experience to our operation. In addition, they are able to take the layoffs and return each year."

The combination of seniors and students creates a unique synergy, said Smith. "Young people who have never held a

Continued on next page

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Reduce turnover

Continued from previous page

formal job are brought into the workplace often aided by the values and work ethics of the senior staff here," she said. "The result is not only teaching on-the-job behavior but also positive lessons for life. Our maintenance department is a great place to grow our youth professionally and personally."

OBSTACLES TO ADDRESS

Of course, in experimenting with different alternatives and approaches, challenges are likely to develop.

"Over the past few years, we've shifted from a 75 percent seasonal staff to just less than 50 percent," said superintendent Frank Rendulic at the City of Dayton's (Ohio) Kittyhawk Golf Club. "In the process, we created several permanent, part-time staff positions [35 hours/week year round].

"The intent was to be able to hire more qualified people. However, finding work for these folks during the winter season is a challenge," he continued. "It's possible that having a larger seasonal crew actually works better."

SOLUTIONS TO LABOR ISSUES

Two articles in this month's issue of *GCN* focus on solutions and different approaches to help reduce employee turnover rates at clubs.

Raymond Davies' article (see page 8) addresses the challenges of understanding the local community and demographics as well as devising a best worker profile to help identify the right candidate for the job.

On the club management side, hiring issues also exist as experts predict that the hospitality industry will need to add 20 million more workers by 2006 to support anticipated growth. David Hubbard's article (see page 21) covers presentations by these experts who outline ways to lower employee turnover rates at golf facilities. ■

CORRECTION

According to Dr. Stella Coakley, department head of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University, Dr. Elaine Ingham ("Compost tea slowly gaining golf converts" Feb. *GCN* 2002) is not an associate professor in that department nor is she employed at Oregon State University. Dr. Ingham was last employed by the University on a part-time basis in 1997 as associate professor/senior research. She then held a courtesy associate professor/senior research position in botany and plant pathology until June 1999. Since that date, she has not been a member of the department.

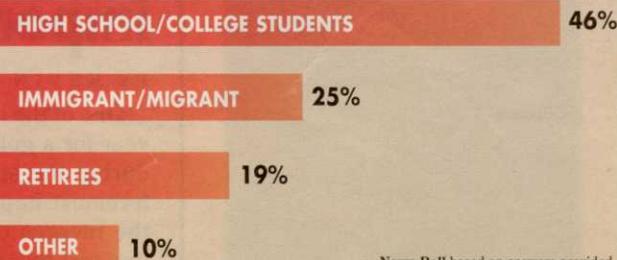
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GOLF COURSE NEWS NEWS POLL

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News Poll based on answers provided by 43 respondents in February

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BRIEFS

FOX NAMED SUPERINTENDENT AT NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GOLF CLUB

BASKING RIDGE, N.J. — Brad Fox has been named superintendent at the New Jersey National Golf Club, a high-end, public facility here. Fox earned a B.S. in Turfgrass Science from Penn State University before taking a position at the Bethpage (N.Y.) State Park courses. He has spent the last 18 months at Bethpage learning the profession under superintendent Craig Currier. New Jersey National is managed by Empire Golf, a subsidiary of Bergstol Enterprises.



Brad Fox

SRO'S BENTGRASS INITIATIVE PROGRAM PAYS OFF WITH REBATES

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Seed Research of Oregon has contributed over \$1,000 to local golf course superintendents associations as part of a bentgrass rebate program. Thirty golf courses and their distributors participated in the 2001 Bentgrass Initiative Program. SRO made the contributions to the superintendent's choice of GCSAA-affiliated association, based on qualifying Seed Research brand grass seed purchased in 2001. Qualifying products included: creeping bentgrasses SR 1020, Providence, SR 1119, Brighton, Dominant and Dominant Plus, colonial bentgrass SR 7100, and velvet bentgrass SR 7200. The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association was the biggest beneficiary.

GOLF MANAGEMENT APPOINTS ZICKAFOOSE AT MARYLAND NATIONAL

FREDERICK, Md. — Golf Management, Inc., based in Jacksonville, Fla., has appointed Brian Zickafoose superintendent at Maryland National Golf Course, an Arthur Hills-designed semi-private course opening July 2002 near Frederick, Md. Previous positions for Zickafoose include director of golf construction for T.A. Turner Construction Services of Gaithersburg, Md. Before that, he managed construction and grow-in of a Jack Nicklaus Signature-designed course for Rocky Gap Lodge and Golf Resort in Cumberland, Md.

Spring snowmelt provides important maintenance hints

By KEVIN ROSS

One of the most important times of the year for a golf course superintendent is during the spring snowmelt period. Of foremost importance is observing what the ravages of winter have done to the fine turf areas of the golf course.

As the snow recedes, first thoughts are to analyze snow mold infection, ice-re-

lated damage, and possible desiccation.

However, superintendents need to look beyond winter damage to see the hints this once-a-year phenomenon has to offer. By watching snowmelt patterns, superintendents can quickly chart dry spots, wet spots, drainage patterns and animal damage on the course. This information is especially valuable if you are at a newly constructed facility or in your first year at an established course.

DRAINAGE CLUES

Drainage is also an area that should not go unnoticed. Low pockets and wet swale

areas can be evaluated and mapped for future drainage installation projects. Other than heavy rainstorms, this is certainly the best time of year to identify these areas. It may even be better than a summer rain event, because the turf is not actively growing and the soil could still be frozen. These two factors can result in a much higher water run-off

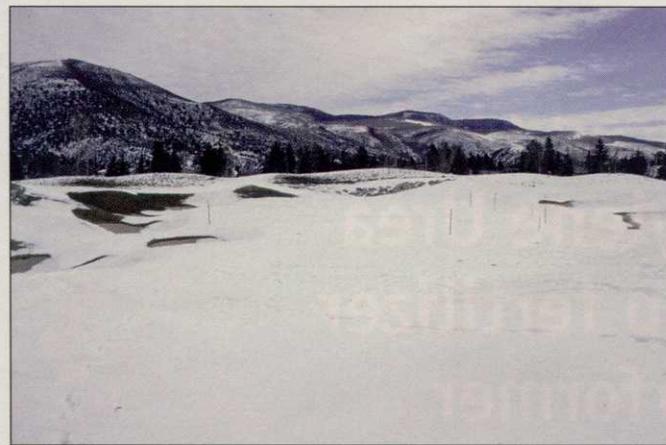
potential. With this increased run-off potential, areas can be noticed at this time that may not be during summer rain events.

ANIMAL DAMAGE

Another issue to watch is animal damage. For example, some golf courses have heavy vole infestations throughout the course, which can result in severe turfgrass destruction. Vole damage tends to be the highest in areas where snow cover lasts the longest. These areas can be charted and filed for potential future fall applications of animal repellants.

Many golf courses have deer or elk herds that take up residency during the winter period causing extensive turf and tree damage. Damage and migratory routes can be

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Spring snowmelt reveals hot spots

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Continued on page 12

WATCH FOR HOT SPOTS

Continued on page 12

Maine superintendents take steps to prevent ice damage

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CUMBERLAND, Maine — After suffering major ice damage during the brutal winter of 2001, superintendents here are employing numerous techniques to keep their greens free of ice this year.

Last year, superintendent Jim Hodge lost all 18 of his greens at Val Halla Golf & Recreation Center. With five feet of snow last winter, and only a small layer of ice, Hodge thought he would get through to spring in good shape. But Mother Nature always surprises.

"We learned a big lesson last year," Hodge said. "It was a combination of a little bit of ice and the fluctuation of temperature. I didn't see turf for more than 120 days. That added up to a lot of turf loss."

This time around Hodge is not taking any chances. After 30 days of ice cover, he

is plowing off the greens and melting the ice layer by applying either Profile soil amendment, black sunflower seeds, or pelletized gypsum and lime. Breaking up the ice allows air exchange and prevents widespread winterkill.



Jim Hodge



Sunflower seeds and Profile reduce ice buildup

"So far the Profile and sunflower seeds work best," he said. "Profile eats into the ice and doubles as a topdressing material. The sunflower seeds absorb sunlight and melt through the ice, but then I have a mess

Continued on page 12

Audubon survey highlights golf course successes

By JOEL JOYNER

SELKIRK, N.Y. — Golf courses continue to improve their environmental performance, according to Audubon International's 2001 *Managed Lands Survey for Golf*. The survey is comprised of more than 470 of the 2,000-plus golf courses



enrolled in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for golf courses. It revealed that courses are

saving water, using less chemicals, and preserving more wildlife area.

The following are a few of the leading indicators:

- When examining water quality and water conservation efforts, 89 percent of courses that responded had improved their irrigation system or the way that water was applied to the site. As a result, these golf courses saved an estimated 1.9 million gallons of water per year, per course since joining ACSP — totaling over 500 million gallons per year. Likewise, 86 percent of golf course managers and superintendents have increased efforts to monitor water quality.

- In the area of chemical use reduction and safety, 82 percent of respondents reduced pesticide use while 75 percent reduced pesticide costs. Additionally, 92 percent of respondents used pesticides with

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Editorial Focus: Hiring

Reduce turnover by implementing hiring plan

By RAYMOND DAVIES

Maintaining and managing a staff can be a challenging, but not an impossible task. By taking into account local demographics, developing a best worker profile, and discussing job responsibilities and goals, superintendents will be better prepared to handle employment issues and reduce turnover.

Hiring issues depend largely on local labor conditions. Many superintendents do not have a significant challenge because of modest or high unemployment or the availability of a large number of college students or active retirees. The main



Raymond Davies

Continued on page 11

Binding contracts provide job security for turf managers

By JOEL JOYNER

ORLANDO, Fla. — Michael Caranci, superintendent at the Candlewood Country Club in Whittier, Calif., addressed the value of binding contracts between golf course turf managers and their clubs here at the GCSAA Conference and Show last month. The presentation was given during the Innovative Superintendent Session I.

“The main reason for signing contracts or devising agreements with clubs is to have security,” said Caranci.

A 21-year veteran of the profession, and a fourth generation golf course superintendent, Caranci knows the importance of having job security in the turf management industry. “I grew up in the household of a superintendent, and I’ve heard many stories of superintendents losing their jobs – in particular for things that were beyond their control. It’s just not fair,” he said.

Weather conditions, the economy, and disease and pests outbreaks are just some examples that have led to the termination of some superintendents. Caranci used an analogy between a turf manager and a physician to help make his point. “If a doctor loses a patient, the family will shake his hand and tell them, ‘Thank you for everything you tried to do.’ If a superintendent loses a couple of *Poa* greens during a heat outbreak, he’s given a pink slip,” he explained.

Criteria that qualifies turf managers for a binding work agreement include:

- Holding a degree in science
- Being well versed in golf course management and construction
- Managing irrigation systems (often computerized systems)
- Managing finances
- Managing labor, people
- Implementing all OSHA and EPA regulations
- Maintaining a pesticide license,
- Meeting continued education unit requirements for professional advancement.

MERCHANDISE YOURSELF

According to Caranci, the first thing superintendents need to do is merchandise themselves and have a good track record to show that they have been around for a while. “Once you merchandise yourself and establish yourself in the profession, let your employer know that job security is your main issue,” he said. “Don’t fall for being buttered up.

“When I presented my contract agreement to my employer, the president of the club at the time came in and shook my hand and said, ‘There’s no way we’d ever let you go.’ I said, ‘I know

that, but I still want a binding contract,’” Caranci continued. The superintendent signed a five-year contract with his club.

Using the resources provided by the GCSAA is a good start, said Caranci. “They’ve got guidelines for developing contracts,” he said. “I took their guidelines and adjusted them to my own

needs at my club.”

The superintendent also suggested contacting an attorney to discuss the verbiage of the document. “Review everything, and be rational about your compensation package,” he said. “Be sure that your non-compensation package is what you are comfortable with and that the con-

tract is applicable by law.”

TERMINATION CLAUSE

The most important section of the contract is in the area regarding termination, according to Caranci. In a binding contract, it should read something like – “The club may terminate this agreement without cause and upon 60 days of written notice to

the superintendent and then only upon payment of the salary amount due under the agreement for the remainder of its original term, plus a separate benefit that’s equal to one month’s salary for each year the agreement was in force,” explained Caranci.

“Now that’s a little bit of security,” he added. “It’s not a major league baseball contract, but it does provide security on your job.”

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Tools of the Trade...at Steve Thomas' Pelican Hill Golf Club

NEWPORT COAST, Calif. — Encompassing 450 acres of prime Newport coastline, Pelican Hill Golf Club is an upscale, daily-fee resort with a Mediterranean flavor. The 36-hole facility provides vistas across two championship layouts.

"Whether you are standing over a sharply breaking 30 foot putt with the sound of the Pacific Ocean crashing in the background, or faced with a 200-plus yard forced carry over a deep canyon, Pelican Hill offers thrills for all golfers," said superintendent Steve Thomas.



Steve Thomas

The Ocean South layout here was the first course to be completed. Opened in 1991, the course stretches to 6,634 yards with narrow fairways. The South course winds through terraced canyons and skirts ocean cliff edges before finishing on a very challenging par 4. Crossing the same canyon twice, this final hole is aptly named Double Cross.

The Ocean North course was opened for play in early 1994. Unlike the South course, the North sits atop ridges with just a few forays into deep coastal canyons. The views of Newport Beach, Catalina Island, and the surrounding coastline are worth the steep green fees, according to Thomas.

"Hitting the wide fairways is the easiest part of playing this course as approach shots and putting on hard-to-read greens provide more of the challenge," Thomas said.

"The nice subtropical weather we experience here lends itself to a year round operation," he continued. "Our greens are mowed 364 days a year [the course is closed on Christmas]. The expectations

of our clientele necessitate a high level of detail work on a daily basis."

GOING TO CALIFORNIA

Thomas has worked on golf courses since 1990. He spent three years at the Wakefield Valley Golf Club in Westminster, Md. "My boss at the time, Gary Angell, inspired me to consider a career in the golf course industry. I thought he was crazy," said Thomas. "The next year, in 1994, I started the two-year Turfgrass Management program at the University of Maryland."

Also in 1994, Thomas was hired at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., where he had the opportunity to work under the leadership of superintendent Paul Latshaw.

"Mr. Latshaw's forte has always been tournament preparations," said Thomas. At the club, Thomas played an integral role in both the 1995 U.S. Senior Open and the 1997 U.S. Open championships.

Thomas' tournament preparation experience under Latshaw continued when he went to The Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles to help him prepare for the 1998 U.S. Senior Open.

"Moving to California and working at the Riviera opened many doors for me," said Thomas. "We had only seven months to prepare the run-down and neglected course for a major golf championship, but we came through with flying colors."

MAIN BATTLES AT PELICAN HILL

In April 2000, Thomas received his first superintendent position working with a staff of 35 people at Oak Creek Golf Club — an 18-hole, Tom Fazio-designed course in Irvine, Calif. Last year in October, Thomas signed on as the director of agronomy here at the 36-hole Tom Fazio-designed Pelican Hill. He continues to oversee the

Continued on next page

THOMAS' TOOLS

GREENS MOWERS: 8 Toro Flex mowers

TEE MOWERS: 8 Toro GM 1000s

FAIRWAY MOWERS: 6 Ransomes Fairway 250s

ROUGH MOWERS: 6 Ransomes AR250 turbos

RIDING BUNKER RAKE: 2 Toro SandPros

TURF UTILITY VEHICLES: 5 Toro Workman 3200, 4 Cushman Trucksters, 3 Daihatsu, 1 John Deere Gator 2020

VERTI-CUT REELS: 2 sets of Ransomes, 2 Gradens, 1 PTO Driven Brouwer

AERIFIERS: 2 John Deere 800 Aercores, 1 John Deere 1500 Aercore, 1 Ryan GA-60, 54-inch Soil Reliever, 72-inch Soil Reliever, 1 Hines Drill-N-Fill machine

TOPDRESSERS: 1 Ty-Crop Quickpass, 1 Ty-Crop MH 400, 1 Toro 1800

GROOMING REELS: 6 Ransomes G-Plex II Groomers

TOURNAMENT SPEED ROLLER: 1 Roll-N-Slice

REEL GRINDER: Foley 650 Accumaster

BEDKNIFE GRINDER: Bernard Anglemaster DX

IRRIGATION PUMP STATION: Flowtronex 2500 gpm (North Course), Flowtronex 1600 gpm (South Course).

IRRIGATION SYSTEM: Rain Bird

GOLF CAR FLEET: 35 gas, 1 electric

FLAGSTICKS: 54 Standard Golf

COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES: 6 computers, 2 printers

PRIMARY HERBICIDE: Barracade, Trimec, Roundup

PRIMARY INSECTICIDE: Merit, Dursban, Talstar



A view of Thomas' Drill-N-Fill machine at Pelican Hill

PRIMARY FUNGICIDE: Heritage, Spectro 90, Banner Maxx

PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER: Various Best and Lesco products

CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT: A one-inch hose!

OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT ON COURSE: 1989 Cushman

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING(S): 20,800 sq. ft.

ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF: 60,000 (30,000 per course)

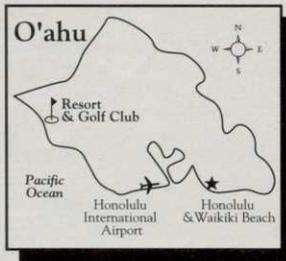
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Volunteer 'regulators' maintain private golf course at Dinosaur Dunes in western Kansas

By JOEL JOYNER

SHIELDS, Kan. — "It's unlike anything you have ever seen before," said Greg Strong, volunteer superintendent and one of the "regulators" here at the private Dinosaur Dunes Golf Club.

The course is unique indeed. Dinosaur Dunes is an 18-hole, 3,413-yard golf course located within the Cat House Outdoor Recreation facility in western Kansas. The owner, Clayton "Cat" Davis, designed and built the layout in 1988 along with the owner of the local John Deere dealership, David Kuhlman.

"We went out on the property with a case of beer and did all of the design work out in the field," said Davis. "I had some volunteers with me who helped with the construction work, and we built the course to our own standards. We've just continued to make changes over the years such as add bunkers, move tees around, and make changes to the design as we went."

Davis used to maintain the course himself with the assistance of some employees at the recreation facility. As other priorities at the recreation area and his cattle feed business required more of his attention, Davis has allowed golfers who are interested to volunteer their time and tools to maintain and make improvements at the course.

Superintendent Strong has volunteered at the course for about six years, and quite heavily during the past two years. "All of the volunteers are members of the club, and most are very active golfers that are out golfing every weekend. Last year, I got in 219 rounds myself," said Strong.

All of the greens at the course are either buffalograss or Bermudagrass. "We use a John Deere grooming mower on greens, fairways and roughs," Strong said.

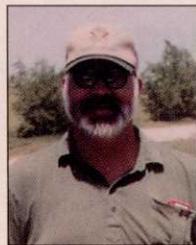
"Five of our volunteers, or regulators as we like to call them, are trained on the mower. The rest bring their own pruning saws, chainsaws, rakes, trimmers, blowers and whatever else is needed and do the work that is set out in the yearly planner. Sometimes we purchase the seed and tools needed ourselves."

The recreation area sits on about 1,100 acres. "It's one of the greatest deals in golf I've ever found," said Strong. "Membership to the recreation area is only \$125 per year. That entitles

REBUILDING THREE NEW HOLES

This year will be an ambitious year for Strong and his regulators. "We are planning on building three new holes – to replace holes that are affected by spring flooding – reseeding five greens, building three bunkers, and adding women's tees and stretching tips to increase playability and to lengthen our course by more than 400 yards," said Strong.

The course is only a par 62, but challenging, said Strong. "It plays through canyons. I've always felt that if you can play



Greg Strong



The sixth fairway at Dinosaur Dunes Golf Club

you, basically, to unlimited golf. There are no set tee times. If you are the guy standing on the tee box, it's your tee time."

Most of the regulators are weekend warriors, but Strong tries to be out on the course about every evening during the peak playing season. "There are a couple of members who even carry pruning saws in their golf bags," Strong said. "They'll go out and play 18 holes, and then head back out to mow five or six holes."

Dinosaur Dunes, you can play nearly any course in the world," he said. "There are drops in elevation up to 100 feet in some places. It's more of a target golf course, but none of the holes are very long."

The only par 5 on the course is 414 yards. "A lot of our par 4s are in the 246 yards to 287 yards range," explained Strong. "But if you are off target, you're off a cliff or in a plowed field. In the summer time, there are silage crops that

Continued on page 28

Audubon survey

Continued from page 8

lower toxicity levels.

• Efforts to address wildlife and habitat management have been equally effective, with 89 percent choosing native plants when landscaping, as compared to 49 percent before joining the program. In addition, the average number of acres devoted to providing wildlife habitat increased by 50 percent – from 45 acres to 67 acres per course – on average.

All of these strides were taken without compromising the quality of the game itself, according to the study. Nearly 100 percent of courses surveyed reported increased or maintained golf quality and player satisfaction.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Combined, the golf courses that responded to the survey provided 40,214 acres of wildlife habitat, an increase of nearly 10,000 acres due to program participation. However, there is more room for improvement in categories such as: improving spill containment for pesticide mixing and containment areas (64 percent); removing exotic invasive plants (56 percent); and installing a contained equipment wash-off area (45 percent).

"We need to continue to work with courses to reduce runoff, employ BMPs [Best Management Practices] in the maintenance facility, and monitor water quality," said Jean Mackey, director of educational services at Audubon International.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf was launched in 1991 in conjunction with the United States Golf Association (USGA). The average course covers 150 acres, with just 30 percent generally used for greens, tees, fairways and buildings – leaving 70 percent as rough, woods, water and other habitats, according to the USGA.

"Golf courses offer a unique open space in landscape for wildlife to exist and thrive. Ongoing stewardship actions and education efforts lead to habitat protection, natural resource protection, and a reduction in the overall impact of golf management practices on the surrounding ecosystem," said Joellen Zeh, staff ecologist with Audubon International. ■

Reduce turnover with hiring plan

Continued from page 8

objective here is to sift through the many applicants and identify those most suited for the work using a best worker profile. A best worker profile identifies the qualities of your current workforce that makes them a successful team.

Many other superintendents find themselves faced with labor markets that are challenged by low unemployment, high housing costs, and few responses to the traditional methods of seasonal staffing. For those in a tough labor market, it is important to effectively compete for candidates that fit your best worker profile.

WORKING WITH NEW EMPLOYEES

After selecting the right individual, steps need to be taken to increase the odds of their success. It is critical to know how the position meets their needs. You need to know what brought the person to the job. This information will allow superintendents to better motivate the person and will help reduce turnover.

After the decision to hire and before communicating this news to the applicant, it is important to manage expectations. Share all the negative aspects of the job up front; it is

important that they understand and accept that they will be doing manual labor, getting up early in the morning, working weekends, etc. Do not hire until you have clearly communicated the aspects of the work that have caused some to leave your operation. Rather than selling them on all the great aspects and hope they can handle the challenges, it is much wiser to undersell the positives and focus on gaining acceptance of the challenges.

MOTIVATING WORKERS

When applicants are looking for work, they know the very lowest wages they will accept. It is important to learn this number. If the goal is to obtain effective staff with limited turnover, then it may well be counter productive to agree to pay someone the very lowest wage they can accept. Paying somewhat more than the minimum they will accept allows you to exceed their expectations and helps them to accept the challenges of the position.

Having a plan that addresses the challenges you face in hiring staff is site specific. The better one understands the community and its dynamics, the better they will be able to identify opportunities to attract successful applicants. By taking full advantage of this experience to establish and manage staff expectations, superintendents can dramatically reduce future turnover. ■

Thomas' Tools

Continued from previous page

maintenance operation at Oak Creek.

"Our main battles at Pelican Hill are the poor soil conditions, transition problems and using reclaimed water," said Thomas. "With a 75-man maintenance team, we have created an intense cultivation, irrigation and fertilization program to combat these issues."

One tool Thomas has recently implemented is the use of a Drill-N-Fill machine. "This machine helps us with our heavy clay soils by injecting sand and helping with drainage and compaction," said Thomas. "We've done complete fairways with it, traffic areas in the rough and other high compaction areas such as green walk-ons and the driving range tee.

"I currently spend most of my time at Pelican Hill, but I also oversee Oak Creek as well," explained Thomas. "It's a wonderful challenge to keep both facilities in tournament condition on a daily basis." ■

RCGA supports environmental initiatives with donations

EDMONTON, Alberta, Canada — Two environmental initiatives have received a big boost thanks to a \$110,000 donation from the Royal Canadian Golf Association (RCGA).

A check for \$75,000 was presented to the Canadian Turfgrass Research Foundation while the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary

System of Canada received \$35,000 during the RCGA's annual general meeting here at Edmonton's Fantasyland Hotel.

"The sport of golf has enjoyed incredible growth in recent years," said Stephen Ross, executive director of the RCGA. "However, that growth places increased importance on devel-

oping the game in an environmentally responsible manner. Both these programs work hard to protect and enhance our environment and we are proud to support them."

The Canadian Turfgrass Research Foundation (CTRF) funds turfgrass and environmental research at various universi-

ties and research facilities across Canada. The foundation's goal is to reduce maintenance requirements by improving turfgrass species and cultural practices. Institutions currently receiving CTRF support are Laval University, University of Guelph and Nova Scotia Agricultural College.

ACSS OF CANADA

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System of Canada develops and administers environmental education programs for landowners. As many as 25 Canadian golf courses have become fully certified sanctuaries for wildlife, while another 170 courses are actively participating in the program. The RCGA's donation will assist in the ongoing environmental education program.

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- Secondary turf equipment market growing pains
- Chicago credit giant to finance golf
- Wolf Creek offers high drama in Nevada desert
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- Secondary turf equipment market growing pains**
By JAY FINEGAN
CHICAGO — A new source of capital has entered the golf industry, and this one comes with deep pockets. Heller Financial, a \$20-billion credit firm, recently established a golf lending group with plans to fill some of the void created when the Bank of America abandoned the golf-financing field last fall. Ironically, two of the key players in the new Heller golf brain trust have sailed in from Bank of America. Rick Nekoroski, who completed \$275 million in golf course investments for Bank of America, will try from Bank of America's eastern half of the country from Bank of America's western half. Rick Heller, Heller Financial's manager for the golf...
- Chicago credit giant to finance golf**
By JAY FINEGAN
CHICAGO — A new source of capital has entered the golf industry, and this one comes with deep pockets. Heller Financial, a \$20-billion credit firm, recently established a golf lending group with plans to fill some of the void created when the Bank of America abandoned the golf-financing field last fall. Ironically, two of the key players in the new Heller golf brain trust have sailed in from Bank of America. Rick Nekoroski, who completed \$275 million in golf course investments for Bank of America, will try from Bank of America's eastern half of the country from Bank of America's western half. Rick Heller, Heller Financial's manager for the golf...
- Wolf Creek offers high drama in Nevada desert**
By DOUG SAUNDERS
MESQUITE, Nev. — The fairways of the recently opened Wolf Creek Golf Club pour through the stark desert terrain like green lava flowing through the landscape. Their stunning contrast against the multi-colored sandstone cliffs creates a spectacular setting that begs a golfer to come out and play in this high desert setting in southeastern Nevada. Your first thoughts are: how could a... Continued on page 24
- Drought-stricken N'west faces dry summer**
By JOEL JOYNT
SPOKANE, Idaho — A drought-stricken Northwest is facing a dry summer. According to Scott Gudes, acting administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Northwest is the most drought-stricken region of the United States. Continued on page 12

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- OVERRECK: A three-to-four-year-old John Deere ProConditioner 3235 fairway mower (left) retails for around \$22,000, compared to \$36,000 for a brand-new 3235S model. It comes with a one-year warranty.
- packages more attractive, they make it more difficult for dealers and wholesale brokers to unload used equipment at a reasonable profit. In order for leases to grow, there...
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Ice damage

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to clean up in the spring." At a price of \$16 for a 40-pound bag of Profile and \$8 a bag for a 50-pound bag of sunflower seeds, the material costs are low.

Superintendent Scott Cybulski at Falmouth Country Club is having similar success with Profile. He uses one 40-pound bag per green and has made one application so far this year.

"It works right down through the ice and makes air holes in it," he said. "When it is above freezing it works really well. It turns the ice into a frozen margarita consistency."

While some are concerned that constant applications of Profile would cause the build up of a Profile "layer" in the soil, Hodge is not concerned.

"I am putting down such a light application," he said. "And with my verticutting and aeration it gets worked into the soil. I have also just done this twice this year. If I was putting down tons year after year, then I would worry."

Getting rid of the snow cover and the ice, however, does open the greens up to other problems, Hodge conceded.

"Exposed turfgrass is now susceptible to direct low temperature kill and desiccation," he said. "But at least I can see the turf and manage it."

The best case scenario at this point would be snowy weather. "We have had a lot of ice this winter," he said. "Some snow cover would help." ■

Snowmelt clues

Continued from page 8

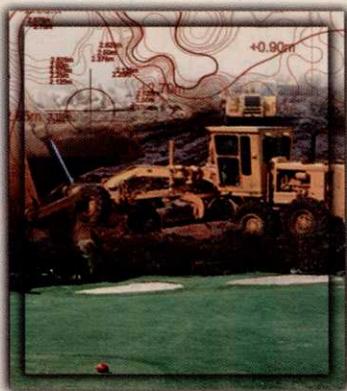
analyzed, and future fencing and repellants can be planned.

Although not related to the snowmelt process, mice damage inhabiting irrigation controllers is another potential problem spot. Most manufacturers recommend that irrigation field satellites remain on during the winter period. These can generate small amounts of heat that mice cherish over the winter period. The resulting damage from wires being chewed can cause major headaches. Preventive measures such as putting mice bait inside these controllers can reduce this damage. ■

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BRIEFS

ASGCA'S GOLFCOURSE-1 TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

CHICAGO — The American Society of Golf Course Architects has created GolfCourse-1 to provide those interested in building a new golf course or remodeling an old one with the appropriate planning guidelines and materials. ASGCA president Damian Pascuzzo will head the effort which is meant to grow the game of golf by providing pertinent information from architects on the proper planning, permitting and construction processes for new construction and remodeling. The package will include information on all types of courses, including par-3, executive and 9-hole layouts. The ASGCA already has many of the materials in place and will be distributing them to individual clubs, municipalities and investment groups. The organization will also add a special section to its Web site (www.asgca.org) for GolfCourse-1.

RTJ II CREATES DALE FURBER EDUCATIONAL TRUST

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Robert Trent Jones, Jr. has started the Dale Furber Educational Trust for the son of late Robert Trent Jones II colleague Al Furber. RTJ II has made an initial contribution of \$25,000 and hopes to match that amount over each of the next two years with the goal of assuring the kind of future for Dale that his father would have provided him. Al's brother Les Furber, a Canadian golf course architect, will act as trustee for the fund. Contributions should be sent to Les Furber, Dale Furber Educational Trust, Box 8160 Canmore, AB T1W2T9, Canada.



YORK NAMED TO GCBA BOARD

TAMPA, Fla. — James York, owner and CEO for York Bridge Concepts, has been named to the board of directors of the Golf Course Builders Association of America. York has been in the golf course industry for nearly 20 years. Headquartered here, his company creates custom designed and on-site construction of timber bridges, retaining walls and other structures on golf courses.

Construction to continue downward trend in 2002

By JOEL JOYNER

JUPITER, Fla. — The U.S. economy hit a recession last year, and a slow down ensued in new golf course construction. The numbers for new construction in 2001 fell off a cliff compared to those recorded in 1999 and 2000. As a result, those in the industry take a cautious perspective on what 2002 has in store for new development projects and where some potential opportunities exist.

New construction hit a peak in 2000 when 524 total projects opened. "Looking at the openings in 2000, it's a pretty safe bet that was the high-water mark. We will not see that number ever again," said Barry Frank, vice president of member services at the NGF.

New development projects completed in 2001 topped out at 377. In 18-hole equivalents, that came to 284 courses compared to 18-hole equivalents of 398.5 courses in 2000 — a downward slide of 114.5 courses. "According to what we see in the pipeline right now, we think there's going to be about 325 openings this year," said Frank. "Our projections are that there will be about 230 daily-fee, 40 municipal and 55 private course openings."

FINANCING TOSS UP

Financing will be a challenging component to most new construction projects. "What the sources out there are saying is

that major lenders for new golf development do not have a great deal of interest," said Frank. "They're primarily cash flow lenders that like historical cash flows that they can project forward, and they take into account the expertise of the operator.

"If there's a choice between putting money into a new project versus something that has a historical track record, lenders are going to go with the history," he continued. "The biggest source for new construction will likely be local banks or private funding in unusual situations."

Real estate related golf projects are expected to remain consistent regardless of demand, according to Frank. "Because they serve an alternative purpose, to sell lots at an increased rate and to increase absorption," he said. "Developers will continue to build real estate related golf projects not so much that they are self sufficient but as an amenity to the overall project."

New construction, however, will continue despite financial barriers. In tough eco-

nomie times, development projects with merit will to proceed, according to Jim McLoughlin with the McLoughlin Group in Pleasantville, Ky. "A soft economy tends

CONSTRUCTION DROP OFF

OPENINGS	2000	2001	DIFFERENCE
PROJECTS	524	377	-147
18-HOLE EQUIVALENTS	398.5	284	-114.5

Source: National Golf Foundation

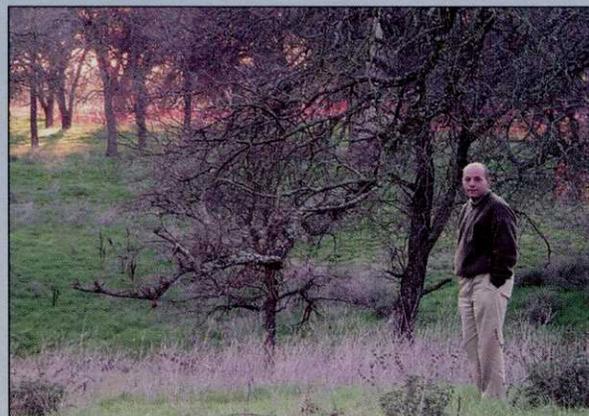
to weed out weaker projects before they get off the ground," he said. "Projects that are worthy, that are good for the developer and the local community, will continue to be developed."

DEVELOPERS ARE FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC REGIONS

While industry leaders say development depends on locality and demographics, there are some hot spots. According to the NGF, some of the top states for projected openings in the top four regions include: Texas, 31 courses; Florida, 20 courses; Michigan, 18 courses; Ohio, 13 courses; and Arizona, 12 courses.

"The top region is expected to be our South Atlantic region that we project to have 62 openings this year," said Frank.

Continued on page 15



Kyle Phillips on site at Morgan Creek GC in Roseville, Calif.

Kyle Phillips returns home to California

By DOUG SAUNDERS

GRANITE BAY, Calif. — For golf architect Kyle Phillips, things have come full circle. Since establishing his own design firm after a fifteen-year association with Robert Trent Jones II Design Group, Phillips has developed a reputation in four short years for visually pleasing and strategically challenging course designs worldwide. Two of his most renowned works, Kingsbarns Golf Links just south of St. Andrews, Scotland, and Golf Eichenhein in Kitzbuhel-Aurach, Austria, have drawn attention to the enthusiastic designer. He begins 2002 by returning to California to design and build in the state he calls home.

Phillips is in the rough shaping phase of his latest American project, Morgan Creek Golf Club, a private club under construction near Roseville, Calif. After several projects abroad, Phillips is enjoying the opportunity to work close to home because it allows him to be even more hands on as the course takes shape.

"I approach every course differently," said Phillips. "The surrounding area, the landscape, the ownership, and the overall plan for any course are all factors that

Continued on page 16

Raymond Hearn: Industry must learn that less is often more

PLYMOUTH, Mich. — The one matter of seemingly universal agreement concerning the aftermath of Sept. 11 is that things will never be the same, and it is difficult to identify an industry that remains unaffected. Golf is no exception. But like many businesses, shifts in the golf industry have been percolating for some time.

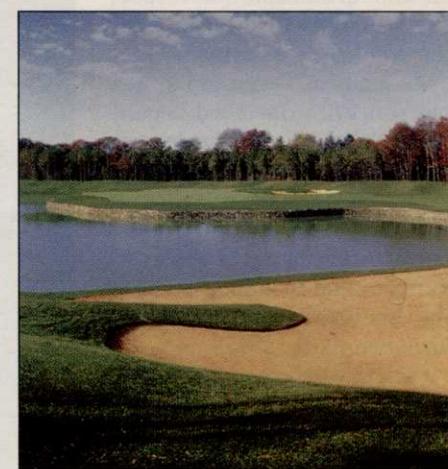
Increased competition for green fees and an overabundance of courses in some areas has been with us for some time now, and the construction of new courses has slowed considerably from the record levels of the 1990s. Plymouth, Mich.-based designer Raymond Hearn addresses possible changes facing the industry and the impact on, and of, golf course architecture.

Golf Course News: What do developers need to consider when contemplating construction of a new course?

Raymond Hearn: Like any number of business endeavors during boom times, the emphasis in the recent past has been on "more is better." The results have often been intriguing, but of course the more bells and whistles in a given design, the

greater the construction and maintenance costs are likely to be. As in any business, profitability can only be achieved by passing along these costs to the consumer.

GCN: How does this trans-



The 16th at Hearn's Sea Oaks GC in New Jersey

late into specific course features?

Hearn: If we listen to golfers across the board, I believe they're telling us what they want. This includes courses that are easier — "more playable" is the current buzzword — as well as more affordable and, wherever possible, less time-consuming to play. This is especially true of golfers new to the game or contemplating taking it up. In general, this means

Continued on page 16

Esler to restore Ross design at Ravisloe

By JOEL JOYNER

HOMEWOOD, Ill. — A major renovation project will be getting underway this spring at the Ravisloe Country Club, a Donald Ross-designed layout located here in this suburb south of Chicago. The project will be overseen by golf course architect David Esler who completed his first new construction design last year at the exclusive, mens-only Black Sheep Golf Club in Sugar Grove, Ill. (*GCN*, November 2001).

Ravisloe has a variety of bunker styles — from tiny pot bunkers to massive waste areas — that Esler plans to restore to their original look. Recapturing green surfaces and pin placements, removing trees and making fairway modifications, and moving a few tees back to compensate for improved ball and club technology are the big issues to be tackled. The project is going to be executed in two phases.

“The design at Ravisloe is pretty much finished,” said Esler. “The first phase will take place this spring on four or five holes, depending on the weather, and the remainder will be improved on in the fall. The schedule allows us to make the changes while keeping the course open for play.”

The primary scope of the work involves the restoration of all bunkers — more than 80 altogether. “We’ll be grassing over probably 15 to 20 bunkers and retaining the land form,” Esler explained. “Obviously, we’ll be respecting the modern distances the golf ball travels while at the same time respecting the tradition of the course and the original Ross design.”

As many as seven to ten new bunkers will be installed, according to Esler. “We will be deepening a lot of the new bunkers where the drainage will allow us to do that,” he said. “We’ll also be restoring many of the cross bunkers and installing some of the bentgrass surrounds that have been lost as well.

“There will be expanded chipping areas and expanded collars around the greens,” added Esler. “In addition to that, on eight or 12 holes, we’ll be expanding the greens to their original shape, an eccentric shape in some cases, and original size.”

By removing some trees and expanding the fairways, Esler expects to capture more strategy. “It provides alternate lines of play and offers more options for shot placement,” he said. “Strategy is a critical element, and that also includes course conditions. The golf course needs to be dry. The drainage work we’ll be doing on the green surrounds will give players an

opportunity to bounce the ball up onto the greens.”

AERIAL IMAGES

The course was built in 1901, and Ross did remodeling work at the facility in the 1920s.

“We found pictures of the course from the 1920s and 1930s in the attic and in the superintendent’s office that re-

veal a variety of styles from massive waste bunkers to tiny pot bunkers,” said Esler.

While drawings were not available, aerial photographs were on hand. “One of the original members, Alex Bower, published a book called *Hazards*. It’s a bit of an obscure book, but he was a real champion and student of golf

course architecture back in the 1920s,” said Esler. “I believe he was also instrumental in bringing Ross to the property to redesign it, and may have commissioned some of the aerial photography to document the work.”

‘A TIGHT BUDGET JOB’

The architect is working closely with the membership to make sure that the project is economical. The work is expected to cost between \$450,000 and \$500,000.

“It’s a tight budget job,” Esler said. “There’s not a lot of extra money going around.

We’ll be using existing drain tiles where it is functional and keep materials localized so that we are not hauling them from



Continued on next page



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Construction

Continued from page 13

"Florida is expected to be the top state in that region with Virginia to follow with a projected 11 openings."

Larry Hirsh with Golf Properties Analyst in Harrisburg, Pa., points to other opportunities that exist for new construction on the East Coast.

"The New York City area is

hot right now and definitely has potential," said Hirsh. "The area between New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C currently has opportunities available."

A large market opportunity for new construction is within 50 miles or 75 miles of New York City, said Hirsh. "On Long Island - though it's very expensive land - there's opportunity as well as in Westchester County, Orange County, northern New Jersey and

central New Jersey."

One of the development and management companies taking advantage of the opportunity in the Northeast is Empire Golf. The company will be focused on two new projects this year - one in Westchester County, N.Y., and the other in Bayonne, N.J. "There are still opportunities in the Northeast for new construction, but it's certainly getting tougher because the financing is not

there right now," said Empire Golf's president Eric Bergstol.

FEASIBILITY STUDIES ARE KEY

No matter the location, feasibility studies will be essential to any new development, said McLoughlin. "Even in a good economy, you can build a golf course in the wrong place," he said. "In the past three or four years, there has been some overbuilding - not nationally, but regionally."

Good feasibility studies are a good way to stop all unnecessary projects, McLoughlin said. "The feasibility work in this country is not where it needs to be - very few consultants say 'No.' As far as new construction, everything needs to be localized," he said. "There is a massive distinction between regional and national.

"For example, I have a client in Easton, Pa., who wants to build a course. We looked around and saw that there are eight courses within a half-hour drive of the proposed site, none that we're doing more than 30,000 to 32,000 rounds at prices of \$35 or less," he explained. "We recommended that the client not do it. The same client wants to build a course in Allentown, N.J. We did a spot check on the area and found opportunity there."

Overall, across the country, new golf construction has slowed, admitted McLoughlin. "But there's ample room out there to develop if you know what you're doing and you pick your spots," he said. "Even in the middle of World War II, this country was still averaging around 250 courses a year. Golf is a tremendously resilient game, and there will always be places for it." ■

Esler, Ross

Continued from previous page

one side to the other. We'll also save existing bentgrass where we can and move it to spots where we need it. We will try to minimize the use of bentgrass sod which is a very expensive item."

Members were reassured about the bunker restoration work when course superintendent Ed Esgar built a sample bunker at the club's practice area. "Along with my crew, we actually built a trial bunker and showed the membership what we had in mind," said Esgar. "It's a grassed-faced bunker like the ones we will be restoring out on the course that have that flashed-sand style.

"The practice bunker was not only successful in educating the members, but promoting the concept and showing them what they had to look forward to," explained Esgar. "The members had discussed restoring some bunkers for a few years now, but there were some difficulties in obtaining the necessary funding. We put the bunker in last September, and it certainly helped provide some incentive to the members."

The superintendent also has finished the ongoing project of squaring off the tee boxes at the club. "We will continue from that stage and, again, address some drainage issues around the tees," said Esler. "We may even have to eliminate some cart paths in the process." ■

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Hearn: Less is more

Continued from page 13

courses that take maximum advantage of the existing landscape. We've paid lip service for years to the notion of "taking what the land gives us," but implementing the concept has frequently been a different matter.

GCN: Is there a model for this sort of facility?

Hearn: There's a fantastic model: Public courses in the British Isles, particularly Scotland, are truly integral to the fabric of society. This is partly a function

of the game's longer traditional establishment there, but that undoubtedly wouldn't be the case if it were priced beyond the means of the average golfer. The courses themselves were built before the days of large-scale earth moving and meticulous maintenance, but that doesn't make them any less interesting. We talk about the notion of inclusion, but we don't always walk the walk.

GCN: What about some examples from your own recent experience?

Hearn: Yes and no. First, it's hard to object to the idea of a client saying, "Just



Hearn: Our firm has recently completed, or is nearing completion of three courses with construction budgets in the \$1.8 million to \$2.3 million range. They are quality designs that allow their owners to charge \$25 to \$45 per round and have quickly

developed an enthusiastic following.

GCN: But as a designer, wouldn't you prefer a large budget? Doesn't it make the design process more stimulating?

Hearn: Yes and no. First, it's hard to object to the idea of a client saying, "Just

spend as much as you want, including your fee." But, understandably, that's not the way the business is going and, for the reasons cited above, this kind of approach to design isn't what the game of golf really needs today. There's nothing wrong with an extravagant golf course project, but I'm not concerned about the guy who can spend \$400 for a day at the course. My interest is in accommodating all the people who can't. Second, designing an entertaining layout using primarily existing landforms and including strategic options for players of all abilities is more challenging, not less, than just moving earth and other features whenever the whim suits you. ■

— Tom Harack

Tom Harack is a freelance writer based in New York City.

Kyle Phillips

Continued from page 13

must be considered. There is no formula that is right for every golf course, and I strive to accentuate each course's unique traits in order to make each course an individual statement."

The project at Morgan Creek is a joint venture between Olympic Realty Advisors, the investment of the California retirement fund CALPERS, the Stonebridge Group of Utah, and Lakemont Homes. The entire project has been under the direction of David Cook, who was an investment consultant at Granite Bay Country Club, a 1992 project where Phillips was the lead designer.

SIX YEARS IN THE WORKS

Cook has been working for the past six years to bring the expansive Morgan Creek development through mitigation, but knew all along that he would like to work with Phillips again after the experience at Granite Bay.

"Kyle has the ability to respond to both the site and the needs of the entire project. I feel that he really listens to what we are trying to accomplish and then fits the golf course into that concept," Cook explained.

The site at Morgan Creek has subtle movement, so the key for Phillips was to set a routing plan that would create good sight lines that make the course, not the houses, the main focal point.

"Cook wanted to have a course that has a very traditional look and feel to it. After working in Europe for the past few years, I have gained more appreciation for the design work of architects, such as H.S. Colt, who designed around natural mounds and slopes to create the angles and challenges that make their courses so intriguing. I try to create these types of landforms in my designs and make them seem as if they have been there forever. This is the landscaping challenge I enjoy the most," Phillips explained.

While he continues to have more projects under consideration overseas, Phillips is happy to have more work open up here in the States. His recent renovation work at the Robert Trent Jones Country Club in Virginia drew praise during the 2000 edition of the President's Cup, and he will be doing more work there this summer. He is also completing environmental impact reports on a daily-fee facility for the city of Alameda, Calif., on a recently decommissioned naval base. ■

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GCSAA's Golf Super-Market is ready for online business

By JOEL JOYNER

ORLANDO, Fla. — It might be an Internet-based service, but a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the launch of the GCSAA's Golf Super-Market.

Accessible via GCSAA Online (www.gcsaa.org), the formal announcement of the service was made at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of



Sean Hoolehan (left) and Scott Woodhead cut the ribbon to launch the Golf Super-Market.

America's 73rd International Conference and Show here in Orlando, Fla. Golf Super-Market was developed from a pilot program that was conducted this past summer.

The Golf Super-Market is conceptually much like a traditional shopping mall as companies lease storefront space to display their products to superintendents. There are no transaction fees and any purchase is strictly between the superintendent and the storeowner, said GCSAA Web

strategy committee chairman R. Scott Woodhead, CGCS.

Additional services and a more personalized approach are available on the site. For example, each individual using the mall can be "geocoded" so that the search results seen are ones that meet a user's criteria and particular location. This provides the most targeted results, but also helps ensure any necessary regulatory compliance and that established sales territories are recognized.

"The goal of this project was to deliver a service that supports the industry's existing distribution network and preserves superintendent relationships with trusted suppliers," Woodhead said. "The mall will always be a work in progress, and it will continue to evolve over time."

ENTERLINE DESIGN

As of the opening, there were 28 charter tenants who were participating in the Golf Super-Market. Raleigh, N.C.-based Nterline, the mall's technology provider, designed the functionality of the service and offers a number of different options for storefront design. The site also includes the GCSAA Buyers' Guide listing to give contact information, including companies that do not have storefronts.

Suppliers can incorporate their existing Internet efforts into their storefront spaces at the mall, or opt to have a store built for them by Nterline. Single- and multi-tier options are available to cost-efficiently serve not only distributors with a single location, but also manufacturers who wish to route product sales through their distribution networks. Future enhancements for the site include a storefront rating system that will allow superintendents to share their shopping experiences.

Highlights from the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) 73rd International Golf Course Conference and Show concluded with a week-long schedule of activities including the wrap-up of the association's year-long celebration of its 75th anniversary. Highlights from the show include:

- Official attendance was 20,613, marking the seventh year in a row that the 20,000 figure has been topped, according to the association. Attendance in Dallas last year was 20,927.

- Education seminar attendance was 6,921, down from the 7,616 in attendance in Dallas.

- A total of 729 exhibitors covered 273,000 square feet of floor space. Last year, 735 exhibitors comprised a record 275,500 square feet of space.

- G C S A A election results were: Michael Wallace, president; Jon Maddern, vice president; Mark Woodward, secretary/treasurer; Sean Hoolehan, director; David Downing, director; and Ricky Heine, who has been appointed to fill Woodward's remaining one-year term as director. Tommy Witt will serve as immediate past president. Robert

Maibusch and Timothy O'Neill will remain on the board of directors with one year left to fulfill their terms.

- Retired St. Andrews Links Trust greenkeeper Walter Woods received GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award.

- The Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association earned G C S A A 's President's Award for Environmental Leadership for its creation of the Environmental Management Resource Manual.

- The GCSAA renewed its sponsorship of Senior PGA Tour professional Jim Colbert.

- The GCSAA Foundation has exceeded its \$5 million "Investing in the Beauty of Golf Campaign."

- Houston Couch, Ph.D., at Virginia Tech; William Ploetz, retired golf course superintendent from Independence Golf Course in Gonzales, Texas; and Bruce Williams, CGCS, the Los Angeles Country Club were selected as GCSAA Distinguished Service Award winners.

- The GCSAA/*Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards were presented (see page 18).



GCSAA wrapped up its 75th anniversary



A view of the trade show floor in Orlando

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GOLF COURSE NEWS
THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

GCSAA names environmental leaders in golf

By JOEL JOYNER

NAPLES, Fla. — Collier's Reserve Country Club in Naples, Fla., and its superintendent William Davidson, Jr., have been named the overall winners of the 2001 GCSAA/*Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

Winners were named in national categories for public, private and resort golf



Superintendent Billy Davidson stands among one of the naturalized areas at Collier's Reserve.

courses and one international category, with the overall winner selected from those four. "It was a big surprise," said Davidson. "If nothing else, we were hoping to inform people about some of the programs we're doing at the course."

BURN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

One of the unique programs implemented here at the facility is a burn management plan. Davidson holds a license in the state of Florida to prescribe fire to do habitat management.

"We started the program a few years ago," he said. "It's unique because there are not too many golf courses that light fires next to million dollar homes."

The property is nearly 450 acres with more than 180 acres of preserved land. "We burn selected sites every year, and basically approach the same locations in three-to-four year cycles," said Davidson. "We accomplish the burns in small blocks, around 5,000 square feet at a time. It's less expensive than managing the areas by hand and much faster. In that respect,

we're using Mother Nature in our favor."

Davidson completed an 80-hour course and all prerequisites with the state's Division of Forestry to become a certified burn manager. His qualification eliminates the need for the course to bring in an outside contractor.

"The fire takes care of everything leaving a nice clean environment," he said. "It removes all the exotic, invasive plants and dead vegetation. It opens up the ground for sunlight in order for new plants and wildflowers to regenerate. In addition, all of the burned materials are turned into fertilizers to assist new plant growth — just the way Mother Nature intended."

Unlike the Division of Forestry that burns hundreds of acres every year, the course is fortunate to have an irrigation system to connect hoses to and have a constant water supply available. Davidson usually burns during the winter and spring seasons.

"Last winter the state was in a major drought and prohibited any burning," he said. "We'll tackle the burn management program again in late spring, early summer this year."

WILDLIFE RELOCATION PROGRAM

The course established a wildlife relocation program on the property last year.

"Any animals that are taken to the local conservancy for rehabilitation, like if they were hit by a car, we've become a foster site for them," said Davidson. "We've become a home for displaced animals and animals rehabilitated after an injury."

The facility has released a gray fox, several birds, and a couple of tortoises to date, Davidson said. "The homeowners [more than 220 homes] are strong proponents of our environmental efforts which makes things much easier," he said.

Collier's Reserve is no stranger to receiving environmental recognition. The course, and its former superintendent Tim Hiers, won the association's national category for a private club back in 1995. In fact, the course was the first ever Audubon International Signature status golf course when it was built in 1993, said Davidson.

"There was no signature program at the time," he said. "Tim Hiers and Ron Dodson [president and CEO at Audubon International] basically created the signature program through the construction of this facility. It started here and has

been developed and enhanced to what it is now."

THE ENVELOPE PLEASE

The top entry for each GCSAA affiliated chapter was named for the Environmental Leaders in Golf Award, and merit awards were given to those who did not earn national or chapter honors, but — in the opinion of the judges — deserved special recognition. The national winners were:

- National Public: Kevin Hutchins, Presidio Golf Course, San Francisco, Calif., Northern California Golf Course Su-



The 12th hole at the Collier's Reserve CC

perintendents Association

- National Private: William Davidson Jr., Collier's Reserve Country Club, Naples, Fla., Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association

- National Resort: Anne Hickman, Barton Creek Country Club, Austin, Texas, Lone Star Golf Course Superintendents Association

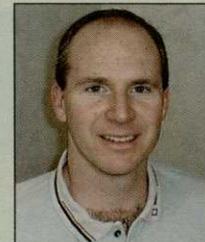
- International: James Sua, CGCS, National Service Resort & Country Club, Singapore

National, chapter and merit winners were recognized Feb. 7 during the GCSAA's Golf General Session.

The Environmental Leaders in Golf Award is sponsored by Syngenta Professional Products; Rain Bird Corp., Golf Division; Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products; and Pursell Technologies Inc.

Clodfelter wins back-to-back golf titles

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — Mitch Clodfelter, superintendent at the Cowans Ford Country Club in Stanley, N.C., has captured his second consecutive title at the GCSAA's 2002 Golf Championship held here at five area courses, Feb. 4-5. He is the first back-to-back winner of the tournament since Roger Null in 1990 and 1991.



Mitch Clodfelter

Clodfelter shot a six over par to win the event posting a 75 each day for a final score of 150. Battling strong winds and cool temperatures, he finished his two-stroke victory at World Golf Village's The Slammer & The Squire course.

He led a tight match against Mark Henderson, superintendent at the Gulf Stream [Fla.] Golf Club who marked up a pair of 76s for a combined score of 152. A three-handicapper, Clodfelter was a member of the 1989 Guilford (N.C.) College squad. The consecutive titles marks the seventh time in the 52-year history of the tournament that a competitor had repeat victories.

Superintendent Andrew Huffman at the Beloit (Kan.) Country Club gave Clodfelter a run for his money by posting a 73 on the first day of the event, but he followed the day after with a score of 80 to finish off with a total of 153, tying for the third slot in the ranks with fellow superintendent Robert Rogers at the Governors Club in Chapel Hill, N.C.

For the eighth consecutive year, The Toro Co. joined forces with GCSAA to host the event that had a field of 610 golf course superintendents from around the world.

Thompson receives USGA Green Section Award

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Long-time golf course superintendent George B. Thompson was awarded the United States Golf Association's 2002 Green Section Award at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando, Fla. The honor, presented Feb. 9, recognized Thompson for "distinguished contributions to golf through work in turfgrass."

The 63-year-old Thompson has been a superintendent for more than 35 years. "All my heroes in the industry have received this award," said Thompson. "I'm really honored to be part of this group."

A graduate from the Agricultural School at the University of Massachusetts in Stockbridge, Thompson spent nearly 18 years as superintendent at the Colum-



George Thompson

bia Country Club in Chevy Chase, Md. He then spent another 18 years as superintendent at the Country Club of North Carolina in Pinehurst where he retired in 2000.

WORKING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGY

Thompson stood out in the course of his career as a superintendent willing to investigate new techniques. In the late 1960s, he was one of the first to use the improved perennial ryegrass varieties for fairway turf in the transition zone. Several universities and chemical companies sought him out to evaluate new products and turfgrass varieties.

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the Safe Harbor Program in the mid-1990s to protect the red-cockaded woodpecker in the North Carolina Sandhills, the country Club of North Carolina was among the first to join the program. The club nurtured a hospitable habitat for the endangered species among the old growth longleaf pines and today has one of the largest populations of these woodpeckers of any golf course in the Southeast.

Since 1991, Thompson has continued his environmental activities as a participant in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

Thompson also has given back to the industry by being one of the first to offer student internships on his golf course. Many of his former assistants have become successful golf course superintendents and industry leaders.

He has been an active volunteer in the local turfgrass industry as well. Thompson's resume includes positions as president of the Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Greater Washington Golf Course Superintendents Association, and the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina (TCNC).

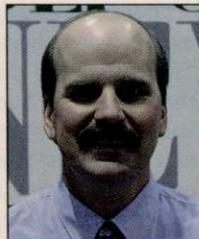
His leadership at the TCNC helped to establish a strong, long-term university/turfgrass industry relationship.

Today, Thompson continues to influence the golf course superintendents of the future through his teaching and speaking activities. Even in retirement, he teaches a turf management course at nearby Sandhills College.

Kevin Ross selects top new products from GCSAA show

By KEVIN ROSS

ORLANDO, Fla. — While walking the trade show floor, there was a decidedly quieter buzz than usual surrounding new equipment debuts. Whether it was because of the events of Sept. 11 or company cutbacks and slowdowns, ground breaking new products were few and far between. However, some new products were hot topics of discussion on the show floor among superintendents.



Kevin Ross

NEW AND HOT

• My *Debut of the Show* goes to the **miniature foam marking kits**. These kits are designed for use with walking rotary or drop spreaders. Although foam



The foam marking kit on a Spyker spreader

kits have been around for years, and Salvarani North America displayed their prototype last year in Dallas, these have certainly been needed for years. Superintendents can now eliminate all those old marking tricks such as gloves, golf balls, flags, and paint.

• The **Super CourtMaster compact automatic leveling system** from Laser Leveling gets the *Runner-up Debut Award*. Sure these have also been around for a few years, but not in the correct size that



Laser level earns Runner-up Debut Award

would benefit many areas on the golf course. This new leveling system will come in two different configurations, in either an attachment directly mounted to a Smithco bunker rake (marketed with Smithco) or as an independent pull unit to use with other rake manufacturers. This is the ultimate in-house unit for grading tees.

• While on the subject of bunker rakes, one of the more interesting equipment debuts from a major manufacturer has to go to the folks at Smithco. The debut of their **E-Star Rake** gets my *Electric Award*.

Electric equipment has yet to hit a home run in the golf business, but an electric bunker rake just may have the potential to take off. Briggs and Stratton's revolu-

tionary new E-tek motor powers this rake, which is quieter, more powerful, and more efficient than its predecessors. An electric rake not only offers the benefit of earlier start times where noise ordinances



Smithco's E-Star bunker rake

are in place, but also offers greater versatility to work around golfers.

• My *Attachments Award* goes to all the companies that are trying to develop the perfect bunker machine rake attachment. Each year there are several new configurations in search of the best rak-



The Jacobsen LF 1880 fairway unit

ing pattern. This year again there was an array of **new brushes, fingers, rakes, and brooms** for different tastes.

• The most interesting *Reel Mower Concept Award* goes to the **Jacobsen LF**

1880 fairway unit. This new unit fits between a present day tri-plex and five-plex. Its design features 18-inch cutting units that are advertised to follow contours better than anything on the market. Its 80-inch cut also lends itself to an aesthetically pleasing mowing pattern along with very low compaction weight per square inch. Time will tell if this becomes an industry standard. On the surface, it sure seems interesting.

• Another mower which attracted attention and receives my *Rotary Mower Award* is the **Toro 4500D and the 4700D**. These machines are similar to



The Toro 4500 D gets the Rotary Mower Award

the old Ransomes AR250, which has made such a big splash over the last five years. The 4500D offers a 5-deck configuration, while the 4700D offers a 7-deck configuration. Toro certainly had ample time to learn from the faults of the AR250, and it appears they have addressed all the issues with their design.

• To all the topdressing unit manufacturers, I bestow the *Versatility Award*. When you browse through the different

Continued on page 27

Wallace Q&A

Continued from page 1

2003, and we'll be working hard to put that entire infrastructure in place this year. In addition, we'll continue to look at our government relations and move forward with research, scholarship, education and all the other programs the association offers. The association is a big operation. There's no one overarching goal except to continue moving the GCSAA and its many programs forward and serve our members.

GCN: What preparations are being made to implement member standards in July 2003?

Wallace: Building the infrastructure to track some 9,000 to 10,000 members, in particular their continuing education units, will need to be established. The GCSAA will be issuing credits to members for things like coaching, being volunteer fire fighters and being involved in other civic activities. Those tracking mechanisms need to be put in place and ready to go. We're looking at the entire individual. We recognize that a member is not just all about golf. Things like social business skills are also needed, and we view superintendents as not only being valuable to the industry but to society as a whole. It broadens way out beyond just our educational programs. We're also looking at individual chapters and their educational programs and working to integrate them into one system. It's all part of our affordable,

accessible goals for educating members.

GCN: What challenges do you anticipate the association encountering this year?

Wallace: I think the challenges we face are those that are going to be faced by most every other industry. We're not immune to the economy. We're also not immune to the continued consolidation within our industry. As a result, the GCSAA is an organization that's dependent on revenue streams such as advertising, the conference and show, and membership growth. The economy will play a large part in where we go. Our business is such that our members have to take a budget each year to their clubs and state their cases as to what the return on the investment is in belonging to the GCSAA. We have a marvelous case to state, but it's one of those things that every year we have to sell it.

GCN: Last year, the GCSAA launched a pilot program for its e-commerce initiative. What role do you see the Internet taking with the association this year and in the near future?

Wallace: The focus needs to be on making continuous improvements and staying engaged and looking at different avenues. We must be willing to look outside what exists and say, 'Are there other ways of

doing business?' That's been critical in our Web strategy. Seven years ago when I joined the board, our Web strategy committee didn't even exist. We try to do things in a planned, methodical manner, but we also recognize that things move fairly quickly in the e-world. We've adapted to that, and we're working our way through that process. The way we look at it is not necessarily doing e-business but business-e. In other words, in what ways can we do our business electronically and will it work in other areas.

GCN: What potential benefits to the association and its members do you see available with the Internet, and are there any obstacles?

Wallace: It's certainly an educational resource and a communication tool. Reaching out to international members is a tremendous benefit. It allows us to communicate with them in a more time relevant format. However, the Internet does present a generation challenge. For younger superintendents and individuals just coming out of college, they've cut their teeth on computers and been involved with them ongoing. For gentlemen like myself, who may be getting toward the latter end of their careers as time goes on, computers weren't available when we entered the profession.

It's not like we're antiques, but it is a function we've had to go back and learn. But we recognize that the future is in computers and electronics, and that's where future superintendents need to be and feel comfortable.

GCN: Your contract with the Hop Meadow CC was not renewed this year. I imagine that a leadership role with the association and a leadership role at a golf club can prove challenging. Have you found any difficulties in trying to balance those two commitments?

Wallace: In taking my new position at Fairview Farm, one of my main concerns was my commitment to the GCSAA. The owner is very comfortable with that and encourages me to continue with it. That was one of my main criteria for taking the position. Balancing the two leadership roles is challenging. You just need to look for facilities where owners or boards understand that what we're doing — the mission of the GCSAA — is trying to provide the best educated and best superintendents available and continue to advance the profession. What we're trying to accomplish at the GCSAA is help make golf a better, more enjoyable and efficient game through education. Supporting the GCSAA is a function of the golf clubs giving back to the industry as a whole. Thankfully, there are some clubs out there that see that value. ■

— Joel Joyner

MARCH 2002 19

Hutchinson's Golf Works takes home Large Builder Award

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ORLANDO, Fla. — Frank Hutchinson started his career in the golf course construction business as a college student raking rocks out of irrigation ditches. In the course of his 26-year career, Hutchinson has performed almost every task in the construction process from being an irrigation superintendent to a shaper to a project superintendent. In 1988 he struck out on his own forming Austin, Texas-based Golf Works, Inc. and has emerged as one of the country's best builders.

While his hard work and perseverance probably paid off long ago, Hutchinson's Golf Works was recognized for its quality work in 2001 as it received the *Golf Course News* Large Builder of the Year Award. Hutchinson accepted the honor here at the Golf Course Builders Association of America's annual dinner Feb. 7.

Golf Works scored a 106.9 out of 110 points for its four projects in 2001. Other participants in this year's contest were Course Crafters, Highland Golf, Landscapes Unlimited, MacCurrach Golf Construction, Medalist Golf, Quality Grassing & Services, Ryangolf, SAJO Construction, and Shapemasters.

GOOD PEOPLE, COMMUNICATION AND TEAM WORK

According to Hutchinson, communication and teamwork are the keys to forming successful relationships and building qual-

ity golf courses.

"Receiving this award is about Golf Works, its people and the relationships that we have formed," he said. "When you can communicate your message to clients and design firms, and follow through, the results are tangible. I stay in constant communication with the project superintendent, architect and developer. If a struggle or conflict comes up we are then able to immediately address it."

Hutchinson attributes the firm's success to an experienced staff.

"I have a group of 34 people who have

been with me eight years or longer," he said. "With those people around and the fact that we only do between four and six courses a year, it keeps our product quality consistent."

Hutchinson is also very hands on. "There isn't anything in this business that I haven't done," he added. "When I come to a site, I don't just meet with the developer and the project superintendent, I meet with all my guys."

THREE NEW ARCHITECTS

Good communication skills were especially needed this year, as three of the company's four projects involved working with architects it had never worked with before.

"A lot of architects will tell you that they don't want to work with you on a high profile job when it is the first time," Hutchinson said. "But we worked hard to establish a good relationship in the begin-

ning and that helped us to be successful."

At Lake Cliff on Lake Travis outside Austin, the firm worked with Palmer Course Design; at Flintrock Golf Club in Austin they worked with Jack Nicklaus II; and at



A view of the 14th hole at Lake Travis

Teravista Golf Club in Round Rock, Texas, they worked with George Clifton.

It also helped that all three of those projects were located within 30 minutes of Golf Works' home base in Austin.

"I usually make two visits per project, per month," said Hutchinson. "This year, I was able to be on site two or three times a week."

Hutchinson said the most difficult job his firm did this year was with an architect that he has worked with on several occasions.

At the city-owned Trosper Park Golf Course in Oklahoma City, Okla., Golf Works

performed a full renovation that was overseen by architect Randy Heckenkemper. It was the 14th project that Golf Works and Heckenkemper have done together.

"It was an extensive project that we had to do in a very short cycle," said Hutchinson. "When you are working with an architect that you have such a long history with, sometimes they are more demanding. But as a result, the revenues are up eight percent at the course, and the city has committed to doing some more work next fall on some of their other courses."

2002 SHAPING UP FINE

While new course construction has slowed, Golf Works has plenty to keep it busy in 2002. The firm has projects going in Seattle and Missoula, Mont., in addition to four others in Texas.

It also started work on its own golf course this past August at ShadowGlen Golf Club in Manor, Texas. The five million dollar course is being designed by local firm Russell Bechtol, and Hutchinson expects to have it opened by this October.

"Some days I question myself," said Hutchinson, "but it made sense to use the experience that I have gained over the years to venture out in the ownership direction."

Agri-Scape snags Small Builder title

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ORLANDO, Fla. — The winner of the *Golf Course News* Small Builder of the Year Award was also presented to a golf course builder who has been in the industry for a long time. After spending ten-plus years as a landscape construction company, Mark Eitelman transformed his firm into Agri-Scape Golf Course Construction in 1992.

Agri-Scape and Eitelman received the award at the Golf Course Builders Association of America's annual dinner here Feb. 7. They posted a score of 104.6 out of 110 for the three projects that they built in 2001.

Also participating in this year's award were ASL Golf Course Construction, Course Doctors, Daylen Golf, Frontier Golf, Glase Golf, Golf Course Construction, SEMA Golf and Southeastern Golf.

ON THE ROAD

Ever since getting into the golf course business in the early 1990's, Eitelman has been on the road. With a core group of guys — including his brother who is a shaper — with him since day one, Eitelman's firm has done projects up and down the East Coast and into the Midwest.

This year, however, the firm stayed close to its home base of Ellington, Conn., working with architects Brian Silva and Tom Fazio.

At Red Tail Golf Club in Devens, Mass., Agri-Scape worked with Silva in creating an 18-hole course that plays over, in and around the former Fort Devens.

"It was a great site to work with, with natural topography and sand and gravel, which really allowed us to go crazy," said Eitelman. "One hole plays through an old artillery storage area and we kept a lot of the old bunkers and grass mounds.

No two holes out there are the same."

Just five miles away in Bolton, Mass., the firm moved double the amount of earth — more than 800,000 cubic yards — at the Oaks Course at the International. The Fazio-designed course, which has numerous waste areas and dramatic elevation changes, opened in July after a short eleven-month construction cycle.

RENOVATING WITH SILVA

After doing a lot of Donald Ross renovation work with Silva, Agri-Scape had the chance to do a full bunker renovation at the Seth Raynor-designed Fox



The sixth hole at Red Tail GC

Chapel Golf Club in Pittsburgh this past year. The club, preparing to host the Curtis Cup in August, brought back the original bunkering and restored some tees to their original location.

"We used box blades and hand work because of the severity of the slopes and the steep faces," said Eitelman. His crew worked on three bunkers at a time while the course stayed open for the duration of the work. "We used a lot of plywood," Eitelman continued. "It was challenging."

Agri-Scape will be doing more work at Fox Chapel this spring in addition to new work with Palmer Course Design in Greenland, N.H.

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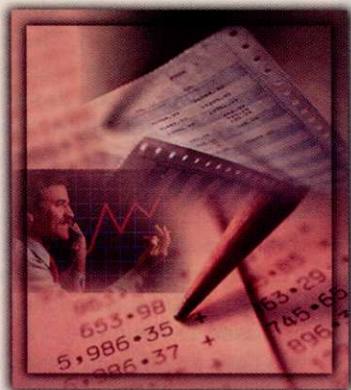
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BRIEFS

KEMPERSPORTS MANAGEMENT REORGANIZES

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — As part of a reorganization, Bob Wallace has been named president of KKL (Kemper, Keiser, Lesnik) Golf and Steve Skinner has been named president of Kemper Golf Management, two newly formed divisions of KemperSports Management. KKL consists of KemperSports' owned and leased properties, while Kemper Golf Management is made up of the company's third party management business. In addition to their newly added responsibilities, Wallace and Skinner will continue to oversee the two existing divisions of KemperSports. Wallace will head up AllGolf, the firm's golf practice range division, and Skinner will supervise KemperSports Development, the firm's golf development and construction management business.

PGA TO HOLD 'JOBS IN GOLF WEEK'

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — The PGA of America has launched its "National Jobs in Golf Week" in order to showcase the potential for employment opportunities in the golf industry. The PGA will roll out the public awareness campaign during the week of March 18-22. During the week, golf course and industry employers will be encouraged to post jobs, while job seekers will be encouraged to view these opportunities at the PGA Employment Center at www.PGA.com.



INTRAWEST ADDS MCLAUGHLIN

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has added Jim McLaughlin to serve as regional director of operations. McLaughlin, who has been with Intrawest Golf since 1998, will oversee the operation of the firm's four courses in Arizona including two Raven Golf Clubs (Phoenix and Tucson), Trilogy Golf Club (Gilbert), and Santa Rita Golf Club (Corona de Tucson).

NGF TEAMS WITH ZURICH

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — The Middle Markets business unit of Zurich North America and the National Golf Foundation (NGF) have formed a strategic joint marketing alliance. Zurich North America helps manage risk by offering coverage designed specifically for golf course facilities.

Summit Golf adds to growing portfolio

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Seizing upon the turmoil in the golf course business, Summit Golf Group has added three new management contracts so far in 2002, bringing its growing portfolio to five courses. The company anticipates having 15 management agreements in place by the end of the year.

"The golf business is struggling and when that happens it benefits good operators like Summit Golf. When times are lean you have to watch costs. Clubs will have to evaluate



The Ted McAnlis-designed Preserve at Tara in Bradenton, Fla., is one of three new courses in Summit Golf's portfolio.

how they run their businesses and that will bode well for us this year," said president Kevin Stark.

To handle the growth, the company has brought in Eric Miko to be the director of operations and has hired Julie Reuse as the director of membership and business development.

Summit Golf specializes in turn around deals, and the three it just signed are no different.

Continued on page 23

Intrawest acquires Hawaii's Big Island Country Club

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has completed its first acquisition in two years with the purchase of Big Island Country Club in Kaiula-Kona, Hawaii. The deal includes a Pete and Perry Dye designed 18-hole golf course and all developed and undeveloped real estate around the course.

Although the golf and tourism markets have been volatile of late in Hawaii, Intrawest is confident that its acquisition of Big Island Country Club will be successful.

"It has the same season as Arizona where we have a number of courses," said marketing manager Ben Keilholtz. "Once you get to May you depend on local traffic, and I think the

course is well positioned with locals."

Keilholtz said that while tourism numbers are down, the project should pay off in the long-term.

"It is not the best of markets



The 17th hole at Big Island is modeled after Pete Dye's famous 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass.

right now, but it will pick back up," he said. "If we had gone in at the peak of the market, there might have been some concerns. But to get a return on this asset should be a fairly attainable number."

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Editorial Focus: Hiring

Experts urge clubs to tackle turnover problems

By DAVID HUBBARD

By 2006, the hospitality industry will need to add 20 million more workers to cover the anticipated growth — the highest projected for all major industries over the next 10 years.

The search for new employees to effectively handle the growth illuminates another issue, how to manage existing employee turnover rates.

Speaking at the National Golf Course Owners Association Conference (NGCOA) in Phoenix in January, human resources specialists, John Sibbald, president of John Sibbald & Associates, an executive search firm based in St. Louis, Mo., and Catherine Gustafson, Ph.D., University of South Carolina, cited the more significant problems and offered a few solutions.

"Reducing turnover is critical as the losses can be enormous and are both tangible and intangible," said Gustafson. "Left unchecked, it can cause the loss of consistency and uniformity in the delivery of a business' products and services, the potential for poor customer service,

lost sales, a lowered perception of managerial effectiveness, as well as the time lost in filling vacant positions."

When the employee turnover rate becomes inordinate to the normal flow of workers in and out of a facility, Sibbald encourages business owners and managers to take a more

EIGHT WAYS TO LOWER TURNOVER

- Managers should fill in for hourly employees
- Have club sponsored social events for employees
- Promote from within
- Be flexible in scheduling
- Offer orientation programs
- Have structured training programs
- Conduct interviews that are 20 minutes or longer
- Do second interviews before making an offer

Continued on page 28

GM, superintendent team up to buy LaCita CC

By JOEL JOYNER

TITUSVILLE, Fla. — Owner and club manager Jim Musick and owner and director of grounds Dale Quinn joined forces to make a dream come true last November by purchasing their own private golf facility here at LaCita Country Club.

The two first met in 1991 while working at the Woodlake Country Club in Pinehurst, N.C. "I was the assistant golf professional and Dale was the course superintendent at the time,"

said Musick. "We've been looking for a facility with the right opportunity since 1997. I, personally, have probably looked at over 100 golf courses in Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina."

The course was built in 1984 and designed by Lee Trevino and Ron Garl. The club is about a 40 minute drive west from downtown Orlando and sits just across from Cape Carnavel. The two managing partners knew from the start that they wanted a private facility. "We had made offers on three clubs that were unsuccessful," Musick said. "A friend told me about LaCita when I was working for American Golf over in Jacksonville.



Club owners Dale Quinn, director of agronomy (left), and Jim Musick, club manager, at LaCita Country Club.

Continued on page 27

Bergstol forms Empire Golf & Hospitality

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEW CITY, N.Y. — Eric Bergstol has taken his “country club for a day” concept one step further by teaming up with Davis Sezna, president of 1492 Hospitality Group, to create Empire Golf & Hospitality, a full-service golf and hospitality management company.

“We are strong on the design, development and service end,” said Bergstol. “But we are weaker on the food and beverage side. Linking up with Sezna combines our strengths and puts us in a different class.”

Since 1998, Bergstol’s Empire Golf has focused on the development of high-end public golf. The company built and now manages six golf courses in the N.Y. area and one in Florida. Sezna formed 1492 Hospitality Group in 1980 and currently operates five restaurants and owns Hartefeld GC in Avondale, Pa., and Mountain Branch GC in Joppa, Md.

The new company will manage Bergstol and Sezna’s respective courses and is already involved in several third party management contracts.

“It is a broad relationship,” Bergstol said. “We will do management and development, and we may get involved in acquisitions as well.”

The new firm will be active in the planning process for Empire Golf’s two new developments, Hollow Brook in Westchester

County, N.Y., and the Bayonne project in N.J.

Sezna’s influence has already made inroads into Empire Golf’s current facilities.

“At New Jersey [Basking Ridge] National we are going to renovate and remodel the whole clubhouse and that is something that we would not have done

without the right formula,” said Bergstol. “We have a 43,000 square foot clubhouse at Pine Hill [N.J.] GC and that is only there because of Sezna and his team.”

Bergstol said improved food and beverage operations will help drive repeat play.

“If you are going to be com-



Eric Bergstol, left, and Davis Sezna

petitive in this market, you have to set yourself apart,” he said. “Food and beverage and clubhouse operations are areas that few people get right. Sezna knows how to create an experience. After a great round of golf, we want our customers to spend the last part of their day being treated well in the clubhouse.”

Empire Golf & Hospitality will be based in Avondale, Pa., and will have an office in New City.

Club Car unveils financing solution

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Club Car has announced a new financial services program developed in conjunction with parent company Ingersoll-Rand and Citi Capital, a division of Citigroup. Ingersoll-Rand Financial Services (IRFS) answers the golf industry’s need for a full-service financing solution, according to Phil Tralies, president and CEO of Club Car.

Customers purchasing golf car fleets, utility vehicles or turf equipment can deal with the same Club Car representative for financing and receive expedited documentation processing.

“We want to make it easy for our customers to do business with us,” said Tralies. “IRFS does that by making the loan application and approval process a seamless part of the overall transaction.”

IRFS provides increased flexibility and convenience for golf course owners through a master lease agreement and a highly automated system for online document processing.

The best time to stop so
it's still in the ea

Summit Golf adds three courses

Continued from page 21

EQUITY CONVERSION

At Barrington Golf Club in Aurora, Ohio, the company is overseeing an equity conversion process. The club's members are in the process of purchasing the facility, which opened in 1994 and features a Jack Nicklaus Signature course, from the developer Bart Wohlstein.

"The real estate is 65-percent sold and they have enough members that they can buy out the developer," said Stark. "We have done the cash flow projections for the bank, put a management team in place and done the due diligence to ensure a smooth transition."

According to Stark, equity conversion deals between develop-

ers and club members are on the rise.

"There are a lot of courses being sold," he said. "There are a lot of developers who are ready to flip courses but there are not a lot of takers outside of the current membership."

The two other developments signed by Summit Golf, however, are still in the early stages of selling real estate.

Olde Sycamore Golf Planta-



The 18th hole at the Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation, outside Charlotte, N.C.

tion, outside Charlotte, N.C., is a Tom Jackson design that is part of a development being built by B.V. Belk. Summit has brought in new general manager Ted Staats to handle the operations at the club and improve its level of performance.

The other contract is with The Preserve at Tara in Bradenton, Fla. The 18-hole Ted McAnlis course is the centerpiece of a real estate development being built by the Towne Group. General manager Kevin Perkins is overseeing the new operations at the club.

ACQUISITIONS MODE

In addition to signing management contracts, Stark said Summit Golf is considering course acquisitions. "There are a lot of properties for sale out there," he said. "We are going to take a hard look at some acquisitions as we see the prices get to the point where we can generate a fairly strong rate of return." ■

Big Island

Continued from page 21

Spear Development Corp. and Saiga California, Inc., opened Big Island Country Club in 1993. The course is situated at 2,000 feet above sea level on the slopes of Mauna Kea and traverses numerous lakes and streams.

"The 17th hole is modeled after Pete Dye's famous 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass," Keilholtz said. "The course also has bentgrass greens and a great microclimate with little wind and moderate temperatures."

There is, however, room for improvement. Intrawest has brought in new superintendent Steve Bruton to bring maintenance standards back up to par. Current general manager Ken Joersz will continue to run the club and a new clubhouse is in the works.

While the project is now strictly golf, Intrawest is considering developing the real estate surrounding the 425-acre project. "We first need to build a clubhouse, address a number of infrastructure issues, sell more memberships and improve the course," said Keilholtz. "That will improve the value that we derive out of the real estate."

"We will get a return in the first five years," he added. "It will go into positive cash flow once we improve the control and sales side." ■

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Palmer Golf looks to third party deals, acquisitions

Continued from page 1

Hills. "Stone Ridge is a great golf course," said Tierney. "With some more aggressive sales and marketing it will do very well."

As far as other new management contracts, Tierney said the company would continue to focus on its cluster markets and look at opportunities in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

With large numbers of courses for sale, and the golf market at or near the bottom, Tierney said the company has received the green light from its financial backer Olympus Real Estate Partners to look at acquisition opportunities.

"If you are a major player like

us, now is the time to take advantage of the down cycle and the lower multiples to bulk up," he said. "This is a very reasonable time to add to your portfolio."

According to Tierney, the firm is getting calls from banks that have repossessed courses. "This may be a good opportunity to come in and operate under a man-



Palmer Golf's Stone Ridge Golf Club in Bowling Green, Ohio

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agement contract for a bank," he said. "It would be a good way to do due diligence while operating the course. If it worked out you could just take over the debt."

High-end courses present the biggest acquisition opportunities, said Tierney.

"Affordable golf will continue to prevail," he said. "High-end daily fees that were underwritten at \$80 to \$100 a round at 50,000 rounds per year will be on the market. They can do 50,000 rounds, but at \$50 a round. There is a lot of great product out there that is not going to be able to command the rate that was anticipated, but if you buy right you can make it work."

While they have not officially teamed up on any developments to date, Palmer Golf is looking to partner with Palmer Course Design on several projects this year. "We are exploring more possibilities with PCD than we have in the past," Tierney said. "The design and build team will work with our management team. Some renovation work, new development and international projects will come on line."

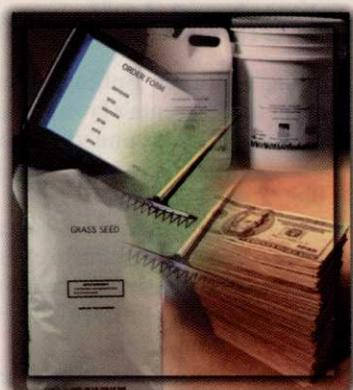
SLIMMING DOWN

While acquisitions and new projects are a focus for Palmer Golf, the events of Sept. 11 forced the firm to concentrate on cutting costs and running its courses more efficiently.

"We took a hard look at how we were operating our facilities from revenue management to expense control, to doing more with less in the off season," said Tierney. "In the end it was healthy."

In order to slim down, the firm implemented early seasonal layoffs, reduced fixed costs and combined some positions. They also held 2002 budgets until the end of December. Moving into the year, the firm is using more regional marketing and Internet promotions and advertising.

It is too early to tell whether levels of play at its facilities have returned to normal or not because many of the company's courses are closed for winter. However, Tierney said event booking is coming in, albeit at lower rates. "A couple of years ago we were able to package food and beverage and merchandise and a lot of other amenities," he said. "They are still holding tournaments, but they have scaled back spending on the amenities." ■



BRIEFS

GARRISON TO HEAD E-Z-GO

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Textron Inc. has named John L. Garrison president of E-Z-GO. Garrison will be responsible for all aspects of the golf car and utility vehicle company including sales, marketing, engineering, and manufacturing. He will report to Greg Hyland, president of Textron's Industrial Products segment. Prior to joining E-Z-GO, Garrison was chairman, president and CEO of water and wastewater management manufacturer Azurix Corp. He also served as vice president and general manager for Case Corp.'s North American Agricultural Group.

SIMPLOT BRINGS IN RICKARD

BOISE, Idaho — Simplot has selected Dr. David Rickard to fill the newly created position of product development specialist. In this new capacity, Rickard will coordinate the commercial turfgrass research department at Jacklin Seed and the continued expansion of fertilizer and specialty product formulations under the BEST, APEX and Simplot Partners brand names. During his 27-year career, Rickard has worked for state government, chemical companies, universities and recently ran his own consulting firm where he specialized in the development of new agricultural technology products. He has overseen product development in biological controls, methyl bromide alternatives, organic soil amendments and foliar fertilizers.



Dr. David Rickard

Simplot has also named Trent Bradford to the post of fertilizer manager for the Professional Products Division's eastern region.

GROWTH PRODUCTS ADDS ACKERSON

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — Growth Products has added Gary Ackerson to its staff of technical sales representatives. He will cover a territory that encompasses Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Prior to joining Growth Products, Ackerson was an assistant golf course superintendent, a division manager for a biological company, and a turf consultant for a raw materials company.

Golf Ventures adds Web site to support nationwide expansion

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAKELAND, Fla. — In a move to support the expansion of its distribution business nationwide, Golf Ventures has introduced an online catalog at golfventuresonline.com.

The new Web site replaces the now-defunct golfbusiness.com. That property has been split between Golf Ventures and International Club Suppliers (ICS). Golf Ventures, which has been in the distribution business in Florida and parts of Georgia since 1986, will handle turf and ornamental products, and ICS has become a food and beverage provider.

"We are expanding across the rest of the United States and this site will assist us with that," said Debbie Nipper, director of national project and marketing. "The site features the main items that we carry, and has sections for service, forums, auctions and specials."

Golf Ventures, which is under the umbrella of Meadowbrook Golf, distributes fertilizers, chemicals, and golf accessories and has agreements with companies such as Helena Chemical, Par Aide and Standard Golf. It is the exclusive provider for the 110 courses managed by Meadowbrook's International

Golf Maintenance.

Golf Venture's nationwide roll out is already well underway.

"We have already added sales staff in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kansas and Missouri and will be adding more in the first half of the year," said Nipper. The company now has 25 sales



Superintendents try out golfventuresonline.com in Orlando.

representatives and may also add some warehouse locations as it expands.

"The Web site will act as a tool for the sales side," Nipper added. "The superintendent or mechanic can go to the site and find items faster and perform searches. They can call and place an order, go through the sales person or order online."

Continued on page 27

Brandt enters golf business with Parkway purchase

HOUSTON — Parkway Research has been purchased by Midwestern agricultural fertilizer manufacturer Brandt Consolidated, adding to that company's growing presence in the green industry. Brandt, which operates 11 liquid fertilizer and micronutrient plants in Illinois, also bought Florida-based Agra Chem in July.

"Agra Chem produces fertilizer and chemicals for the citrus business in Florida, and Parkway fills in the gaps giving Brandt access to the turf and ornamental and lawn and garden markets," said Ray Kimmel, former Parkway president.

Parkway will become a part of Brandt's Clawel Specialty Products division, but will continue to operate out of Houston and Kimmel will remain on board as the general manager of Parkway. Clawel will now offer micronutrients, specialty chemicals and adjuvants to the commercial agriculture, turf, horticulture and lawn and garden markets.

"This is a pretty exciting time around here," said Kimmel.

"We will have broader product lines and more access to technology. There is a lot of new technology on the horizon, and we expect to announce new releases over the next several months."

In addition to a full line of



Ray Kimmel, right, at the show in Orlando

fertilizers, wetting agents and colorants and indicators, Parkway also makes specialty turf products such as Consan fungicide and Neo-Tec bionematicide.

Kimmel expects the company to continue to thrive in the golf market.

"Our prime market is golf," he said. "We have a highly specialized product line designed to fill certain niches. We don't sell generic products, so as a result we have remained healthier than most."

— Andrew Overbeck

ProSource One expects strong 2002 growth

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Now that ProSource One's ownership issues have been settled, the company is moving forward and expects a strong growth curve for 2002.

The fertilizer supplier has bounced around a lot over the past several years. Agrilience bought



Bob Lee

ProSource One in 1999 after it was put up for sale by Terra Industries in 1998. In 2001, the company was almost sold to Royster-Clark Group, but a newly committed Agrilience called off the deal.

"Agrilience is looking at us as a vehicle for growth," said director Bob Lee. "We are working on a plan to grow the professional side of the business without making a major acquisition."

The company currently has sixty-five sales people and sales of between \$170 and \$200 million.

Continued on page 27

Gowan acquires Rubigan fungicide from Dow

By ANDREW OVERBECK

YUMA, Ariz. — Gowan Co. and Portugal-based Margarita Internacional have acquired Rubigan fungicide from Dow AgroSciences. The purchase includes all registrations and trade names. Gowan will market the products in the United States and Canada and Margarita will handle the product outside North America. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

While the principle driver behind the sale were the agricultural and horticultural uses of the product, Gowan said it will still pursue Rubigan's golf and turf uses. Rubigan is a broad spectrum, locally systemic liquid fungicide for curative and preventive control of dollar spot and other key diseases on turfgrass and ornamentals. It is also used to control *Poa annua* in overseeded, warm-season turfgrass.

"We specialize in taking molecules that other companies have lost interest in and breathing new life into them," said Gowan's Jim McNutt. "Rubigan has been on the market since 1987, and it has been neglected because there are newer Sterol Inhibitors on the market. We still think there is life in Rubigan. We think it is as good as the rest and that there are some things to latch onto and leverage to keep the sales going."

Dow AgroSciences decided to jettison Rubigan because it overlapped with the broad fungicide line that it acquired in the Rohm and Haas buy out.

"Rohm and Haas gave us a strategic position in the global fungicide business," said Bruce Meile, general manager of Dow AgroScience's turf and ornamental business. "We discovered that while Rubigan and Rohm and Haas' fungicides were not directly competitive, there were a number of uses that were partially overlapping."

Continued on next page

Textron retools sales and marketing team

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products has named four new vice presidents to lead sales and marketing for its turf and professional lawn care (PLC) division.

Dennis Schwieger has been named executive vice president of sales and marketing – turf and PLC. He joins Textron from Valmont Industries where he was vice president of global distribution.

Three other new vice presidents will report to Schwieger:

- Ralph Nicotera has been promoted to

vice president of marketing and product management – turf and PLC. Nicotera has been with the company for 27 years, most recently directing sales and dealer development for turf and PLC.

- Joe Thompson has been appointed vice president of sales – turf. Prior to joining Textron, Thompson worked for John Deere and Case Construction.

- Joe LaFollette is the new vice president of customer care – turf and PLC. He joins Textron from CNH Corp. where he held several executive sales and marketing positions.

Syngenta, Bayer end neonicotinoid dispute

Continued from page 1

“To continue litigation we were going to incur heavy legal bills, and it became a business issue for both parties to come to an agreement that benefited both of us,” said director of corporate communications Ken Gordon.

As part of the settlement, Syngenta will pay Bayer \$120 million in return for full access to crop protection and related markets worldwide for thiamethoxam. The company expects global sales of thiamethoxam to top \$200 million.

According to Chuck Buffington, market manager for Syngenta’s lawn and landscape division, it is not unusual to have different patented active ingredients within the same chemical class.

“Heritage and Compass are both trademarked and patented strobilurin chemistries but are significantly different products,” he said. “Now there are two neonicotinoid chemistries.”

While Syngenta has already registered thiamethoxam for agricultural and crop uses elsewhere in the world, it is still waiting for the Environmental Protection Agency to register Meridian, its first thiamethoxam product for the turf and ornamental business.

Meridian offers lower use rates, broad-spectrum control on multiple grub species, and increased late season activity. Syngenta expects registration by late 2002 or early 2003.

For its part, Bayer is confident that its neonicotinoid product, Merit, will continue to lead the grub control market.

“The dispute was costing both parties a lot of time and money,” said Dan Carrothers, director of marketing for Bayer Garden and Professional Care. “Settling was the right decision. But we feel very strongly about our position in grub control.”

Bayer has been selling Merit since 1994 and has unveiled a marketing campaign that offers a full guarantee that its product will control grubs.

According to turf and ornamental brand manager Michael Daly, the new campaign will help superintendents mitigate risk by helping them time applications of Merit for preventive control and applications of Dylox for curative control. ■

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HA02

Dow sells Rubigan

Continued from previous page

We had to choose between Eagle or Rubigan, and Eagle is newer and more widely recognized.”

According to Gowan’s turf sales manager Steve Peterson, Rubigan will be a big part of the company’s turf offering. “We are going to run with it on the turf side,” he said. “We will maintain the existing market and keep it in front of the *Poa annua* market.”

In the short term, McNutt said Gowan will not make any major changes. “Initially, I don’t see a whole lot of changes between what they were doing and what we are doing,” he said. “It usually takes us a year or two to get used to a new product and have our sales and technical team find new fits and uses and different positions that we can take.”

With the divestiture of Rubigan, Meile said the integration of the Dow AgroSciences and the Rohm and Haas product lines is pretty much complete. “We are 95-percent done,” he said. “It has been eight months since the close date and we have taken care of the people issues, technology transfers and product overlap.”

The final challenge, according to Meile, will be wrapping up product code issues, revising logos and literature, and handling registration and state label problems. ■

Kevin Ross' new product awards

Continued from page 19

booths, you can't help but think where we were ten years ago with these units. Fairway topdressers were almost nonexistent, and now every manufacturer has their own model. Turfco introduced new refinements with the **WideSpin 1530**. This unit is being advertised as the dual-purpose machine, to address both super light topdressings and heavier applications for aerification purposes.



Turfco's WideSpin 1530

day turf management. This unit has gathered some amazing steam since its debut. So much so that it receives my *Imitation is the Best Form of Flattery Award*. At least three other companies have put their Graden version on the market. All the credit should not solely go to Graden, however. The development of the "Superbents" and "Ultradwarfs" certainly has given this machine an assist in its popularity.

• The **Toro Flex 21** gets the *Hottest Mowing Unit Award*. After its debut in Dallas last year, this mower is riding a wave of incredible popularity. It far exceeded its sales projections for 2001, and Toro is looking forward to an even bigger



Toro's Flex 21 gets Hottest Mowing Unit Award

year in 2002. This year Toro has added a **groomer and two different brush attachments** as options for the Flex unit.

These are all the items that caught my eye at "The Big Show" in Orlando. I can't wait to see what Atlanta 2003 can deliver. ■

Musick and Quinn buy Florida's LaCita CC

Continued from page 21

"We thought a private club was the best market to get into for our first club," he explained. "The daily-fee market, especially here in Florida, is such a price conscious market. There are a lot of golf courses in the state and a lot of competition. We felt a private club would give us an edge up on service and the quality of the facility would enhance the membership. It was a good fit."

The club was previously owned and operated by ClubCorp (CCA). The purchase price was more than two million, according to Musick. "There are four of us as partners," he said. "Dale and myself are the managing partners. There's an attorney, Kenneth Senn, in Colorado who also holds a real estate license and helped out with the legal aspects of the acquisition, and Louis Reeder, a businessman in Texas, who brought a great deal of business experience with him. We each own a 25 percent interest in the club."

WINNING BACK MEMBERSHIP

The initial goal for the two managing partners is to boost the membership numbers. The club once had over 1,800 members, and currently has just over 900 members with about 245 full golf members. The other memberships include pool and fitness, tennis and social memberships.

"We'd like to get the golf membership numbers up to around the 325 to 350 mark," said Musick. "In a five year period, CCA had seven general managers here at the club. It was basically a revolving door. Our objective is to win over the support of our current members and begin to grow the membership through word of mouth. Members have told us that having two of the owners available here on location is a big benefit."

Musick and Quinn closed the deal Nov. 30, on a Friday, and were out on the course making changes the following Monday. "It was a little wet in some areas, and we put in a considerable amount of drainage," said Quinn.

Drainage was installed on holes five, eight, 12, 13, 14, and 15. "The project was

well received by the members. On the fifth hole, members had never been able to take their carts out into the fairway. After the work, they were in the fairway within less than four weeks," said Quinn.

The club is situated on 150 acres of property. "We've also done some landscaping around the clubhouse, and we've recently established an 'adopt-a-hole' program here," said Quinn. "Groups of members have been interested in enhancing the landscape on the course. We'll have four or five families for each hole, and we'll focus on things like beautifying the tee

boxes. They are certainly enthusiastic and want to participate, so they can help out by donating some of their time and dollars. They also can go out in the evenings to fill divots and repair ball marks on their adopted holes."

The club is also creating a memorial for those members who have passed on, according to Quinn. "They approached us about establishing a memorial," he said. "We've already cleared a visible area on the course where members will be able to purchase commemorative bricks. There will be about 900 bricks made available to them, and we expect that they'll sell out rather quickly."

LOCAL BUSINESS, GROWING MEMBERSHIP

The club is targeting corporate events and building a strong connection with the community. "We've tried to keep a lot of our business local," said Musick. "We do business right across the street at the bank, we have our lease vehicles from the Ford dealership in town, and our carrier for all of our property and liability insurance is just across the street. We're working to remain community focused. They

help make up our membership, so it's a two-way street."

Though private, the club does host outside events like corporate outings and charitable fund-raisers on the agenda. "There's a Hospice fund-raiser coming up, and we've got the fifth an-



The ninth green at LaCita Country Club

nual Space Coast Junior Golf tournament in April during the weekend of the Masters," said Quinn. "David Leadbetter brings his top 20 students to the club, and the field is limited to 84 players." The club is supportive of local junior golfers by inviting young players and high school students to play the course free of charge.

The club has implemented a membership incentive plan that will carry through until the middle of March. "We've sent letters to our members to invite their friends and associates to join the club," said Musick. "By helping us sign up new members, they'll receive a reduction on their monthly bill.

"After the middle of March, we'll be looking at some outside advertising," he added. "In addition, from CCA files, we sent about 200 letters to previous members offering them a 50 percent reduction on their initiation fee if they wish to return to the club. Right now, we think that word-of-mouth will be a key factor for us. Once previous members hear that the service, quality of the course, and consis-

ProSource One eyes growth

Continued from page 25

ProSource One covers the United States from the upper Midwest to the Southeast and has a small presence in New England and the Southwest that may soon be expanded.

According to Lee, the company has already added two members to the sales team in the Carolinas and has bolstered its staff in Florida.

Hiring will be key to the company's short-term growth, Lee said. "We want to hire people who can bring business with them," he said. "We are getting new, experienced people on board and we are improving our business in the markets we are already in. We also will be looking at some small acquisitions."

The uncertainty surrounding ProSource One has afforded the company some advantages, said Lee.

"We have been through the hardest part," he said. "I think we have taken out most of our weak spots, and now we just need to work on growing the business."

While he admitted that the turf business was going to be difficult going forward, Lee said he is confident that they can grow the business.

"The market itself is not growing and [superintendent's] budgets are going to be conservative," said Lee. "Our sales staff has to be more of a consultant and help customers solve problems. We can't just be coming in and selling on price." ■

— Andrew Overbeck

Golf Ventures

Continued from page 25

Nipper said the site will eventually serve up online parts information, technical tips and support.

OTHER AGREEMENTS

Although Golf Ventures works exclusively with Meadowbrook, that association does not preclude it from offering its services to other management companies.

"We offer management companies an opportunity to control prices," said Nipper. "We see the opportunity there and want to provide them with quality products as well. We are working with other major golf course owners, and we have several national accounts pending."

In addition, Nipper said the company is pursuing an agreement with the National Golf Course Owners Association and is exploring ways it could work with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Golf Super-Market. ■

tency is back at the club, we believe a lot of members will return."

The club projects anywhere from 35,000 to 37,000 rounds of golf this year, according to Musick. The facility also features a swimming pool with a cabana and Jacuzzi, a fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment, a tennis facility across the street with six courts and a separate building with two racquetball courts. ■

Employee turnover

Continued from page 21

pro-active approach to determine a reasonable and effective turnover rate for their particular operations.

REDUCING TURNOVER

According to Sibbald and Gustafson, the first step is to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary turnover, and to understand who leaves and why.

"While employees should be regarded as assets rather than expenses, some positions should simply not be regarded as permanent," said Gustafson. "It is often more cost effective to allow employees in easily filled positions to move out or up. As for the truly standout employees, promoting from within allows management to create opportunities which in turn reduce the turnover rate."

Sibbald and Gustafson noted that for the great number of seasonal golf club operations, retaining trained and experienced help is particularly aggravating. They suggested that owners be creative in their incentives and recognition programs to encourage their best employees to return.

Hiring the right person for the job at the onset is, of course, the best means to control the turnover rate. In times of employee shortages, managers pressed for time can easily get a little careless in the selection process. Sibbald and Gustafson reiterated the dangers of "labor crisis management" that involves little more than quick interviews without careful reference checks.

"Simply filling positions with warm bodies can lead to the problems that plague the industry," said Sibbald. "Hired in a crisis mode, new employees are not properly introduced to the company, and usually receive only minimal training, creating the situations that lead to their quitting or being involuntarily dismissed."

They suggested seeking new and perhaps non-traditional sources for new employees such as university programs, internships, the aging workforce, and even welfare to work programs and rehab centers. ■

Dinosaur Dunes

Continued from page 11

can reach up to eight feet high. If you hit your ball into a silage field, it's gone. Our roughs, in some places, reach up to six feet tall."

MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES

The challenge for Strong and his regulators is that the course is played quite often. "We don't have somebody that manages the course constantly," said Strong. "Members tend to take liberties at times."

For example, there are 20 golf cars on the course owned by individual members. "There are no golf cars provided by the club," Strong explained. "Some golfers will even use John Deere Gators, Quads, ATVs, or - when it is really cold - some will even drive their truck out on the course."

"The constant play makes redesign, maintenance of fairways, changing of tee boxes and everything a real challenge," he continued. "We can't really shut the course down to maintain it or make changes."

The main five regulators - the big helpers - include: Jerry "Big Daddy" Kirchoff, Ron German, Joe Heath, Larry "Swede" Fagerquist, and Paul Parker. Other regulators include: Jim Davis, David Kuhlman, Steve and Melva Barnett, Nikki Hemel, Bev Kirkoff, and Richard and Teresa Hemel. ■

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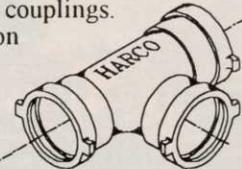
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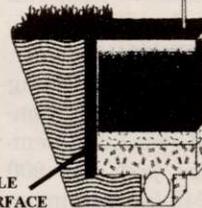
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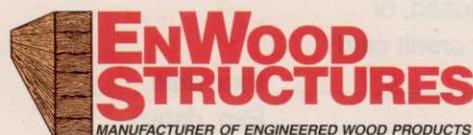
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nity Tree Conference in
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GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

	JAN. 2001	JAN. 2002	% CHANGE
IN PLANNING	35	58	40
OPEN	10	9	-10
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	28	26	-7

Source: National Golf Foundation

NATIONAL GOLF ROUNDS PLAYED*

REGION	DECEMBER	Y.T.D.
NEW ENGLAND (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)	178.3%	-3.1%
MIDDLE ATLANTIC (NY, NJ, PA)	128.2%	-7%
EAST NORTH CENTRAL (MI, OH, IN, IL, WI)	561.4%	-4%
WEST NORTH CENTRAL (MN, IA, MO, KS, NE, SD, ND)	224.6%	-5.1%
SOUTH ATLANTIC (DE, WV, VA, MD, NC, SC, GA, FL)	30.8%	1.6%
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL (KY, TN, AL, MS)	65.1%	1.5%
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL (AR, LA, OK, TX)	22.6%	-1.2%
MOUNTAIN (MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV)	-17.5%	-3.7%
PACIFIC (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI)	-19.1%	-2.1%

* The percentages above represent the difference in number of rounds played in the month of December 2001 to the number of rounds played in December 2000.

Source: Golf DataTech

Golf Course News Stock Report (2/15)

Company(Symbol)	Price	Change(%) 1/15/02	52-wk range
Aventis (AVE)	72.88	6.2	64.05 - 84.50
Bayer AG (BAY)	29.70	-6.6	29.65 - 33.29
BASF (BF)	36.20	-2.4	27.15 - 47.22
Century Garden and Pet (CENT)	9.27	20.3	5.94 - 10.25
Deere & Co. (DE)	45.04	5.7	33.50 - 46.28
Dow Chemical Co. (DOW)	30.57	13.5	23.66 - 39.67
Golf Trust of America (GTA)	5.10	-2.9	4.01 - 9.25
Ingersoll-Rand (IR)	45.00	8.2	30.40 - 50.28
Lesco, Inc. (LSCO)	7.20	-.70	6.10 - 14.50
National Golf Properties (TEE)	7.04	-37.1	6.30 - 27.70
Monsanto Co. (MON)	30.84	-5.4	28.20 - 38.80
Syngenta AG (SYT)	11.00	6.6	8.50 - 12.20
Toro Co. (TTC)	51.05	9.8	39.00 - 51.40
Textron, Inc. (TXT)	43.96	7.4	31.29 - 60.47

"Looking at the openings in 2000 [524], it's a pretty safe bet that was the high-water mark. We will not see that number ever again,"

— BARRY FRANK, VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER SERVICES AT THE NGF ON THE CONSTRUCTION SLOWDOWN OVER THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF. SEE STORY PAGE 13.



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