

Carlson to help draft development standards in Sarasota County

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its Development Services department to come up with golf course development standards because it was too time-consuming to handle approvals on a case-by-case basis.

"The Board of Commissioners asked for design and performance standards for golf course development because as it stands today, there is nothing that specifically addresses golf courses," said Dorothea Zysko, resources protection services manager for the county. "They felt it was more appropriate to look at courses in general and devise standards that would apply to all courses. This would also give developers an idea ahead of time of what the county expects of them."

The standards, which are still being formulated, will integrate the best management practices developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Water Management District and will cover requirements including site acreage, buffer zones, setbacks, open space, stormwater and drainage, water use, habitat management, and construction and post construction monitoring. Requiring courses

to become members of an environmental program like Audubon International is also being considered.

Zysko decided to put together an advisory committee made up of interested parties to discuss the proposed standards. In addition to Carlson, members from Audubon International, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the GCSAA and two developers and engineering firms attended the first meeting in February. The committee aims to have final regulations in place by the end of May.

According to Zysko, Carlson was a natural choice for the committee because of the work he has done at Venice G&CC. "We felt there was a need for a more comprehensive approach to water use and conservation and habitat preservation. Tom has done quite a bit on his course, so we asked him to participate," she said.

Carlson, who came to the club two years ago, immediately pushed the members to

become Audubon certified.

"This is the perfect course for it," he said. "We have wetlands, pinelands, uplands and oak hammock. It's a perfect mix of terrain and vegetation."

Carlson started by building a new maintenance facility from the ground up, putting in a state-of-the-art

mix/load station, a washwater system and fuel tanks. Then he went to work restoring habitat and wetland areas on the course.

"We have fresh-water wetlands, but they are disconnected and no longer flow naturally," he said. "We had upland plants that were moving into them, so we are working with the county to use a nearby lake to inundate them once a year to bring them back to their natural cycle."

"We also cleaned up the buffer zones and converted turf to natural areas to connect habitat and give wildlife cover," he added.

A new high-tech irrigation system helped reduce water use by 34 million gallons last

year and using Polyon-coated slow-release pesticides has helped reduce chemical use.

Showcasing the course's environmental improvements has been an important step in the process, said Carlson.

"We had the county's Integrated Water Management officials over for a tour and they didn't realize that golf courses were working on mitigating environmental impacts. They had no idea. They didn't know Audubon International existed," he said.

Carlson is quick to admit that his situation at Venice G&CC allows him to spend the extra time on environmental projects.

"I am fortunate here because I can spend time on this," he said. "I have a good staff and a great assistant that runs the course and frees up my time. Although I do get a lot of work done when people leave for the day."

He also said the development standards being discussed would likely make golf course construction more expensive, but it would do away with practices that have given the golf course industry a black eye.

"Yes, it will bring up the cost of construction," said Carlson. "But it will ensure that what is built is responsible. By having requirements right off the bat, it will select out those who don't want to be responsible." ■

'Having requirements right off the bat will select out those who don't want to be responsible.'

— Tom Carlson

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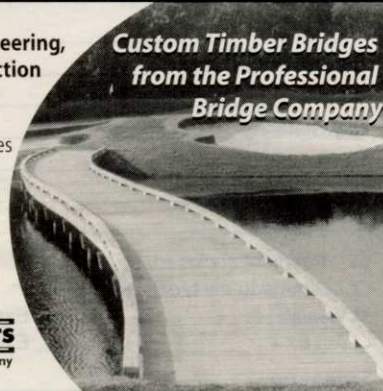
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Vendors applaud GCSAA, NGCOA show merger

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marketing for Flowtronex. "We think meeting with owners, especially if they are side-by-side with the superintendent, at one big show will be a great opportunity."

Even chemical and fertilizer companies are eager for the opportunity to be in front of both members of the buying team.

"With our product line on the chemical side of the business, there is a lot of differentiation of our product versus our competitor's product," said Peter Farno, turf and ornamental market manager for Bayer ES. "This opens up the owners to why there are differences, why they should value our products versus competitive products. It's an audience we don't always get in front of."

The joint show will offer owners a larger perspective on the golf industry than they might normally get.

"This year was the first year we had done

the owner's show," said Dave Heegard, vice president of sales and marketing for Pursell Technologies Inc. "I spoke to a lot of owners who were glad we were there because it gave them an understanding of

who the players are in the business. In those situations where the owners are an integral part of the decision-making process,

it makes sense for them to go to the show and see what's going on."

As a result, many expect more owners to attend the show than before.

"That is the expectation," said Toro's Ford. "With times being as lean as they are, owners are taking a more active role in where money is being spent. Our product is a capital expense so it makes more sense for them to be involved."

Bayer ES's Farno agreed.

"There's a fair amount of owners that come to the GCSAA show, and that's great, but there will be a whole lot more," he said. ■

'We think meeting with owners, especially if they are side-by-side with the superintendent, at one big show will be a great opportunity.'

— Tom Levey

Link Up 2 Golf expands

Continued from page 3

on-course experiences. The program will culminate in a four-hole scramble.

This year's new markets will be:

Carolinas Section - Raleigh, N.C., Charlotte, N.C., Greensboro, N.C., Greenville, S.C., Columbia, S.C.

Colorado Section - Denver, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins/Greeley

Connecticut Section: Springfield, Mass., Hartford, Ct., New Haven, Ct.

Michigan Section: Detroit, Traverse City

Middle Atlantic Section: Washington D.C., Baltimore, Md., Richmond, Va.

New England Section: Worcester, Mass., Boston, Mass., Providence, R.I.

North Florida Section: Tampa, Sarasota, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tallahassee

Northern Ohio Section: Toledo, Cleveland, Akron

Southern California Section: Ventura County, Bakersfield, San Diego

Southern Ohio Section: Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton

Tennessee Section: Nashville

Since its creation, Link Up 2 Golf has attracted more than 1,200 students.

QUOTED

Barker, Joel	Simplot Turf & Hort.	16
Barnes, Howard	Quality Grassing & Svcs.	10
Briggs, Stephen	BASF	1
Bruff, Thomas	KPMG Golf Practice	22
Carlson, Tom	Venice Golf and CC	1
Davison, Tim	Davison Golf	8
Dye, Pete	Pete Dye Designs	10
Farley, John	Teal Bend Golf Club	6
Farno, Peter	Bayer ES	21
Farris, Ron	Farris Golf Designs	1
Ford, Tim	Toro Co.	3
Garcia, Fidel	Ryngolf Inc.	10
Graves, Steve	Private Club Network	14
Heegard, Dave	Pursell Technologies Inc.	21
Hirsh, Laurence	Golf Property Analysts	22
Holanda, Rick	Aronimink Golf Club	8
Hughes, Mike	NGCOA	3
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Myers, Rick	DLF-TRIFOLIUM	16
Olson, Alan	Flowtronex	16
O'Malley, Tom	Saddleback Golf Course	22
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Tralies, Phil	Club Car	3
Zysko, Dorothea	Sarasota County	20

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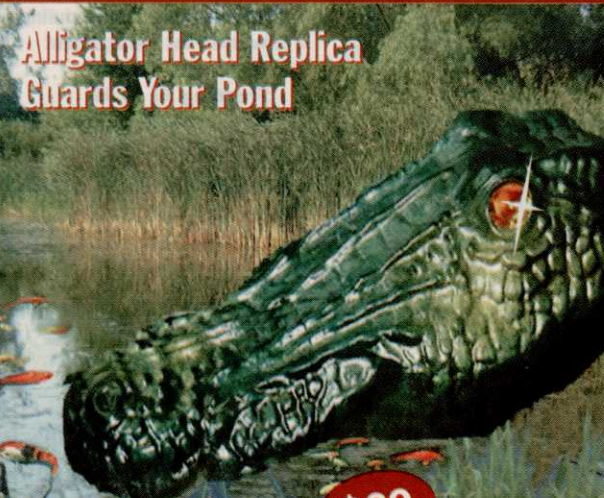
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Optimism springs from NGCOA show

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This has driven out several cash sources," explained Thomas Bruff of KPMG Golf Practice.

But *Golf Course News* editorial advisory board member Larry Hirsh of Golf Property Analysts made the point that course owners need to look to their local banks



Attendance at this year's NGCOA Solutions Summit in Palm Springs, Calif., was up almost 13 percent from last year's show.

for financing. He feels that the older and more established golf operations could be in a significantly better position, as they may not be carrying as heavy of a debt load as the newer golf developments.

"I am not ready to conclude that the 'mom and pop' operation will be the significant

player in the future but I do think that there is a trend developing that way as management groups struggle to find ways to increase profitability," Hirsh told an economics seminar.

Hirsh noted that there is a different buyer coming into the golf market now, one who has a passion for golf and can accept lower profits to become involved in the game. Many believe the passion for the game is one that needs to be brought back to the forefront of golf.

But the most important issue to be addressed was the slump in rounds played nationwide and how to reverse that trend. The detailed research carried out by Golf 20/20 put things into perspective. Golf is a \$62 billion industry that has at its core 10 million best customers (those who play at least 25 rounds or spend \$1,000 annually). The survey found another 12 million potential best customers playing golf, and an ESPN.com poll found 45 million people who say they are golfers. So the challenge to the golf industry is how to get this large pool of golfers back to the golf course.

The answers seem to hinge on two points. First, course owners were urged to improve their marketing to the best customer in order

to make them loyal customers. Second, is the challenge of bringing new golfers to the game.

An ambitious project, Link Up 2 Golf, created by the PGA of America, will be expanded this summer (see story on page 3), and course owners are being advised how they can help make golf a better experience for the new golfer.

During the problem solvers sessions many explained some of their ideas for encouraging junior golfers through value passes and encouraging afternoon family days to fill afternoon tee times. Some even presented ideas of creating three-hole and six-hole experiences for beginning golfers to get them comfortable in course situations. All these ideas aim to address concerns that golf takes too much time.

Conference attendees were also very positive about the recent announcement that the NGCOA and the GCSAA conferences will merge in 2005. This obvious linking of trade shows will join superintendents with the controllers of the checkbook, which should improve efficiency for both parties.

Tom O'Malley of Saddleback Golf Course in Firestone, Colo., summed up the feeling of

many about the combining of the two shows.

"I think it is a no-brainer and I really can't see any downside to it," he said. "I don't think that it will take away from our autonomy and I know that it will make our purchasing decisions much easier." ■

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