

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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COUNTERPOINT

BASF packs specialty portfolio

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — With the integration of its TopPro Specialties subsidiary, the pending approval to market fipronil insecticides and the expected registration of two new fungicides, BASF's professional turf and ornamental group is poised for rapid expansion.

The group also recently reorganized its upper management, sales force and customer service teams. Former TopPro vice president Stephen Briggs is the new director of BASF's Specialty Products Department (SPD) which includes the turf and ornamental group.

"When BASF acquired MicroFlo [TopPro's parent company] in 1998 they didn't have a specialty group so they kept it as a subsidiary in Memphis, Tenn.," said Briggs. "With the American Cyanamid acquisition in 2000, they now had two specialty groups that were going to the same or similar markets with similar customers. It was decided based on customer input and efficiency within the organization

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Investors snag Western Golf

New owners move company to Southern California, hand reins to longtime exec. Heath



Western Golf Properties Inc. manages eight golf courses, including Stonewall Golf Club in Gainesville, Va., pictured above.

By DEREK RICE

SANTA ANA, Calif. — A group of private investors based in Southern California, including former western operations executive Bobby Heath, acquired Phoenix, Ariz.-based Western Golf Properties Inc., an 18-year-old management and development company, last month. Financial terms were not disclosed.

As a result, the company planned to relocate its headquarters to Santa Ana location.

The new owners selected Heath to become the company's presi-

dent, effective in March. Heath, who will replace Western Golf founder Joe Black, said he hopes to guide the company through what are rough times for the golf industry.

"We are faced with an increasingly competitive environment at each property, making the focus on driving revenue paramount, while adjusting operating costs as necessary to achieve net operating income," Heath said. "That being said, my vision is to infuse a heightened level of business and marketing savvy into our current

management style."

Officials at Western Golf declined to discuss the transaction in detail before *Golf Course News* went to press. In a statement, the

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Carlson leads on county green standards

By ANDREW OVERBECK

VENICE, Fla. — When superintendent Tom Carlson here at The Venice Golf and Country Club achieved Audubon certification, he wasted little time sharing the club's accomplishments with the surrounding community.

From giving Sarasota County water management and environmental officials tours of the course to making presentations at other area clubs during member-guest outings, Carlson has

been busy spreading the word.

However, his latest community

sory committee that is creating future golf course development and management standards for Sarasota County.

"When I came to Venice Golf and Country Club I made it clear that I was not comfortable living up to standards, I wanted to set standards," said Carlson. "I hope these actions lead to sustainable community development."

Sarasota County's Board of Commissioners charged



Carlson is restoring natural wetlands at Venice G&CC.

effort will have a much broader impact. Carlson is part of an advi-

In spite of drought Black Hills blooming

By DEREK RICE

RAPID CITY, S.D. — In the shadow of the Black Hills in South Dakota, architect Ron Farris is putting the finishing touches on the Golf Club at Red Rock, nine holes of which should open this month, against Farris' advice.

"You'd love to have as much maturity as possible on a golf course," he said. "It's not perfect, but that's mostly because of the drought last year."

Red Rock is one of seven active South Dakota projects according to the National Golf Foundation. The crown jewel of this group, Farris said, is the Graham Marsh-designed Sutton Bay Golf

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