

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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Superintendents Steven Cook and Timothy T. O'Neill debate the merits of changing the GCSAA's articles of incorporation.

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## COUNTERPOINT

## Redstone GC ready for '03 Tour stop

By DEREK RICE

HOUSTON — After a couple false starts due to bad weather in Houston, Redstone Golf Management was finally able to open its



Dick Harmon

first 18-hole course at Redstone Golf Club in early December.

Designed by Jim Hardy and Peter Jacobsen,

the course will host the 2003 Shell Houston Open two weeks after The Masters. A second 18-hole course, designed by Rees Jones, is currently in progress and is expected to open in fall 2004. The Jacobsen/Hardy course will be private, while the Jones course will be open to the public. The Shell Houston Open will move to the Jones course in 2005.

Jacobsen and Hardy turned the existing course at Redstone GC into a 7,508-yard course. Upon completion of the Jones course, the facility, which also includes a 31,000-square-foot teeing area for

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## Audubon sets 50 percent goal for 2007



Audubon International helps create protected natural areas on golf courses, such this one at Keswick Club in Virginia.

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SELKIRK, N.Y. — Audubon International has unveiled an ambitious membership drive to attain 50 percent participation from the 17,000-plus golf courses in the United States over the next five years.

Currently 13 percent of the courses across the country have joined either the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program or the Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctuary program. Two percent of all courses in the U.S. have achieved Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary status.

"This is an ambitious effort,"

said Kevin Fletcher, director of programs. "Now is the time to be bold and make this happen."

The plan has five objectives, said Fletcher:

- Make sure that all 17,000-plus courses know the Audubon International program exists.
- Find out why those who know about the program have not joined.
- Do a better job of explaining the benefits of the program to the environment, job satisfaction and overall golf course budget.
- Dispel any myths about the program and its difficulty.
- Work more with the industry

as a whole by communicating more with golf course managers, owners, management companies, developers and suppliers.

### WHY HAVEN'T MORE JOINED?

At the core of the membership initiative is figuring out why

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## GCSAA TO TACKLE LONG LIST OF INITIATIVES

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The last 18 months have been anything but quiet at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America headquarters here. From introducing an e-commerce venture, to proposing a dues increase, to studying the relocation of its headquarters, the association has kept busy. Budget shortfalls and slipping numbers for the upcoming show in Atlanta have added to the organization's growing to-do list.

Golf Course News recently caught up with GCSAA CEO Stephen F. Mona to discuss the association's list of initiatives and ongoing challenges.



Stephen F. Mona

Golf Course News: Where does the GCSAA want to be in five years?

Mona: We have five specific goals that we want to achieve by 2007. Number one, we want the superintendent to be viewed as the key to the economic vitality of the golf facility. Second, we want the

superintendent to be viewed as a key to the enjoyment of the game. Third, we want the GCSAA to be viewed as one of golf's leading organizations. If we have high visibility and credibility, than so do superintendents. Fourth, we want to be seen as the authoritative source for information and continued education for the golf course management profession. And finally, we want to be recognized as a leader in helping golf courses make a positive impact on the environment.

GCN: How do you respond to the criticism from some members

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## Gotham Golf merger hits snag in court

By DEREK RICE

NEW YORK — The long-planned and now shareholder-approved merger between First Union Real Estate Equity and Mortgage and Hershey, Pa.-based Gotham Golf Corp. hit a snag in early December when the New York Supreme Court for New York County granted an injunction blocking the transaction.

At issue is compensation for preferred shareholders vs. that for common shareholders. One preferred shareholder, George Kimmel, filed a lawsuit in April seeking class-action status.

Under the original plan, First Union shareholders

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# Carolinas Show posts record numbers

Borman to return as executive director in 2003

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — The Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association's 36th Annual Conference and Show here Nov. 18 to 21 posted record numbers for the second year in a row.

According to Carolinas GCSA director of communications Trent Bouts, overall attendance was up 14 percent and the number of superintendents attending education seminars shot up 45 percent.

One of the reasons for the increase in attendance is the fact that the regional show offers a less costly alternative to the GCSAA's annual conference and show.

"It is a good show and I can get my

education credits for a lower cost per CEU," said Steve Huffstutler, superintendent at Foxfire Country Club in Naples, Fla. "You look around here and aside from the fewer number of people it is just like you are at the GCSAA show."

Bouts said the association put a huge effort into marketing the event this year.

"Certainly we worked harder than ever to generate interest and awareness," he said. "A key component of that promotion was the new *Show Times*, (produced in a partnership with *Golf Course News*) which went to 6,000 golf industry members in October. That edition and a second edition published live

at the show really raised the show's profile and its service significantly."

One of the top stories at the show was the announcement that Chuck Borman was returning to the Carolinas GCSA as executive director. The association had been without an executive director for much of the year.

Borman previously served as executive director from 1998 to 2001 before leaving to become the chief operating officer for the GCSAA. He is due to resume his duties at the Carolinas GCSA in early March.

In other news from the show, Rob Roy, superintendent at Oldfield Club in Bluffton, S.C., took home his first Carolinas GCSA Superintendent Member Championship at International World Tour

Golf Links. Roy said the win was special because he will soon be leaving the Carolinas to grow in Greg Norman's The River Club in Duluth, Ga.

"This is likely my last championship," said Roy. "It means a lot to me to put my name on a trophy next to such great Carolinas superintendents as Mike Seuss, Paul Jett and Mitch Clodfelter."

The Coastal Plains team of Kyle Bibler, Gordon Williams, Robert Rogers and Dick Ferriter, took home the Local Association Team

Championship.

On the closing night of the show, the Carolinas GCSA presented its Distinguished Service Award to James Ernest "Ernie" Hayes. Hayes, who turned 80 in September, began his career as a superintendent at Linville Land Harbor Golf Club in Linville, N.C., in 1969. He was a founding member of the Western North Carolina Turfgrass Association and is an emeritus member of the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina.

## Funding, player development major themes at Golf 20/20

By DEREK RICE

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The mood coming out of the third installment of the Golf 20/20 Conference in November was one of optimism, as the industry consortium assembled to grow the game is poised to take some action.

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem said the board will take a "serious look" at any additional business plans for other initiatives submitted by conference participants.

The seven people who have made up the Golf 20/20 executive board will be joined by eight

# Ohio Turfgrass Show continues success

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Despite mixed numbers, executive director Kevin Thompson termed the latest Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Show, held here Dec. 9 to 12, a success.

While the number of exhibitors increased 2.3 percent to 252, Thompson said year-on-year attendee numbers were down seven percent to 2,900.

"We had an ice storm on Wednesday morning," he said.



The Ohio Turfgrass Show posted mixed numbers.

tors said they were doing just as much business. I think we are getting the same amount of buyers, there are just less members in the buying team."

The conference's educational seminars received high marks, and a new addition to the show, the Innovation Station, was a popular attraction. Thompson

said the new product showcase would be a bigger part of next year's show.

— Andrew Overbeck

"But I think the slight drop in attendees had more to do with the economy. Employers are sending fewer representatives, but exhibi-

## Audubon's 50 in five

Continued from page 1

courses that know about the program have not joined. Fletcher said breaking down the perception that Audubon International is a time and money vacuum is the tallest task.

"Superintendents are really busy people and perhaps it is seen as another voluntary thing that they don't have time to do," Fletcher said. "We have tried to show that when you go through the program, it often frees up time. If you are managing less turf areas because you have converted them to natural areas you have more time to spend doing something else on the course."

"Likewise, we have designed the program to work with both large and small budget courses. Our staff ecologists propose projects but also work within the cost constraints of the course," he continued.

When it comes to the budget cuts that many courses are facing this year, Fletcher said superintendents should not be forced to make a choice between the environment and the bottom line.



Kevin Fletcher

"The environment is a core part of the golf experience," he said. "And these environmental projects can be evaluated by return on investment. All things being equal you will find there are business benefits of investing in environmental programs."

To encourage participation from superintendents, Audubon International is rolling out its Chapter Challenge that builds from the response the organization got from the Delaware GCSA that has achieved 100 percent participation.

"We have already gotten a commitment from the Florida GCSA to get 50 percent of their courses enrolled in the next five years so that is a good start," said Fletcher. "We are working broadly with the GCSAA but we want to do a better job of working with chapters to do what we can to get them involved."

Audubon International is also making a concerted effort to reach all sectors of the golf industry.

In addition to its panel discussion at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta, the organization will host an environmental leadership summit Feb. 12 at Catechee Golf Club outside Atlanta. The point of the meeting will be to create an informal program-level advisory board that provides input to Audubon International's goals for the coming five years, and to discover new ways to continue to improve environmental awareness and stewardship action throughout the entire golf industry. ■



The Golf 20/20 executive board answers questions at an open session to close the conference. From left: PGA commissioner Tim Finchem, LPGA commissioner Ty Votaw, PGA of America CEO Jim Awtrey, NGCOA president Mike Hughes, GCSAA CEO Steve Mona, Acushnet president and CEO Walter Uihlein, and USGA president Reed MacKenzie (sitting in for USGA executive director David Fay).

The emphasis of the conference was to seek out potential golfers in demographics that have not traditionally taken to the game, including women, minorities and older non-golfers.

One of the most welcome and contentious issues to arise was the proposal to seek funding from various industry sectors, including media, suppliers, associations and players. While there is a seeming consensus that some sort of industry funding is needed, similar to the milk and pork co-ops, specific points of contention revolved around who would provide how much funding to whom. The conference adjourned with no decision on that matter.

The executive board approved the development of business plans in two areas — the adult player development program Link Up 2 Golf and golf in schools — over the next three months.

In addition to these two plans,

additional members — Joe Louis Barrow of the First Tee; Bob Dedman Jr. of ClubCorp; Ron Drapeau of Callaway; Sara Hume of the Executive Women's Golf Association; David Manougian of The Golf Channel; Jim Nugent of GolfWeek; David Pillsbury of American Golf Corp.; and Phil Tralies of ClubCar.

At press time, as a result of two workshops held at the conference, one on women in golf and the other on marketing to the emerging fan base, a Golf 20/20 Diversity Task Force was expected to be formed by the end of 2002.

During a session on alternative facilities, KemperSports Management president Steven Lesnik suggested a name change, saying the word "alternative" carries a negative connotation. As a result, the alternative facilities task force proposed a new classification, golf ranges and practice facilities.