

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

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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.