



[REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK]

Asian Golf Show 2012

Bruce Williams, GCI's globetrotting editor, racked up the frequent flier miles for his trip to the Asia Golf Show in Shenzhen, China, which took place in late December. Here's Bruce's take on:

THE STATE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

"China's GDP has been hovering at about the 7.7 percent rate for the last few years and is thought to reach 8.2 percent in 2013. That is pretty impressive compared to the USA these days. If you look at the cities I visited, there are hundreds of construction cranes in place and operating to construct high-rise housing units. Also, at several of the golf courses I visited there was a lot of home building going on around golf courses that had recently opened."

THE SHOW. "The shows in Asia are not just your typical GIS in a smaller format. The shows include both the turf side of the business as well as the development side including contractors, architects and some developers. This side of the show floor is separated by a wall from the other side which contained consumer goods predominantly. So you could do one stop shopping for not only your golf turf needs but also for golf balls, shoes, clubs, tourism, etc. With this type of a setup it is hard to gauge the total level of attendance as some people were there purely for the golf turf and others were there purely for the consumer side of the show."

THE OVERALL VIBE. "In speaking to a variety of exhibitors on the golf/turf side, the overall response was that they were pleased with the traffic that they saw at their booths. It was not about volume but quality of the people at the show. Alan Prickett, who leads the initiatives for Jacobsen in Asia, indicated that Shenzhen had been the best venue in China for trade shows thus far. He said: 'Our level of qualified buyers was excellent and we had a good volume of traffic showing interest in our product line for the entire show. The amount of interest in our product line was pleasing and our team felt that the interest was genuine.'"

The Asia Golf Show in Shenzhen, China, had more than just golf products – attendees could shop for turf and tourism supplies at the same time.

Check out this month's digital addition for more images from AGS 2012.

From THE FEED

Were you a part of the GCI Tweetup and Social Media awards at last year's Golf Course Industry show? We're making social media really social again this year – but inside, this time. Aquatrols has partnered up with our team to bring the event to the show floor and give Pat Jones another reason to wield his megaphone. Meet up at the Aquatrols booth (#2231) on Wednesday, Feb. 6, at 3:30 p.m. to join the conversation. We'll announce this year's recipients of the Social Media awards and talk about even more turf than we already do online, plus enjoy some cold beverages and music. Use the #GCITweetUp13 tag on Twitter to let us know you're joining in!

Join the conversation
on Twitter @GCIMagazine!



Michigan Turfgrass grows

The Michigan State University turf diagnostics lab will expand soon, thanks to a \$100,000 donation made by Michigan turfgrass alum, superintendent and former assistant national director for the USGA, Carl Schwartzkopf, along with the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation.

The new lab will make it easier to make more precise studies of turf with some brand new equipment at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Scenario, and will add a molecular biologist to the facility.

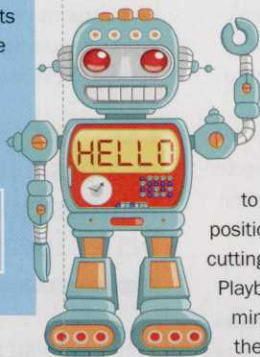
"It's just amazing to me that we're able to be at a facility that Carl had a part in building back in the 60s," says Gordie LaFontaine, executive director of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation.

Schwartzkopf made the official donation December 7, when MTF and GCSAA members and faculty were there for a ribbon cutting and dedication of the new lab.

Watch Schwartzkopf donate \$100,000 to Michigan State University's turf diagnostics lab at bit.ly/GCI100k.

ROBOMOWER IS COMING

IF THERE'S an empty mower cutting its way through the fairway, don't assume it's a runaway. It could be a mower equipped with the Probotiq control system, turning an ordinary mower into a self-driving mowing machine.



The control system is just a few parts, including an armrest terminal, a GPS antenna for the rollbar and front and back safety sensors to make sure nothing can stop the mower – well, except anything it's not supposed to mow over. When a crew member rides a mower with Probotiq installed, he can use the Teach mode to train it to store information about the mower's position, driving speed, steering angle and lifting the cutting units. When the run is complete, using the Playback mode later will let the robo-enhanced mower mimic the mowing session from earlier after driving the mower to the starting position.

If the crew's still afraid the mower will go rogue, there's a wireless remote control, plus internal system and engine monitoring and obstacle detection sensors. If something does trip the sensors or it detects something unsafe, the mower will come to a stop and send a text to your cell phone.

We're still waiting for the build that comes equipped with lasers, ourselves.

