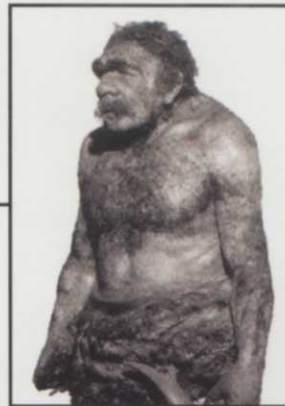


20 billion years ago
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Unknown
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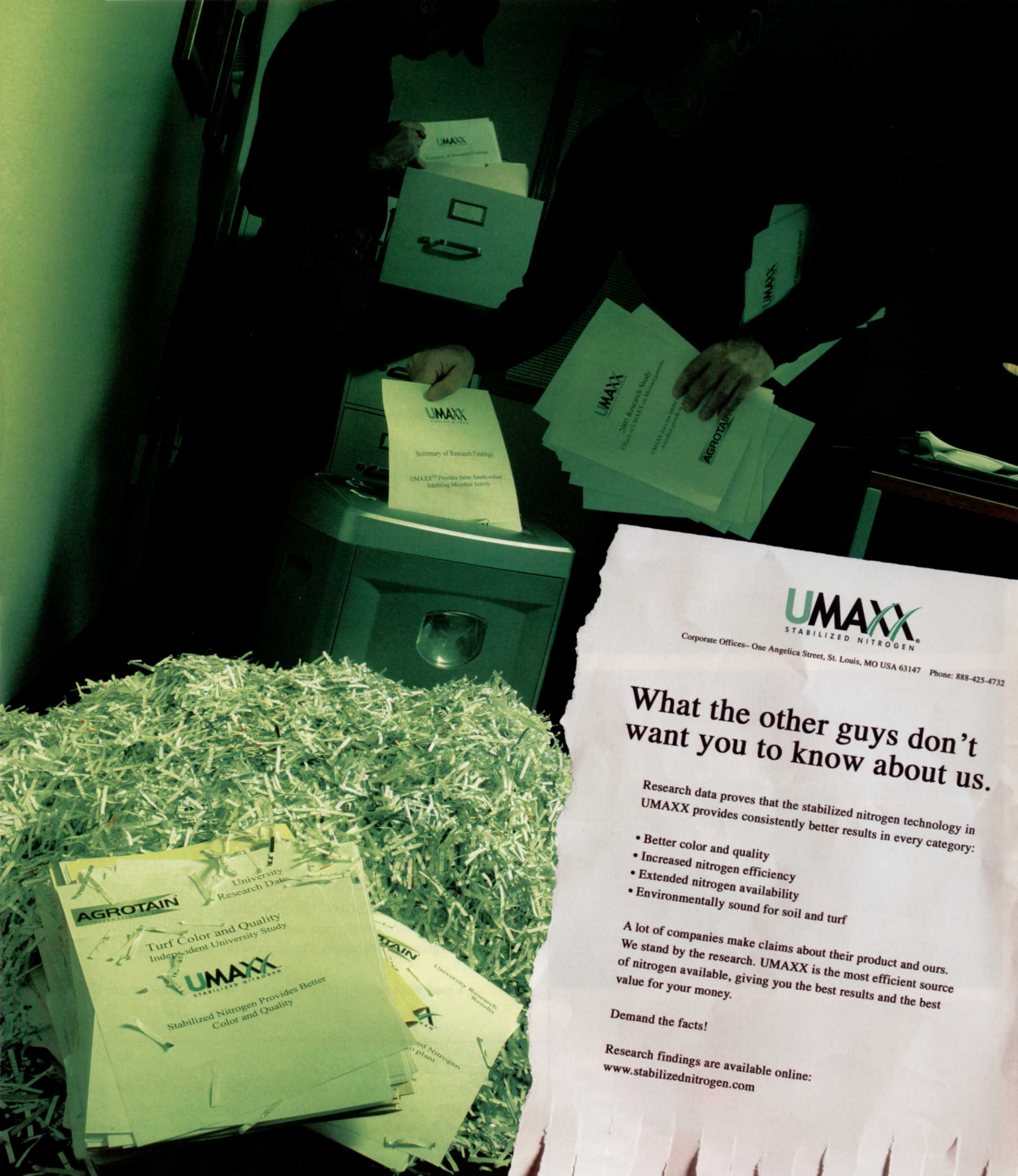
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Proper material selection and care are key to successful turfgrass establishment regardless of the method used.

Cover photography courtesy of Vail Resorts Development Co.

EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course News reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those managers responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset. *Golf Course News* shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.



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ONLINE-ONLY FEATURES:

OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Excessive rain, hurricanes and a change in fairway grasses in the 24th hour were just a few obstacles faced while renovating the Manakin Course at Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot, Va.

AFTER THE STORMS

Like many California golf courses, Soule Park in Ojai started the 2005 season poorly but recovered from considerable flooding en route to a solid year.

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John Walsh
Editor

Golfer relations

While talking with many golf course superintendents for a story about burnout (page 50), it was hammered home again that you love the technical aspect of your jobs. It's why most of you entered the business in the first place. Simply put, you like to work outside and grow and maintain turfgrass so golfers can enjoy it. That technical expertise translates into compliments from golfers, right? Well maybe sometimes, but unfortunately the more ignorant, negative and demanding comments from golfers are the ones that cause consternation among you guys (and gals) and stress you out. That's the part of the job many of you dislike – dealing with golfers.

At the average club, how many members understand your job and what it takes to maintain the course they play? That could be evident by the amount of complaining you hear. There's always a vocal minority (maybe it's bigger) who rub you the wrong way.

The superintendent position has evolved from strictly working on the course, with little interaction with club management and members, to one in which a larger part of the job involves dealing with management and golfers. Obviously, this varies from job to job, depending on the responsibilities.

Many of you are climbing the golf management ladder and thinking about becoming general managers. Dealing with golfers becomes more prevalent with that job. Jim Singerling, chief executive officer of the Club Managers Association of America, sheds light on what a typical general manager deals with (page 24). It sounds like many of you stress about the very thing you would be spending most of your time doing as general managers.

More communication between golfers and superintendents is needed and could help alleviate some of that stress. To deal with golfers more effectively, you should be getting pointers from general managers, especially those who used to be superintendents, as well as your peers. Sharing ideas usually helps.

Veteran superintendents have said that when they were younger they didn't want many golfers on the course because they were trying to maintain certain conditions and golfers didn't help that. But in their wisdom, they now realize, because

this industry is a business, the more golfers the better. However, it can be a double-edged sword. The more golfers there are, the more money in the budget, but the more wear the course endures.

If dealing with golfers is getting you down, something needs to be done about it because golfer/superintendent interaction is likely to become more involved in the future. Young golfers in their preteens and early teens are more sophisticated than their counterparts a generation ago. Their expectations are high and could add to the strain of the golfer/superintendent relationship.

You need to develop a clear, open line of communication with golfers – one that's not a one-way street in which golfers just unload on you, but one in which you can explain your side of the story. "The customer is always right" mentality is acceptable to a point, but you need to respond to golfers to help them understand why things are the way they are. Golfers need to listen. There are too many golfers who don't respect you enough.

This is a tough situation because you can't expect golfers to study or learn more about course maintenance. Many golfers have the mentality that they're on the golf course to have fun, not learn. So, unfortunately, the onus is on you to do more to improve communication and the relationship.

You could pick out the golfers or members who want to learn more about course maintenance and impart wisdom on them with the hopes that they will, in turn, tell others. Maybe the knowledge will spread.

I'd like to hear from those superintendents who have managed that line of communication with golfers successfully. I'd like to hear success stories in which golfers became enlightened because they actually listened to you. E-mail me at jwalsh@gie.net or visit the message board on the *Golf Course News* Web site to share these golfer-relation stories.

And here's to improving the golfer/superintendent relationship and hoping the worst part of your job gets better. GCN

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Calendar

Feb. 28-March 2

Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference and Trade Show
Greater Pittsburgh ExpoMart
Monroeville, Pa.
Call 814-238-2402 or visit
www.paturf.org.

March 2-7

Canadian Golf Superintendent Association's 57th Annual International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show
Vancouver (B.C.)
Convention Centre
Call 905-602-8873 or visit
www.golfsupers.com.

March 6

Western Regional Conference Buffalo/Niagra Marriott
Amherst, N.Y.
Call 800-873-8873 or visit
www.nysta.org.

March 6-9

New England Regional Turf Conference
Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, R.I.
Call 401-841-5490 or visit
www.nertf.org.

March 7

California Golf Course Owners Association Board and Member Meeting
Strawberry Farms Golf Course
Irvine, Calif.
Call 877-465-3122 or visit
www.californiagolf.org.

March 30

Adirondack Regional Conference
Lake Placid Resort (N.Y.) –
Holiday Inn
Call 800-873-8873 or visit
www.nysta.org.

CD, directory



A practical learning tool about soil wetting agents is available – Crop Science Society of America's "Soil Wetting Agents" CD. It provides information about how soil wetting agents work, water chemistry, how water moves in soils, soil water repellency, soil wetting agents and the use of soil wetting agents to address water repellency. The CD also features:

- Information about common turf maintenance and management;
- Information for professors, students and practicing turf advisors/managers; and
- Tools for staff training at golf courses, athletic fields and other turf facilities.

It can be ordered online at www.societystore.org, by calling 608-268-4960 or by e-mailing books@croscs.org.

The **2006 University of Massachusetts Green Directory** is available. The 32-page comprehensive guide to educational resources for Massachusetts agriculture industry professionals includes:

- Contact information for agriculture specialists and faculty;
- Upcoming conferences, seminars and workshops;
- Plant diagnostic lab submission information for insect, disease and cultural problems;
- Soil- and tissue-testing lab submission information;
- Pesticide license information, including test dates, training workshops and how to get a pesticide license;
- Extension newsletters, Web sites and publications; and
- Frequently used phone numbers related to agriculture.

To receive the directory, send a mailing address to greeninfo@umext.umass.edu, fax 413-577-1620 or call 413-545-0895. It's also available online at www.umass.edu/agland. GCN

Contact Rob Thomas, associate editor, at rthomas@gie.net or 800-456-0707 to submit resource information.

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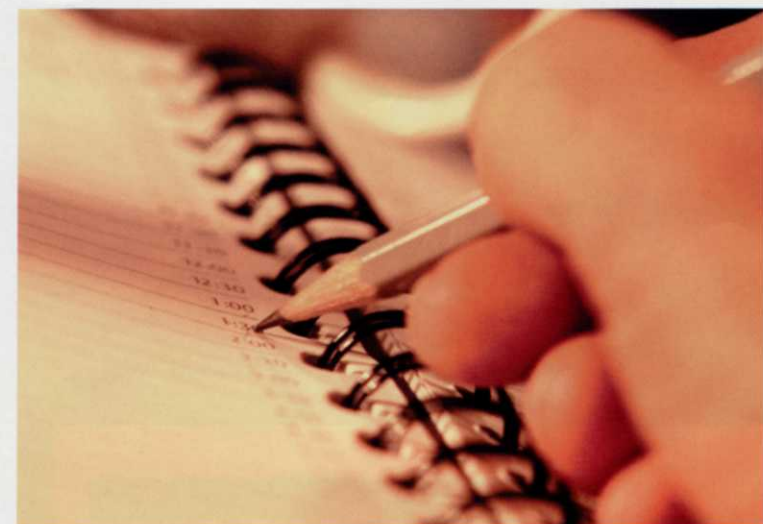
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Industry news



Experts say water conservation awareness needs to increase.

Photo: Rob Thomas

Panel examines conservation

Pasadena, Calif. – Environmental and water conservation experts examined landscape irrigation conservation initiatives and strategies at the second annual Intelligent Use of Water Summit, which was hosted by Rain Bird Corp. The symposium panel focused on the relationship among water conservation and landscape water use, water conservation policies and legislation, and potential programs and initiatives to increase awareness of the need to conserve water.

Taking place after a recent release of a United Nations report predicting an eminent and devastating global water shortage by the year 2025, the summit provided a venue for panelists to encourage civic and business leaders to promote water conservation. Panelists urged leaders to abide by current water-conservation policies and impose more strict water-regulation policies on their organizations.

The panelists included:

- Eric Klotz, water conservation and education section chief, Utah Division of Water Resources;
- Stuart Styles, director, Irrigation Training and Research Center;
- Robert Glennon, professor, University of Arizona, Rogers College of Law
- David Minner, professor, Iowa State University;
- John Neylan, manager, AGCSA Tech, Australian Golf Course Superintendent Association;
- Mark Welterlen, publisher, Grounds Maintenance; and
- Tim Blair, program manager, Water Use Efficiency, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Panelists' written submissions can be downloaded at www.rainbird.com.



PACE launches Super Journal

San Diego – Unpublished technical data generated by golf course superintendents, turf managers and researchers, and interns have a home in Super Journal, an online turf research journal published by the PACE Turfgrass Research Institute and accessible for free at www.paceturf.org.

Super Journal's submission require-

ments aren't as rigorous as an academic journal's, but PACE requires the basic principles of experimental design and data recording and summary be followed. A research guide has been provided on the Web site.

Super Journal includes reports by researchers such as Mary W. Olsen, Ph.D. and Michele J. Kohout, Ph.D., University of Arizona plant pathologists. Olsen and Kohout discovered Bermudagrass is a reservoir for the inoculum of the cool-season turfgrass disease, rapid blight.

Other articles are about insect management, reclaimed water management, conducting research projects and photographing turf diseases.

Super Journal seeks to provide a venue for:

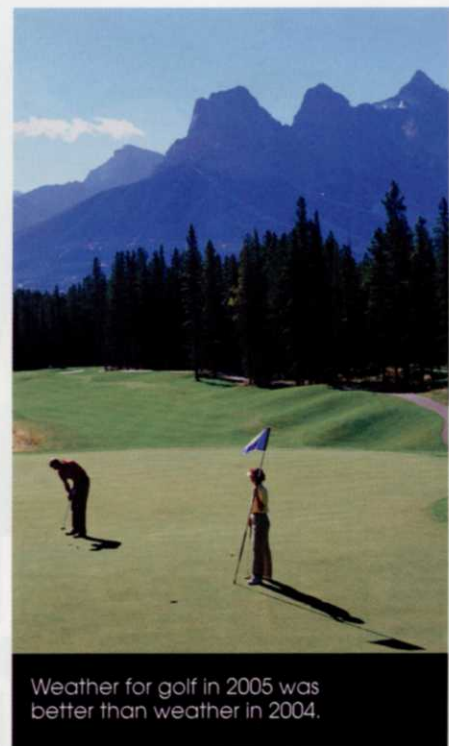
- Superintendents to publish the results of their turf research projects and to share their conclusions with fellow turf managers;
- Turf researchers to rapidly publish and disseminate their experimental results; and
- Superintendents who want help designing, carrying out, interpreting and/or summarizing turf research experiments.

Golf weather improves in 2005

Buffalo Grove, Ill. – 2005 closed with net favorable weather at the national level compared with 2004, according to Pellucid Corp. Golf playable hours in December was 4.6 percent higher than December 2004, which ensured the full-year weather comparison to remain positive – GPHs increased 1.6 percent in 2005.

National rounds in November outperformed weather for the first time in 2005 with a 10.4-percent increase, creating a weather-adjusted rounds index of 204 for the month.

"With half the country shut down for the winter, the weather information is now heavily influenced by the Sunbelt states where we saw double-digit gains in GPH across all three of the California reporting regions," says Pellucid president Jim Koppenhaver. "Florida and Texas also had positive Decembers, which added to their year-to-date increases. Positive results for 2005 were widespread with the breadth indicator showing 12 regions finishing with higher GPHs versus 2004 against six decliners producing a breadth



Weather for golf in 2005 was better than weather in 2004.

Photo: Rob Thomas

ratio of exactly 2:1."

For key state geographies where direct comparisons between GPH and rounds changes can be made, rounds generally have followed weather, but there's no linear correlation between the weather and rounds results.

"For every negative influence, there's generally an unheralded corresponding positive influence somewhere reducing the volatility of the weather variable across annual periods," Koppenhaver says. "By studying both local and macro results, we can paint a more accurate picture for serious business people regarding which direction and to what extent variances in weather helped or hurt them throughout the year."

Winners selected for environment

Lawrence, Kan. – Recognizing their commitment to environmental stewardship, Los Lagos Golf Course in San Jose, Calif., and its certified golf course superintendent, Alan R. Andreasen, were named the overall winners of the 2005 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.

Syngenta Professional Products and Rain Bird Corp., Golf Division are the presenting partners of the award.

Judges selected winners in three national categories (public, private and resort courses), and an international winner, with an overall winner being selected from the group. The other national win-