

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Textron combines E-Z-GO, Turf Care

Textron has consolidated E-Z-GO Textron and Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products into a single organization — Textron Golf and Turf.

The organization, headquartered in Augusta, Ga., will continue to offer golf cars, professional/commercial turf care equipment and utility vehicles under the Bob-Cat, Brouwer, Bunton, Cushman, E-Z-GO, Jacobsen, Ransomes, Ryan and Steiner brand names.

L.T. Walden Jr. was named chairman and CEO of Textron Golf & Turf. Textron says the move strengthens the company's position in the golf, turf care and industrial markets.

### Simplot, Budd to purchase ABT

Henderson, Nev.-based AgriBioTech Inc. will sell its turfgrass seed assets and specialty division to Kenneth R. Budd and J. R. Simplot Co. for about \$65 million, according to a report on Turfnet.com. Budd is a former president and chief operating officer of ABT, and J.R. Simplot is a privately held agribusiness company in Boise, Idaho.

### Toro raises forecast

The Toro Co. is raising its forecast for the year after posting second-quarter earnings per share that exceeded analyst expectations. Net sales for the quarter were \$441.8 million compared to \$433.1 million for the quarter last year, a 2 percent increase. Net sales for the first half of 2000 were \$722 million, compared to \$683.9 for the first half of 1999.

Golf equipment sales were up but golf irrigation was down in comparisons to an unusually strong first half last year, Toro said.

The company also announced a com-

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## A Funny Thing About PDI

By Larry Aylward, Managing Editor

**I**t was time for Arizona superintendents to get serious and talk about the Professional Development Initiative, GCSAA's controversial proposal "to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of the professional superintendent." So all became quiet when a no-nonsense-looking Kevin Smith, president of the Cactus and Pine GCSA, took the podium at the group's annual meeting in April.

Smith would introduce Jim DeMoux of Franklin Covey Consultants, who would address the members and discuss their concerns regarding PDI. The tall, good-looking and well-dressed DeMoux waited in the wings as Smith introduced him. "He has degrees in underground water erosion and intergender communications from Green Valley Community College," Smith said. "After graduation, he landed a job at Acme Irrigation. He was nominated twice for employee of the month, but never won."

Then DeMoux took center stage. He asked members if they had any burning questions about PDI — they had none — and announced he wanted to review the competency-based performance assessment, a part of PDI that's a sticking point among superintendents. DeMoux then asked for a volunteer to answer sample questions from the competency-based performance assessment to give



**Does this guy look like a PDI expert? Depends on whom you ask. His name is Sean Hoy, but he was Jim DeMoux to members of the Cactus and Pine GCSA.**

audience members a better idea what it was about. Dan DeVere, former Cactus and Pine president, agreed to be the guinea pig.

Then DeMoux began asking DeVere a series of outrageous and hilarious questions, such as:

- Who do you call if someone accidentally runs himself over with a golf cart? 911, First Aid or the maintenance facility to repair the golf course?
- What kind of soap do you use in

a ball washer, and how many pumps does it take to get a Titleist clean?

• If Johnny spent \$18 on eight beers and played an extra nine holes on Saturday, how much will his wife get in the divorce settlement?

The quick-witted DeVere, who had no idea what was going on, had some great comebacks for the questions.

DeMoux: "Out of everything you've learned, what is it that you never do right?" DeVere: "Lie to my wife."

DeMoux: "Have you ever kicked a person off the course for indecent exposure?" DeVere: "I asked her to come back."

About 10 minutes into the presentation, the crowd was roaring — and wondering how this bit could really be about PDI. Finally, DeMoux let on. He confessed his real name was Sean Hoy, a Phoenix-area comedian and cartoonist who's president of Pranks Galore, a company that specializes in customized corporate comedy.

Yeah, this was supposed to be about PDI — but with a twist. The Cactus and Pine GCSA leaders figured that PDI, which is as humorless as Congressional budget negotiations, would be better off presented in a jocular light. Most audience members enjoyed the presentation and probably appreciated not being banged over the head with PDI logic.

Smith took the podium after Hoy, and told the audience on a more serious note — a short one, too — that the association was committed to getting out information about PDI in a serious and informative fashion. Just as important, Smith reminded members never to lose their sense of humor — even when it comes to PDI.

## Industry Off EPA's Hook

Superintendents don't have to worry about finding an alternative product for Dursban. EPA spared the golf course maintenance industry in its ban of chlorpyrifos because of kids ages 1 to 6 — rather, lack of them on golf courses.

In its June 8 ruling, EPA cited health risks to children for its ban of the insecticide's use in gardens and homes. But because kids ages 1 to 6 won't normally be found on golf courses and won't be exposed to chlorpyrifos, EPA let the golf course maintenance industry slide.

"I haven't talked to any superintendents yet, but I assume they're pleased," said Tim Maniscalco, manager of government and public affairs for Indianapolis-based Dow AgroSciences LLC,

manufacturer of Dursban, a chlorpyrifos-based insecticide.

Chlorpyrifos products were among the first inspected under the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. In regard to the new ruling, Maniscalco says EPA "has raised the hurdle so high that you can't jump over it."

"There's no new scientific evidence regarding it," he adds. "It's just that the exposure standards are set at such a high hurdle that very little exposure for almost any use is allowed. EPA felt compelled to protect children and give them an extra safety margin."

Retail sale of chlorpyrifos products in the United States will be allowed through 2001.

## Quotable

**"A two handicap on your resume will get you more attention than a two-year degree."**

— Mike Rewinski, a New York superintendent, responding on a GCSAA Web site forum about the importance of superintendents playing golf.

**"It's in the shop getting new brakes right now."**

— Dennis Cone, founder of the Worldwide Caddie Hall of Fame, updating a Palm Beach Post reporter on the status of the "Hall" — a 1978 Winnebago.

**"His influence on the profession cannot be understated ... He helped transform golf course architecture into the highly specialized profession it is today."**

— Brian Ault, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, on the death of Robert Trent Jones Sr.

**"I'm glad that we didn't lose it. Superintendents are a very educated and trained group of professionals who are aware of uses of chemicals. We're licensed to use them and must continue our education of them."**

— Alan Puckett, superintendent of the Club at Eaglebrook in Lakeland, Fla., on EPA's Dursban ruling.

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ppany-wide initiative to raise its after-tax profit return on sales to 5 percent by the end of fiscal 2003.

### **ClubCorp forms Pinehurst division**

Dallas-based ClubCorp has formed The Pinehurst Co., a new division "to leverage the worldwide recognition and reputation of ClubCorp's flagship golf destination resort, Pinehurst."

The new division includes Pinehurst, Barton Creek in Austin, Texas; Daufuskie Island in Daufuskie Island, S.C.; The Homestead in Hot Springs, Va.; and Palmilla in Los Cabos, Mexico.

The Pinehurst Co. replaces the division ClubCorp Resorts.

### **NGCOA, Apollo form Golfbusiness.com**

The National Golf Course Owners Association and Apollo Real Estate Advisors, L.P. Principals have formed golfbusiness.com, a business to-business, electronic commerce platform for the golf industry. Tampa, Fla.-based Golfbusiness.com is a vertically integrated marketplace that will offer golf course and driving range facility owners and operators necessary products and services for their businesses.

Meadowbrook Golf Group, one of Apollo's portfolio companies, agreed to contribute its purchasing power to the company. In addition, golfbusiness.com will benefit from the existing supplier relationships of Golf Ventures, a distributor and supplier of golf products and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Meadowbrook.

### **Andersons completes Scott's acquisition**

Maumee, Ohio-based The Andersons announced it has completed its acquisition of Marysville, Ohio-based Scotts Co.'s U.S. Professional Turf Business.

The transaction includes a long-term supply agreement under which Scotts will use its proprietary manufacturing processes to produce value-added products for the Andersons.

# Goin' Electric

**H**igher fuel prices mean higher maintenance costs for superintendents using gas- and diesel-powered turf-care equipment. Some superintendents, however, have reduced maintenance costs by going electric.

David Boughter, assistant superintendent for Coyote Hills GC in Fullerton, Calif., has cut fuel costs by using an electric greens mower. "We don't worry about gas prices and fuel consumption with it," says Boughter, who has a Ransomes E-Plex II electric greens mower.

Not only do electric mowers eliminate traditional fuel costs, they also require less preventive maintenance. And no, electric mowers aren't more expensive than gas and diesel mowers.

It's easy to calculate the operation costs of a gas- or diesel-powered triplex mower compared to an equivalent electric triplex mower by looking at the mowing schedule — the average number of hours it takes to mow per day, the amount of fuel used and the number of mowing days per year, says Peter Whurr, vice president of product management for Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products in Racine, Wis. To calculate maintenance costs, consider the number of oil changes, hydraulic fluid changes, air filters and coolant changes in a year, Whurr adds. This provides a conservative estimate since it doesn't include labor costs.

Rising fuel costs may drive other superintendents (especially those eyeing the bottom line) to consider electric alternatives to traditional mowers. Fuel prices have steadily increased since March 1999, more than doubling in some regions.

A reason for the higher prices is a reduction in the amount of crude oil produced by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries — an attempt to boost prices that have fallen to a 12-year low.

Although OPEC recently agreed to increase oil production by 7 percent, or 1.7 million barrels per day, many industry analysts expect higher prices to continue through the summer.

## Due South

Toto, I don't think we're in Canada anymore.

It's rare to see a superintendent move across a state line, not to mention a national border, but CGCS Dave Gourlay defied the odds by relocating from Toronto, the Big Apple of Canada, to Manhattan, Kan., the "Little Apple" of the Sunflower State.

Gourlay, a long-time leader among Canadian superintendents, was recently lured to the picturesque but relatively isolated Flint Hills of Kansas to become general manager and superinten-



Dave Gourlay loves the "Little Apple."

dent for Colbert Hills GC at Kansas State University. The new course is demanding — its 152 slope rating equals Pine Valley — and not exactly a

pitching wedge away from a major metro.

"I didn't know what to expect when I came down for the interview," Gourlay says, "but we fell in love with the place as soon as we saw it. It's a great place."

## All Mobbed Up

**P**enn State grads will tell you the Mafia doesn't exist. They deny blood rituals, secret handshakes and whispers about "made" superintendents that have circulated about their school for years.

But if there's no Penn State Mafia, how do you explain that all but one of this year's U.S. Majors are being hosted by clubs that employ Penn State graduates? Coincidence? We don't think so.



Oscar Miles (standing, right) enlists a pack of Nittany Lions for help at the Merit Club, including second assistant Chris Blake (standing, left), and interns Brian Steelwagen (kneeling, left) and Steven Craig.

Here's a list of the important tournaments Penn State influenced this year: the Masters, Augusta National (William Bradford Owen III., '87); the U.S. Women's Open, The Merit Club (Oscar Miles, '61); the U.S. Open, Pebble Beach Golf Links (Eric Greytok, '96); the U.S. Senior Open, Saucon Valley CC, (Old Course) Old Bethlehem, Pa. (Terry Laurent, '86); and the 100th U.S. Amateur, Baltusrol GC (Upper Course) in Springfield, N.J. (Mark Kuhns, '77).

The Penn State brotherhood denies the rumors that Godfathers Joe Duich and Tom Watschke will soon make an offer to the staff of the PGA Championship, which will be held at Valhalla GC in Louisville, Ky., that they can't refuse. The Championship is the only U.S. Major this year not to bear the stamp of that school in State College.

## Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews state association sites

I don't belong to a superintendent association, so I have to live vicariously through the sites that you work so hard to post on the Web. If you're looking to start your own chapter Web site, here are a few to check out to see what others are doing (all sites start with <http://> unless otherwise noted):

(\*\*\*\* - Bookmark it and return frequently; \* - Look at only if absolutely necessary)

\*\*\*\*[www.igcsa.com](http://www.igcsa.com) - The site was created and formerly maintained by Rob Buckner, superintendent of Blue River CC in Shelbyville, Ind. With user-friendly menus, discussion forums and a links page that provides extra benefits to members, Indiana GCSA has a lot to be proud of. The site was recently updated and improved, according to Chris Piske, president of the association, who says the "new" site is "20 times better" than the original.

\*\*\*\*[www.ogcsa.org](http://www.ogcsa.org) - The Oregon Golf Course Superintendents Association site, though pleasant looking, has a disconcerting opening page. In the middle of the page is a line of text that seems stuck in perpetual hyperdrive. After 10 minutes of staring at



it, I still couldn't read it (let's hope it wasn't a subversive subliminal message of some sort). The page's hotlinks with industry vendors are easily accessible, and its interface leads users easily through the site. Oregon's superintendents can obtain copious information to help them do their jobs better with the help of this site.

\*\*\*\*[www.mgcsa.com](http://www.mgcsa.com) - Maine's Golf Course Superintendents Association provides a no-frills site packed tightly with information. It provides a meeting schedule, president's address and extensive job postings for anyone looking for a job in The Pine Tree State. It's a solid site that serves its members well.

*Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom's associate editor, whose friends and family don't want to associate with him. You can reach him at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) with column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.*



## Heads Up!

More beginner golfers means more "fores!" on the golf course. So watch out for errant balls.

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Beginner golfers (thousands)	1,831	1,959	2,962	2,859
Participation rate*	0.9%	0.9%	1.3%	1.2%

\*Percentage of total U.S. population that played golf for the first time in the specified year.

SOURCE: NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION; ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY