

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 12

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

Higher 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."