

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Toro exceeds expectations

Bloomington, Minn.-based The Toro Co. reported net earnings for the third quarter ending Aug. 3 exceeded expectations despite a difficult market. Net earnings were \$16.9 million, compared to \$16.4 million for last year's third quarter, a 3 percent increase.

Revenues declined by 4.4 percent to \$329.8 million compared to \$345.2 million a year ago. Nine-month revenues were \$1.08 billion, slightly ahead of last year's same period of \$1.07 billion. Net earnings year-to-date were \$48.3 million compared to \$44.3 million last year, a 9.1 percent increase on net earnings.

Deere income down

Moline, Ill.-based Deere & Co. reported net income of \$71.8 million for the third quarter ending July 31, and \$256.1 million for the first nine months of 2001. This compares with net income of \$172.4 million and \$414.4 million for the comparable periods last year.

"Deere's third-quarter results continued to reflect the general economic slowdown and low farm commodity prices," said Robert W. Lane, chairman and CEO. "Although we are pleased to have remained profitable in the face of such difficult conditions, we are continuing to take aggressive actions to further strengthen our competitiveness and drive more efficient asset levels."

Scholarship available

The Grand Tour Scholarship features a four-week journey to visit 25 of the top 100 golf courses the country, either in the East or West.

For more information, contact Bettina Schrickel, certified golf course architect, at 954-647-3436 or lionessgolf@aol.com.

Please, No Crappy Jokes

MILORGANITE CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

By Ron Hall

Happy birthday, Milorganite! Gosh, that sounds funny — saying happy birthday to a fertilizer that's the byproduct of a city's sewage treatment process. Even so, the popular industry fertilizer Milorganite is 75 years old this year.

I traveled to Milwaukee in August to get a firsthand look at how Milorganite fertilizers are made and to see some of the venues where they're used (Brown Deer Park GC and the Brewers' new Miller Park). I was also allowed a glimpse at a new family of synthetically enriched Milorganite products (Milorganite Komplete) being tested and readied for the turf/ornamental market. While Milorganite fertilizers are a byproduct of the treatment of Milwaukee's sewage, they have never contained sewage.

"It is, and always has been, the nutrient-rich, heat-processed remains of the critters that digest the sewage. Even after 75 years, we find we still have to get that message out," says the company's Jeff Spence.

The history of the organic nitrogen fertilizer starts in 1926 when Milwaukee looked to O.J. Noer, of the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture, to find a use for the biosolid

byproduct resulting from the city's activated sludge process. This technology had been perfected in England and never before used in the United States.

Noer found that the byproduct had an average nutrient profile of 6.2 percent nitrogen, 2.63 percent phosphate and .4 percent potash. He tested the materials on agriculture and turf and discovered the results were excellent. Further testing on golf

courses convinced him the material had great potential as a fertilizer.

The commercial potential had become so obvious, the Sewerage Commission authorized construction of a biosolids processing facility for the product, whose name stands for MILwaukee's

ORGanic NITrogen. Commercial production began in August 1926.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District will produce 55,000 tons of Milorganite this year at its modernized Jones Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. The sale of Milorganite fertilizers defrays operating costs and provides a controlled way to redistribute wastewater nutrients to the environment, safely and beneficially.

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— JEFF SPENCE

Hall is editor of Athletic Turf, Golf-dom's sister publication.