

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

Bayer says purchase will affect profit margins

Reuters said a spokesman for Bayer AG confirmed a report citing CEO Manfred Schneider as saying margins would fall in the first year after its purchase of Aventis CropScience unit. The executive also stated margins would return to current levels in the third year after the purchase. Bayer is in exclusive negotiations with Aventis SA to purchase its CropScience unit for around \$6 billion, including debt.

Eco Soil reorganizing

Rancho Bernardo, Calif.-based Eco Soil Systems said in a letter to shareholders that it has engaged an investment banker to help it reorganize its core business. The company also said it's seeking to sell non-core assets and use proceeds from any sales to pay down debt and improve its working capital position.

Pursell opens Pursell Farms

Pursell Technologies officially opened Pursell Farms, its new 3,000-acre corporate headquarters, in July in Sylacauga, Ala. The headquarters includes demonstration sites, research stations and a guest lodge. During the grand opening, ground was broke on the construction of FarmLinks, a championship 18-hole research and demonstration golf course that will be the focal point of the complex. FarmLinks will also include a prototype learning facility for kids called The First Tee at Pursell Farms.

Lesco income down for first half

Cleveland-based Lesco reports that it achieved record sales of \$164.1 million for the quarter ended June 30, an increase of 3.7 percent over \$158.3 million in the 2000 second

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Worth the Trouble?

SUPERINTENDENTS WEIGH PROS, CONS OF RECEIVING GOLF CAR CASH

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.,
Managing Editor

Should superintendents push for a share of the golf car revenue that traditionally goes to golf professionals? The answer depends on what extra headaches they're willing to endure.

According to the National Golf Foundation's 1999 U.S. Golf Facility Compensation Study, 17.1 percent of golf professionals receive a percentage of the money as compensation, while less than 1 percent of superintendents do.

Ensuring the golf car fleet is in working order is a 24/7 job, said Dennis Watkins, superintendent at Lords Valley CC in Newfoundland, Pa. Superintendents who receive revenues from golf car rentals are often asked to take on the additional responsibility of servicing them, he added.

"You'd have to pay me big bucks for that aggravation," Watkins said. "Extra work is involved, often during the season. You have to have a daylight-to-dark commitment."

On the other hand, if superintendents don't mind the additional maintenance responsibilities, golf car revenues can add substantially to their compensation packages. In



DIGITALSTOCK

Golf car rentals can bring superintendents additional revenue, but they come with added responsibility.

George Manuel's case, the extra money he received at Pine Forest CC in Houston was between \$14,000 and \$16,000 annually, representing 2 percent of golf car fees. Manuel, now superintendent at River Oaks CC in Houston, said he enjoyed the extra revenue and the added responsibility.

"I liked having responsibility for the golf car fleet, but you have to hire a good technician to oversee daily maintenance because it's too much for your regular mechanic to do," Manuel said. "I felt I could keep the cars better maintained than they would be otherwise because I controlled the service, and my standards are pretty high."

Parin Schmidt, superintendent at Naperbrook GC in Naperville, Ill.,

said he received a small percentage of car revenue from Monday morning outings when he was superintendent at Stonebridge CC in Aurora, Ill.

"I controlled the decision about when golf cars were allowed on the course," Schmidt said. "I also took the heat if a member didn't like [my decision]."

He currently maintains more than 80 cars without receiving any additional money.

If you take on the additional responsibility, you should create a separate car division within the maintenance department, complete with a full-time mechanic, part-time mechanic and staff to wash cars, said Walter Montross, superintendent at Westwood CC in Vienna, Va. His course's pro receives the car revenue and is responsible for the maintenance.

Montross says he's weighed the pros and cons about getting into the golf car business when his course invited him to become the general manager, which would have included the responsibility. After careful deliberation, he decided against taking the job because it would have distracted him from what he enjoys most.

"The additional revenue isn't worth it," he said. "If I wanted to take it on, I would become a general manager instead of doing what I love — being a superintendent."

Gripping About 'Get A Grip!'

That goofy little booklet that GCSAA sent in mass quantities to superintendents to distribute to golfers has gone over like a Buffalo Bills performance in the Super Bowl.

It's a dog.

The booklets, entitled *Get a Grip!*, were mailed to GCSAA members in July with memorandums from GCSAA president Tommy Witt. The booklet contains excerpts from the book of the same name by John M. Capozzi, a successful businessman. It's filled with cartoons, quotes and jokes from golfers, actors, etc. We and others didn't find it humorous.

In his memorandum, Witt asked superintendents to distribute the magazines to "maximize the exposure for



GCSAA's latest public relations initiative drew howls of protest from the rank-and-file.

GCSAA

Quotable

"Our objective is to keep this golf course current. Beginning in 1934 and throughout their tenure, Cliff Roberts and Bob Jones made improvements to complement the changing state of the game. We have continued this philosophy."

— Hootie Johnson, Augusta National GC chairman, on the course's renovation headed by Tom Fazio. Augusta will be extended to 7,270 yards from 6,985 yards. (*The Wire*)

"This is the only golf course in the world that combats things yearly. I'm not sure longer is the answer."

— PGA golfer Hal Sutton on the Augusta renovation. (*The Augusta Chronicle*)

"They look like bloody huge flying goldfish!"

— Visiting Scotsman Dave Samuels, superintendent at The Belfry, describing the yellow orioles flitting about during a round of golf before the John Deere Classic in Moline, Ill.

our profession." He said the booklets were part of GCSAA's 75th Anniversary celebration. But many superintendents are griping about *Get A Grip!*

One superintendent told us the booklets were a bunch of "unsolicited crap" and an "embarrassment." That superintendent said he received about 500 copies to distribute.

The booklet sparked a debate on one of the GCSAA online forums. One superintendent said *Get a Grip!* represents a bad public relations job for superintendents.

Witt vowed in a posting that GCSAA didn't spend a penny on the project. He also said the booklet was supposed to — but didn't — provide examples of how superintendents contribute to the golfing experience.

Maybe GCSAA should follow up the booklet mailing with an aspirin mailing to superintendents.

Extra strength.