

# Another Trying Year

But there are signs that point to ... dare we say ... an upturn

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EDITOR

**T**wo years ago we reported that the difficult economy was an integral issue facing the golf course maintenance industry. Last year we reported the same thing. This year ... you guessed it.

Times were tough for superintendents and their golf courses in 2003 — and then some. A whopping 74 percent of superintendents say the poor-performing economy affected rounds at their courses, according to a *Golfdom* online survey of more than 300 superintendents conducted in October. Fifty-seven percent of superintendents said their rounds were off between 5 percent and 15 percent. Tough economic times often lead to budget cuts, and 2003 was no exception for many superintendents.

**Superintendents are confident that golf cars at their courses will get more use in 2004.**



DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

The first story (page 4A) in our third annual *Golfdom* Report reports on these issues and more. Two years ago, we reported that many superintendents — and plenty of financial analysts — expected the sour economy to turn sweet the following year. It didn't, and it didn't this year either. We're not making any predictions for next year, but there are signs that point to ... dare we say ... an upturn. Recent national economic news has been positive. Also, many superintendents — and maybe we shouldn't report this — say they're optimistic about 2004.

Also in this year's *Golfdom* Report is a story about the state of the job market (page 14A). Many industry people have questions about their profession. Is it a crowded market place? Are there enough jobs for capable graduates? Will finding a job require relocating? And how long will it take to move up the ranks and become a head superintendent? We try to answer these questions as best we can.

Both stories in the report also feature information charts garnered from our recent superintendent survey. Additional charts appear on page 20A.

Finally, we would like to hear what you think of this report. Please contact me at [larryward@advanstar.com](mailto:larryward@advanstar.com) or Managing Editor Frank Andorka at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) to give us your views and any story ideas you might have for 2004.