

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

GCSAA restarts moving study

The GCSAA has restarted its headquarters relocation study. But there will be a change in the process, said certified superintendent Jon D. Maddern, GCSAA's president.

The study will be based on the same model that was used in recent years to study and implement the Chapter Affiliation Agreement and the Professional Development Initiative. As part of this process, an independent resource group composed of GCSAA members has been created to study all relevant issues regarding relocation. The Headquarters Location Resource Group will have administrative support and operate under broad oversight, but will have appropriate autonomy with which to act, the association said in a news release.

The relocation study was put on "pause" in February.

Bayer off to good start

The Bayer Group is off to a good start in 2003, spurred by its acquisition of Aventis CropScience. Bayer said continuing operations improved by 31 percent in the first quarter. Sales of Bayer CropScience jumped by 92 percent, mainly due to the Aventis CropScience acquisition.

In other company news, Bayer Environmental Science announced the company can continue to market the active ingredient fipronil and its mixtures to the turf and ornamental market. The announcement stems from Bayer CropScience AG's recent agreement on the divestiture of selected insecticides and fungicides to BASF AG.

Bayer says it retains back-licenses for certain nonagricultural applications. Fipronil serves as the active ingredient for Chipco TopChoice and Chipco Choice. Chipco

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Power Play

EYEWIRE

AN ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM COULD LOWER CHARGING COSTS FOR YOUR GOLF CAR FLEET

By Scott Austin

If you're like most general managers, superintendents and golf club executives, you do two things every month when your electrical bill arrives. You take one look at it and mutter something about the *x*b%cc&ing!* power company. Then you do one more thing — you pay the bill.

You don't have to, you know. Well, unless you want your local power company to pull the plug on your club, you *do* have to pay your power bills. But you don't have to resign yourself to ever-increasing costs for electricity. You can lower your power bill significantly by investing in a system to manage and control charging costs for your fleet of electric golf cars.

While most clubs carefully scrutinize their costs for labor, food and beverage and equipment, electricity costs are often overlooked even though they can claim 25 percent to 35 percent of operating expense budgets. But in today's environment — with fuel costs going up and increasing deregulation of the power companies — it makes sense to have an energy management strategy that's more proactive than the common "we'll try to use less" approach.

Energy management systems have been around for almost two decades.

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Choice is used by Southern superintendents for long term mole cricket control.

Scotts resubmits application

With another year of field study now under its belt, The Scotts Co. has resubmitted its request for government approval of its Round-Up Ready creeping bentgrass. The company had withdrawn its application for approval last fall after the USDA asked for an additional growing season's worth of data on the herbicide-resistant species.

Originally, the company hoped to have seed available commercially in 2004 or 2005, but Scotts spokesman Wayne Horman said the company "really isn't looking at any specific timeline right now" to come to market.

Deere supplying EAGL

John Deere was named the exclusive supplier of golf course maintenance equipment and financing to Evergreen Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL), a golf course management company serving more than 40 courses around the country. Through the agreement, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source will be supplying golf and turf maintenance equipment to the superintendents of each EAGL course, including all mowing, aeration and specialty turf products. John Deere will also provide exclusive financing to the courses.

RISE launches site on West Nile

RISE has launched a new Web site — www.westnilevirusfacts.org — on West Nile virus and how pesticides are an important preventative tool. West Nile virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito and can infect people, horses, many types of birds and some other animals. The virus spread rapidly South and West throughout 2002. Many experts believe that in West Nile virus will make its way across the entire country this year.

Web site focuses on water issues

The University of Georgia turfgrass team has introduced the Web site, www.turfgrassWater.com, to disseminate information related to turfgrass water issues. The team consists of scientists in the forefront of water conservation, and water-quality research and outreach.

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But the most advanced systems on the market today are a far cry from the ones introduced by the power companies themselves in the mid 1980s to manage irrigation systems. Internal computers, user-friendly displays and comprehensive backup features now bring new management and control capabilities to course operations.

The basic job of any energy management system is to switch the charging function from a manual task to an automated one, using today's advanced technology to realize a cost savings. It sounds simple enough, and it is. But before you invest in a system, it's a good idea to get an analysis of your facility's electrical usage from the system's manufacturer, which will be able to explain the system in detail and tell you what you should expect in the way of savings.

The basis for any energy management system is that it allows clubs to recharge their electric car fleets during many local power companies' less-expensive off-peak times. These times are more commonly known as Time Of Use (TOU) or Time Of Day (TOD) rates. They were introduced by utility

companies as an incentive for customers to shift their charging load to times when public demand is lower. Depending on where your course is located, these reduced rates are usually in effect from around 8 p.m. until 8 a.m. The system can be programmed to switch itself on when the off peak-rates begin and off when the standard rate takes effect.

A quality energy management system should be specifically designed for golf car charging to automate all

electrical control tasks. It should be totally hands-free, and adjust automatically to seasonal and time changes. Choose a model that can also be programmed to phase-in a charging system to help eliminate overload problems. Also inquire about a program that includes surge protection, lightning safety, and golf car storage facility design and planning. A top-of-the-line system offers this and more.

In most cases, energy management systems save clubs 10 percent to 60 percent on their charging costs. Clubs with a fleet of 70 cars, for example, could expect an average savings of around \$500 per month, or \$6,000 per year.

Coincidentally, that's about what the system is going to cost on the front end. In addition to the hardware and software, installation labor costs are about \$500 for a new facility to \$2,500 to retrofit an existing facility. The equipment has a life cycle of about 20 years.

One way to look at the benefit is to think of it in terms of adding 10 more golf cars to the fleet for an entire year at no cost.

Energy management systems designed specifically for your golf car fleet not only combat rising costs, but also pay for themselves at the same time. One of the biggest residual benefits is that when you're saving on electricity you're not reducing services or quality in the eyes of your members. You're simply helping your club operate more efficiently, which is something everyone appreciates these days.

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Scott Austin is energy management specialist for Augusta, Ga.-based Club Car.