

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

NGCOA's final meeting

The final meeting of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) — as we know it — is set for Jan. 10-14 in Tampa. In 2005, the NGCOA will combine its annual show with the GCSAA annual conference. That maiden convention will take place in February 2005 in Orlando.

The NGCOA is billing its show as the "2004 Solutions Summit." Between 600 and 700 golf course owners and operators are expected at the show, which will offer educational sessions on how to maximize profit centers and control expenses in every aspect of golf course operations.

Bayer restructures sales team

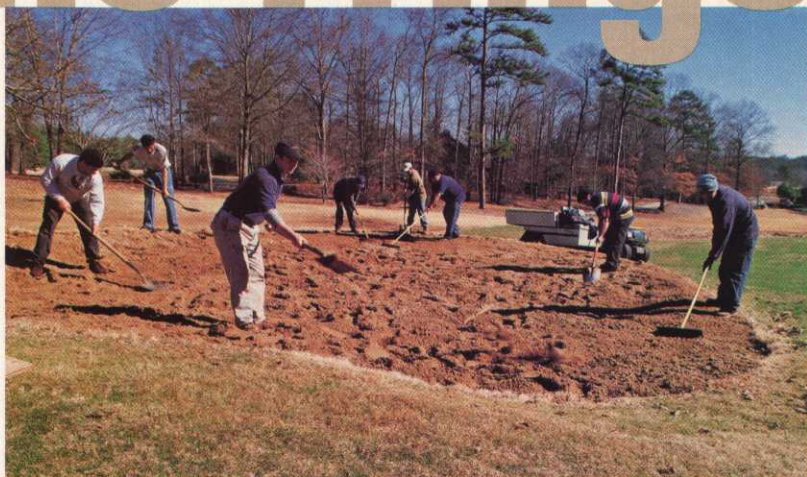
To better serve the differing needs of Green Industry customers, Bayer Environmental Science said it will expand and reposition existing sales and marketing resources within Chipco Professional Products.

The recent creation of a national lawn care/landscape and grounds maintenance region with a dedicated sales manager and sales representatives will enable the three current sales regions to specialize on golf course customers in their geographies. An expanded number of sales representatives will concentrate on either golf course or lawn and landscape/grounds maintenance customers.

Irrigation industry nearing \$1 billion

The irrigation industry is approaching the \$1 billion level, according to Jim Barrett, president of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants. The amount being spent on construction of irrigation systems produced by the professional members of ASIC exceeds more than \$712 million, up more than 30 percent from five years ago.

Briefs continue on page 16



ROB BELKNAP

Renovations Rebound

INTEREST RATES, IMPROVED ECONOMY HELP FUEL TURNAROUND

By Mark Leslie

Golf clubs around the country have overcome the fear factors that followed 9-11 — a sour economy and a world in turmoil — and are fast-forwarding planned renovation projects, according to industry experts.

A record-setting comeback from an economic recession, coupled with low interest rates, a desire to regenerate aging courses and heightened competition are fueling the turnaround.

"Our indications are that capital expenditures are up considerably," said Jim Singerling, executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America. "Master plans are calling for pushing projects ahead, not just because of the economy as a whole, but because interest rates are where they are. All the managers I'm talking to are saying they're pushing projects that were scheduled for late 2004 and 2005 and trying to get them done this winter and next spring."

Senior designer Jim Nagle of Forse Design in Hopwood, Pa., said his office is being inundated with requests for master plans.

Architect Steve Smyers of Lakeland, Fla., said clubs realize they need to keep up with modern standards to attract the next generation of players. "Members are proud of their clubs and want the latest and greatest turfgrasses — both for themselves, their children and grandchildren," he added.

Architect Michael Hurdzan of Hurdzan/Fry in Columbus, Ohio, said: "It is a very good time to bid a project now because contractors are not as busy as they've been in the past, and we're seeing really good pricing and values."

Secondly, clubs that are doing this are struggling to fill membership rolls and are being compared to upscale public courses that provide better playing conditions. It's difficult for a country club to think that there are

Continued on page 19

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 15

"We can expect to reach the \$1 billion level within a couple of years as needs rise in the many sectors served by ASIC professional members," Barrett said.

Fischer retiring from Dow Ag

A. Charles Fischer, president and CEO of Dow AgroSciences LLC, is retiring on Feb. 1. Jerome Peribere, vice president of agricultural chemicals, was named Fischer's successor. Fischer, who has served as president and CEO of Dow AgroSciences since March 1, 1999, will complete 37 years of service with The Dow Chemical Co.

GCSAA to honor "Distinguished"

Gordon LaFontaine, Danny H. Quast and Gordon C. Witteveen were selected as recipients of the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award. Each will be acknowledged at the Opening Session of GCSAA's 75th International Golf Course Conference and Show, Feb. 12, in San Diego.

LaFontaine is former executive director and past president of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. Quast is a retired superintendent and former president of the Miami Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association. Witteveen, a published author, historian and former superintendent, has been a powerful voice for superintendents across Canada and the United States.

Aquatrols sponsoring contest

Cherry Hills, N.J.-based Aquatrols is sponsoring a student essay contest for children of superintendents and golf course maintenance employees. The topic of the essay is: Water Conservation in Turf and Landscape. The essay should be 1,500 to 2,000 words.

Judges will select three winners who will receive scholarship prizes, including a \$2,000 grand prize. Entries must be received at Aquatrols by March 1. Entries may be submitted by mail or e-mail. Entrants must be accepted into an undergraduate program at an accredited facility/institution for the 2004/2005 academic year. Send mail entries to: Aquatrols Essay Contest, 5 N. Olney Ave., Cherry Hill, N.J. 08003 or e-mail entries to essay.contest@aquatrols.com.

Deere Rolls Out One Source

TEAMS WITH SUPPLIERS TO PROVIDE A 'FULL-SERVICE PLATFORM'

Nearly two years ago, John Deere Golf & Turf announced its vision for a new program called One Source. Last month, John Deere officially rolled out its Golf & Turf One Source program during a press conference at its offices in Cary, N.C.

With One Source, Deere has teamed with a cornucopia of golf course suppliers from various industry segments, including Turf-Seed (seed), Hunter (irrigation), AquaMaster (fountains and aquatic aeration) and others to provide "a full-service platform that brings together a variety of products and services in order to better serve the expanding needs of superintendents." The program includes mowing and maintenance equipment, irrigation and landscaping supplies, credit, parts and service.

In essence, John Deere Golf & Turf says it has created a one-stop shop for many superintendents' turf needs. Benefits for superintendents include com-

petitive pricing and fewer vendor contracts, among other things.

"This program saves them time and allows them to build strong relationships with a trusted brand," said Gregg Breningmeyer, director of marketing and sales for Golf & Turf One Source.

Deere's other supplier partners in the venture are Advanced Microbial Solutions (soil solutions), Cal-

JOHN DEERE GOLF & TURF ONE SOURCE™

"The real value
is in increasing
efficiencies for
superintendents."

GREGG BRENINGMEYER
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND SALES
GOLF & TURF ONE SOURCE



cium Silicate Corp. (silicon nutrients), Hancor (drainage), John Deere Landscapes (nursery suppliers), Nu-Gro (fertilizer blenders), Profile Products (soil amendments), Howard Fertilizer (fertilizer), Spring Valley (fertilizer) and Progressive Turf (fertilizer).

Dave Truttman, division sales manager for Golf & Turf One Source, says Deere sought suppliers that shared common business objectives and a commitment to innovation. The companies also had to be willing to private label their products.

Breningmeyer realizes many superintendents have strong relationships with vendors and might be hesitant to switch to One Source even if they do receive better customer service.

"We don't expect them to drop those relationships," Breningmeyer added.

But Breningmeyer also believes that Golf & Turf One Source will form solid relationships of its own with superintendents over time.

"The real value is in increasing efficiencies for superintendents," he said. "We have all the products they need."

— Larry Aylward, Editor

Off The Fringe

Continued from page 15

four golf courses in the city that have better greens than it does."

Larry Hirsch, president of Golf Property Analysts in Harrisburg, Pa., said there seems to be a lot of interest in renovations, mostly from private clubs.

"We don't see as much renovation at public clubs, but that's what private clubs use to sell themselves," Hirsch said.

In 2000, some 86 percent of private clubs did some sort of major capital improvement project, and that figure dipped to 79 percent in the year following the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on America, Singerling said. "But the post-9-11 fear has abated," he added. "My sense is that the number for the 2002-03 cycle will be around 90 percent."

Leslie is a free-lance writer from Monmouth, Maine.

Quotable

"You'd like to think you could be somewhere forever in this business, but I think it's almost next to impossible."

—Mark Kubns, certified superintendent of Baltusrol Golf Club, on staying at one club for an extended period.

"The hardest thing about being a superintendent is being a good role model."

—Mark Wilson, certified superintendent of Valhalla Golf Club, on leadership.

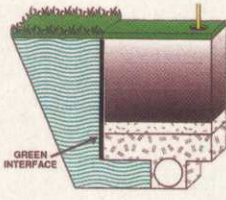


"The golf courses people enjoy most are those that look hard — but play easy."

—Steve Johnson, partner and national director of KPMG Consulting's Golf Practices, on building "difficult" golf courses.

EAGLE GOLF & LANDSCAPE PRODUCTS

EAGLE INTERFACE FOR GREENS AND BUNKER CONSTRUCTION



GCSAA SHOW
BOOTH 750



800-21-EAGLE

WWW.EAGLEGOLFANDLANDSCAPE.COM

INSURANCE FOR PLANTS

Mycor Tree Saver
PLANT IT ONCE!
PLANT IT RIGHT!

Introduce the fertility partners of the forest floor into your landscape plantings for thriving, long-lasting trees and shrubs.



IMPROVED FORMULATION
RHIZOSPHERE BACTERIA & COLONIZE

One Packet of Tree Saver=

- 17.8 MILLION SPORES of Mycorrhizal Fungi
- Rhizosphere Bacteria
- COLONIZE
- 1-ounce of Terra-Sorb® per packet
- Soil Amendments

Planting Success!

Guide to Landscape Installations and Maintenance
Plant Health Care, Inc.



For additional product information, distributor locations or to request a copy of **PHC's Guide to Landscape Installations and Maintenance** Call 1-800-421-9051 or go online to **www.planthealthcare.com**

Off The Fringe

Embracing *Poa*

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT IT, YOU MAY AS WELL TAKE CARE OF IT

By Anthony Pioppi

After years of unsuccessfully battling *Poa annua* with an endless array of cultural practices and chemicals, more in the turf industry are seeing *Poa* as a grass to be hugged, not drugged.

When it comes to *Poa*, maybe the mantra should be, "If you can't kill it, grow it."

We're not talking about high-bred species of *Poa* in development. We're talking about the good, old common annual variety found in virtually all cool-weather locals across the country.

The fact is, the likelihood of altering the ratio of *Poa* to bentgrass on existing greens is almost nil, especially where *Poa* makes up a large majority

of the existing species. "It's a difficult dynamic to change," says Jim Skorulski, agronomist for the USGA Green Section's Northeast Region. "If your greens are 80 percent *Poa*, you had better change your management practices to benefit the *Poa* because that's what you have."

Superintendents are learning to live with annual bluegrass, which can create a rather smooth, fast putting surface thanks to *Poa*'s ability to handle a low height of cut.

Skorulski points out that attitudes toward annual bluegrass have changed in the 20 years he's been in the business.

"Superintendents are trying to find ways to make it more consistent," he

Attitudes toward annual bluegrass or *Poa annua* have changed in the past 20 years, USGA Agronomist Jim Skorulski says.

says. "They are creating nurseries with aerification cores and are not worried about keeping it (*Poa*) out. Would that have been the case 20 years or 15 years ago? Probably not."

AerWay®

Turf experts agree regular aeration is the one thing that will immediately improve health and vigor.

AerWay® Groundhog for Golf Courses *It's Simple - Regular Aeration is Your Best Investment*

Deep tine "venting" aeration every two weeks will improve drought resistance, reduce weed pressure, and produce a resilient playing surface that will bounce back from the pressures of daily play.

Only AerWay® lets you aerate and play right away!

A choice of 4 tine options lets you satisfy all of your aeration requirements. AerWay® offers a range of systems from 48" to 15' wide, 3-point tractor mounted and pull-type, starting at under \$3000.00

for further information call **1-800-457-8310**

Advanced Aeration Systems

www.aerway.com email: aerway@aerway.com





FCF SCHMIDT

One problem that remains, according to Randy Kane, turf pathologist for the Chicago District Golf Association, is that superintendents can't decide whether they love or hate the stuff.

He addressed this problem at a meeting late last year with assistant superintendents from northern California. He talked about how some superintendents treat *Poa* erratically. "They try and kill it in the spring and fall, and they try to keep it alive in the summer," Kane says,

Kane's advice is for superintendents to tailor their cultural practices for the benefit of *Poa*, instead of focusing just on the bentgrass.

"If it's in a mixed stand, people manage for the bent, keeping it dry and using less fertilizer," Kane says.

Also, topdressing and grooming, which are good for bent, are harmful to *Poa* and can damage leaf tissue and lead to higher incident rates of disease, Kane notes.

"If you really stress it, there's a good chance you'll lose it," Kane says.

He does suggest small-tine aerification, hand watering and spoon-feeding of nutrients. "A lot of superintendents are paying more attention to fertilization and irrigation," Kane adds.

According to Skorulski, one key to help *Poa* is to increase the nitrogen rate, which helps the shallow rooting plant establish.

Kane says research indicates some growth regulators can markedly benefit

the plant when applied at the precise time. "There is some evidence showing that *Poa* roots better and is more tolerant if it doesn't seed or flower," Kane says.

The catch is the window for the application is small and can differ on the same course because of microclimates. "It might work for one superintendent

but not for another superintendent whose course is located five miles away," Kane says.

Skorulski concurs.

"It's all timing. When you hit it right, it does extremely well," he says.

Pioppi is a free-lance writer from Middletown, Conn.

WATERFRONT OR BEACHFRONT WITH THE ALLEN HOVER MOWER IT DOESN'T MATTER.

THE ALLEN HOVER MOWER WILL
SAVE TIME AND PROVIDE A BETTER
CUT VERSUS ANY STRING TRIMMER.

POWERED BY FOUR-STROKE
HONDA ENGINES, THE ALLEN
HOVER MOWER IS AN EQUIPMENT
INVESTMENT THAT WILL SAVE
YOUR COURSE MONEY AND PROVIDE
A BETTER PLAYING SURFACE.

ALLEN HAS LONG BEEN
RECOGNIZED AS THE BUILDER
OF THE FINEST HOVER MOWER
IN THE TURF INDUSTRY.

SO CHOOSE ALLEN
AND CHOOSE THE BEST.



allen

SEAGO INTERNATIONAL, INC.

WHETHER YOU GROW IT OR MOW IT,
ALLEN IS THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE.

CALL 1-800-780-9889

FOR YOUR NEAREST DEALER.

P.O. Box 1131, HOBE SOUND, FL 33475
PH: 772-546-9889 • FAX: 772-546-4242

WWW.ALLENSEAGO.COM

E-MAIL: HOVER@ALLENSEAGO.COM



Affiliate
Member

Golfdom and Floratine to Salute 'Mentors' Again In 2004

Last year, *Golfdom* and Floratine Products partnered to recognize four of the industry's leading mentors – those special people who take the time to guide and teach young people in the profession. In 2004, the two are joining again to pay



tribute to more superintendents who exemplify this great tradition of the profession.

The 2004 "Keepers of the Green" Awards will use a nomination process guided by leading superintendents, including winners from last year, to select a group of superintendents who are continuing the heritage of mentorship that goes back to Old Tom Morris himself.

"We're looking for people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help young people become leaders in the golf community," said *Golfdom* Publisher Pat Jones. "We want to pay tribute to the people who mentored today's superintendents, but we also want to keep this great tradition alive for future generations as well."

Bill Byrnes, Floratine's president, said: "We feel strongly that this business is all about the great people who take the time to develop the talents of young people. We're looking for the Johnny Appleseeds who plant so future generations can harvest the fruit."

Last year's winners exemplified that spirit perfectly. They were: **Fred Biggers** of Wintergreen Resort in Wintergreen, Va.; **Brian Darrock** of Fairbanks Ranch Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.; **Kurt Thuemmel** of Walnut Hills Country Club in East Lansing, Mich.; and **Mike Wooten** of Cedar Ridge Country Club in Broken Arrow, Okla.

Winners of the 2004 Keepers of the Green Awards will be announced at the GCSAA Conference & Show in San Diego. Winners will be profiled in an upcoming issue of *Golfdom*, receive an engraved award and be featured in Floratine ads throughout the year.

Interested readers can share their ideas for possible nominations with their local Floratine distributors. To find a distributor in your area, call 901-853-2898 or e-mail techinfo@floratine.com.

DRYCONNTM

WATERPROOF CONNECTORS

from King Innovation



Innovation has always had a first name...King.

We invented and patented the "One Step"[®], easy-twist, filled connector and proudly make them in the U.S.A. Our brand name reinforces that same quality connection. "DryConn" will be the waterproof connector everyone will ask for by name. Wherever moisture exists: landscaping, irrigation or direct bury, DryConnTM Waterproof Connectors are the perfect solution.

Get your **FREE Sample Today!**
Call **1-866-DRY-CONN (1-866-379-2666)**

You'll love the ease, simplicity and reliability of DryConnTM Waterproof Connectors...
America's original patented filled connectors!

KING

INNOVATIONTM

Where Quality and Innovation ConnectSM

3801 Lloyd King Drive • St. Charles, Missouri 63304 • 636.519.5400 • www.kinginnovation.com