

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

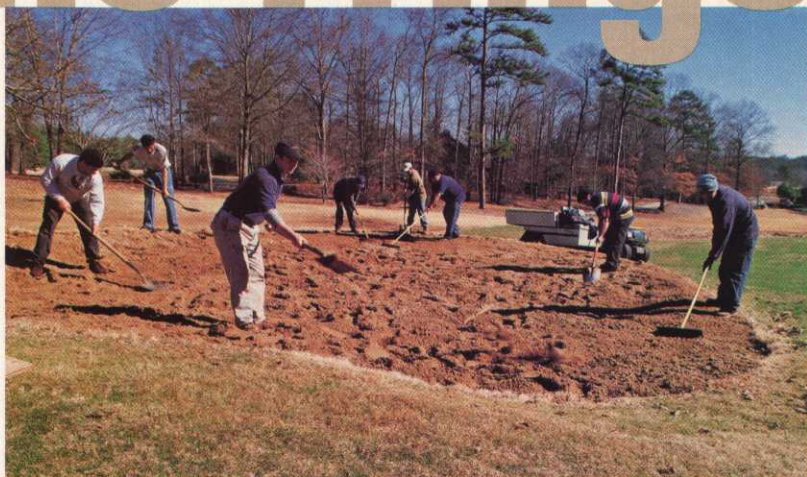
To better serve the differing needs of Green Industry customers, Bayer Environmental Science said it will expand and reposition existing sales and marketing resources within Chipco Professional Products.

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.

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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

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"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™**

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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