

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

H-2B Cap Nearing Capacity

The Federation of Employers and Workers of America (FEWA) is advising its members utilizing the H-2B seasonal guest worker program that their access to this legal source of temporary workers may be severely limited for the first half of fiscal year 2006.

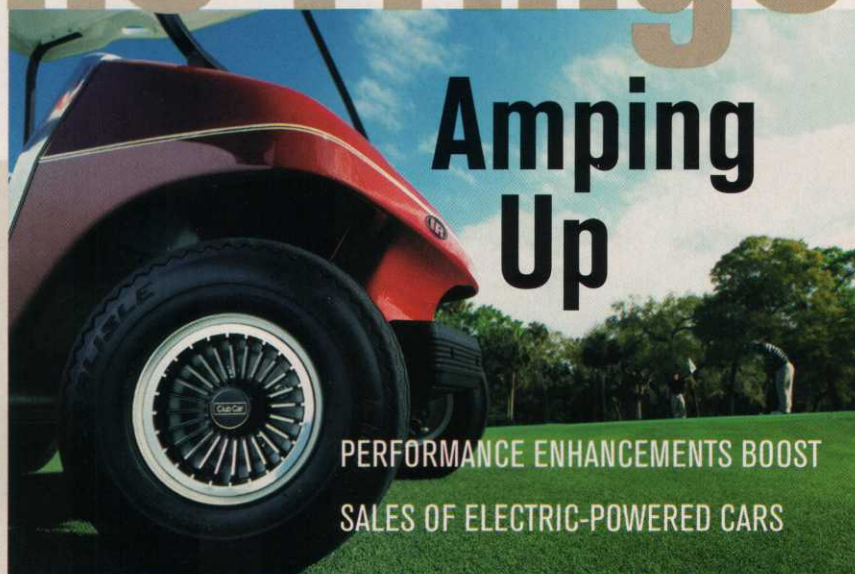
Program statistics released by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) indicate that 28,015 of the 33,000 H-2B worker visas available in the first half of fiscal year 2006 were approved or were pending approval as of Oct. 23. The remaining 33,000 visas will not be available to employers until April 1.

However, thanks to the efforts of the H-2B Workforce Coalition, which FEWA co-chairs, employers will still be able to bring in qualified workers even after the cap is reached, said John Meredith, FEWA vice president of government relations. Meredith's reference is to a provision in the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2005 enacted earlier this year. The new law provides workers who participated in the H-2B program in any one of the last three fiscal years an exemption from the statutory cap. These returning workers, designated H-2R, will be allowed to enter the country and work in temporary jobs that American workers do not take at anytime in fiscal year 2006.

Carolina GCSA founder dies

Grant Bennett, one of two men responsible for forming the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association, died at the age of 85 in October in Columbia, S.C.

Described as a "local giant" in the *The State* newspaper, Bennett was a superintendent, club professional and teacher.



By Thomas Skernivitz
Managing Editor

Golf cars that run on gas may never follow in the tracks of the Edsel, but they are close to being lapped in popularity by their ever-improving electric counterparts.

At least one car manufacturer, Club Car, currently has a sales split of 60/40 in favor of electric-powered cars over the once-dominant gas models. The change in ride is far from dramatic, as the trend began five to 10 years ago, the company says.

"I don't foresee a day that we will not produce gas cars, but I do think that you're finding more and more factors that will contribute to increased electric vehicle demand," says Mike Read, Club Car's director of marketing.

The primary reason behind going electric is improved performance. Gone are the days of reaching the bottom of a hill in a battery-operated car and having to recite a Hail Mary

or two in hope of getting back up.

"It used to be that everyone had 36-volt cars," says Robert Kirby, the marketing coordinator for Yamaha Golf Car. "But now the technology of 48-volt cars and the power of the batteries is so good that there is not a benefit of one over the other as far as hill climbing or terrain goes."

Potential buyers, Read says, are usually caught off guard while testing today's electric-powered cars. Club Car's electric vehicles run on four custom-designed 12-volt batteries in place of the outdated and heavier six 8-volt batteries. Fewer terminal connections reduce system resistance by 33 percent. And an onboard computer system works in tandem with a battery charger to replace the exact amount of energy needed to replenish the batteries without overcharging.

Yamaha's top electric car features a regenerative braking system that feeds energy back into the batteries and moderates the car's speed on downhill inclines. Its battery charger and bat-

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