

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

RISE unveils program for specialty pesticides and fertilizers

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) recently unveiled a new grassroots program for managing local pesticide and fertilizer issues.

"Our goal is to strengthen and build alliances in towns and cities across the country and to increase public awareness of the benefits of our industry's products," RISE President Allen James said. "Pesticides go beyond beautifying our surroundings — they play a vital role in protecting people, animals and the environment. Our industry has a great story to tell and we've done a good job of communicating at the federal and state levels. This new grassroots program will help us to tell our story in hundreds of communities across the nation, ensuring an informed public and a balanced public policy debate about the use of specialty products."

RISE has committed to a significant expansion of its grassroots action and is hiring a grassroots manager. Also, RISE is encouraging industry associations, state and local chapters, individual members and distributors to get involved.

PTI spins off FarmLinks

The research program started by Pursell Technologies Inc. will now operate as its own company under the name FarmLinks LLC.

The spin-off business in Sylacauga, Ala., is comprised of four divisions:

- Pursell Farms, a 3,500-acre farm with lakes, streams, forests, rolling hills, mountains, wetlands and wildlife;

- FarmLinks Golf Club, a championship 18-hole golf course created by PTI in 2003;

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So You Want to Host a Major Tournament?

AS A VOLUNTEER, HERE'S WHAT I'VE FOUND YOU CAN

COME TO EXPECT **By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor**

In the last six years, I've had the good fortune to be a volunteer staff member for four high-profile golf tournaments. If all goes as planned this year, I'll chalk up my fifth this summer as part of Bob Reynolds' crew at Newport Country Club for the U.S. Women's Open in June.

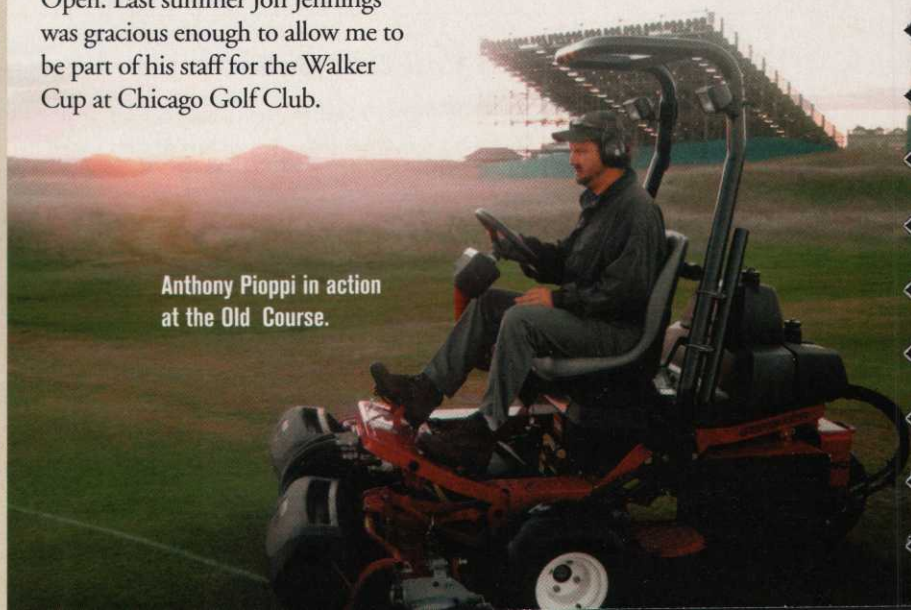
My first stint was with Eddie Adams at the 2000 Open Championship at the Old Course. I was back at the Old with Euan Grant, who was in charge for the 2005 Open. In between I worked a bit for Craig Currier at Bethpage Black for the 2002 U.S. Open. Last summer Jon Jennings was gracious enough to allow me to be part of his staff for the Walker Cup at Chicago Golf Club.

There are common threads that run through the successes each of these talented professionals was able to attain with their respective tournaments. Unlike superintendents who host tour events every year, these men were faced with new situations every day. Even at the Old Course, which hosts a European PGA Tour event, the rules are different for the Open.

The first fact I realized — and it is unequivocal — is that I would never want to be the superintendent on whose course such tournaments are held. The amount of — how can I

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Anthony Pioppi in action at the Old Course.



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put this delicately — beetle droppings that comes with hosting such an event is amazing. The tournaments, amateur or professional, garner an inordinate amount of attention from the media and golf fans around the world. Often, decisions are made by governing bodies in which the superintendent has no input and is left only to implement and defend.

As an example, in 2000 on the Wednesday morning of tournament week, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, which oversees the Open, decided to remove the crushed stone and cement pieces that covered the sidewalk behind the Road Hole green on No. 17. As far back as anyone could remember the surface had always been that

way, but the R&A came to the conclusion that if a ball ended up on the sidewalk players would be able to sweep away the stone and cement chips around the ball, classified as loose impediments, giving themselves a teed-up lie. Even though Adams realized his crew could be better utilized elsewhere with the first tee time less than 24 hours away, he had the entire staff of 45-plus on site within minutes and in under an hour the sidewalk was clean.

As Adams said at the time, there was no reason to get worked up about such decisions. There was nothing he could do to change it, so why worry about it.

The media will scrutinize every alteration and perceived flaw on the course, especially if players complain. At the three professional tournaments in which I took part, the media nearly obsessed over green speeds. Currier refused to discuss it at Bethpage. So when players started guessing the greens were rolling close to 15 feet, that became gospel with

some reporters even though Currier never commented on the matter. But Currier and others for whom I volunteered understood they had to deal with the media, which meant making themselves available to the press and answering the same questions repeatedly.

A pattern I found at all the tournaments was the superintendents made their full-time employees the crew chiefs. Maybe that seems obvious, but remember that high-profile tourna-

ments bring high-profile volunteers. The number of superintendents of famous courses who donate their time at such tournaments is astounding. Although it may seem odd to have a guy who normally mows collars higher in the pecking order than one of the most respected superintendents in the coun-

try, it makes sense. The full-timer understands exactly how his boss wants a certain job performed.

The people teaching each task must be clear and concise in their instructions and firm in their assessments of the work being done. The host superintendent must let his full-time crew members know they are the bosses, and if they don't like how a job is being performed, they must correct the offender, no matter how well known he or she is.

At the same time, hosts need to remember that their full-timers and the volunteers are talented. There must be a trust factor. The last chore a superintendent wants to be doing is driving around checking every bunker, collar, approach and first cut to make sure the work is done correctly.

The lead-up to the tournament can sometimes be years. It's good that a host course superintendent has fun with it and makes sure the crew does, too. It will be over before they realize it.

**The full-timer
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