

Business briefs

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■ an agronomics component, which utilizes the distinctive property as a "working laboratory" and research facility where golf products are tested, demonstrated and evaluated under real-world conditions;

■ and The Experience at FarmLinks, a relationship-marketing program that brings more than 1,000 turf and horticulture professionals to Pursell Farms and the FarmLinks Golf Club each year for several days of education, relaxation and recreation.

Environmental Turf, SFR agree

Environmental Turf and SFR Holding Co. reached an agreement regarding the patent, marketing and licensing rights to the salt-tolerant SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum.

SFR will hold the trademark and exclusive patent on SeaDwarf, with Environmental Turf having all rights to the trademark and patent as the Master Licensor. SFR retains the rights to sublicense, propagate, distribute, market and sell SeaDwarf in Mexico.

Environmental Turf will hold the exclusive patent rights and marketing rights as Master Licensor to sublicense sod growers to propagate, distribute, market and sell SeaDwarf, both domestically and internationally. Essentially, Environmental Turf is the central source and marketing company for SeaDwarf in the United States and worldwide, with SFR acting as the licensing agent for growers in Mexico, in cooperation with Environmental Turf.

July named Smart Irrigation Month

The Irrigation Association has named July Smart Irrigation Month to raise awareness of the importance of using irrigation efficiently.

"Our mission is to promote efficient and effective irrigation worldwide," said IA Executive Director Tom Kimmell. "Smart Irrigation Month is a way for the industry to highlight irrigation equipment and practices that make the most of our most precious resource. While the irrigation industry is bringing increasingly efficient technology to the marketplace, irrigation consumers have an important role in choosing efficient technology and using it effectively," Kimmell said.

NGCOA Reacts to Eminent Domain Issue Affecting New York Club

With the Village of North Hills, N.Y., threatening to seize Deepdale Golf Club under eminent domain law and turn it into public links, Mike Hughes, the CEO of the National Golf Course Owners Association, issued the following statement:



Mike
Hughes

IT'S NOT OFTEN the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution enters the world of golf, but it did so recently in the Village of North Hills, N.Y. That's where city officials are moving to claim eminent domain over a private golf club. While disturbing in this instance, the possibility that similar actions could spread to courses in other parts of the U.S. is what should have golf club members and non-golfing taxpayers alike very concerned.

The Village of North Hills is home to the Deepdale Golf Club, a highly regarded private club approximately 20 miles from Manhattan. The mayor of North Hills claims converting Deepdale to a municipal facility in the name of "economic development" would provide an amenity to village residents. It is also likely the conversion would boost property values, according to Mayor Marvin Natiss, although he didn't say anything about property taxes.

We believe the mayor is loosely interpreting the "Takings" clause of the Fifth Amendment, which allows taking private property for "public use" as long as just compensation is made to the private party. However, our quarrel is not with the Constitution or even the concept of eminent domain — it's with this interpretation of economic development.

*We saw the eminent domain issue coming even before the U.S. Supreme Court's controversial *Kelo v. City of New London, Conn.*, ruling in June 2005 that confirmed the use of eminent domain in the name of "economic development." A pre-Kelo example occurred in Coatesville, Penn., where an attempt failed to condemn a family farm in order to construct a recreational complex that would have included an 18-hole golf course.*

Leadership at the National Golf Course Owners Association believes this is a slippery slope. If government starts to condemn private property in order to build upscale municipal courses, or scout for "blighted" privately owned golf courses ripe for multi-million dollar renovations subsidized by taxpayers, where might it lead? That's why this is not only an issue for golfers. Undoubtedly, that's also why lawmakers in Washington and in more than 30 states have introduced legislation to curtail or require greater scrutiny of eminent domain in the name of economic development.

We believe local authorities need to ask whether their constituents are really clamoring for more high-end, public golf courses. There are currently some 70 public-access golf courses within a 25-mile drive of North Hills. Isn't the hue and cry much louder for investment in better schools, healthcare and roads?

The question that must be asked now in North Hills . . . is whether the need for further economic development justifies seizing some of the least-blighted property in the area. Is it more compelling than the Deepdale members' right to their private club? Further, might the property values enjoyed by North Hills, already among the highest in the nation, be due in part to the gem of a private golf club that already calls North Hills home?