

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

BASF Will Not Sponsor PVP

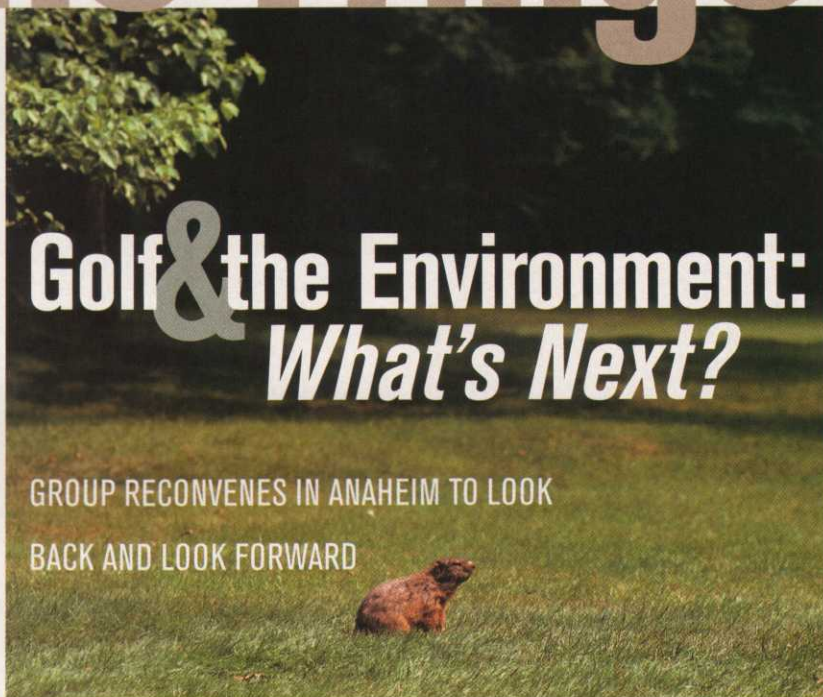
BASF will not sponsor the People vs. the Pros golf tournament this year. Toni Bucci, business manager for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals, said the company was proud to use the event to raise national awareness of superintendents' professionalism but will forego tournament sponsorship in 2007 to focus on supporting product innovation.

BASF has sponsored People vs. the Pros for the past three years, including two years as the title sponsor. "We still feel a lot of value in that investment," Bucci said.

In People vs. the Pros, 200 amateur golfers, divided into two age groups, compete in a three-day, 54-hole-handicapped stroke-play tournament. The low-net winner of the 18- to 49-year-old tournament and the low-net winner of the 50-and-over tournament play PGA pros for a chance at \$50,000 for charity. Last year Retief Goosen and Gary McCord were the pros. Several U.S. superintendents participated in the tournament courtesy of BASF, which also held a Superintendents' Cup Tournament as part of the event. The event took place at Pinehurst Resort two of the last three years. Bucci said BASF sponsored the event to elevate superintendents' images. She said she hopes BASF will "get in a similar venue" in 2008 with a similar message.

Greytok Flies Winged Foot

Eric Greytok is the new superintendent of Remington Ranch's three championship courses, leaving the high-profile Winged Foot Golf Club, where he hosted a U.S. Open and a U.S. Amateur Championship. Greytok spent six years as golf course superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club. Prior to that, Greytok served as superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links.



By Joel Jackson, Contributing Editor

Twelve years ago, the Center for Resource Management organized the first Golf & the Environment (G&E) Initiative at Pebble Beach Resort. From the meeting, "The Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States" was produced with input from more than 20 golf and environmental organizations. On Feb. 19 and 20, the Salt Lake City, Utah-based Center for Resource Management held a reunion in Anaheim, Calif., to review and discuss the progress that the G&E Initiative has made since "The Environmental Principles" was produced.

Over the years, additional G&E meetings have been held in Pinehurst, N.C., Orlando and Nebraska City, Neb. The group reconvened in Anaheim not only to assess progress

made, but to design a road map for what comes next. Reports from conference co-chairs Michael Hurdzan, owner/architect of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design, and Phil Os-hida, a deputy director at the Environmental Protection Agency, kicked off a series of presentations, which also included talks by Ted Horton, executive director of the California Golf Course Owners Association; Todd Miller, executive director the of North Carolina Coastal Federation; Jim Snow, national director the United States Golf Association's Green Section; Brent Blackwelder, president of Friends of the Earth; and Greg Lyman, GCSAA's director of environmental programs.

Here are some of my observations from the two-day meeting's breakout sessions and general discussions:

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Off The Fringe

Big News From the Big Three

DEERE, TORO AND JACOBSEN ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY AT THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

With news to share, the Big Three — John Deere & Co., The Toro Co. and Jacobsen — all called press conferences at the Golf Industry Show in February.

Deere had some of the show's biggest news to share: details of its acquisition of LESCO that had been announced before the press conference. But Toro and Jacobsen also made important announcements regarding their respective businesses.

Deere's press conference, held at the GIS media center, was a standing-room only event. Several attendees were from LESCO, who came to hear Gregg Breningmeyer, director of sales and marketing for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source, expand on Deere's acquisition of their company for \$135 million or \$14.50 per common share. Cleveland-based LESCO, a distributor of fertilizers, seed and chemicals, will become part of John Deere Landscapes, which will more than double its locations with 332 LESCO stores.



Gregg Breningmeyer

"This is, on a revenue basis, the largest acquisition in the history of Deere & Co.," Breningmeyer said, noting that the company has been around for 170 years.

For Deere's customers, the buyout means "an expanded portfolio of goods and services that will allow [them] to leverage their budgets more efficiently than they've been able to do in the past." Breningmeyer said.

Breningmeyer noted he couldn't answer all of the questions from those at the press conference because Deere doesn't have all the answers yet. Later, in an interview with *Golfdom*, Breningmeyer said Deere didn't buy LESCO to disman-

tle the company. "We didn't buy a racehorse to shoot it," he added. "We brought it to grow the business. We're not going to throw out the LESCO brand name."

The deal is expected to close in June.

Deere also announced at the press conference that it had an agreement of principle to become the "exclusive golf course irrigation supplier" to the PGA Tour and TPC Network. This agreement is in addition to John Deere's current status as both the "official equipment supplier" and the "official One Source supplier" to the Tour.

Breningmeyer said John Deere will supply golf irrigation systems and ongoing maintenance and support for all PGA Tour and PGA-owned properties. The initial installation of John Deere Golf Irrigation will begin with the Tour's new championship-length course in Scottsdale, Ariz., slated to open in November. The PGA TOUR's agreement with John Deere is in effect until 2014.

Toro held its press conference at its massive trade-show booth. Toro also had plenty of news, led by its announcement that all of its diesel-powered golf course and sports fields and grounds equipment will be "Biodiesel Ready" by 2008. This includes the Toro Reelmaster, Groundsmaster, Greensmaster, Workman and MultiPro product families.

Beyond these specific product families, Toro will continue to expand the use of biodiesel fuels in other diesel-powered equipment lines. The company is also creating upgrade kits for the above-mentioned product families to convert diesel models already in production or in the field to be compatible with biodiesel fuel. The kits should be available by June.

"Our biodiesel readiness initiative is part of a commitment to developing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers and help to better the environment," said Mike Hoffman, Toro's chairman and CEO, in a press release.

Keeping with the energy theme,

Toro also announced a partnership with the state of New York to provide the next generation of turf maintenance equipment powered by hydrogen fuel cells. Toro will provide Niagara Falls State Park with three hydrogen-powered utility vehicles based on the Toro Workman chassis.

Toro also announced its new Synergy Series golf irrigation products, a collection of products to help superintendents improve their irrigation practices as well as cut labor, water and energy costs.

"We want to help golf courses that currently do not have a central control system, and Synergy Series ... will help alleviate issues and limitations associated with a facility's aging or manual irrigation system," said David Angier, golf marketing manager at Toro Irrigation.

The Synergy Series components include Toro's new Dual Trajectory sprinklers (DT30/DT50), SitePro Synergy Series (a new version of the SitePro central control software), the Network GDC (Golf Decoder Control) system, the Network LTC Plus Satellite Controller, and the OSMAC RDR Satellite Controller.

Toro also introduced its ProCore Processor at the show. Designed for large turf areas, the ProCore Processor sweeps, processes and disperses aeration cores in one, quick operation. Toro also debuted



syngenta Business Tip of the Month

Try a Prevent Defense for Control

Pesticides can be applied in three different ways. But course operators and superintendents looking for the surest and most economical method to keep disease at bay should consider a preventive program first.

The three most common ways to treat greens are:

- Preventive applications at low rates to try to prevent diseases from occurring.
- Curative applications at higher rates to cure plants with minimal damage once disease symptoms show themselves.
- Eradicating applications at still higher rates and frequencies that aim to rid plants of the disease once many have already died.

Because disease organisms can be active for two weeks, three weeks or more before symptoms show, many superintendents make preventive applications before any disease organisms have infested the plant. A truly preventive application starts weeks before disease symptoms appear.

Material builds up in the plant over time, meaning it can be applied at lower rates per application thus making it less expensive per application. So it's a misconception to think that more pesticide is used and more money is spent on preventive programs than curative programs.

It is also possible to make more preventive applications over the course of the year since Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) labeling limits the amount of material that can be applied to a given area on an annual basis.

Dollar spot is a good candidate for preventive applications, because it's a disease that superintendents don't want their golf courses' greens to contract since it's difficult to control once it has started. Hence, dollar spot populations should be kept below the critical mass by preventive applications.

Preventive applications also require less application rates. For example, a preventive rate could be 2 ounces per 1,000 square feet compared to 4 ounces for a curative rate. Preventive applications can also be stretched out because they're not made to cure a disease — they're made to control the pathogen and keep it from breaking out.

The "Tip of the Month" is provided by Syngenta to support superintendents in their agronomic, business and professional development. To comment on this column, submit a lesson from your own experience, or suggest a topic to be covered in a future issue, please visit www.golfbusinessstips.com.

its ASAP and ASAP+ parts delivery, an enhanced combination of services to better meet the needs of customers for urgent parts delivery at an affordable price.

Charlotte-based Jacobsen also had several announcements, including the introduction of the Eclipse 122 F, which the company calls "the dawning of a new age in the evolution of walking greens mowers." The new mower, available this summer, features a cutting head capable of 50 percent more float than other greens mowers, Jacobsen says. The new floating-head design and other performance options virtually eliminate the possibility of scalping, the company says.

Jacobsen also announced it was opening a new facility to bring together its corporate headquarters, global distribution center for whole goods and parts, and a state-of-the-art training center. The facility is located about 4 miles from its manufacturing plant in Charlotte.

"Customer satisfaction is our highest priority," said Dan Wilkinson, president of Jacobsen. "Bringing all of our training, customer service and administrative activities under one roof helps us respond more quickly to the turf professionals who buy our equipment."



Dan Wilkinson

The Jacobsen University training center will be used to host turf professionals, students, dealers and new employees for sales and technical training. One lab will be reserved to demonstrate efficient reel maintenance and grinding techniques, one for electrical systems training and the other for teaching the ins and outs of hydraulic systems.

Jacobsen also announced improvements to its all-electric walking greens mower, the E-Walk. A redesigned electronic control unit simplifies the functional options on the E-Walk. A new D-handle design specific to the Jacobsen In-Command control system has also been added. ■

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A sound preventive approach starts with a strong agronomic plan. GreenCast® from Syngenta features exclusive, free agronomic planning tools to help you devise a preventive strategy. Visit www.greencastonline.com to develop your customized agronomic plan and take advantage of additional tools to help create conditions worthy of devotion on your course.

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Off The Fringe

A Q&A With Mike Heacock

INDUSTRY VETERAN, WHO'S BASED IN TOKYO, REFLECTS ON WHAT HAS BEEN

Name: Mike Heacock

Title: Senior Vice President of Course Maintenance for Pacific Golf Management K.K. in Tokyo.

Age: Turned 39 for the 21st time this year

Number of years working in the golf industry: More than 30

Who has been the biggest influence on your career and why? The late Dr. Kent Kurtz, the longtime educator at the California Polytechnic State University; and Rich Eichner, golf course superintendent at Discovery Bay Country Club in Byron, Calif. They were wonderful mentors in the best sense of that word.

What was the defining moment in your professional or personal life? Realizing 23 years ago that I did not want to come in every morning to the same golf course and the same crew and the



same members for the rest of my working life.

What's the greatest invention the golf industry has seen?

The bulldozer.

If you could change something about the industry right now,

what would you change? The equipment the pros are using makes classic courses obsolete. Let us amateurs play with whatever, but regulate the clubs and balls for the pros.

If a movie were made about your life, what actor would play you? A medium-height old guy with a beer gut.

Last book read: Bill Bryson: "I'm a Stranger Here Myself."

Favorite movie: (tie) "Blazing Saddles" and "Patton"

Describe yourself in one word: Grateful

My hero is: Mickey Mantle

I hope to be remembered as: Someone who cared. ■

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■ The initial meetings in the 1990s raised awareness of the issues of concern to all parties.

■ Common ground was found and good programs were implemented.

■ Participation over time has flattened. The questions were asked: What can be done to stimulate more involvement? And what incentives are there for lower-budget facilities to get involved with G&E?

■ How does the industry communicate/market the message that golf courses can be community assets?

■ Groups like regulators, local governments, media and the general public need to hear the science behind golf. How do we best achieve this?

■ Data gathering is essential to benchmark current status and track progress. GCSAA's Environmental Profile Project will provide this information.

■ New research should be on new turf varieties that require lower inputs. Research into social marketing to understand golfer and public attitudes, and how to craft effective methods of educating them, is also needed.

■ The group's steering committee will process all the comments and attempt to identify and prioritize goals for adoption and action by the group.

What was most evident from the meeting in Anaheim is that the industry has come a long way, but it can't rest on its laurels. Much remains to be done to fully educate society about how golf and the environment can exist in harmony. ■

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— Lessley Boyd
Carter Plantation
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