



## Golf course 'correction' could bode well for the industry, according to our special report

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

**R**emember when the stock market underwent a correction a few years ago? Well, if you glance at the market closings in the business section of today's morning paper, I think you'll agree the correction turned out ... well ... correct.

Today, the stock market is soaring like one of John Daly's tee shots.

Which brings us to the golf course industry. Insiders, including the head honchos from the industry's leading associations, are keeping their eyes on their own industry's "correction."

For the first time in 60 years, the golf industry experienced negative net growth in golf facilities in 2006. In fact, the net number of golf course openings — the combination of course openings minus course closures — has been dropping for the past four years.

But this is good news for the golf industry, much like the recent stock-market correction turned out to be good news for the national economy.

"This is a healthy thing," says Mike Hughes, executive director of the National Golf Course Owners Association. "It's the economy working as we would expect it."

In our sixth-annual *Golfdom Report*, a special report on the state of the profession, we report on the golf course correction and other issues affecting the industry (See "In Good Repair," page 6A). We don't just take a look back on the past year, either. We provide a look forward of what you can expect in the near future.

Also in this year's *Golfdom Report*, Contributing Editor Jim Black writes about his experience as an employee in the landscaping industry in "In Search of Greener Grass" (page 15A). Black, who has golf course maintenance in his blood, writes that he shocked himself when he left the business for landscaping. But as it turned out, Black couldn't stay away from the profession for long.

In the third segment of the *Golfdom Report*, we provide you with the results of our recent reader survey (page 19A). Every year we conduct the survey to gauge superintendents' sentiments about their jobs and the profession. We had 625 responses this year.

Finally, we would like to hear what you think of this report. Please contact me at [lailward@questex.com](mailto:lailward@questex.com) or Senior Editor Dave Frabotta at [dfrabotta@questex.com](mailto:dfrabotta@questex.com) to give us your views. ■