



Steady

Holding

Our special report and survey reveals optimism about the industry's state, among other findings

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

When Joe Beditz picks up the morning newspaper, the president and CEO of the National Golf Foundation sees these headlines:

Gas Prices Could Hit \$4 a Gallon Next Year

Mortgage Mess Gets Messier

War in Iraq Costing U.S. More Than \$1 Trillion

The Consumer Price Index Soars

But Beditz doesn't let his jaw hit the floor. He stands firm, not letting the bad economic news get the best of him.

While Beditz realizes that such news impacts consumer spending — and that includes spending on golf — he is an optimist and believes the golf industry is holding its own during these tough economic times.

Yes, rounds are basically flat, according to his association's research, but Beditz views that as a victory.

"Rounds are holding," he says. "It's surprising they are holding under these economic conditions."

Beditz is not alone in his guarded optimism. So are many of his industry peers, including golf course superintendents. You can read about their views in the two-part story that leads off our seventh-annual *Golfdom* Report (see "The Bucket Is Half Full," page 6A).

Also in the this year's *Golfdom* Report, Contributing Editor Ron Furlong, superintendent of Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Wash., writes about how important it is to keep a high profile at the golf course in "Image Is Everything" (page 15A). Furlong tried laying low once and realized that wasn't a smart thing to do.

Throughout the *Golfdom* Report, we provide you with the results of our recent reader survey. Most of the results can be found in the report's final segment (page 19A). The results reveal, among other things, how happy superintendents are with the pay they receive. We conduct the survey annually to gauge superintendents' sentiments about their jobs and the profession. We had almost 650 responses (methodology is on page 20A).

Finally, we would like to hear what you think of this report. Contact me at laylward@questex.com to provide your views. ■