

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Rounds rise in February, thanks to warm weather

It was an early spring for the golf industry as favorable weather, along with an extra day in February for leap year, bolstered rounds in February 10.4 percent compared to same-store rounds last February, according to the National Golf Foundation.

The increase was enough to offset January's doldrums and carry year-to-date rounds into positive territory — up 3.4 percent.

February numbers skyrocketed in areas where unusually warm weather drove golfers to dust off the clubs, including in the Upper Midwest (up 360 percent), the Northeast (up 134 percent), and the Mid-Atlantic, which was up 63 percent.

Also reassuring for the industry, areas where winter golf thrives did well, including in the Southeast (up 23 percent), the South Central (up 16 percent) and central and south Florida, which were up more than 7 percent for the month.

### Marriott mandates Audubon

Marriott International is requiring its 34 golf courses at 25 locations throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean to become Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries by the end of the year.

The management company's Doral Golf Resort & Spa in Miami, host of the 2008 WGC-CA Championship in March, became the first-ever Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in North America to host a World Golf Championships event. About 650 golf courses have gone through the Audubon certification program.

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## From One Dream Job to Another

WOODWARD MOVES FROM TORREY PINES TO CEO OF GCSAA

By David Frabotta, Senior Editor

Only a pretty sweet job could have taken Mark Woodward away from San Diego. The past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will host his first U.S. Open in June at Torrey Pines Golf Course, the first municipal facility to host a U.S. Open.

He pursued the position from a hospital bed three years ago during a bout with colitis. "I've been at the Majors, and I knew I'd never have the opportunity to host one unless I moved," Woodward said in March during a *Golfdom* visit to Torrey Pines.

Woodward spent 31 years working in various capacities for the city of Mesa, Ariz. He became the director of golf operations for the city of San Diego in 2005. "I knew it was going to be a very interesting job for me, and it would be a once in a lifetime experience for me being inside



Mark Woodward

the ropes at a Major."

But Woodward won't be inside the ropes for long. After the Open, he'll begin his tenure as CEO of the GCSAA. It's an organization he's known for 30 years, and he earned his certification more than 20 years ago. When he takes the helm July 1, he'll be the

first superintendent to lead the GCSAA.

"I've been working pretty hard my entire career to set myself up for an opportunity like this, so I'm proud to be the first superintendent to lead the organization," Woodward said via phone after the announcement. "I've been a member for 30 years, so I think I have a pretty good idea of what our members are about and what they want from the association — the value of education, programs and services that we offer."

Woodward, who has a master's degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix, says he's always been interested in leading the organization, but he didn't think he would ever have the opportunity

See our June issue for a complete U.S. Open preview.

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