

**E**ven though we're well into it, I still can't believe it's 2010. Wasn't it just last week we were all fretting about Y2K? Just for fun, I recently paged through *Golfdom* issues from 2000. My, how things have changed ... and stayed the same! And some things that were important 10 years ago ... well ... you just don't hear much about them anymore.

For instance, in 2000 we reported heavily on the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Professional Development Initiative, or "PDI," which we said "had the potential to reshape the employment future of every superintendent in the United States." At the time, we believed it did, and so did you. Well, PDI was passed and went into effect, but it surely didn't have the impact people thought it would.

There are the cobwebs left dangling by electronic commerce. In 2000, *Golfsat.com* and other companies tried desperately to get superintendents to purchase maintenance products online. *Golfdom* also featured stories on the subject. But one final word about e-commerce: Edsel.

Some things are working, though. In 2000, we reported The Toro Co. was developing a prototype greens mower powered by a fuel cell. Toro has developed that mower, which it says demonstrates the feasibility of hydrogen as a fuel for specialty application. In 2020, that mower, or others like it, could be a mainstay on golf courses.

While on the topic of greens mowers, in a 2000 story headlined "To Infinity and Beyond," we reported on what superintendents expected from tomorrow's greens mowers. Well, tomorrow is today and greens mowers have become more operator friendly, more fuel efficient and easier to maintain. OK, the mowers aren't cutting with laser "blades" yet, but who knows in another 10 years?

In a story on why more superintendents should use plant growth regulators, we asked a rhetorical question, "Why not use them?" Ten years later, we're certain that more superintendents than ever are using PGRs for myriad reasons.

And get this, in 2000 we reported that widely detested crabgrass may be able to clean up soil heavily contaminated with petroleum. Memo to BP.

## Things Change ... And Stay the Same

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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We also reported on many economic issues in 2000. Of course, the economy was much different then, including the golf economy. We ran a story on how a healthy economy and a shrinking labor pool had attracted more headhunters to the industry. Considering that more courses have closed than opened in the past five years, I don't think those headhunters are hunting anymore.

Speaking of golf course openings, we reported in 2000 that California and Florida were tied for the most golf course openings in 1999 with 36 each. With a little luck, about 35 new courses will open nationwide this year.

Of course, many things have stayed the same since 2000. In his decade-old column, "Take That Cell Phone and Shove It," *Golfdom* columnist Joel Jackson expressed how perturbed he was that superintendents were getting up in the middle of meetings and seminars to answer their ringing cell phones. They're still doing that.

In 2000, we quoted industry legend Joe Duich, professor emeritus at Penn State University and turfgrass extraordinaire, as saying, "How are you going to get your members to repair ball marks? No way in hell you're going to do it." Something tells me Duich is still right.

Finally, in 2000 we offered results from our first survey of superintendents on the state of the profession. One of the questions asked was: What's the biggest challenge you face in your job? Fifty-eight percent answered "labor problems" and lamented about finding reliable employees.

But 10 years later, only 22 percent of superintendents say finding and retaining good employees is their No. 1 challenge. They're worried about other things, such as keeping their own jobs.

Thanks for taking this ride with me in the time machine. Let's do it again in 2020.

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