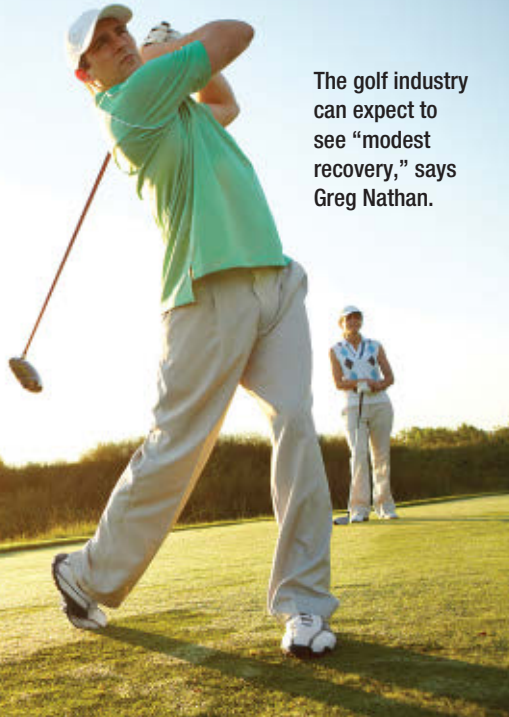


Off The Fringe

On Its Way Back



The golf industry can expect to see “modest recovery,” says Greg Nathan.

mass exoduses of 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, when the game lost 1.5 million and 1 million golfers, respectively.

Equipment manufacturers also are noticing improvement. “2009 fell off the map — for everyone,” said Grant Young, Toro’s Director of Marketing. “Since then, things have rebounded, simply because sooner or later, people have to buy or replace equipment.”

At Jacobsen, meanwhile, “more than 80 percent of our territories are reporting a year-over-year increase in sales,” says Jacobsen Vice President of Sales Ric Stone. “We are cautiously optimistic about the rest of the year.”

Also “cautiously optimistic” is John Deere Marketing Manager Mark Ford. “A lot of courses have been deferring maintenance well, and they now have

Superintendents and manufacturers have held their breath for an economic recovery for five long years. Now, they can begin to exhale, ever so slightly, as the industry starts to show signs of a comeback.

National Golf Foundation (NGF) Senior Vice President Greg Nathan is encouraged by the positivity he’s hearing from leaders in the industry. And, thanks to the mild winter, the past four months have shown double-digit year-over-year rounds gains, he said.

Mild weather definitely has helped, said Keith A. Ihms, CGCS, the director of grounds and maintenance at Country Club of Little Rock. “But I also think people are starting to feel like they can get out there and play,” he asserted.

ECONOMIC SIGNS FINALLY POINT TO A LONG-AWAITED TURNAROUND FOR THE GOLF INDUSTRY. BY BETH GERACI

Ihms, who’s also secretary/treasurer of the GCSAA Board of Directors, said Country Club of Little Rock has kept records on play since he arrived in 2006. This year, he said, “we experienced the biggest January and February of any of those years. There’s been more activity out on the golf course, and encouraging to me, more interest in our junior golf program for the summer.”

Another positive sign, golf attrition finally is tapering off. According to the NGF, the game’s losing players at a much slower rate than in the recent past. In 2011, NGF stats show, golf lost 400,000 players, a 1.5 percent drop from 2010. That’s a mere shadow of the

the reassurance to seriously consider purchasing,” he said.

“It’s a little early to draw any definite conclusions,” Ford continued. “But we’re encouraged. There was a positive feeling at the Golf Industry Show that everyone felt, and we don’t feel that was a mirage.”

NGF research “has shown that golf has emerged from previous recessions pretty quickly,” Nathan said, “and there are good reasons to expect a similar pattern this time.”

Whether golf is making a lasting comeback is “TBD,” Young said. “The key to the future will be getting players into the game and keeping them.”

At GCSAA, Phipps most looks forward to connecting with people.

Phipps Joins GCSAA Staff

BY BETH GERACI

David Phipps rises every day at 4:15 a.m., as he has for years. It's hardly an unusual ritual for a golf course superintendent. The thing is, Phipps isn't a superintendent anymore.

After 20 years in golf course management, and an impressive 12-year run as Stone Creek Golf Club superintendent, Phipps has joined the GCSAA as its Northwest Region field representative.

"As I weighed my career options, I thought it would be a logical next step for me professionally," Phipps said. "It just seems to fit with what

I'm so passionate about."

In his new position, Phipps takes one of his most notable passions — the environment — to the doorstep of chapters throughout the region. Phipps won the GCSAA's 2011 President's Award for Environmental Stewardship and is a five-time winner of the GCSAA/*Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

Now, he advises superintendents throughout the Northwest on environmental initiatives. He's also responsible for promoting the association, reaching out to members and empowering chapters to connect with their communities.

Phipps was impressed by the GCSAA on a 2004 business trip and



in 2008 began contemplating a career with the association. "Being in Lawrence, you buy in really quick," he said. "Because you realize how strong the association is, in terms of friendliness and organization. I think our leadership at GCSAA is phenomenal right now."

But for Phipps, saying goodbye to Stone Creek wasn't easy. "Stone Creek is my baby," he said. "I built that thing."

He'll be back, often — as a guest.



A DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS

Joe Stribley, superintendent at Yellowstone CC in Billings, Mont., recently spotted an unusual sight. "It was dark, I thought, 'what the heck is that?'" he says. "I shined my headlights on her... it's the first time I've ever seen an albino deer."

Syngenta's Bell Retires

It was a stellar run, but after 35 years at the company, Syngenta marketing communications manager Margaret Bell retired May 4.

Bell launched her Syngenta career in the Chemicals Group, switching to Ag in 1980. She'd worked in marketing communications in Syngenta's Lawn & Garden Group since 2001.

Bell "has been a trailblazer in our industry in many ways, and her business savvy, contacts and knowledge of the golf, lawn care and landscape markets will be difficult to replicate at Syngenta," said Syngenta Turf and Landscape Territory Manager Lee Bloomcamp.

"You always enjoyed working on a project with Margaret," added Walt Osborne, Syngenta's key account manager for national golf accounts. "She has a great sense of humor, and you knew you could count on her to get the job done — and done right."

Bell was active in many Green Industry associations, especially the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA), of which she served as vice president for nearly 12 years.

She will savor most the camaraderie she felt in the golf industry. "A lot of times I've been the only minority and only woman in the group, and I didn't even notice it," Bell said. "That's pretty good, to know you're around people who are all good folks. I will miss that more than anything."



Off The Fringe

Jacobsen Opens New Midwest Dealers

BY BETH GERACI

As part of its effort to build ties with customers across the U.S., Jacobsen has opened three new Midwestern dealerships to better service customers in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, regions that previously were serviced directly by Jacobsen. Jacobsen also will double its territory sales force and triple the amount of service personnel in the field.

“We want to build stronger relationships with the customer base,”



An Eclipse 322 riding greens mower

said Chuck Grief, director of sales for Jacobsen’s Eastern Division. “We have more product sales managers. And we’re just going to be much more visible out in the market.”

The push for more customer interaction began with new Jacobsen President David Withers, who told *Golfdom* in January building customer relationships was among his highest priorities.

“I’m very interested in working a partnership with dealers to really go after conquest accounts and show people the Jacobsen product, people who haven’t seen the product in maybe 10 years,” he said at the time. “We really have an opportunity if we can get that right.”

Jacobsen also has hired staff to demonstrate products in the Midwest for what the company says is an increasing demand for Jacobsen’s Eclipse line of mowers. “Everybody wants to see these things,” Grief said. “The intent is to make sure, if they want to see how Jacobsen products operate, it’s available for them to see.”

Becker Underwood Adds Staff

BY BETH GERACI

Becker Underwood has hired staff to enhance its marketing and communications division and regional sales.

“It’s the first time Becker Underwood has had a full-fledged communications team, so I’m hoping to come in and set some high standards,” said Charles Whitt, Becker Underwood’s new communications manager.

Dan Kuester, a marketing communications specialist in agriculture products, joined the team in April. With 25 years of communications experience, Kuester earned his bachelor’s from Luther College and his master’s from Drake University.

“Dan’s going to be a very strong member of the team,” Whitt said.

Sherman Hollins has come on board as Becker Underwood’s new regional sales manager for the eastern and southern U.S., covering sales in 17 states.

Hollins has 24 years of sales and marketing experience in agricultural consumer products, plus a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics and an MBA.

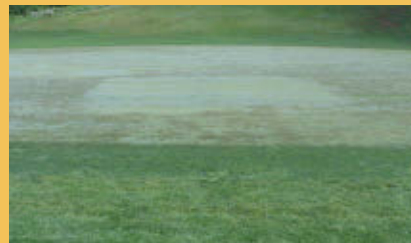
“Sherman has a lot of experience and has really cultivated a number of relationships in the southern crop markets,” said Mike McFatrigh, national sales manager at Becker Underwood. “We’ve been looking for a while. The wait was worth it.”

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- Sulfentrazone affects underground weed reproductive structures, reducing future populations
- FMC herbicides featuring sulfentrazone deliver fast results PLUS a noticeable difference next season



The photo above shows an area of green kyllinga just after a fall treatment with Dismiss.



This photo shows the same area the following spring. While the green kyllinga has reestablished most everywhere else, the area treated with Dismiss is lush and green.



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