

Off The Fringe



(Below) Deere's Mike Buccheit and Jim Roach observed as superintendents tested equipment; (Left) Superintendents socialize over dinner at the Washington Duke Inn.

event," said Mark Ford, marketing manager, John Deere Golf. "This event offers superintendents an inside look at how we think, how we work, and gives a glimpse into our product plans for the coming years."

Mike Buchheit, a John Deere dealer from Fuquay Varina, N.C., is in his 14th year with Deere, and he's been to every Feedback event held during that time.

Feedback "plays a very big role in our product development," he said. "The machines we're building now are going to be impacted by the feedback we receive, and

the machines we'll build in the future will be impacted."

Dudley Nation, equipment manager at Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., called the event "eye-opening."

"It's good that John Deere has the end users come down and see what the engineers are doing, and that they'll actually take some of our advice and use it," he said.

While others tested Deere equipment and noted pros and cons, Jason Brownell, superintendent at Big Canoe Golf Club in Jasper, Ga., said the event gives him a clearer picture of what equipment is coming and how his course could use it.

"Coming to these events and meeting new superintendents and engineers and suppliers, it's necessary for this business," Brownell stressed. "It's necessary so you can stay abreast of new technologies and changing trends and things like that, so you don't get left behind."

As useful as Feedback was for both sides informationally, it was just as appealing from a social standpoint. On the patio of the Washington Duke Inn, the host hotel, superintendents casually talked shop over beers and dinner. "We've got guys from all over the country," said Jonathan Gruber, superintendent at Hampton Grove Golf Course in Huntsville, Ala. "We've got everything from equipment technicians to operators to superintendents.... It's been a fantastic event."



Feeding Frenzy

At John Deere Feedback, superintendents get their say on Deere equipment — and more. By **Beth Geraci** Senior Editor

The morning of Sept. 12 was a cool and misty one in Durham, N.C. The Duke University golf course was damp with dew, and the sun had just risen.

Superintendents and equipment managers, along with the John Deere dealers who had invited them, had gathered on the course for John Deere's Feedback event. They were there to sample Deere's full line of upcoming equipment and give their feedback on it — hence the event's name. Deere will then use that input to adapt its current and future products.

"This year marks the 25th year of John Deere being in the golf business, and the 20th time we've held a Feedback