

Starter

NEWS, NOTES AND QUOTES



//ENERGIZED

BATTERY POWER

BY RECENTLY IMPLEMENTING AN ALL-ELECTRIC FLEET AT ONE CHATTANOOGA COURSE, TENNESSEE TAKES A STAND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

BY BETH GERACI // Senior Editor

➔ In May, Tennessee government officials unveiled an exciting new lineup at Bear Trace at Harrison Bay, a course on the Tennessee Golf Trail in Chattanooga.

The lineup: A large all-electric fleet of golf course maintenance equipment. By swapping its gasoline-powered equipment for an all-battery-run lineup, Bear Trace has established an important environmental precedent for other state-owned golf courses in Tennessee to follow.

"We're the guinea pig, the prototype," Bear Trace CGCS Paul L. Carter said.

Bear Trace's all-electric fleet comprises 18 pieces of equipment, including seven Jacobsen Eclipse 322 all-electric riding greens mowers; two Tru-Turf greens rollers; two Smithco Super Star bunker rakes; five Toro MDE utility vehicles; and two Club Car Carry All Turf IIs.

"As fuel prices continue to climb and additional emission and noise regulations are put in place, we expect more superintendents will seriously consider electric and hybrid technol-

ogy for their maintenance equipment," said Chris Fox, product manager for Jacobsen.

Tennessee government officials assert that the new equipment will provide an estimated 300 percent decrease in annual operation expenses. And because the equipment produces zero emissions, Carter said the course expects to reduce its carbon emissions by

215,000 pounds annually.

"Anything we can do to protect the environment and conserve resources, that's always on the top of our list," Carter said. "This project falls hand in hand



A crowd watches as an electric Jacobsen riding greens mower works a green silently.

with our mission."

That mission started about seven years ago, inspired in part by the presence of wildlife on the course.

Carter dreams of one day having solar panels on the maintenance building "so we're generating as much power as we're using."

In the meantime, "I'm glad to be part of an organization that's willing to go out on a limb and say, 'This is where we need to be. We need to look at this electric equipment.'"

//WATER LOWDOWN

USGS SAYS GROUNDWATER LEVELS SHRINKING

Groundwater levels in the United States are shrinking, a recently released U.S. Geological Survey study has found.

After examining 40 U.S. aquifers, the USGS study found that from 1900 to 2008, U.S. aquifers were depleted by more than twice the volume of water found in Lake Erie alone.

In a statement, Acting USGS Director Suzette Kimball said groundwater stored in aquifers is vital in that it provides drinking water and water for irrigation, maintains ecosystems and supports the flow of streams and rivers.

The study examined changing groundwater levels as they pertain to municipal, industrial and agricultural uses. Although water levels have shrunk considerably since 1950, they have experienced even higher rates of draw down from 2000 to 2008, dropping an average of 25 cubic kilometers per year when according to the USGS the historical average is 9.2 kilometers annually.

The Ogallala Aquifer is especially at risk, the USGS says. Located across 170,000 square feet under the High Plains, its depletion over the last eight years has amounted to 32 percent of the aquifer's cumulative depletion during the entire 20th century.

//TURF CONVERSION

PINEHURST TO CONVERT GREENS ON THREE MORE COURSES

Pinehurst Resort & Country Club announced recently it will soon convert greens on Pinehurst Nos. 8, 3 and 2 to Champion ultradwarf bermudagrass.

Nos. 8 and 3 will be converted this summer, while No. 2 will undergo its conversion in July 2014, after the course hosts the men's and women's U.S. Opens. According to a Pinehurst release, the conversions mark "the next stage" in creating championship conditions at Pinehurst year-round, even in hot temps.