

Todd Gray, director of finance programs for golf and turf leasing at John Deere Credit, says leasing has become “the acquisition method of choice” in the past 10 years. Gray says the '80s golf boom and the influx of daily-fee public courses caused competition for golfers' dollars. That led to frugality among courses, which could no longer afford to pay cash for equipment.

Gilmore and Gray estimate that about 50 percent of U.S. golf courses, mostly daily fee, lease equipment with no options to buy. The courses, which don't have thousands of dollars to purchase new equipment, are using available money on other projects, such as clubhouse improvements or rebuilding greens.

Gilmore stresses there are other reasons to lease, including low monthly payments and upgrading for new equipment more often. And because a superintendent is always using newer equipment, it will require less maintenance and there will be less downtime, he notes.

Superintendents may be lobbying their course owners to purchase new equipment to keep up with the competition. It's likely that a course maintained by new equipment will look better than a course kept up with 7-year-old mowers, Gray notes.

“Nobody is going to come back to a course that has an oil stain across the fairway,” he says. “That's what old equipment does.”

Gilmore and Gray agree that superintendents turn into business authorities when talk turns to their bud-

gets for new equipment, so they want to know everything about leasing.

“Superintendents are smarter than they were 15 years ago,” Gray says. “Part of their training is managing their equipment fleet. They're learning that maintenance, downtime, parts and an extra mechanics all have dollar costs associated with them.”

Smart superintendents are looking for good deals. They'll scrutinize every variable in a lease — looking for confusing contracts, hidden fees and other mystery costs that could end up breaking their budgets. For instance, Schmidt says he's displeased with leasing companies that require customers to purchase routine parts, such as oil filters and belts, for inflated prices as part of their agreements.

Smart superintendents are also careful to select the most sensible leases for their needs. Many agreements include options to purchase equipment when terms expire. Others don't offer such choices and restrict equipment use to an hour count and charge additional fees if the time is exceeded.

A smart superintendent will also make sure that dealers provide an accurate definition of “excessive wear-and-tear charges” to avoid potential costly settlements when a lease expires, experts say.

### Not for everyone

Gilmore, Gray and Skenes agree that leasing is not for all superintendents and golf course owners. “If they want to own the equipment for 10 years, they're better off buying it,” Skenes adds.

Bill Fountain, operating partner at The Majestic Lake Walden in Hartland, Mich., does not lease turf equipment at his course, but he says that leasing has its benefits. “You're always using newer equipment, and it's under warranty,” he adds.

But Fountain says owning equipment also has its advantages. He believes people take better care of equipment if they own it than they would if they lease it. For that reason, owned equipment endures. “Our equipment lasts a long time because we take care of it,” he adds.

Skenes disagrees, noting that whether or not a course's crew takes care of equipment — owned or leased — is a reflection on how well the course is managed and maintained overall.

Location is also a factor in leasing. If your course is in Florida and you're using equipment year-round, you may want to consider leasing, Gray says.

Schmidt agrees that leasing and buying both have advantages. He's thankful that he has a choice, especially if he wants a new high-tech fairway mower and the money isn't in the course's coffers to purchase it.

In today's world, he can always lease it. ■

## LEASING LOGIC

Dan Gilmore, director of leasing and finance for Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products, suggests these reasons to lease:

- maximize equipment purchases while maintaining budget;
- low monthly payments;
- frees up working capital;
- doesn't show up on balance sheets as a debt;
- upgrading to new equipment more often;
- less maintenance costs;
- less downtime; and
- more attractive-looking golf course.

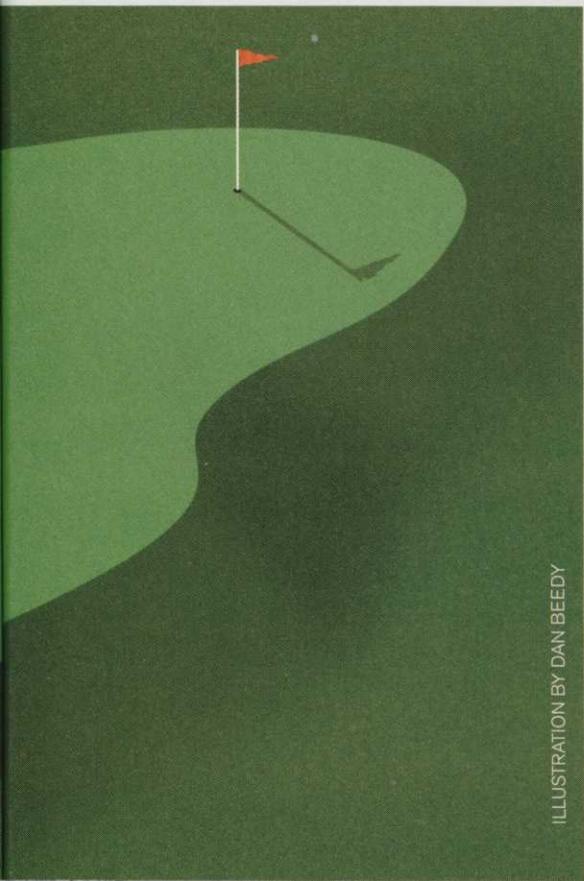


ILLUSTRATION BY DAN BEEDY

# New Wheels

## The latest in utility vehicles:

▼ **John Deere** introduces the ProGator utility vehicle, available in 23.5-horsepower diesel and 26-hp gas versions. It combines modern styling and operator-friendly features with durability and power, according to the company. A five-speed, fully synchronized transmission lets a driver keep going without stopping to change gears. Strength also comes in the form of a one-piece axle supporting the rear wheels, allowing for more capacity while providing more reliability.

John Deere also offers the Electric Gator, an electric vehicle for superintendents concerned about operational sound levels and exhaust emissions. Designed for quick acceleration and steady performance between chargings, the vehicle features overspeed and roll-away control. It's also equipped with an anti-rollback function.



Deere also offers the model 4100 Narrow compact utility tractor, which is 36 inches wide and can navigate through narrow rows.

For more information, contact 800-537-8233, [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com) or Circle No. 202

### ► **Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products**

offers the Cushman Hawk, featuring a heavy-duty steel frame, reinforced front suspension and rack-and-pinion steering. It's available with a choice of gas or electric power. Both models include drum-type parking brakes.



The company also offers the Cushman Turf-Truckster, a four-wheel vehicle with a rated capacity up to 2,850 pounds. The three-wheel model can carry up to 2,500 pounds of personnel and cargo. The Turf-Truckster's molded plastic unibody construction is impact and rust-resistant, according to the company. Three engine choices are available, and the vehicle comes with a choice of manual or automatic transmission.

For more information, contact 414-637-6711, [www.textron.com](http://www.textron.com) or Circle No. 204



### ▲ **Toro Co.**

will introduce the Workman 1100 in the winter of 2000. It's designed to hug terrain with effective stability, traction and ride, according to the company. The Workman is equipped with an Active In-Frame suspension and an independent front torsional suspension to provide a smooth and stable ride.

It also has large, protected storage spaces under the seat and hood. The plastic cargo bed transports up to 1,000 pounds of cargo, the company says.

Toro also offers the the Industrial Workman, a 4,000-pound vehicle for heavy-duty hauling and maintenance needs. It has 2,600 pounds of total capacity.

For more information, contact 612-888-8801, [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com) or Circle No. 201

▼ **E-Z-GO Textron** has expanded its line of Workhorse vehicles with the Workhorse LX line, featuring the rugged, truck-like cowl from the Workhorse ST 350. The LX models have differential



scuff guards, tubular front bumpers, bed liners, horns and fuel gauges or charge meters.

For more information, contact 706-798-4311, [www.ezgo.com](http://www.ezgo.com) or Circle No. 203

**Club Car** offers the XRT 272 for use on extreme terrain. Features include:

- an 11-horsepower, 351-cubic centimeter engine (the vehicle can haul a payload of 1,200 pounds);
- four-wheel hydraulic brakes;
- independent front suspension coupled with semi-independent rear suspension;
- operator-selected differential lock; and
- aluminum I-beam construction and aluminum cargo box.

For more information, contact 706-863-3000, [www.clubcar.com](http://www.clubcar.com) or Circle No. 200

### **Yazoo/Kees Power Equipment's**

line of Haul Master vehicles includes the Huskie and Huskie HD models. Both are designed for heavy-duty jobs.

For more information, contact 601-366-6421, [www.yazookees.com](http://www.yazookees.com) or Circle No. 205

### **The CheTech Co.'s**

Taskforce line of medium-duty vehicles are highly maneuverable, have a 2,000-pound capacity and feature power steering and four-wheel brakes.

For more information, contact 715-924-3192 or Circle No. 206

### **Diamond Turf Equipment**

offers the VersaPro 2000, which features a 16-horsepower Vanguard engine. It offers two- or three-wheel drive, adjustable seating and zero-turning radius. It's also equipped with gear-operated steering.

For more information, contact 800-551-8873 or Circle No. 207

# Nobody does it better.



- **Breeding** – *Research and international testing to develop the world's finest varieties*
- **Production** – *Excellent quality seed from the top growers in Oregon*
- **Marketing** – *Professional, knowledgeable staff and distributor network*
- **Customer Service** – *Expert agronomic advise with on-time delivery and follow-up*
- **Quality** – *Oregon Blue Tag Certified varieties, mixtures and blends*

**SEED RESEARCH™**

27630 Llewellyn Road • Corvallis, OR 97333 U.S.A.

Telephone: 1 (800) 253-5766 • Fax: (541) 758-5305

E-mail: [info@sroseed.com](mailto:info@sroseed.com) • Web site: [www.sroseed.com](http://www.sroseed.com)



Have a

# Lifesaver

*On-course rescue vehicle rolls where others can't*

## MED-BED AT A GLANCE

**What is it?** The Med-Bed was created by Lecompton, Kan.-based Bud Newell & Associates to be used on the John Deere Gator. Together, the Gator and the Med-Bed combine the versatility of a utility vehicle with the benefits of a modular medical rescue unit. With the Med-Bed, the Gator can be adapted for transporting accident victims on a backboard.

**How much does it cost?** The Med-Bed retails for \$3,000. Additional accessories push the cost to around \$3,335.

**Where can I buy it?** The Med-Bed is available through John Deere dealerships.

**Are there other options?** Yes. E-Z-GO and Club Car offer vehicles with ambulance package kits.

BY STEVE AND SUZ TRUSTY

**I**n an era of lawsuits, Good Samaritan statutes and sky-high workers compensation claims, “be prepared” is more than a catch phrase used by Boy Scouts.

Golf courses have always taken steps to prevent and prepare for injuries to employees and guests. Training programs, signage, safety nets, safer golf cars, lightning detection systems — they’ve all become routine. But given the physical nature of courses, on-course medical emergencies have always presented a challenge.

What duty does a course have to its guests? How quickly can an ambulance reach a heart-attack victim on a distant hole? What capabilities, beyond CPR training and a first-aid kit, should course management provide?

Until the past few years, too few courses have been prepared to answer these hard questions. But as new technologies such as portable

defibrillators become common, more facilities are finding ways to meet the challenge of on-course injuries and illness.

For Longaberger GC, in Hanover, Ohio, an emergency response program is one more step in customer service. The Longaberger Co. is a renowned basket maker that draws more than 500,000 visitors annually. Its premium public golf course opened for play last spring as an added attraction for visitors and local residents. It’s nestled in the timber-covered hills of an 800-acre property and provides challenging play amid spectacular views of the countryside.

“For the safety and security of our guests and employees and for the security of the property and facilities, we keep security personnel on-site at the course 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” says Matt Blowers, Longaberger’s assistant security manager. “Part of that security team is out patrolling the course in a util-

ity vehicle equipped with a Med-Bed. While we hope to never need the use of this unit, we believe it's important to have it available on the course in the event of a health emergency."

The Med-Bed is a relatively new entry into the golf market. In short, it is a customized bed insert that carries a variety of life-saving supplies. Essentially, it turns a John Deere Gator into a mini rescue unit capable of reaching and treating a victim quickly and efficiently.

All personnel are trained to use the course's two-way communication system to alert the proper individual of any emergency and to describe the problem and the location on the course.

Longaberger security has an emergency response plan with the local emergency response units including the police, sheriff and fire departments. Four specific areas surrounding the course are designated as sites where emergency vehicles and personnel would meet the course's Med-Bed-equipped Gator should the need arise.

Each hole on the course is assigned to one of these four sites. Should an emergency occur,

all security staff and emergency personnel know the meeting place. Given this, Blowers thinks it's unlikely that an ambulance or other rescue vehicle would need to drive onto the course itself.

The Med-Bed attachment can be installed on any Gator and easily removed. The initial assembly takes about two hours. The front passenger seat is replaced with a shorter back seat provided with the Med-Bed package.



The Med-Bed turns a John Deere Gator into a mini rescue unit capable of reaching and treating a victim quickly and efficiently

The short back seat, when rotated, sits on the handle bar in the Gator and becomes the front attendant seat. This allows a backboard to be placed in a level position inside the vehicle, extending from the front to the back.

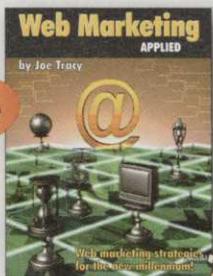
The original front seat is then attached to the Med-Bed in the rear-sliding seat position, adjacent to the backboard and facing the rear of the Gator. The original cargo shield is replaced with the split cargo shield provided with the Med-Bed package. Backboard strap attachments also are provided.

There are four components to the Med-Bed system, including the unit itself, a backboard, the headlock and the patient straps. The total package costs \$3,335.

Once the initial conversion is completed, the Med-Bed can be installed or removed quickly by sliding the Med-Bed onto the vehicle and hooking the handle over the appropriate T-Bar to secure it. ■

Steve and Suz Trusty are partners in Trusty & Associates, a Council Bluffs, Iowa-based industry consulting firm.

## You're *Open* for Business on the Web



Coming in December

**\$31<sup>95</sup>**

Item#DMGB100  
Over 300 Pages  
Soft Cover

Written by internet specialist and leading author, Joe Tracy

Read This Book!

...What's Your Next Move?

**Web Marketing Applied, Web Marketing Strategies for the New Millennium**, is the must-have book for Webmasters, Web marketers, Web developers...or anyone involved in the marketing or promotion of a Website. Every chapter is filled with powerful ideas to help you drive traffic to your site. Excellent for any industry, business or profession.

Master Your Next Move with Success!

**Call 1-800-598-6008**

Fax: 218-723-9146 • Outside the U.S. call 218-723-9180

Please mention code 950918GOLF when ordering

Visit our Website and order online at

[www.advanstarbooks.com/webmarketing/](http://www.advanstarbooks.com/webmarketing/)

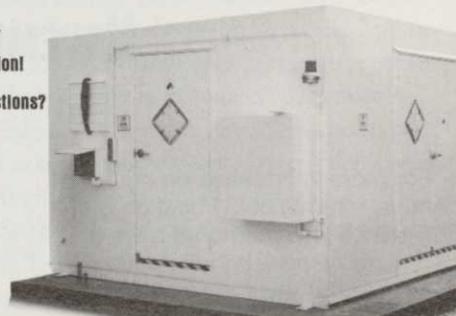
## Time's Up!

Avoid costly fines



**U.S. Chemical** is your source for prefabricated, hazardous material containment buildings. Centralize all your turf care products in one safe and secure location

- Call for FREE site evaluation!
- Have EPA, OSHA, DOT Questions? Ask US for answers.
- Select models in stock.
- FREE brochure!



**Call 1 800 233-1480**



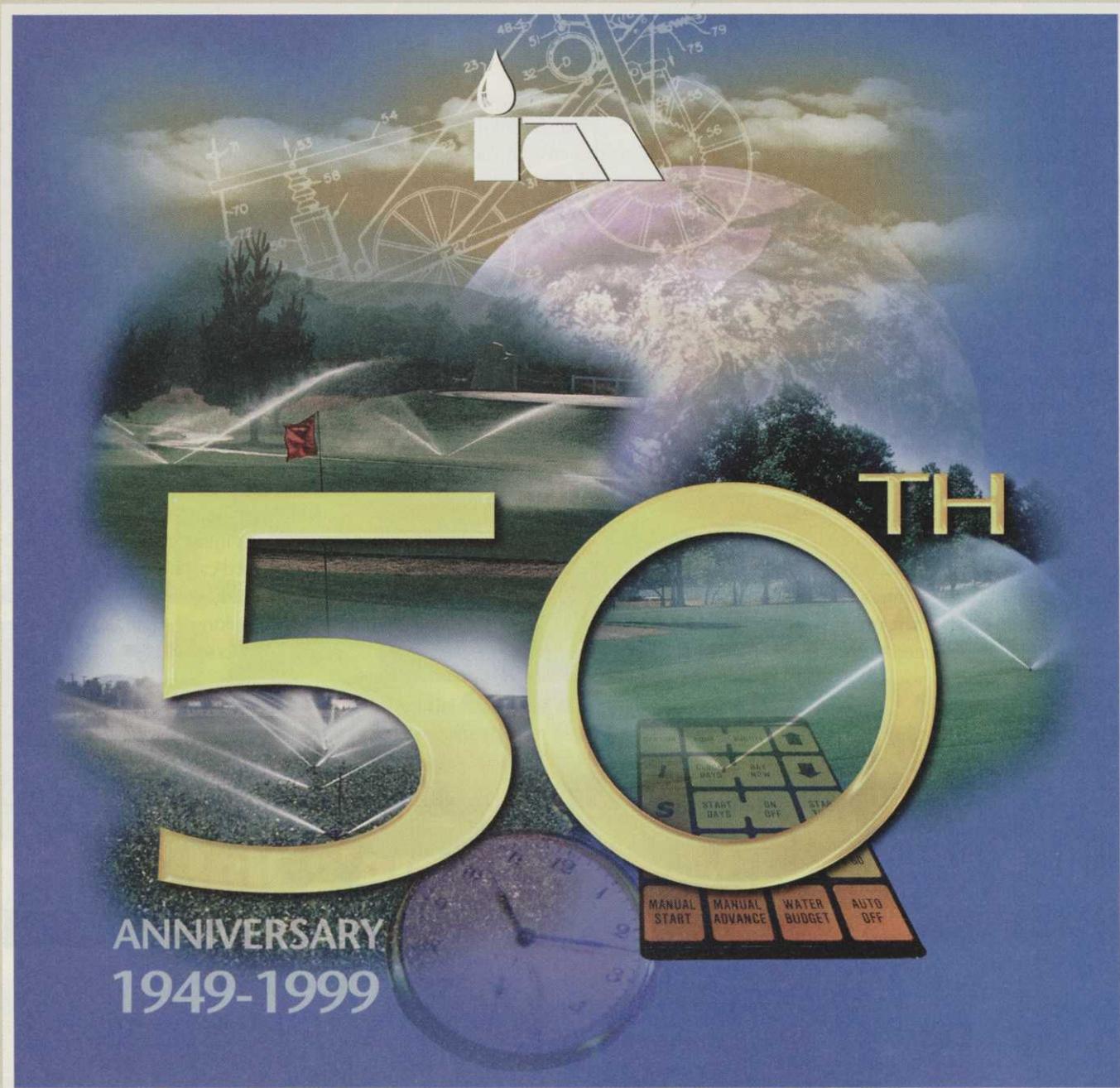
**U.S. CHEMICAL**  
Storage LLC

CIRCLE NO. 110

[www.golfdom.com](http://www.golfdom.com)

Golfdom

45



**REFLECTING YESTERDAY, IMAGINING TOMORROW**  
**INTERNATIONAL IRRIGATION SHOW**  
**NOVEMBER 7-9, 1999, ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

PLEASE CLIP HERE BEFORE FAXING TO EXPEDITE TRANSMISSION

For more information on our 20th Annual International Irrigation Show, please visit our home page at <http://www.irrigation.org> or return this form to the IA.

**THE IRRIGATION ASSOCIATION**  
 8260 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive  
 Suite 120, Fairfax, Virginia 22031 USA  
 (703) 573-3551 • FAX (703) 573-1913

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

**T**he season to be jolly kicks off in a few weeks. For Judy Hutt, the holiday season is the time of the year to Give 'Em the Bird.

No. Not *that* bird! We're talking about a different species — a flying, feathered fowl. We're talking turkey — and we're talking about giving that turkey to charity.

On Oct. 20, Hutt, owner of Boise, Idaho-based Shadow Valley GC, will host the second Give 'Em the Bird golf outing to benefit the city's food bank. Nearly 150 players will flock to Shadow Valley for golf and a great time. A player's admission is a turkey — to be eaten by Boise's needy on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

A 12-pound bird will get a person a round of golf; a 15 pounder is good for a round and a cart; and a 19 pounder will get one all the fixings — a round, cart, lunch and range balls.

Hutt organized the first outing last December after seeing a disheartening report on the television news: The local food bank had to turn away 200 poor families who had asked for Thanksgiving turkeys because of a bird shortage. The report said the situation would be worse at Christmas.

Hutt and her husband, Ron, immediately brainstormed to come up with an idea to help.

"Every year around Thanksgiving, courses have turkey shoots where they give away turkeys as prizes," Hutt says. "We thought, why can't there be an outing where turkeys are the entry fee?"

It was too late to do something for Thanksgiving, so the Huttts promoted the event as a benefit for Christmas. The name for the outing didn't come to Judy when some jerk cut her off in traffic — "It just came to me," she says with a laugh. But the media, not surprisingly, loved the name, and local radio and TV stations were happy to promote the event.

"One radio station promoted it as the chance to give Judy the bird," says Hutt, who has owned the popular course for 26 years.

There was one problem: 6 inches of snow covered the course two weeks before the event. But Hutt vowed the show would go on — that golf would be played in the snow with tennis balls, if need be. People were into it. Nearly

## For the Holidays, Give 'Em the Bird

BY LARRY AYLWARD



A PLAYER'S  
ADMISSION IS A  
TURKEY — TO BE  
EATEN BY THE  
NEEDY ON  
THANKSGIVING AND  
CHRISTMAS

150 golfers signed up in four days, and almost 150 others had to be turned away.

On the day of the tournament, 200 turkeys were collected, along with \$500. Even folks who weren't playing in the event stopped by to donate turkeys and cash.

"It was a real feel-good day, and everybody had a good time," Hutt says. "The food bank was blown away by what we collected."

Marketing and promotion was the last thing on Hutt's mind when she was organizing Give 'Em the Bird. She just wanted to help the poor. But the event has enhanced the reputation of Hutt and Shadow Valley in the community.

"It has definitely helped our business," she says. "We all need to make a profit, but the goodwill advertising helps."

Shadow Valley, voted by locals as Boise's best public course for three consecutive years, is at 85-percent capacity during the golf season, Hutt says. "The public thinks highly of us," she adds. "You can't put a monetary figure on something like that."

There's a moral to this story: Golf course owners are in the ideal position to assist the less fortunate. You can use your courses to hold fund-raisers and raise money for the needy, not only at the holidays, but throughout the year.

Even though you're not publicity hounds, word will get out about your altruism. And because you don't flaunt your generosity, people will know you're legitimate in your efforts.

Talk about breaking down the stereotype of golf as a game for self-centered, rich folks who don't give a damn about the poor.

So this holiday season, take a cue from Hutt: Give 'Em the Bird.

---

Larry Aylward, managing editor of *Golfdom*, can be reached at 440-891-2770 or [laylward@advanstar.com](mailto:laylward@advanstar.com).

## Local Hero

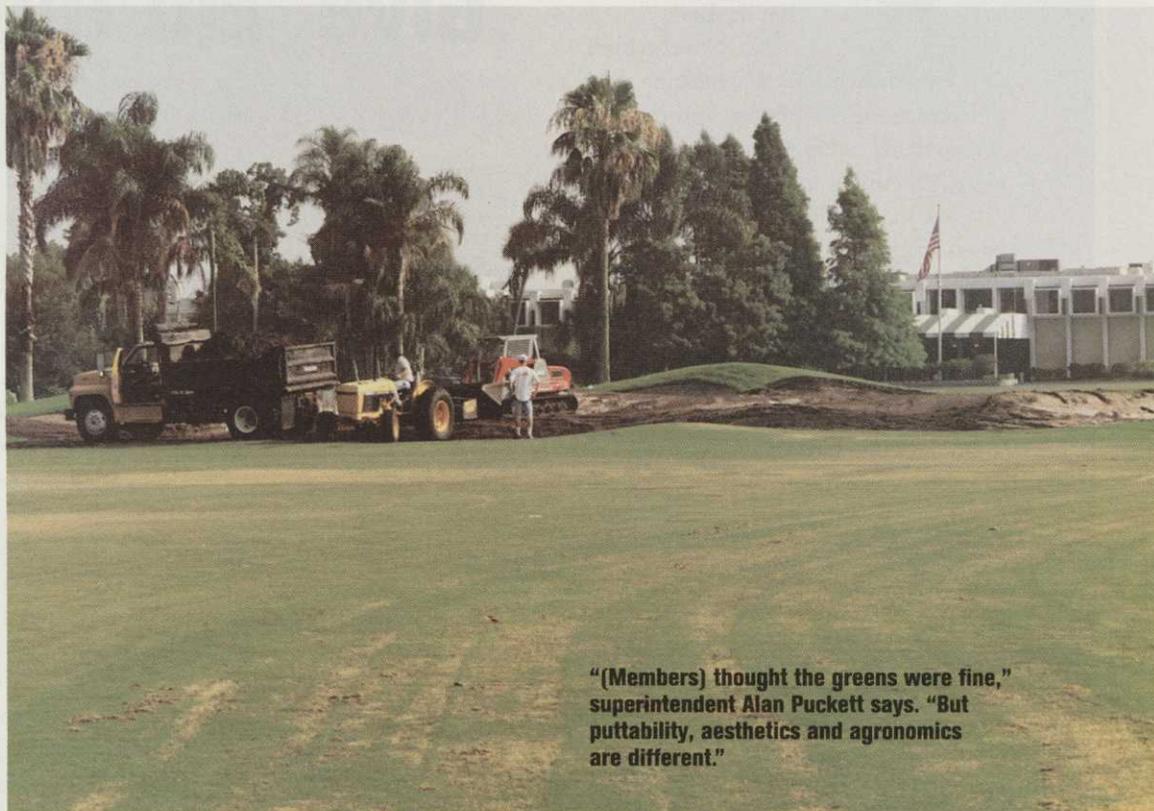
Florida superintendent hails homegrown turf for successful greens renovation

### Problem

They looked good, they played well, but . . . the greens at Lake Region Yacht & CC were in bad shape and in need of renovation.

### Solution

FloraDwarf, a dense and fine-textured creeping turfgrass developed at the University of Florida. "Our greens turned out flawlessly," says superintendent R. Alan Puckett.



**"(Members) thought the greens were fine," superintendent Alan Puckett says. "But puttability, aesthetics and agronomics are different."**

BY LARRY AYLWARD  
MANAGING EDITOR

**N**obody was blaming the golf course greens at Lake Region Yacht & CC for putting games gone awry. In fact, most members at the Winter Haven, Fla., course believed the greens were in excellent shape.

But superintendent R. Alan Puckett discovered that the greens, despite their vivid and vigorous appearance, were diseased and contaminated. He knew the greens would eventually have to be restored.

### The problem

The back-nine greens were rebuilt

in 1984; the front nine were rebuilt in 1987. Problems began in 1984, when the backside greens grew in contaminated. Since the greens were renovated three years later on the frontside, Puckett and his crew had to maintain them differently, especially when verticutting.

"It was like maintaining two different entities," he says.

The backside greens contained mosaic circles. Puckett and his crew could manage the diseased spots, but only to a point.

"People didn't know we were having problems," Puckett says. "They thought the greens were fine. But puttability, aesthetics and agronomics are different."

Puckett noticed the developing problem when he came to Lake Region in 1990. He also noticed

that the frontside greens were grown in with better-quality Canadian peat moss, compared to the backside greens which were grown in with Florida peat moss.

The greens deteriorated even more over time, especially in the winter during overseeding.

"The matted and contaminated spots would choke out the overseed," Puckett says, adding that areas on the greens became bare. "You couldn't keep a consistent surface. That was the final straw."

Puckett began to lobby for the greens renovation in 1995, but he had to convince his superiors and members that it was necessary. Besides not being able to see the problems with the greens, they believed the greens needed to be refurbished every 20 years, not every 12 years.

“But USGA says rebuilding greens every 12 to 14 years is not uncommon in Florida,” Puckett told them.

Puckett did what he could to maintain the greens and continued to campaign. His superiors finally consented to the project in the spring of 1998.

But there was another problem: cash flow. Because of a \$1.6 million clubhouse renovation, Puckett had about \$220,000 to spend on a greens renovation, which can cost up to \$350,000.

Puckett had to run like an Olympic sprinter to get the project done quickly. His mission? Get the greens done on the double so the course wouldn't be shut down for long.

### The solution

Puckett studied various turfgrasses and narrowed the field to only certified grasses. He considered Tifdwarf, a nearly 30-year-old grass.

“I would have used it, and it would have been fine,” Puckett admits. “But I didn't want to be that old course with that old grass six years down the road. It was a personal fear.”

Puckett also considered Champion, a dense, ultra-dwarf bermudagrass. But in the end, he chose the homegrown FloraDwarf, a dense and fine-textured creeping turfgrass recently developed at the University of Florida. Puckett says the ultradwarf is used on only about 30 golf courses in the country.

Puckett had been told that FloraDwarf was more difficult to maintain — that it needed more nitrogen and verticutting. Critics also told him that it was such a tight, dense plant that it would be difficult to overseed. But

Puckett, who later discovered the criticisms were overstated, didn't hesitate on his choice.

He also looked for ways to save money on the project. For instance, after taking a soil sample, he decided it was cheaper to take out 6 inches of mat and thatch, add 6 inches of sand and till it together 12 inches down to create a good mix. “That was cheaper than putting in 12 inches of new mix,” he adds.

### Outcome

Puckett teamed with Rick Trombley, of Avon Park, Fla.-based Highland Golf, who acted as site foreman on the renovation. Mike Dasher, an Orlando architect, also consulted on the project.

Reconstruction on the front nine began in late June of last year. Four greens had severe undulations, which made them unplayable from some areas. Those greens also had only two or three pin placements, and they became worn in those areas. Puckett and his crew softened the greens, making them more player friendly. The greens also now have 10 to 12 pin placements.

The 2nd green was completely moved and rebuilt to make room for a parking lot. Members thought the move might ruin the hole by making it shorter, but Puckett was able to extend the hole slightly by pushing back the tee.

Puckett and crew had the front-nine greens finished in a month. Then it was on to the back nine, which they completed in two weeks. Puckett attributes the quick finish to how well he and Trombley worked together.

Grass on the back nine had grown in over the years, and the greens were smaller, Puckett says.



Superintendent Alan Puckett says he would stack FloraDwarf up against other bermudagrasses.

He and his crew enlarged the surfaces and downsized humps.

While Puckett and his crew of 13 were redoing the greens, they also decided to relevel the tees. Puckett convinced members that he could greatly improve the tees — which were slightly uneven — by renting a Rotodarian, an English-made rotary cultivator, for \$1,000.

That's not all. Crew members also replaced bunker sand and used the old sand to rebuild service roads. In addition, they constructed berms on three holes for water control. Lastly, they built a 3,000-square-foot nursery green with FloraDwarf for sod replacement.

Not surprisingly, Puckett and his crew worked days and nights. They completed their work in an astonishing 117 days. Puckett says he was at the course, which reopened Oct. 17, from sunrise to sunset for 114 of those days.

“It was a phenomenal effort on our part,” he adds.

### Comments

Puckett is impressed with FloraDwarf, and says he would stack it up against other

bermudagrasses. “Our greens turned out flawlessly.”

Of its critics, Puckett says, “If you maintain your golf course to a high level, all of those factors are minor adjustments.”

For instance, Puckett says he can cut FloraDwarf lower than Tifdwarf without damaging it. He also didn't have any overseeding problems last winter. “FloraDwarf is not as difficult to manage as I thought,” he says.

He purchased the FloraDwarf from Greg Norman Turf in Avon Park, Fla. “Hands down, it's one of the cleanest fields there is,” Puckett says.

Puckett knew the renovation was a success when he didn't hear any complaints after the course opened. He says some members went out of their way to comment positively on the project.

For his efforts, Puckett received a bonus and a plaque. He beams when he talks about the renovation, an obvious career highlight.

“I don't need a pat on the back, but I need to know that people notice that I'm trying,” he says. ■

# Maintenance

■ CASE STUDY

## The New Champion

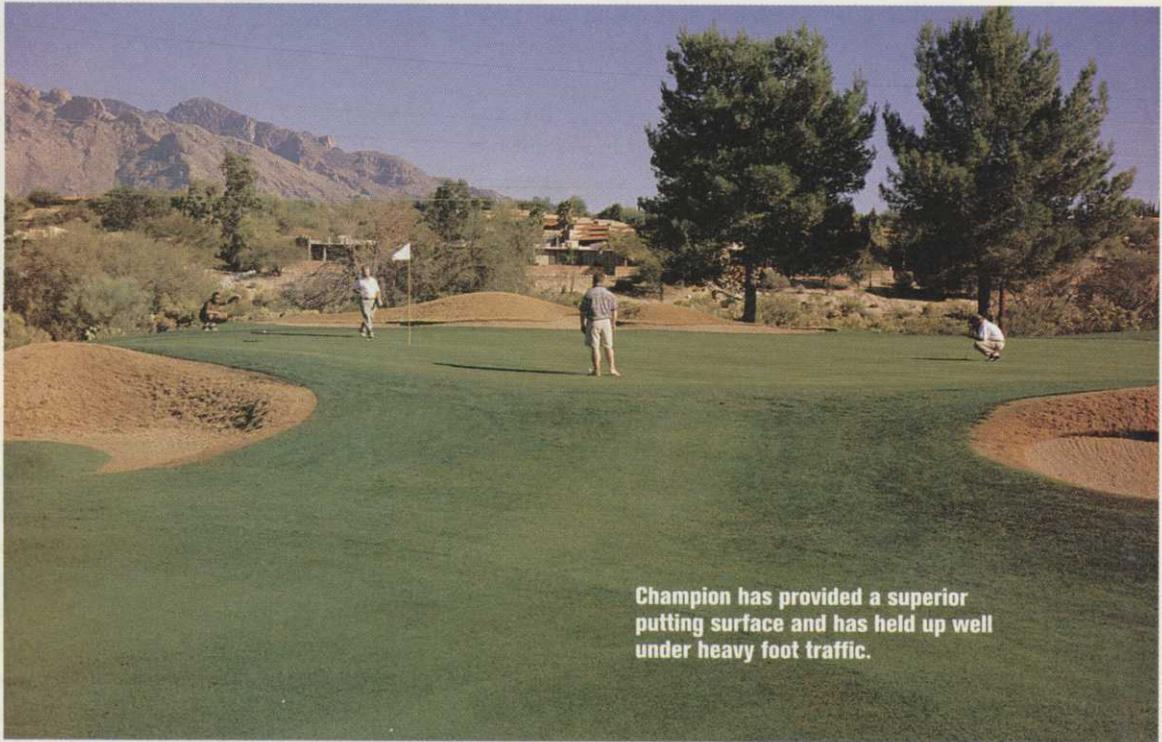
Mike Petty made a winning choice when he selected a hybrid ultradwarf bermudagrass for a greens renovation

### Problem

The undersized bentgrass greens took a beating when rounds at Tucson (Ariz.) National Golf Resort doubled from 30,000 to 60,000.

### Solution

A greens renovation was in order, and it was a tough and enduring bermudagrass named Champion to the rescue.



Champion has provided a superior putting surface and has held up well under heavy foot traffic.

PHOTOS BY DON DALE

BY DON DALE

**I**n his spare time, superintendent Mike Petty partakes in desert motorcycle races. There's a part of him that likes to live dangerously.

So it's no surprise that Petty, superintendent at Tucson National Golf Resort and Spa in Tucson,



Superintendent Mike Petty relishes risky business.

Ariz., took a risk by using Champion, a hybrid ultradwarf bermudagrass, for a greens renovation in 1997.

Petty chose Champion because the course needed a tough and enduring grass to accommodate a doubling of foot traffic. Champion may have been a radical choice, but it was one Petty felt he had to make.

### The problem

When Tucson National transformed from a private course to a resort course in 1983, it went from 30,000 to 60,000 rounds a year. Over the years, the undersized bentgrass greens were damaged by increased play, especially in the summer heat.

Management at Omni Hotels, owner of Tucson National, wanted to repair the greens, but discovered

that most solutions were too expensive. Petty says the best option was to improve the greens' root zones by 30 percent, increase their size and redo the bentgrass — but that would have cost \$1 million.

Another option was to find a more durable turf, and bermudagrass seemed the natural choice.

### Solution

Petty selected Champion because he thought the dense-growing hybrid would provide a superior putting surface and hold up well under heavy foot traffic. But the renovation project got off to a bad start when a contractor failed to grow the sprigs into a useable sod.

However, after Petty stepped in and grew the sod himself, the renovation went smoothly and cost only about \$250,000.

"This Champion variety estab-