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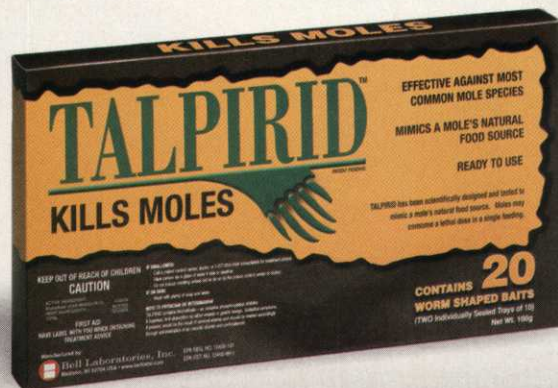
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The Big Picture

THE NUMBERS THAT SHAPE YOUR BUSINESS

TIDBIT OF THE MONTH

Styling in the Sunshine State



Florida seems to have an insatiable appetite for high-end private clubs. The **Concession Club** in Bradenton, a co-design of Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin, will open later this year. It will have \$75,000 memberships. The **Founders Club**, a 700-acre golf course and residential enclave in Sarasota, opened Feb. 4 with memberships fetching \$80,000. And the **Tom Fazio** course at the Ritz-Carlton Sarasota, set to open in late 2005, will offer 300

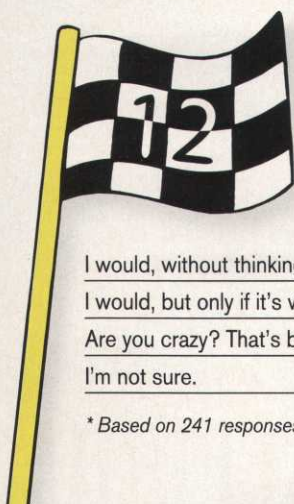
memberships ranging in price from \$75,000 to \$125,000. Also coming on line are **Bella Collina** in Montverde, **The Habitat** and **Tuscany Reserve** near Naples, and the first 18 at **The Tesoro Club** in Port St. Lucie. For details on these and other golf projects around the United States, visit www.golfconstructionnews.com.

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ILLUSTRATION: LIQUIDLIBRARY

Breaking Tradition. At What Cost?



We asked readers if they would build a 12-hole golf course if it meant growing the game and improving its overall economic health?

I would, without thinking twice about it.	38%
I would, but only if it's vital to the profession.	22%
Are you crazy? That's breaking tradition.	24%
I'm not sure.	15%

* Based on 241 responses

Golfdom

ILLUSTRATION: CLIPART.COM

Golf Rounds Played

The percentages below represent the difference in number of rounds played in December 2004 compared to the number of rounds played in December 2003.

REGION	DEC.	Y.T.D.
New England ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT	-16.7%	3.2%
Middle Atlantic NY, PA, NJ	20.1%	2.1%
East North Central MI, OH, IN, IL, WI	7.0%	-0.5%
West North Central ND, MN, SD, NE, KS, IA, MO	42.6%	-1.2%
South Atlantic WV, DE, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA	3.2%	1.3%
Florida	1.8%	-0.7%
East South Central KY, TN, AL, MS	1.0%	1.4%
West South Central OK, AR, LA	-2.5%	-5.0%
Texas	-3.5%	-4.2%
Mountain MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM	1.7%	-0.1%
Pacific WA, OR, AK, HI	0.2%	-0.8%
California	-4.0%	-1.9%
TOTAL UNITED STATES	1.5%	-0.1%

GOLF DATATECH

Augusta's Green Thumb

The Masters is for April 4-10 at Augusta National Golf Club. Phil "Lefty" Mickelson will defend his title, which was his first Major victory. But enough about Mickelson and a little about **Brad Owen**, the course's superintendent, who bleeds Augusta green.

Education: Turfgrass management degree from Penn State University in 1986.

Years at Augusta: 18.

Previous position: Assistant superintendent of Augusta National.

Future position: Here's betting it's Augusta for several more years.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: MIKE KLEMME/DAN BEEDY

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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Hoffman takes over at Toro

Michael J. Hoffman officially took over as CEO for The Toro Co. on March 15, succeeding Kendrick B. Melrose, who will assume the role of executive chairman for Toro's board of directors. Hoffman, 49, is a 27-year veteran with the company. He was elected president and chief operating officer in 1994 and has been responsible for all the company's businesses and operations. Melrose joined Toro in 1970 as director of marketing for the consumer products division. He was named CEO in 1983 and chairman of the board in 1987.

LESCO'S new fleet

You could say LESCO is keepin' on truckin' — and in a big way. At the Golf Industry Show in February, the Cleveland-based company unveiled its new Store-on-Wheels vehicle, a 20-foot-long truck that will carry about 180 products at all times. The company said it will replace all of its current vehicles this spring and summer and expand its fleet from 72 at the start of 2005 to 110 by the end of the year.

Michael DiMino, LESCO's president and CEO, said the new truck "strengthens" LESCO's commitment to its customers. "The golf course market is at the core of LESCO's business, just as it has been since LESCO's founding in 1962," he added.

The company's original Store-on-Wheels concept was born out of a focus meeting with superintendents. The concept was introduced in Florida in 1976.

ITODA establishes training institute

The Independent Turf and Ornamental Distributors Association (ITODA) has established the ITODA Training Institute to support

Briefs continue on page 16

What's Up These Days?

ROUNDS ARE, ACCORDING TO TWO TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

AND EVEN THOUGH IT'S ONLY A SLIGHT INCREASE, IT'S GOOD NEWS

You can call this a classic case of up and down.

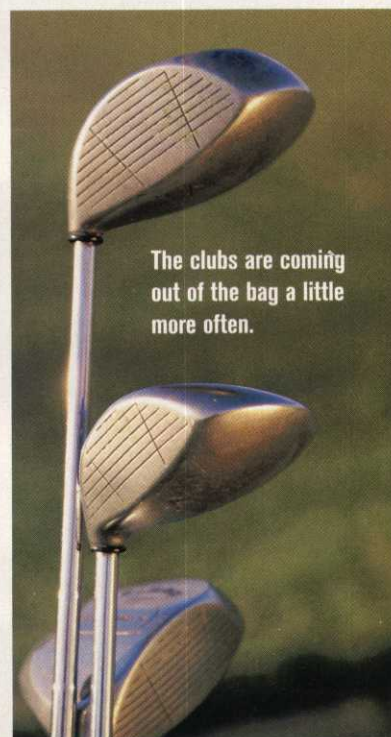
What's up? Well, the National Golf Foundation (NGF) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) recently reported that rounds increased — albeit slightly — for the first time in three years.

What's down? Well, the NGF also announced that the number of golf course openings continued to slow in 2004. There were 150.5 course openings and 62.5 verified closures (in 18-hole equivalents) for a net gain of 88 courses.

"The data show that the number of new courses being built has decreased every year since 2000," the NGF said, noting that the 2005 forecast is for 150 to 160 18-hole equivalent course openings. About 400 18-hole equivalents opened in 2000.

"To many golf course owners and operators, the slowdown is a welcome relief because it indicates that golf course development has adjusted to the lack of growth in demand," the NGF reported. "However, the decrease in new courses does not come as good news for the golf course design and construction business."

Back to the increase in rounds, which was a very modest 0.7 percent nationally. The NGF welcomed the



The clubs are coming out of the bag a little more often.

PHOTO BY: DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

increase in light of declines the past two years.

"As usual, results vary remarkably by region, with some areas experiencing a 5-percent decline and others increasing by as much as 9 percent," says Joe Beditz, president and CEO of NGF. "Variations across regions, due in large part to weather patterns, show a continuing tendency to balance themselves out."

Mike Hughes, executive director of NGCOA, said the numbers reflect

Switcheroo

BASF'S MILLER SAYS SUPERINTENDENTS SHOULD
CHANGE OUT NOZZLES FOR PARTICULAR PESTICIDES

Tis the season for ... spraying pesticides. With that in mind, we turn to Kyle Miller, senior technical specialist for BASF Turf & Ornamental, to garner a few tips for proper spraying.

Miller says many sprayers these days are fitted with nozzles that deliver a medium/coarse spray. "You can use these nozzles for different products. [They have] a coarser spray so if the wind kicks up the spray will stay uniform without a lot of drift."

But Miller stresses that superintendents should consider switching nozzles for each pesticide they're spraying, whether it's an herbicide, fungicide or insecticide. For instance, a nozzle that emits a coarse spray is not effective for a fungicide program.

"It may not be as important if you're spraying a soil insecticide to have real fine droplets hitting the soil," Miller says. "You can probably get away with a coarser spray. But in the case of a contact fungicide, you want to maximize that product on the leaf. So you want to have a nozzle that can do that for you. If we have a real coarse spray, then you're probably not going to do a very good job of getting it on the foliage because there are a lot of big particles that will roll off the leaf and fall down into the turf canopy. So they won't be effective."

Miller points out that nozzles are inexpensive. "You can buy a whole set for \$100," he adds.

— Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief



Kyle Miller

what we've heard from many members. "Overall golf spending is rising a bit as the overall economy continues to improve," he said.

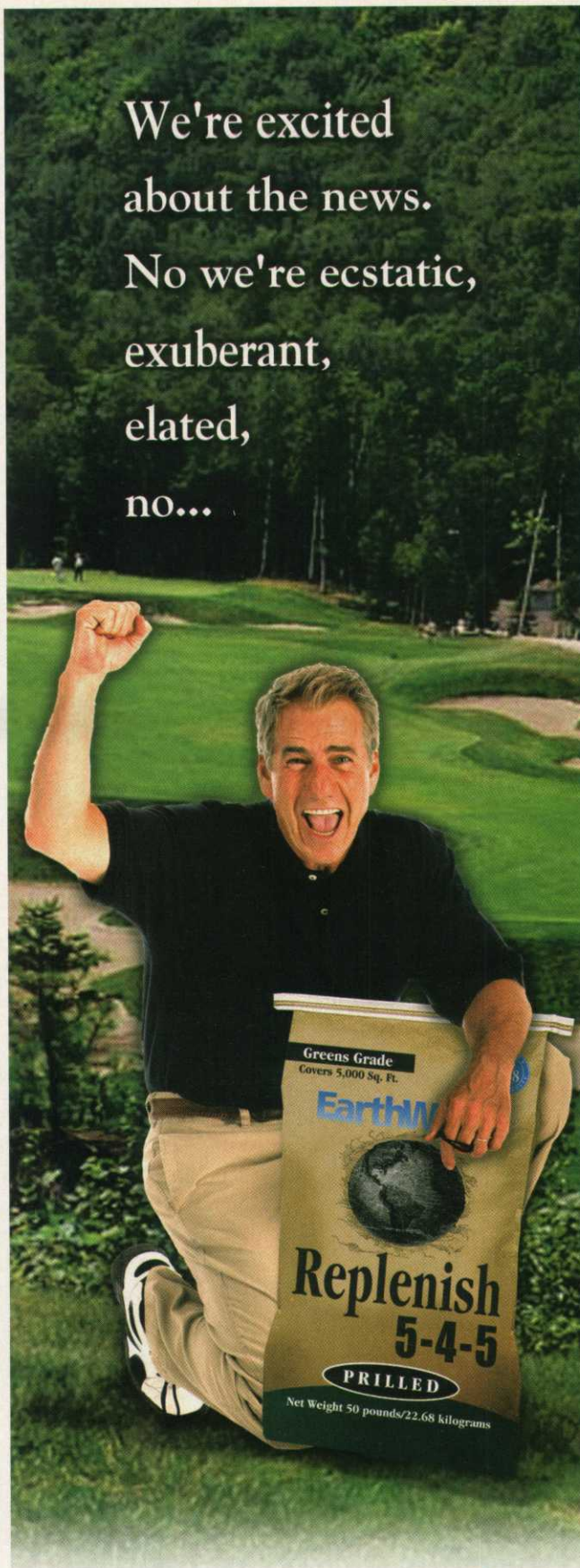
Private club rounds were flat for the year while public courses had slight increases. "Premium" public courses had the best showing with nearly a 2-percent gain, followed by "value" public with about a 1-percent increase.

The report is based on information reported by a

panel of nearly 2,600 golf facilities across the United States. Response rates to monthly surveys vary from 60 percent to 70 percent.

Including the 2004 openings, the total number of U.S. golf facilities stands at 16,057, thus breaking the 16,000 mark for the first time. Adjusting for 9-hole and 18-hole-plus facilities, there were 14,988 18-hole equivalents at year's end.

We're excited
about the news.
No we're ecstatic,
exuberant,
elated,
no...



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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

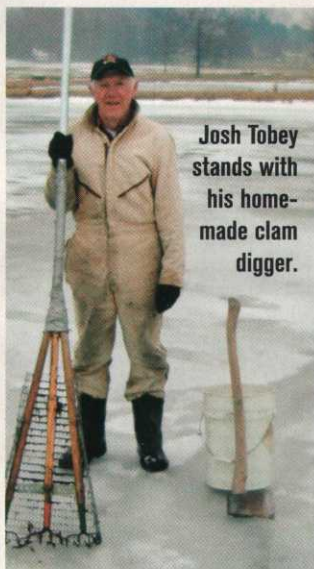
Briefs continued from page 14
independent distributors through training and education.

"In establishing the training institute, ITODA is assuming a new role as the primary educational resource for independent distributors, with the support of other groups in the industry," ITODA President Chris Petersen said.

Singleton honored by ASGCA

The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) will present its Donald Ross Award to golf course irrigation pioneer John Singleton at its annual meeting April 18 in Pebble Beach, Calif. Singleton will be the 30th recipient of the award, which is given annually to a person who has made significant contributions to the game of golf and golf course architecture.

Digging for Clams ...Err... Golf Balls

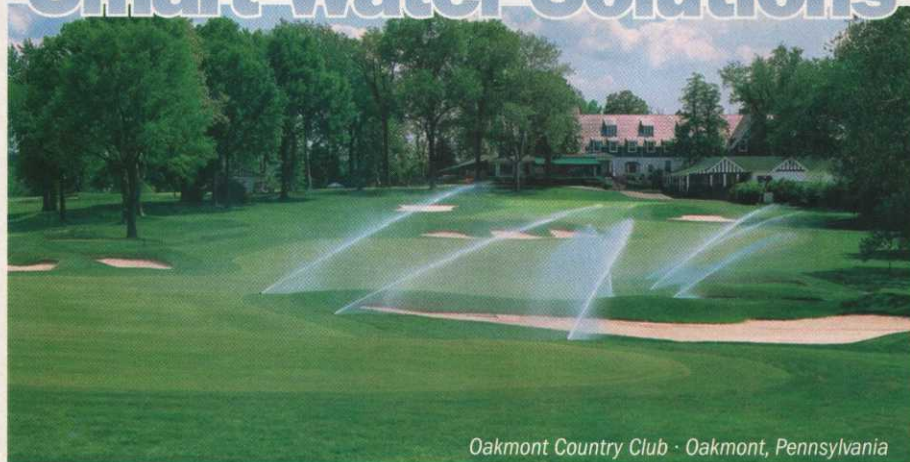


Josh Tobey stands with his home-made clam digger.

For the past four winters, Josh Tobey, a 78-year-old member of the Elks Club of State College (Pa.), gets his exercise in a unique way on the frozen golf course ponds. Tobey grew up in the New England area and was exposed to clam digging early in his teens. That practice has come in handy for his winter activity. He can be found almost daily, chopping holes through the ice-digging for golf balls with his homemade "clam digger." This past winter he found nearly 3,000 golf balls.

On good days Tobey will usually fill a 5-gallon bucket with balls, about 300 of them, that he has dug out of the muddy pond bottoms. Tobey says it's great exercise. The only negative is cleaning each of the

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Tobey in action.
He found nearly 3,000
balls this past winter.

balls before storing them. He tried washing them in his washing machine once at home, but his wife quickly put a stop to that practice.

What does Tobey do with thousands of golf balls? He has given many to local high school golf teams, sold them to raise money for his church and library and given them to the course pro for range balls.

(Editor's note: David Williams, certified superintendent of the Elks Club of State College, sent us this information about Tobey and took the photographs of him in action.)

Quotable

"I don't want to be out there mowing tomorrow and run over a mine."

— Anonymous staff member with the Tea Tree Golf Club on the island of Tasmania, Australia, after a mortar shell — "quite old," according to police — was inexplicably found on the course. (Knight Ridder)

"We've had rains before where we shut off the water for two or three days, but not 10. I mean, over 15 days already."

— Carlos Federico, superintendent at The Pines Golf Club of Marana in Tucson, Ariz., quoted by KOLD News 13 on the abundance of rain throughout the southwest in February.

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Movie Site Turns California Golf Course 'Sideways'

By Thomas Skernivitz, Managing Editor

Asked to pick his favorite flick of 2004, David Rosenstrauch gives two thumbs up to the only movie that really "hit home."

Certainly, then, the certified superintendent at River Course at the Alisal has to be heralding "Sideways." After all, the movie literally hit home — in this case Solvang, Calif., in the heart of Santa Barbara wine country. Two scenes were filmed at River Course, including one gut-buster that occurs on one of Rosenstrauch's fairways. The lead characters, played by Paul Giamatti and Thomas Hayden Church, having just had a group chip into them, return the favor and fire a few balls (and expletives) right back at 'em.

"The scene on the golf course was

pretty cool," Rosenstrauch says. "Those were some of the members from our private course that they used (as extras)."

Nevertheless, it's "Finding Neverland" over "Sideways" when Rosenstrauch is pressed to name his No. 1 movie. So much for any home-course advantage, which, in this case, included some terrific on-location food spreads and a set of free tickets to the premier.

"Personally, I thought 'Finding Neverland' was one of the best movies I've seen in the last 15 or 20 years," he says of the Johnny Depp film that details the origination of the fairy tale character Peter Pan. "I loved 'Neverland.' It hit home. The end got me right between my heart. When that little kid is looking at (Depp's character) with tears in his eyes, it struck me. Loved that movie. It was fantastic."

Not that "Sideways" was bad.

"I'd give it a B," Rosenstrauch, 52, says. "I thought it was pretty funny."

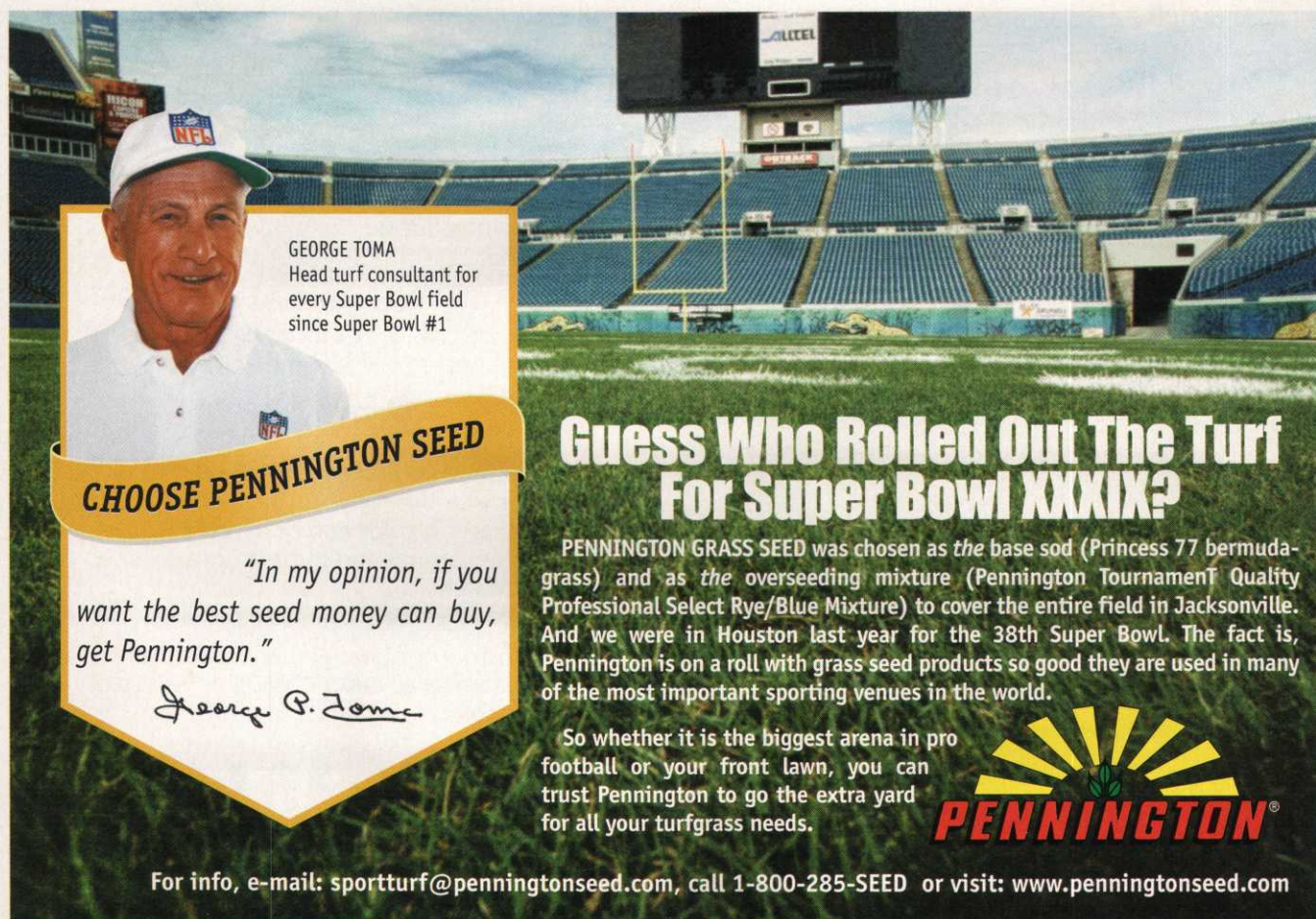
Things weren't so amusing at the time of the filming last May. The two golf scenes, which lasted less than five minutes combined on film, closed the course for the four days it took to shoot.

"Man, I could never be an actor. I'd be going out of my brain," Rosenstrauch says.

The good news is that tourism in the valley is booming. Not bad for a movie that Rosenstrauch says was considered "B-grade from the get-go."

"The River Course is just packed. A 5-hour round, 6-hour round is not uncommon now," Rosenstrauch says. "It's going to be a good year."

Spoken like a true wine-country superintendent.



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Help, I've fallen behind and I can't catch up. An 84 year-old Florida woman almost had cardiac arrest when she saw her \$419 water bill and couldn't understand why. A trouble-shooter from the local utility company found her automatic irrigation system wasn't properly programmed and was running amok, driving up her water bill. Other members of the "Greatest Generation" such as my parents, War Babies my age and a ton of baby boomers are also falling further behind in this high-tech world. But it doesn't take a computer geek to turn off the water when it's raining.

Water management districts don't have the money, personnel or access to ride herd on the public's irrigation controllers. People who can't program VCRs or cell phones evidently can't handle 12-station clocks on garage walls either. This is where most of the public water waste occurs. As the millions of acres of residential, commercial and municipal turfgrass goes mismanaged or unmanaged, the water crisis continues to make headlines.

But this crisis is self-inflicted. Regional areas run out of cheap accessible water because they allow growth without providing alternative solutions to offset the increasing demand on existing watersheds. We may be running low on "cheap" water, but we are not running out of water. Until coastal states develop more desalinization plants and all communities recycle effluent for irrigation, the media shouldn't demonize or trivialize the more visible water users such as golf. According to a recent Golf Economic Impact study, there are 4 million acres of lawn turf and 140,000 acres of irrigated golf turf in Florida. The public sector uses 30 percent of the water; golf uses 3.5 percent.

Agriculture (the biggest user of water) and golf (one of the smallest) still get hammered in the press, even though both manage and recycle water better than John Q. Public. Our management skills are overlooked and we are made the scapegoats because people can't figure out a day-of-the-week push-pin dial, a 0-to-60-minute station dial and the off/auto switch. A roving irrigation tech on the city payroll who shuts down systems during rainy weather could

Responsibility Lacking, Not H₂O

BY JOEL JACKSON



GOLF COURSES ARE
GOING HIGH-TECH TO
BE ECONOMICALLY
EFFICIENT, BUT
THEY AREN'T
GETTING MUCH
PUBLIC HELP
OR RECOGNITION

save tons of water and money and set a good example.

As the agriculture and green industries move forward with new technology, the homeowner sector is falling behind. The irrigation designers, manufacturers and installers are missing a huge market share by not bringing residential equipment and design into the 21st century. Place an on/off switch by the kitchen/office window so mom/building manager can turn it off when they see it's raining. A system also needs periodic maintenance to be most efficient, but first things first.

So much for the end-users; our politicians aren't immune to falling short either. After years of cutting budgets to land grant universities that support agriculture and green industries, urbanized legislatures have literally and figuratively abandoned their roots. In trying to remake states into high-tech economies, they have turned their backs on the agri-business industries that kept many states solvent during the recent economic slowdown.

Farms, groves, ranches, nurseries and golf courses are going high-tech to be economically efficient and environmentally friendly, but they aren't getting much public help or recognition. Poorly managed growth overloads and depletes our natural resources. Investment in alternative water sources and conservation measures lags behind the growth curve. It is urban sprawl and ignorant people that are wasting water, not those who work the land.

Our water woes will continue until individual homeowners and municipalities take seriously their responsibility for practical water use and conservation instead of trying to solve the problem by blaming turfgrass and penalizing small niche users like golf.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.