

Challenges on your course should be reserved for the players.



WeKoPa Golf Club



* Golf Digest 2005-2006 "100 Greatest Golf Courses" list.

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7. Merion G.C. (East)

Ardmore, Pennsylvania

8. Winged Foot G.C. (West)

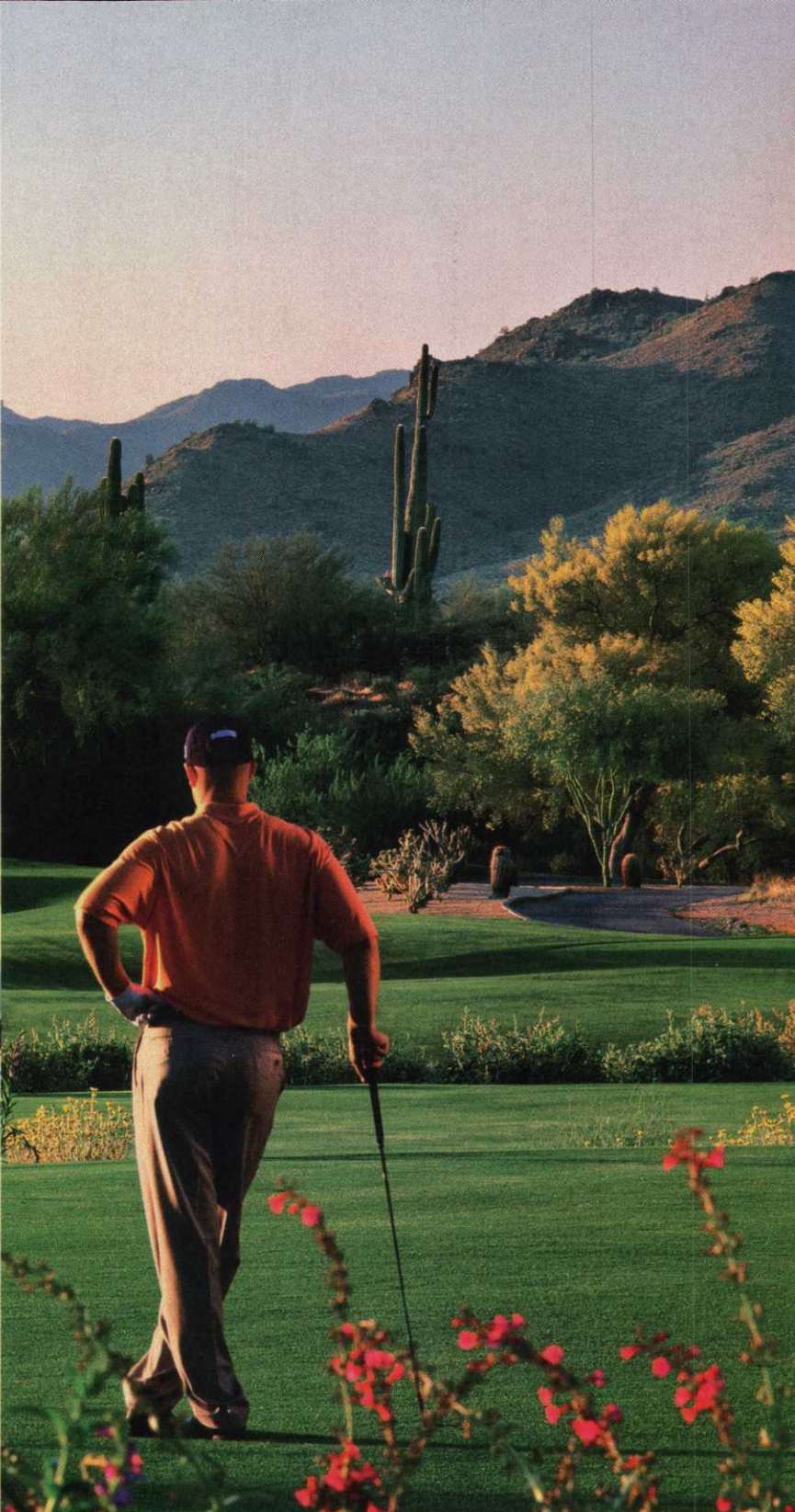
Mamaroneck, New York

9. National Golf Links of America

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SEPTEMBER 2006 • VOLUME 62 • NO. 9

Ante

GOLFDOM BUDGET GUIDE

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It doesn't take Charles Schwab to conclude that increasing employees' pay can help solve your labor woes.

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Are you thinking of paying your employees more? Are you looking for more labor-saving ways to manage? Read our third-annual Budget Guide.

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Golfdom's Art Director Kristen Morabito used this image from IndexOpen in designing the cover for our third-annual budget guide.

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No Pie in the Sky Here

GPS technology proves valuable for golf course builders and architects.

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► Sizzling

If you're planning your 2007 budget, you might be able to use these products. Check them out starting on page 85.



News with a hook

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Getting It Straight

Jed Spencer, certified superintendent of Chenal Country Club in Arkansas, wrote us to dispute the nickname of Kansas, which was discussed on our Big Picture page in the August issue. We suggested that Kansas was the "Jayhawk" state. Kansas' nickname is the Sunflower state, Spencer points out. "The University of Kansas is not the land grant school for the state," Spencer writes. "Kansas State University is the land grant school in the state and offers degrees in horticulture and turfgrass. I would venture to say the majority of those from the state of Kansas who read your magazine are Kansas State alumni."

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Turfgrass Trends

This month *Golfdom's* practical research digest for turf managers discusses white grubs and the challenges they pose to turfgrass research. See pages 57-69.

Online Exclusive



Read this story only at www.golfdom.com/onlineexclusive:

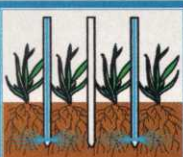
► Someone stole his clubs, but that didn't stop Steve Jones from winning BASF's Superintendent's Cup. By Larry Aylward

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A photograph of a golf bunker. The bunker is a deep, curved pit filled with reddish-brown sand. A long-handled rake with a black head and a wooden handle lies on the sand, its head pointing towards the right. The bunker is bordered by lush green grass on the left and right sides. In the background, a grassy hill rises, and a few dark silhouettes of trees and buildings are visible under a clear blue sky.

I am but a humble rake.

Simple. Not flashy.

My home is a bunker.

Some even call it a trap or a hazard but I am not offended.

Instead I stand by like a firefighter waiting for the bell to ring as incoming rounds threaten the serenity of my home.

Today I will deal with numerous challenges like a fried egg, or the deep footprints of a well-fed judge. But as I've done for 50+ years, I will rise to the challenge, perform my duty and lie back down without so much as a thank-you. But I'm not bitter.



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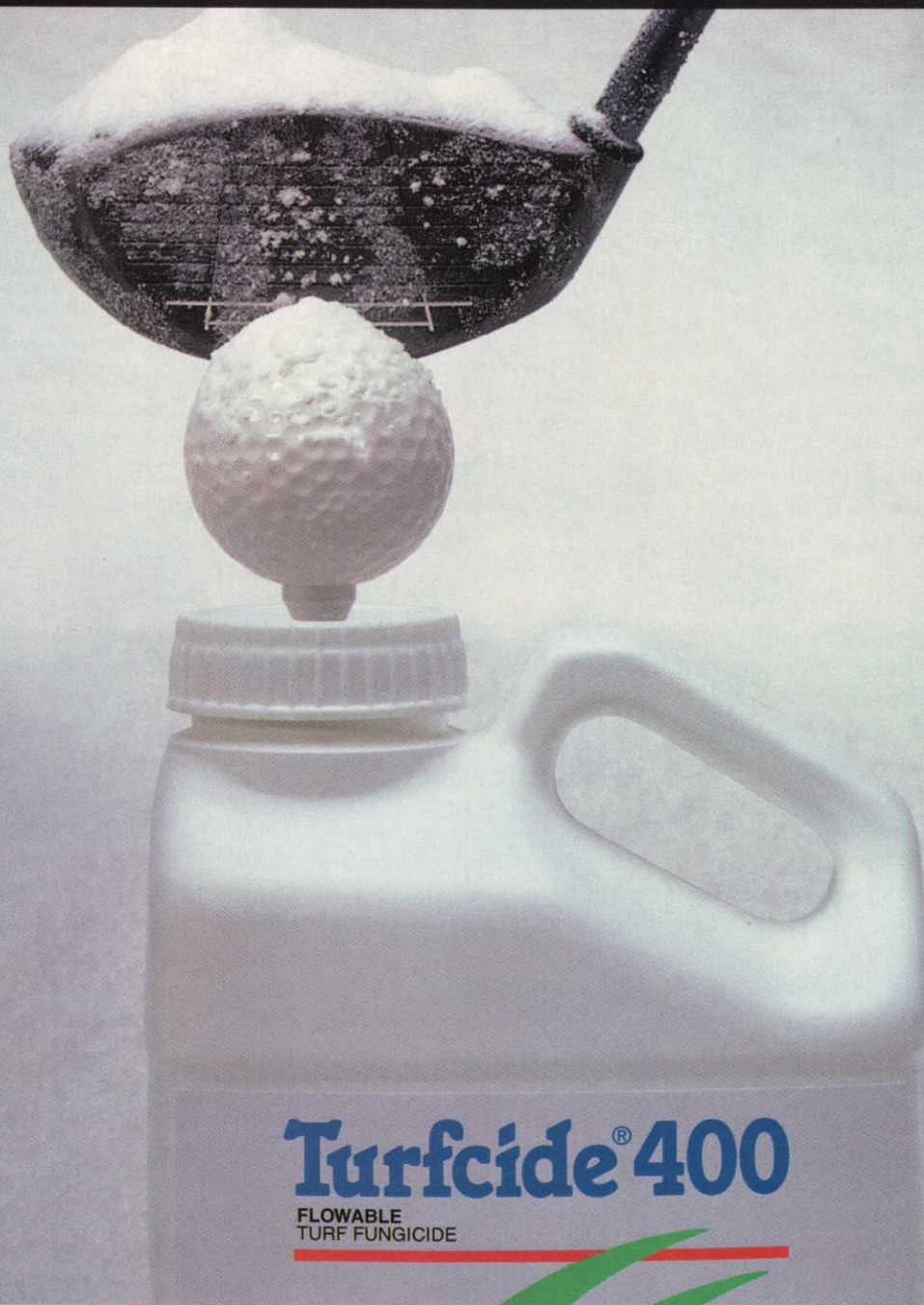
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By now you've heard the news about LESCO. The Cleveland-based provider of turf products is going back to its old way of doing business. It must — to survive.

LESCO announced in July that it expects a \$4 million net loss for 2006. The company's negative news caused its stock price (Nasdaq) to rapidly plunge 36 percent to a 52-week low. LESCO's swift-swooping stock made news locally and nationally.

Much of the bad news stems from LESCO's new way of doing business, which was implemented by the company's former CEO Michael DiMino, who resigned last fall. DiMino, who joined LESCO in December 2001, dissolved the company's direct sales force and increased its mobile Stores On Wheels units to sell turf products to superintendents in hopes of maximizing the company's operating profit percentage.

The move backfired on the company, however. LESCO said "its lower-than-anticipated net revenues for 2006 are primarily attributable to the loss of sales to customers who were previously supported by a direct sales representative." Translation: Superintendents and LESCO's other customers missed the one-on-one interaction that the company's sales representatives provided.

Hence, LESCO, under its new CEO and president Jeff Rutherford, is going back to its old business model. The company is rehiring the sales reps.

Rutherford says he talked to superintendents who told him they could always count on their LESCO sales reps "to get things done." Superintendents enjoyed talking agronomics with them, among other things. The two sides forged trusting relationships. And then, before you could say strobilurin three times fast, the sales reps were gone.

What happened to LESCO articulates loudly the importance of the person in the sales process. Chalk one up for the human touch.

In this age of electronic gadgets that turn us into reclusives and a business philosophy that darkly declares that people's jobs can be replaced by machines, it's a relief to see that humans are

Don't Discount the Human Touch

BY LARRY AYLWARD



IT'S A RELIEF
TO SEE THAT
HUMANS ARE STILL
INDISPENSABLE IN
SOME ROLES —
SUCH AS SELLING
TURF PRODUCTS TO
SUPERINTENDENTS

still indispensable in some roles — such as selling turf products to superintendents.

It doesn't matter that the person who purged the sales reps from LESCO is gone from the company. It also doesn't matter that Rutherford didn't support that person's decision in the first place. LESCO still screwed up as a company and must deal with the consequences as a company.

But LESCO deserves credit for having the fortitude to admit a mistake and then trying to fix it. Many companies would place a different spin on such an ordeal to avoid admitting any wrongdoing.

Will other companies learn from LESCO's mistake? Hopefully. But here's betting another company will make a similar mistake in a few years. And someone — a person who doesn't know the nuances of the golf course maintenance industry very well — will be gone from the business almost as fast as he or she got in it.

And the reason for that person's departure will be the same. That person will have underestimated the human touch in an industry that thrives on it.

The greatest thing about the golf course maintenance industry is its people, from superintendents to sales people. The longer you work in this industry, the more you realize how terrific it is because of its constituents. Most people I've met are as congenial as Jimmy Carter.

And these people, especially superintendents, value relationships with others, including those who sell fungicides and fertilizer for a living. It's these alliances that set this industry apart.

That said, it's good to see that LESCO has a new business strategy — its old one.

Aylward, editor in chief of Golfdom, can be reached at 216-706-3737 or larylward@questex.com.

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The Big Picture

THE NUMBERS THAT SHAPE YOUR BUSINESS

TIDBIT OF THE MONTH

Start Spreading the News

People might not expect New York City to be a hotbed for golf construction, but that's just what's happening. Now under way are \$24 million worth of renovations being made to six of NYC's Parks & Recreation-owned facilities. Overseen by operator American Golf, projects are under way at Pelham and Split Rock in the Bronx; Clearview in Queens; Dyker Beach in Brooklyn; and the South Shore and La Tourette courses on Staten Island. Items on the job lists include upgrades to the courses, cart paths, irrigation systems and clubhouses. For details on these and other golf projects around the U.S., visit www.golfconstructionnews.com.



COURTESY OF:



The Weighting Game

It's a sensitive issue – dealing with overweight employees who may be costing you money by taking more sick days and having higher medical bills. Thomas B. Gilliam, Ph.D., an expert on the problems caused by obesity in the workplace and author of "Move It. Lose It. Live Healthy: Achieve a Healthier Workplace One Employee at a Time!" offers these tips to help employees recognize and do something about their weight problems:

- ♦ Be honest with people about the impact of their excess weight. It's natural to dread these types of conversations, but remember that your employees are adults. They can handle it.
- ♦ Commit to helping them lose weight. It's easy to make any lifestyle change if you have support.
- ♦ Offer incentives. Some operations may give small cash bonuses or gift certificates for reaching pre-determined milestones.
- ♦ Teach employees the basics of weight loss. The only way to lose weight and keep it off is to consume a moderate, nutritious diet and exercise regularly. Period.
- ♦ Get your employees excited about good nutrition. Create a "recipe" bulletin board so that employees can share the details of their delicious finds and their own culinary creations.
- ♦ Foster and encourage exercise groups.



Golf Rounds Played

The percentages below represent the difference in number of rounds played in June 2006 compared to the number of rounds played in June 2005.

REGION	MONTH	Y.T.D.
New England ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT	-19.6%	-3.1%
Middle Atlantic NY, PA, NJ	-7.9%	-1.2%
East North Central MI, OH, IN, IL, WI	0.1%	0.4%
West North Central ND, MN, SD, NE, KS, IA, MO	7.9%	4.6%
South Atlantic WV, DE, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA	1.7%	4.4%
Florida	6.9%	2.8%
East South Central KY, TN, AL, MS	-0.4%	-0.2%
West South Central OK, AR, LA	-0.1%	3.8%
Texas	-0.9%	4.9%
Mountain MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM	3.6%	5.3%
Pacific WA, OR, AK, HI	-0.6%	0.8%
California	-2.8%	1.4%
TOTAL UNITED STATES	-0.7%	2.3%

GOLF DATATECH

Taking Your Lumps at the Pump

Last summer we were worried when gas prices hit \$2.30 a gallon. Now pump prices are much higher, near \$3 a gallon in some regions. We asked our readers: Are you worried that current gas prices will hurt your golf course's operation in some way?

Yes, for sure prices will impact us big time
43%

Yes, but not too much
29%

I'm getting concerned, but I'm not real worried
15%

Not at all. Prices can rise to \$4 for all I care
12%

* Based on 65 responses

Golfdom