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Golfdom

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BY JOHN WALSH, ANTHONY PIOPI AND CHRISTOPHER S. GRAY SR.

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PUTTING
SURFACE
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Golf and the Globe

— John Deere Golf's Gregg Breningmeyer, who spends many of his days on the road in America and abroad, discusses the growth areas of golf globally in this podcast with *Golfdom* Editor in Chief Larry Aylward.



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 **BASF**

The Chemical Company

Dan Rosenbaum won't lie to you. Bring on the grassroot-eating bugs and turf disease, he says with a laugh. But, hey, what do you expect from the man who wears the hat of director of the specialty products business for FMC Professional Solutions?

But allow Rosenbaum to don another hat — that of the chair of the RISE Governing Board — and it's time to get serious. RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) is a national not-for-profit trade association representing producers and suppliers of specialty pesticides and fertilizers. The organization serves as a resource and advocate on pesticides and fertilizers, and monitors legislative and regulatory issues.

Rosenbaum's job is about to get more interesting because the Obama administration is expected to get tough on pesticide manufacturers and users, wanting to make them jump through more hoops than the tigers do during a month's worth of Barnum & Bailey circuses.

Not surprisingly, the administration is listening to the environmental activists. Alas, you might soon see restrictive pesticide legislation on the books at the federal, state and municipal levels.

"I don't want to sound like an alarmist," Rosenbaum says, "but we're starting to see a level of challenge we haven't seen in the past eight to 10 years."

Hence, pesticide and fertilizer manufacturers and users — that means you, golf course superintendents — rely on people like Rosenbaum to defend their image and its actions. And Rosenbaum, as well as others who represent RISE, will do that gladly and leave everything on the field, as the athletic metaphor goes.

However, RISE is not a large organization and its people can't be everywhere at once. So RISE needs the people in the trenches — that means you, golf course superintendents — to help in its efforts, especially at the grassroots level. Rosenbaum says the need for superintendents to get involved and promote themselves and their industry for using pesticides and fertilizers responsibly has never been greater.

During a RISE meeting at the Golf Industry Show in February, the organization's Jim Skillen updated attendees on a list of proposed regula-

The Potential to Impact Livelihoods

BY LARRY AYLWARD



"WE'RE STARTING TO SEE A LEVEL OF CHALLENGE WE HAVEN'T SEEN IN THE PAST 8 TO 10 YEARS," DAN ROSENBAUM SAYS

tions that have the potential to impact the golf course industry. The news wasn't good. Halfway through his talk, Skillen said to attendees, "You look depressed."

If some of the discussed regulatory issues are passed, superintendents will be busier with more paperwork and oversight, not to mention having a lot more pressure on them to abide by the new legislation or face legal implications. And who knows what else could be coming, especially from an administration that likes big government.

Rosenbaum knows most superintendents went into the business because they're environmentalists at heart and use fertilizers and pesticides carefully. But those environmental activists who believe golf courses are as toxic as Chernobyl don't know this.

But rather than dig in their heels to get ready to defend their practices, Rosenbaum suggests superintendents go on the offensive. Here's an idea: Superintendents could invite members from local Sierra Clubs to their courses for tours and lunch. Sure, the Sierra Club members will be skeptical about visiting, but it's your chance to get in front of them and tell them what you really do, like provide havens for wildlife. It's your chance to change their thinking.

And by doing so, you're getting out in front of the issues. And to Rosenbaum's point: If restrictive legislation does get passed, it's difficult to revoke it. So it's vital not to let it pass in the first place.

Rosenbaum says environmental activists are adding to their agendas. He expects the Environmental Protection Agency to take a more politicized view of what they want to achieve.

"This has the potential to impact livelihoods across the industry," Rosenbaum says.

That means you, golf course superintendents.

Aylward can be reached at laylward@questex.com.

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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

BASF Taps Lish



Brian Lish is the new business manager for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals. Lish joined BASF in 2006, initially serving as district business manager

for BASF Crop Protection and most recently as business manager for BASF Professional Vegetation Management. Lish will lead all turf and ornamentals business and marketing initiatives for BASF. He replaces Toni Bucci, Ph.D., who took on a role within BASF at its North American corporate headquarters in Florham Park, N.J.

BASF also appointed Derek Miller to strategic account manager for national golf, lawn and landscape, and named Chris Key and Jonathan Smith as senior sales specialists.

Syngenta Promotes Cole

Syngenta Professional Products veteran Scott was promoted to marketing manager for the golf market. Cole was previously turf market manager for herbicides, insecticides and plant growth regulators. He has been with Syngenta for nearly 13 years.

In his new role, Cole focuses on all areas of the golf industry, including superintendents, general managers and golf course owners. Cole realizes he'll face challenges in his new role, such as regulatory pressures coming out of Washington.



"We're watching the administration closely," he says. "We're prepared as we always have been. The key is being a good environmental steward." ■

Get Real ... As In Virtual



By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

GOLFDOM PARTNERS WITH IGCEMA TO STAGE VIRTUAL TRADE SHOW. SEVERAL COMPANIES ALSO ON BOARD

I've heard people say trade shows — like the ones you attend in vast convention centers in cities like San Diego and Orlando — are dinosaurs. While I don't think trade shows are becoming extinct, I do think there's a place for a virtual trade show.

That's why *Golfdom* is partnering with the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association

(IGCEMA) to stage the IGCEMA's Virtual Trade Show, a three-day live event where suppliers, dealers and customers can gather online for meaningful business development and relationship building. The event is set for May 11-13 and targets golf course superintendents, technicians and other industry personnel as attendees.

It doesn't cost anything to attend this trade show, which should be an attractive proposition to the people

whose golf courses and clubs can't afford to send them anywhere during these difficult economic times. In fact, we're betting superintendents who couldn't attend the Golf Industry Show in San Diego will be interested in this.

"The draw for attendees is they can enter a trade show-like experience in the comfort of their offices or homes free of charge," says *Golfdom* Publisher Pat Roberts. "This is an especially appealing opportunity for those who can't physically attend an industry show or conference due to budget cuts."

IGCEMA's Virtual Trade Show is the brainchild of Stephen Tucker, the CEO of the IGCEMA, an organization dedicated to expanding the education, enhancing the professionalism and improving the image of the golf course equipment manager and turf equipment technician worldwide.

So far, Tucker has landed The Toro Co., John Deere Golf, Jacobsen, Turfco and Bernhard and Co. as event partners. Getting these companies involved in this event verifies that it's not some pie-in-the sky effort.

"We expect other industry leaders to join them, not only because we aim to deliver them a global audience of buyers, but because we've made the process of getting booth set-up easy and seamless," Tucker says.

Kudos to Tucker for getting this going. It has taken a lot of planning and hard work. It has become a passion for him.

Ten years ago, a few companies (remember Golsat Inc.?) tried to bring e-commerce to the golf course maintenance industry. They bombed. The industry wasn't ready for it then, but this is a different twist. Back then, superintendents weren't interested in e-commerce partly because they valued the relationships they had with their suppliers' sales people. With his virtual trade show, Tucker isn't taking that out of the equation.

We think he's on to something.

Who knows? Maybe in 50 years they'll beam us up to trade shows. But for now, attending a virtual trade show could be pretty cool. ■

Editor's note: For more information about IGCEMA's Virtual Trade Show or to sponsor a booth, contact Pat Roberts at proberts@questex.com.



"Attendees can enter a trade-show like experience in the comfort of their offices or homes free of charge."

— PAT ROBERTS

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Off The Fringe

ARCHITECTS, BUILDERS HANG ON FOR BETTER DAYS

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

Hope Against



There might be small signs that the economy in general is showing signs of improvement, but not so for most of the golf course design and construction industries.

Other than parts of Asia, the Near East and Far East, business is at best slow and at worst dismal.

Ask Mark Eitelman, owner of Agri-Scape Golf Course Construction how he's doing and his answer can be distilled down to the name of a city: St. Louis.

For the first time in the 19 years of its existence, the Connecticut-based company took a job west of the Mississippi River, renovating Algonquin Country Club, located in St. Louis, to the plans of architect Brian Silva.

Also to survive, the company sold off a few pieces of heavy equipment and took jobs outside the golf industry, such as excavating dirt.

One golf course project on which Agri-Scape is working is outside the company's normal purview. "It's not a golf job, but it's an engineering project," Eitelman says. But in a down economy, it's kind of nice."

Usually, it would be the kind of job Eitelman would let another firm handle. "We're trying to do everything ourselves, if we can," he says. "It's taking up time and getting us further through the storm."

He's holding out hope that 2010 will be a better year. "I don't think it's going to get much worse," Eitelman says.

Doug Carrick, principal of Carrick Design in Ontario, Canada, says he's felt the slight rumblings of improvement in Europe and Asia. He has a project in golf-crazy South Korea and one moving forward in Slovakia. Back home is a different story.

"It's still slow," Carrick says. "We haven't seen signs of a full recovery yet. Some clients are talking about refocusing on projects but haven't pulled the trigger yet."

Like Eitelman, he's looking for a better 2010.

"It's not great yet, but at least we're seeing some signs of it turning around," Carrick says.

According to architect Craig Schreiner, whose Schreiner Golf is based in Myrtle Beach, S.C., the future doesn't bode well and might be even worse than 2009.

"Things are definitely slowing down, even in the remodeling business," he says.

Much of his work has been on courses looking to save money on the maintenance side of the business by removing bunkers or remodeling them so as to reduce washouts.

Like Eitelman, Tom Shapland, president of the Midwest office for Wadsworth Golf Construction, is doing some traveling in search of business. In early December he was out of the country pursuing work, a new tack for the company.

Shapland is not optimistic.

"Our projection is that 2010 is going to be worse," he says. "Private clubs are more reluctant than a year ago to go ahead with projects."

Because it takes so long to get financing and permitting for a golf project, Shapland says he's not surprised the golf construction segment is lagging behind the overall economy.

IMG Golf Course Design's Brit Stenson also says his company's Canadian and U.S. businesses are "stalled" but international business is moving along, especially in Asia where the company has focused its sales efforts since 1991.

"China is keeping us pretty busy, and we have our fingers crossed that the central government doesn't follow through on its threats to slow or stop golf course developments," Stenson says. "Hopefully, the inclusion of golf in the Olympics, making golf a more legitimate sport rather than a leisure activity for the wealthy, will give them pause."

IMG also has a small amount of work in Vietnam and Malaysia. "Except for China, there's still quite a bit of caution in Asia, but maybe not the pessimism that was so apparent last year at this time," Stenson says.

In the United States and Canada, the design and build will continue but it will do so with fewer construction companies and architects. Rumors are circulating of dirt movers already getting out of golf.

On the architecture side, a number of large firms have laid off associate designers and office personnel. The smaller companies, some with only one architect that work in a one geographical area, may fold. ■

Contributing Editor Pioppi is based in Middletown, Conn.

Hole of the Month

HOLE NO.

11

ROBERT TRENT JONES JR. COURSE,

Nestled in the foothills of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains is a little piece of heaven known as the Rock Barn Golf & Spa. The resort is named after the Old Rock Barn, a local landmark constructed in 1879 using local wood and flat rock gathered from nearby waters and pastures. It's a fitting tribute, as Rock Barn Golf & Spa has been painstakingly designed into the spectacular natural panorama, rather than built on top of it.

The course designed by celebrated architect Robert Trent Jones Jr. is no exception. Jones took full advantage of the sloping native terrain of the area as well as Lyle Creek, which gracefully carves its way throughout the property. It's as if the land were destined for the game of golf—making it no surprise that the Jones course was dubbed Best New Course in North Carolina and the fourth Best New Course in the nation.

A prime example is the 11th hole, better known as "The Natural" – a long par 4 with a dog leg left that required the least amount of grading of any of the holes on this course. But nature didn't intend this to be an easy par. The length, treacherous bunkering and tiered green make it a difficult number-2 handicap hole.

Nature has thrown a few more challenges at golf course superintendent Tony Denton. Recently, the property was overrun with yellow nutsedge as a result of flooding. Hoping to quickly return the turf to its original beauty, Denton turned to Dismiss® turf herbicide. Not only did Dismiss deliver fast visible control of the sedges, it reduced future populations and helped minimize the need for follow-up treatments. With its unbeatable performance, Dismiss has proven to be the natural choice for protecting the unspoiled beauty of the Rock Barn Golf & Spa.

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THE TURF
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