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Nebraska Golf Course Superintendents Association

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Nebraska Golf Course Superintendents Association
August 6, 2003
Wilderness Ridge
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

Thank you for inviting me to be here with you today. It is such a pleasure to have this opportunity to greet you, and to talk briefly with you about an exciting new program within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that we're looking forward to with great anticipation.

We've been working almost two years now to establish our new Professional Golf Management Program. I'm so very pleased we have Dr. Terry Riordan, professor in our Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, heading up the new program as Professional Golf Management Program Director, and I'm pleased, too, that our Center for Grassland Studies coordinates the program.

Scott Holly Martin Murphy

This major is offered by our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in cooperation with the College of Business Administration and the College of Education and Human Sciences. Even as we await our pending PGA accreditation, we have approximately 20 students who will be taking courses with us this fall to fulfill requirements for the new major.

Students in the Professional Golf Management Program will take core curriculum courses, as well as courses in such areas as horticulture and agronomy, business administration, hospitality and food service management, courses specific to golf management, and internships. They also must pass the PGA's player ability test, and complete the PGA's three checkpoint levels.

The approximately 20 students who this fall will be taking courses to meet the new major's requirements heard about our program by word-of-mouth – we haven't begun to actively recruit students for the new Professional Golf Management Program yet. More than 60 potential students have contacted us to learn more about the new major, which I think shows the great interest in such a program today at the University of Nebraska.

When I came to Nebraska two and a half years ago, I was struck by the opportunity here to build such a program because of the excellent turf work that is a strength of the Institute and the university. We have a tremendous turf team. Some of you here today may be graduates of our turf science option in horticulture. We have graduated a number of fine professionals who participated in that option and are contributing their skills throughout Nebraska today, and we are proud of that, and of our grads.

As we start the new Professional Golf Management Program, we are

building on our strengths and public interest. I am firmly-convinced that as we build on our traditional programs to put forward new programming that meets continually-emerging needs, we strengthen our traditional programs, as well.

Perhaps some of you saw The Associated Press story in July about our new program. It quoted Chris Hunkler, the PGA's senior director of education, as saying Nebraska is in an ideal location for a professional golf program. It will be the only program offered between Michigan's Ferris State University and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

The story said the PGA hopes to have professional golf programs at 20 colleges and universities within the next few years. It reported half of the 14 programs now-operating are in the southeast part of the country, and the PGA has placed a moratorium on new programs in that region.

Chris Hunkler also was quoted as saying, "The employers today are demanding that club pros be college-educated." Our 4 ½ year program will be academically-rigorous, and will require our professional golf management students to complete 16 months of practical work experience at golf courses, in addition to their classroom studies. Perhaps some of you will be involved with our students in that significant internship-component of our program.

Interest in turf is strong, and we are seeing interest in sports turf MANAGEMENT

[redacted] increasing. Our first Sports Turf Field Day held July 21 drew over 150 attendees – some from outside Nebraska – for tours and to hear about such topics as water quality and conservation, traffic, sand-based fields, cultivar selection, low-mow bluegrass, and more. It was a good turnout for the day.

Again, thank you for inviting me to be with you this morning. It has been a pleasure to be here, and to have this opportunity to talk about a program we believe offers great promise of growth for Nebraska. I'd be glad to answer any questions if we have time and, if we don't, I invite you to contact me later if you have questions or comments to share. Thank you.

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