

Jacobsen announces degree for turf equipment technicians

Jacobsen Textron will sponsor the turf industry's first two-year associate degree program for turf equipment technicians. The program will be offered at Texas State Technical College in Waco. Jacobsen has also established two annual scholarships for students participating in the program.

Developed jointly by Jacobsen's training staff and the college, the technicians' program combines a curriculum focused on a solid understanding of hydraulics, electrical and engine principles, along with hands-on training.

"Jacobsen chose Texas State Technical College because of its strong mechanics' program and an active advisory committee for its golf course and turfgrass management studies," said Tony Saiia, Jacobsen vice president of customer service & product support. "The school has excellent training labs, as well as several holes of golf which provide perfect 'real life' areas for learning about turf equipment."

Saiia added that program developers agreed that technicians and mechanics should have a clear understanding of the day-to-day demands of turfgrass maintenance, in addition to their technical equipment training.

"Our intention," said Wallace "Tinker" Clift, CGCS, who heads the Golf Course & Turfgrass Management program at the college, "is to meet the demands that the golf and grounds maintenance industry has placed upon us in recent years. We want these students to receive both technical training in the classroom and field experience in an approved work situation before they graduate."

Jacobsen has also established two annual scholarships to provide additional support for the program – the Wayne Snell Memorial Scholarship and the Steve Moffett Memorial Scholarship. They are named in memory of two turf professionals who were associated with Jacobsen



A combination of classroom and hands-on training will stress hydraulics, electrical systems, engine principles and more.

Lake City CC GCO program

Florida's Lake City Community College's also has an Equipment Technician program. In fact, the one-year program annually graduates about 25 technicians, who have more than 100 job offers waiting for them. John Piersol, chairman of the LCCC program, said he receives calls each year from as far away as Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas and North Dakota from courses looking for trained technicians.

Piersol said he is happy to see the new program at Texas State Technical College and the development of the EETC's efforts to help organize a national effort in preparing qualified people for a rewarding career in golf course maintenance.

"As an industry we are definitely lacking in providing well-rounded technician training for the mechanics who must manage shops and repair today's sophisticated equipment," he said.

"Part of the problem is that educational institutions don't really understand the golf industry. It takes a lot of capital up front to outfit a proper teaching facility.

"Having the proper person head up the program is the final piece of the puzzle. He must be a very pro-active person with good organizational and managerial skills as well as the mechanical background."

Piersol knows that it will take a combined effort from all sectors of the industry to make some sort of standardized and officially recognized technician training a reality. He has suggested that maybe the GCSAA might act as an impartial facilitator for such an effort.

"We need to form partnerships with industry to develop a standardized curriculum that trains an individual for the total needs of a golf course shop operation from administration to welding," he said.

"We need to approach schools and help start the programs. In return it would only be fair that the golf industry should have a large say in who runs the program. We can't have the old high school shop teacher or votech auto mechanics/small engine repair teacher do it!"

Just as the superintendent's role has grown beyond "greenskeeping" over the years, so has the mechanic's role in running the shop. It's time to devote a little more thought to how these new equipment technicians and shop managers are to be trained for the future... and to support the process.

until their untimely deaths from illness last year.

Wayne Snell was Jacobsen's manager of product training and helped pioneer many of the training programs offered at the company. Snell was 40 when he died from a cerebral aneurysm November 2, 1996.

Steve Moffett was the president of S.V. Moffett Company, a Jacobsen distributor in West Henrietta, N.Y. Moffett was well-known for his educational interests and efforts in behalf of turfgrass students. He died October 31, 1996, from cancer.

The scholarships will be awarded to four students each year — two of the Wayne Snell Memorial and two of the Steve Moffett Memorial.

"Jacobsen is extremely proud to sponsor this new, two-year associate degree for turf equipment technicians," said Saija, "and we're excited about the scholarships. They are named for two friends of Jacobsen who believed in the power of education and who shared their knowledge with others to advance the turf industry. We're glad that Jacobsen can help carry on those ideals."

Besides assisting in curriculum development, Jacobsen is preparing recruitment materials for potential candidates to help them understand career opportunities in the turf equipment field.



**Industry leaders to
sanction certification**

First EETC Board of Directors elected

Virgil Russell, Executive Director of the Engine and Equipment Training Council, announced the election of the first EETC Executive Board and Board of Directors during the EETC's annual meeting in Dallas, May 5 and 6.

This Board represents a broad cross-section of our industry's educational and technical leadership, plus supporters from the educational field who support the industry's efforts in ensuring a future

supply of qualified technicians and improving current industry efforts in training and education.

The EETC's new president is Andrew Kuczmar, director, National Service Training for Echo, Inc. Vice president is Paul Scholten, manager, Service and Technical Publications for Kohler Company. Secretary is Chuck Bontrager, product training and education manager for MTD Products, Inc.

Treasurer is Bruce Radcliff, director of Customer Education, Briggs and Stratton Corporation. And advisor to the Executive Board is Tom Kane, assistant director, national training manager, Kubota Tractor Corporation.

General Board members include Clifford Kurkowski, president, Anoka Hennepin Technical College; Larry Case, national advisor and CEO, Agricultural Education/FFA Liaison, National FFA Center; Jerry Bernhardt, director of career and technology education, Windham School District, Texas Department of Criminal Justice; Tim Lawrence, director of business and industry partnerships, VICA;

Also Dave Krueger, technical manager, outdoor power equipment, Sears, Roebuck and Company; Dan Wallace, instructor, Outdoor Power Equipment Excellence Center, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology; Glen Whitt, dealer representative, Plano Power Equipment; Larry Frogge, distributor educator representative, Grayson Company; and Jim Starmer, distributor representative, Dixie Sales Company.

Other industry Board members include Brad Beck, supervisor, Service Publications and Training, Commercial Products Division, The Toro Company; Mark Erenz, technical service coordinator, Generac Corporation; Paul Jurgens, director of customer service, Exmark Manufacturing Company; Randy Richard, training specialist, John Deere Lawn and Grounds Care Division; and Ralph Sylvester, manager, Service Training, Jacobsen, Division of Textron.

With this broad base of support from both inside and outside our industry, and a commitment from all EETC members to "leave their egos on the doorstep,"

it would appear that the future impact of the EETC on our industry will be positive and substantial.

Position Statement

The Engine & Equipment Training Council is a professional organization that promotes and supports the education and training of the outdoor power equipment service technician. As members of the EETC, we:

1. Promote and maintain documented high performance and ethical standards

- Maintain an industry-supported list of minimum competencies
- Use these competencies to validate materials

2. Support an industry-sanctioned certification process

- Basic entry level certification to be recognized as a sign of employability in the industry

- Recognize the manufacturer-specific training to be able to capitalize on foundation built through certification

- Respect the training methods of others and promote unity of effort

3. Encourage excellence in engine and equipment maintenance through education

- Serve as a resource for education institutions such as trade schools, technical schools, colleges and vocational clubs interested in supporting this industry

- Encourage educational institutions to use certification and EETC standards

4. Provide a common communication method mutually beneficial to manufacturers, technicians and customers

- Share competencies, training materials and programs with all members

We support OPE Technicians Certification

For more information about the EETC, contact Virgil Russell, EETC, 1946 S. IH-35, Suite 100-A, Austin, TX 78704-3693, Phone (512) 442-1788, Fax (512) 442-1789,

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Editor's Note: Mr. Russell writes that he has heard more interest from golf course technicians in Florida than any other state.