THE FLORIDA GREEN

Hands On

Make Opportunities Available for Vital Staff Training, Education

“You cannot teach what you do not know. You cannot go where you cannot lead.”

This was a comment by Andy Ragsdale during research for the cover story for this issue. I thought it fit perfectly with the Hands On theme.

While it is vital for superintendents to be up to date on regulations and turf management technology and equipment, it is clear that communication, business and leadership education are also key components for a successful career and operation.

Superintendents can attend GCSAA, FTGA, commercial and local chapter education programs, but what are courses doing to train the staff that is also critical for the success of the facility?

Many courses send their assistants, technicians and/or foremen to the FTGA Regional Seminars in January. Several TESTA (Turf Equipment Service Technicians Association) chapters offer training sessions for certification in several maintenance areas.

Requiring pest control technicians to become certified Pest Control Operators is another way to improve their knowledge and environmental awareness.

Perhaps the best way a superintendent can improve performance and training of their assistants is to have them join the local FGCSA chapters and give them the opportunity to attend several meetings each year.

Here are thoughts of some FGCSA members on job training, health and safety topics:

**SEVEN RIVERS UF/IFAS PLANT SCIENCE CENTER**

We have quarterly safety meetings throughout the year with the entire staff. Topics include pesticide safety, heat stress, equipment safety, etc. We do most of the training in-house but have brought in individuals from outside the organization such as Lee Bloomcamp and Chris Pappas.

We have had unusual training sessions for forklift operation, proper lifting, and passenger bus operation (I bet no one else has that last one).

The University’s policy on pesticides is more strict than the state’s policy. Almost everyone on the staff has a pesticide license and therefore needs opportunities to earn CEU’s. We provide them with several opportunities to achieve those CEU’s.

We usually send everyone to attend Chris Pappas’s First Response Chemical Spill Training Course. We send two people every year for the week-long class for Site Commander Training for Chemical Spills.

We have conducted Fumigation Training sessions over the last couple of years for the entire University which serve as a review for most and an opportunity for others to take the test and receive their license or earn CEU’s.

The Marion County Jail supplies trusties daily to work on the site. They watch the Works Protection Video every day on the bus bringing them from the jail. We get a few new people every day, so we need to make sure that they all see it.

My turf crew attends the FTGA seminars every January. When I had a mechanic, I sent him to equipment technician seminars that were held around the state. The University offers computer training classes, which many of our staff have attended. We keep very detailed records of applications and inventory, so having computer skills is a big plus for many of the employees.

Mark G. Kann
Coordinator of Research Programs

**CENTRAL FLORIDA MARRIOTT WORLD CENTER**

We have numerous associates going through a certification program at this time for high-reach, forklift, and pallet-jack operating. The associates are required to have their certification with them whenever they’re operating any of that equipment.

We’re also all attending a safety seminar on hearing, which includes a hearing exam.

John Kopack
Golf Course Superintendent

**TREASURE COAST HOBIE SOUN D GOLF CLUB**

We have monthly general safety videos, with tests at the end, sent by Risk Compliance. We very rarely have a workman’s comp claim so I would say the videos do their job. When I review the video program with insurance adjusters, they are usually pretty impressed. We have been doing this for five or six years.

We also have a checklist for operators for everything from fairway mowers to string trimmers. This checklist was taken directly from the...
operators’ manuals of the various pieces of equipment. We review important items from the manual and make the operators sign off on each piece of equipment.

I have two guys who have been with me for only three years. The rest of the staff have been here a minimum of six years, most of the them more than 10, so most of the crew know their jobs and safety requirements inside out.

My mechanic also goes to FTGA and GCSAA conferences when they’re nearby and he is active in the local mechanic’s association.

Roy MacDonald
Golf Course Superintendent

CALUSA
MAPLE LEAF G&CC

We use a wide variety of training methods.

Internal Training: One-on-one training with manager or experienced crewmember, using the SVW videos and staff meetings. We also have safety training with our personnel management group, daily supervision of operators including guidance and advice. We also have hired a supplier’s technical rep to come in and teach a class.

External Training: Staff members attend UF/IFAS Extension classes and manufacturers’ seminars. The club reimburses employees for tuition for college classes, and registrations for FTGA and GCSAA conferences and shows and also monthly Calusa GCSA meetings.

My current assistant is planning to retire next spring. I have an irrigation tech who is an excellent candidate for advancement and is interested in becoming a superintendent. We are paying his tuition for the turf program at Edison College so that he will be well-trained to assume the assistant’s position in the spring.

Nancy Miller
Golf Course & Grounds
Superintendent

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