ROLLING MEADOWS, Ill. — The American Sod Producers Association has provided $21,000 to researchers at the universities of Florida, Maryland, Nebraska and Illinois. ASPA's Research Committee reviewed 24 projects from 19 researchers at 14 institutions before reaching its decision.

Grants went to Dr. P. Buzy of the University of Florida for his study on “High Impact Turf: Design Specification for Natural Sodded Parking Areas”; Dr. M.C. Carroll of the University of Maryland for his study entitled “ Sediment Capture by Materials Used To Line Construction Site Waters.”

Also, Dr. G.L. Horst of the University of Nebraska for research on “Water Use on Turfgrasses and Ground Covers in Conventional and Xeric Conditions” ; and Dr. H.T. Wilkinson of the University of Illinois for work on “An Integrated Biological Control Program To Reduce Fungicides Used for Control of Lawn Diseases.”

Funding for the grants came from the organization's general revenues and a $5,000 donation from Ciba-Geigy Turf and Ornamental Group.

By Peter Blais
College graduates have fewer superintendent job openings to select from than a year ago, although most should still find employment, according to faculty members at turf management schools.

“The job market isn't as good this year,” said Michigan State University Professor John 'Trey' Rogers. “There may be fewer openings because superintendents haven’t moved from course to course as much. Maybe employers are being more conservative. Or they were worried about the Gulf war and the economy. I’m not sure.

“But all our graduates should get jobs. Last year there were two openings for every student. This year it’s more like a one-to-one ratio.”

Texas A&M’s Richard Duble also noted fewer superintendents changing jobs throughout the South.

“I suspect it had something to do with all the winter kill last year,” the extension turfgrass specialist said. “Usually a superintendent loses his job if his greens die. But everyone’s greens died last year, so they didn’t blame the superintendent. If you fired the superintendent there was no one around to fix the greens.”

Lake City (Fla.) Community College Professor John Pierso noticed a drop-off in job openings, even in the country's

Grads' job market good, not great

Job openings for beginning assistant superintendents may be down, but not so for golf course mechanics, according to Lake City (Fla.) College Professor John Pierso.

“We’ve gotten calls from Arizona and South Dakota in the last week looking for mechanics. They’ve looked everywhere. They’re the chairman of the school’s Division of Golf Course Operations, which includes a one-year certificate program in equipment and shop operations for aspiring mechanics.

“We have just seven people graduating from the program this year. If we had 50 we could easily place them in jobs right away.”

And the pay isn’t bad. Lake City graduates start at $7 to $10 an hour and are usually in the $25,000–$35,000-per-year range with a couple of years, Pierso said. Pretty good for someone with a high school degree or GED and a one-year certificate.

So why aren’t students knocking down Lake City’s doors to get into the golf course mechanics program?

“High school students have never heard of the job,” Pierso said. “Students who become mechanics usually don’t play golf, so they don’t know what’s available. When they hear the title, they think about lawn mower and golf car repair.

“There’s a real misunderstanding of what golf course mechanics do. Guidance counselors think all they do is grease equipment. But that’s far from the truth.

“Golf course mechanics are often responsible for $200,000 or more in equipment. They’re not grease monkeys. They’re turf equipment managers. They set up shops, train people, develop preventive maintenance programs and work with computerized equipment.

“A properly trained head mechanic warrants $35,000 to $40,000 a year. He can save a course at least that much. Most superintendents will tell you the mechanic is their right-hand man.”

Lake City’s program is 18 years old. Four instructors handle the class work and have access to $500,000 of state-of-the-art turf equipment donated by golf industry suppliers.

“We will closely adhere to the GCSAA code of ethics,” the founder and president of Executive Golf Search, Inc.

The firm will deal primarily with superintendents but may eventually branch into the country’s.

In search of the perfect superintendent

Trent Jones joins with Faubel, Payne in new enterprise

By Peter Blais
Three of the best-known names in the golf course management business have formed a worldwide executive search firm for superintendents.

Architect Robert Trent Jones Sr., Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Immediate Past President Gerald Faubel and Michigan State University Professor Emeritus Ken Payne recently founded Executive Golf Search, Inc.

The firm will deal primarily with superintendents but may eventually branch into the course professional and general manager areas, Faubel said.

One of the company’s primary services will be helping courses define their needs regarding the type of superintendent they want. Conversations with club officials and follow-up questionnaires will be used to determine those needs, Faubel said.

Executive Golf Search will help clubs develop salary, benefit and educational packages while assisting in contract negotiations to help recruit the best superintendents available, Faubel said.

“Our goal is to meet and identify highly qualified individuals and attempt to reward them for their service to golf with the best possible jobs,” Faubel said. “We have some fantastic people in the golf course maintenance field who are ready to move on to clubs. Often, those clubs don’t realize how important the superintendent is, especially with the environmental situation today.

“We want to have an impact on the industry by having employers realize how important the superintendent is to their operations. It’s a win-win situation for everyone.”

The company is located at 669 Westchester, Saginaw, Mich. 48903.

See related story on page 42.

“Some superintendents are strong in construction and others in maintenance,” he added. “It’s important clubs recognize what is entailed in hiring a superintendent who can meet their needs regarding communications, technology and the environment.

“We’ve always felt a club first identified its needs before hiring a superintendent it would have greater success in keeping that individual.”

Faubel said the firm will stress placing GCSAA-certified superintendents.

“We will closely adhere to the GCSAA code of ethics,” the founder and president of Executive Golf Search told the Golf Course Superintendent Association of America.

Limited placement services are currently available for superintendents, according to Faubel. The GCSAA’s Employment Reference Service lists job openings and salaries.

least two other placement firms deal with golf industry personnel, Faubel said.

“But no one has the in-depth experience we do with superintendents,” Faubel said. “Other firms deal with architects, builders and club managers, too. We’ll be just superintendents for now.”

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