Nichols' reign begins, as GCSAA moves forward

By Peter Blais

Randy Nichols prefers to look at the overwhelming rejection of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America proposed bylaw changes in a positive light.

"I didn't see it as a negative. As far as I'm concerned the members were saying they are happy with the way we've done things so far, so why change," said the new GCSAA president.

That mindset should stand the head superintendent of Dunwoody, Ga.'s Cherokee Town & Country Club in good stead as he leads the association into a new year.

Incorporating those lofty ideals while modifying the proposals to make them more palatable to members is one of Nichols' priorities.

"Superintendents are conservative in nature. So am I. They want a slow, steady growth and didn't see the proposals providing that," he said.

Among Nichols' other priorities are moving forward on the superintendent mortality study seeking to determine if there are any links between long-term pesticide exposure and certain diseases, and collecting data on ground water contamination studies being conducted at many courses around the country.

The new GCSAA president expects the controversial field staffing program to be instituted on a regional trial basis later this year rather than the nationwide plan originally proposed.

He also looks for steady growth in Asia, where GCSAA opened a Singapore office last year and will conduct its first Pacific Rim Conference and Show in March.

Nichols said he looks forward to working with new board of directors chairman David Fears of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., and George Renault of Burning Tree Club in Bethesda, Md.

"I think they'll both do very well," Nichols said. "Dave has been involved with GCSAA a long time and has spoken often at the Club Managers Association of America's annual meeting. George has been very involved in the GCSAA, too."

As for the directors they unseated, Charles Passios and Joseph Hahn, Nichols said:

"I have the utmost respect for both of them. They felt passing the bylaws was important. They were sort of victimized by their support for them."

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