Internships a win-win situation for courses, students

By Mark Leslie

As turfgrass management becomes more technical and specialized, golf course superintendents are finding it increasingly important to have more knowledgeable crew members. And so they are pursuing agronomy students, offering positions on their crews in a win-win situation — the student intern gains experience and the superintendent gets a knowledgeable employee.

"Having a dependable core of folks who are going to understand more in-depth what turf maintenance is about, and what golfers want, is an asset," said Bob Brame, agronomist with the U.S. Golf Association's Mid-Atlantic Section.

"That's a perfect formulation."

Brame said that most of his interns from "top-notch programs like Michigan, Iowa and Ohio State," Medinah (Ill.) Country Club superintendent Danny Quast said: "They already have four or five years working on a golf course. All the basic training has been done. Plus they come with a great attitude and they're excited about the job, conscientious, educated and experienced. That's a perfect formulation."

"We not only have the facilities to house people, which I think is key. We're making internships very valued positions instead of lower-rungs," said Greenwich (Conn.) Country Club-superintendent Greg Wojick.

"We're looking for the top one percent of students, enticing them with top pay, living quarters, bonus potential and responsibilities that are not typical for an intern."

Those responsibilities include pest monitoring and scouting, chemical applications, and manpower recordkeeping, inventory control, a full range of technical training, irrigation scheduling and other administrative duties.

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Family pulls together

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small landing areas add to the course's appearance and playability," said Bobby. "It did and does cost a little more money to function and meet regulations," Bobby said. "But it's better than getting a $1,500 to $10,000 fine for not complying."

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