Three out of four superintendents say job has become more challenging

To quantify current career conditions for superintendents, Golf Course News commissioned an independent online survey of 4,000 readers in December 2003. The survey generated a 13.7 percent response. Three out of four superintendents say their jobs have become more difficult because of a combination of slumping course revenue, budget pressure and ever-increasing golfer expectations. Following are key questions and responses from the survey:

1. Compared to three to five years ago, has your job become more challenging or less challenging?
   - More challenging: 73%
   - Less challenging: 2%
   - No response: 25%

Reasons why the job has become more challenging (specific responses):
- Increasing golfer expectations: 20%
- Tighter budgets: 19%
- Rounds down/greater competition for revenue: 16%
- Slump in the overall economy: 11%
- Job title/increasing responsibilities: 10%
- Course maintenance problems: 6%
- Labor shortages/issues: 5%
- More regulation/environmental issues: 4%
- Other: 9%

Reasons why the job has become less challenging (specific single responses):
- New course ownership: 4%
- Dealing with employees better: 96%
- Better tools and equipment: 43%
- Learning more: 52%
- More money in the budget: 43%

2. How secure do you feel your present position is?
   - Very secure: 41%
   - Not secure: 40%
   - Somewhat secure: 11%
   - Not sure: 7%
   - No answer: 1%

3. As a superintendent have you ever been terminated or quit for budgetary, technical performance or personality/political reasons?
   - No: 63%
   - Yes: 37%

Main reasons for "yes" responses:
- Personality/political: 23%
- Budget: 7%
- Technical performance: 2%
- Other: 11%

*Course bankruptcies, taking new jobs, promotions, etc.

4. Has a close friend who was a superintendent ever been terminated or left a position for technical performance, budgetary, personality/political reasons, or to take a job outside of golf?
   - No: 4%
   - Yes: 96%

Main reasons for "yes" responses (Note: multiple responses allow total to exceed 100%):
- Personality/political: 83%
- Technical performance: 70%
- Take job outside golf: 52%
- Budget: 43%

5. Did your formal training to be a superintendent prepare you adequately in terms of people skills?
   - Yes: 51%
   - No: 46%
   - No response: 3%

6. How long have you been working in your current job as a superintendent or assistant superintendent?
   - Average: 8 years

7. How many years have you been working in the golf industry?
   - Average: 19.5 years