



John Walsh
Editor

A helping hand

Good will. The industry has a lot of it. One of the unique aspects about the golf course management industry is the comradery among golf course superintendents and the brotherhood that exists among them. It's a friendliness among competitors that I haven't seen in other businesses.

Superintendents continuously use better products, methods and technologies to manage turf and their staffs better, as well as meet golfers' expectations through the conditions of the courses they maintain. When someone finds something that works better or finds a better way to do something, he's not shy about telling other superintendents what's working for him or what isn't. And there seems to be few trade secrets. Most golf course superintendents want their fellow professionals to excel at their jobs and advance within the industry.

Another example of this brotherhood is when superintendents give each other a helping hand when someone hosts a major tournament. With millions of people watching and thousands visiting a course for such a tournament, the superintendent wants the course to shine. Other superintendents want the course to shine, too. That's why there are many superintendents and assistant superintendents from throughout the country that come to the course that's hosting the tournament to volunteer their time and efforts to help a fellow superintendent. Many superintendents work behind the scenes to give one superintendent the limelight as professional golfers praise the conditions of such a well-maintained course. That's not selfish.

Recently, late this summer and early fall, there was another example of superintendents' care for each other after many well-maintained courses in Florida took a beating from Mother Nature. Four hurricanes – Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne – tore through Florida and wreaked havoc, damaging some of the country's most beautiful golf courses.

There are about 1,300 courses in the Sunshine State – the most golf courses per state, according to the National Golf Foundation – and 350 to 400 of them were damaged from the hurricanes. There have been estimates as much as \$30 billion worth of overall damage in Florida. The cost of cleanup for some courses is

between \$800,000 and \$1.1 billion. Mother Nature can be vicious, but who thought like this. Not only has she put a hurt on the physical conditions of these courses, but she's also put a clamp on their revenue streams. The negative affects of the damage will last for the rest of the year and into next year for some of these courses. Owners must wonder when they're going to wake up from this horrible nightmare.

Jeff Parsons, general manager of the Diamondback Golf Club in Haines City, estimates the hurricanes took out about 1,000 trees on the course and the cost to clean up and repair all the damage will be about \$250,000 in machine and labor costs. Parsons expects the cleanup to take about a year. To help with the cleanup, Diamondback received help from members of a golf course maintenance crew in Georgia.

Randy Waldron, superintendent at the Golf Club of Georgia in Alpharetta, heard about golf courses sustaining hurricane damage in Florida and wanted to do something to help. So he contacted a friend, ChampionsGate Country Club superintendent Bobby Ellis, to see what he could do. Ellis referred him to Parsons, and Waldron sent one of his assistants, Steve Sisson, and some equipment to Diamondback.

Because Waldron and some of his staff are from Florida, they wanted to help out, especially a course that didn't have a big budget. The course maintenance staff at the Golf Club of Georgia convinced a local supplier to donate a chain saw for Sisson to take with him, and the staff collected about \$300 to pass along to Diamondback's maintenance staff. Sisson helped out at Diamondback for a week while he was being paid by the Golf Club of Georgia.

Now that's lending a helping hand.

This is just one example of superintendents helping fellow superintendents during a crisis. I'm sure there are plenty more. But in this day and age of superintendents having to do more with less, it's nice to know they're willing to give other superintendents a helping hand at no cost and even chip in out of their own pockets. It all goes back to brotherhood.

Superintendents are lucky and should be thankful they're in an industry that's so helpful and kind. Many other industries, because of competition and budget pressures, are much more vicious – kind of like, well ... Mother Nature at times. GCN

GOLF

COURSE NEWS

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management

Vol. 16 No. 6

Editorial Offices:

GIE Media, Inc.
4012 Bridge Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: (216) 961-4130
Fax: (216) 961-0364

John Walsh
Editor
E-mail: jwalsh@giemedia.com

Lauren Spiers
Associate Editor
E-mail: lspiers@giemedia.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Butch Horn
E-mail: ahorn@charter.net

Kevin Ross, CGCS
E-mail: kjross@vail.net

David Wolff
E-mail: dgwolff@charter.net

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Terry Buchen, CGCS
Golf Agronomy International

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo

Kevin Downing, CGCS
Willoughby Golf Club

Tim Hiers, CGCS
The Old Collier Golf Club

Lawrence Hirsh
Golf Property Analysts

Ted Horton, CGCS
Ted Horton Consulting

Dr. Michael Hurdzan
Hurdzan, Fry Golf Course Design

Mary P. Knaggs
Bass Rocks Golf Club

Kevin Ross, CGCS
Country Club of the Rockies

Matt Rostal, CGCS
Interlachen Country Club

Steve Thomas
Pelican Hill Golf Club

WEB/INTERNET
www.golfcoursenews.com

Golf Course News is published six times per year by GIE Media, Inc., which also publishes: *Lawn & Landscape*, *Commercial Dealer*, *Interior Business*, *Snow Business*, *Pest Control Technology* and *Recycling Today* magazines. GIE Media is a leader in custom publishing, book publishing, database marketing, conferences and special events.