

R.I.S.E. UP AND BE HEARD

By PAUL DIEGNAU, CGCS
Keller Golf Course

I know many of you recently attended the March Mini-Seminar held at the Minnesota Valley Country Club. Hopefully some good information was gleaned by all in attendance and maybe even a few eyes were opened. In all honesty, I was a little disappointed in the turnout and by the lack of GC Superintendents in attendance.

Considering that pesticides are one of our major "tools of the trade" and they are facing increasing pressure from the environmental extremist movement, I thought the topic would hold more relevance for our membership.

One of the take-away messages from this event was stand up and be counted. You may think your voice won't be heard, but it will! Case in point - 14 Minnesota Superintendents made it a point to write comments in favor of retaining PCNB usage on turfgrass on the U.S. EPA website. Hats off to each and every one of you! A recent conversation with one of my sales reps in late March revealed that AMVAC (a major manufacturer of PCNB) believes EPA will now, due to those efforts, re-register PCNB for snow mold protection on turf. Whether or not that proves to be true remains to be seen. I am sure the future holds many more battles of a similar nature.

At the March seminar the opening speaker was Stacey Pine, the national grassroots manager for R.I.S.E. (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) ®. R.I.S.E. is a national not-for-profit trade association that serves as a resource and advocate on pesticides and fertilizers, provides current and accurate information on issues and research, promotes the safe and responsible use of specialty pesticides and fertilizers, and monitors legislative and regulatory issues at the state and federal level. Ms. Pine's message boiled down to this - we must engage our local and state representatives one-on-one regarding the safety, the benefits and the necessity of the pesticide products we use in our industry. The current atmosphere is favoring the aggressive, target local government approach by the anti-pesticide movement within this country and elsewhere. Our neighbors to the north currently have 123 local communities with

total pesticide bans!

On April 5 of this year I received an e-blast from Stacey at R.I.S.E. pointing out a disturbing, but almost inevitable development in the state of Minnesota. The city of Northfield has adopted a ban on all synthetic pesticides used on city-owned property to be phased in over six years. Ms. Pine says this movement to implement OPM's (Organic Pest Management) at the local level is gaining considerable momentum and has serious industry-wide ramifications. She goes on to state, "...if a local municipality adopts an OPM for government facilities and property, it provides a much stronger case for bans and regulations on pesticides and fertilizers used on private property by homeowners and commercial applicators since the government is only asking its citizens to engage in the same practices as it has done to 'protect the environment for all its citizens.'" Copies of the Northfield OPM document and comments regarding the document by the Vice Chair of the City of Northfield Environmental Quality Commission are available for your viewing at www.mgcsa.org.

Please be aware that R.I.S.E. has an abundance of resources available to assist in countering the anti-pesticide/fertilizer movement. Available resources include:

- ~ Step-by-step guidelines for meeting with elected officials;
- ~ Talking points for those wishing to meet with elected officials;
- ~ PR development and publishing assistance for specific group initiatives including brochures, press releases, etc. A sample brochure produced by R.I.S.E. for the Environmental Industry Coalition in Connecticut on the benefits of turfgrass athletic fields is also available for viewing on the MGCSA website. Even though R.I.S.E. assisted with the brochure development and paid the printing costs, only the EIC logo is found on the brochure;
- ~ Advocacy and /or media training in Minnesota.

If you are interested in obtaining any of these publications or training or you have additional questions, Stacey can be contacted at: Stacey L. Pine, Director State & Local Affairs, Manager RISE Grassroots Affairs, DC Legislative & Regulatory

Services, Inc., 1156 15th Street, NW; Suite 525, Washington, DC 20005 or call her at (202) 872-8440, fax (202) 872-8808, spine@dclrs.com or visit www.dclrs.com

Keep your eyes and ears open throughout the towns, cities and communities of Minnesota. Spread the news of new initiatives and environmentalist activities and share this information with R.I.S.E., your colleagues and industry leaders. But more importantly, engage your elected officials at the state and local levels and provide them with real facts. Together in a united front we can retain pesticides as one of the tools of our trade. To quote Ms. Pine: **"DON'T LET THE ACTIVIST VOICES BE THE ONLY ONES HEARD BY ELECTED OFFICIALS!!"**

Twin Cities Area Waste Pesticide Collection

Waste pesticide collection is available on Monday, June 11 between 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the South Hennepin Recycling and Problem Waste Drop-Off Center in Bloomington.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:

Participants must have a business address or county residency in Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey or Scott Counties.

The collection is open to:

- ~ Commercial applicators
- ~ Non-commercial applicators
- ~ Golf courses
- ~ Nurseries
- ~ Pesticide dealers
- ~ Structural applicators
- ~ Tree companies

A maximum of 300 pounds of waste pesticide is allowed

Participants need to pre-register the Waste Pesticides that they will be bringing to the collection. Waste Pesticide Registration forms are available in pdf format below.

Pesticides only!

NOT ACCEPTED: surfactants, crop oils, adjuvants, tank cleaners, dye markers and empty pesticide containers.