



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Give Yourself a Pat on the Back

By Richard A. (Rick) Traver, CGCS

Recently I have had a couple of opportunities to hear Tom Ryan explain the Economic Impact Study for Minnesota golf that the MGA had compiled in 2007. During the first of these opportunities, there were a few spots of interest generated for me, but the second time I heard him speak, many other issues started to stir my synaptic responses.

Since many of you have not had the opportunity to listen to or read this report, I will throw a few tidbits in your direction; however, I encourage you to go to the MGA website or the latest edition of *Minnesota Golfer* and read the report.

In that report are a number of positive informational tidbits about the golf industry in Minnesota, such as the fact that golf contributes \$2.4 billion to the state's economy. That there are 508 golf courses in Minnesota of

which 90% are public, and that Minnesota is the only state to have hosted all 13 USGA national championships. One item that really caught my attention was that among visiting golfers, Minnesota ranks third highest in golf destinations behind Florida, and Arizona. (In the report it has us ranked fourth, but after further review Tom Ryan clarified that to third.)

So my recommendation to the members of the MGCSA is to give yourselves a pat on the back. To be ranked third when we have only six quality months to play golf tells me that we are doing an excellent job of building and maintaining quality golf courses. I have always said and

still believe, that Minnesota and our surrounding states have some of the best golf course superintendents managing turf under some of the worst conditions.

All the information gathered in this study will help our industry on several levels, but primarily when dealing with the state legislature. At the risk of upsetting a politician or two, it seems that every political season the local legislature finds something to get our membership stirring or make our jobs a little more difficult. The most recent of those was the surcharge on irrigation water. As we learned at our last Mini Seminar, irrigation water has become the new hot topic on the political agenda, and more regulation is being sought by several different state agencies. This could lead some superintendents to make dramatic changes in how they manage their turf. The MGCSA will be working with the MTGF and affiliates, to develop a Best Management Practices program for irrigation water. By putting together a BMP and using it in conjunction with the information from the MGA and the Economic Impact Study from the MTGF, which includes all turf industries, we will be able to show the legislature that our industry is on top of conservation and no additional controls are necessary. Hopefully they will take the information to heart.

Since the season is finally underway, I hope you have all had a great start and I will see you next month.

-Rick



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