



Engage In 2009

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As the "new awakening" looms in our immediate future, I sit back and speculate what is in store for our industry. I hear names like Gore and Kennedy thrown about as possible heirs to the throne of the EPA. Regardless of who gets the nod, I think we, as an industry, must engage the political process NOW rather than later. Your voice can and will make a difference in determining the level of regulation laid on our doorstep. Now is the time to post the names and numbers to your local, state and federal representatives by your phone and use them. E-mails are also effective in making your opinions known. I am afraid that if we fail to engage the process we will see regulation in the turfgrass industry, the likes we have never seen before. Separate yourself from apathy, stand up, and be counted!

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As the 2009 Green Expo draws near, make plans to attend January 7-9. For a very reasonable price, you and your staff can experience the latest and greatest in education and products, not to mention the networking and socializing opportunities. Some of the speakers include Dr. Bruce Martin, Clemson University, who will discuss Rhizoctonia and Pythium pathogens as well as designing disease control programs for bentgrass greens. Dr. Shawn Askew, Virginia Tech, will cover Tenacity use on the golf course and controlling Poa seedheads. MN OSHA will discuss compliance issues in our maintenance shops and Herb Stevens, "The Skiing Weatherman," will provide you with the facts that the mainstream media doesn't tell you regarding global warming/climate change. Keith Radel will teach you all you need to know to join the ranks of the successful bluebirders and Charlie Fultz, former 13-year GCS, will share an innovative method for improving operational efficiency using input from your staff. These are just a few of the educational opportunities offered this year. I hope to see you there!

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I try not to be a shill for TurfNet.com but, in all honesty, it is some of the best budget money I spend annually. In addition

to the highly informative forum/discussion board with participants from across the U.S. and beyond, constantly updated interviews from the movers and shakers in the golf industry, Turfnet now offers free educational webinars to its members. In the past six weeks, I have participated in live presentations by Dr. Frank Rossi, Kevin Ross, CGCS, Dr. Fred Ylverton and Dr. Roch Gaussoin on topics

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such as late-season fertility, dormant seeding, what I learned this past year, new herbicide technology and preparing for winter. Not only do you get access to the latest research and findings from well-known experts but educational CEU's are offered as well. These real-time educational offerings are also archived for viewing at a later date. Check out Turfnet.com and see if sitting at your office desk earning CEU's while acquiring the latest industry research and information makes sense for you.

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Do not forget to mark March 10 on your calendars for the 2009 March Mini-Seminar to be held at The Wilds Golf Club. Spend a full day with the highly controversial, outspoken and entertaining Dr. Frank Rossi from Cornell University. As an added benefit, breakfast will be served prior to the seminar.

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Below is part of a letter my Golf Professional recently received from *Golf Digest Magazine* regarding their annual "America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses and Best Courses in each State" ranking. Ron Whitten, Senior Editor, wrote the letter. It appears that *Golf Digest* is taking a big step in combating the "Augusta Syndrome" on a national level. Check this out:

"As Architecture Editor, I coordinate

Golf Digest's survey of America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses and Best Courses in Each State. As Keller Golf Course is a candidate for consideration for our 2009 rankings, I thought you should know about a major change in one of the seven criteria used in our course evaluations.

"Earlier this year, we redefined our conditioning category. The old definition read: 'How would you rate the playing quality of the tees, fairways and greens on the date you last played the course?'

"The new definition reads: 'How firm, fast and rolling were the fairways and how firm yet receptive were the greens on the day you played the course.'

"Our new definition takes the position that dry, firm turf provides the best condition for playing golf. Our new definition is

intended to encourage water conservation, by rewarding courses that don't overwater fairways and greens. It is also intended to reward courses with adequate drainage that allow fairways and greens to be playable in a reasonable time after major rainstorms. Since our new definition has nothing to do with the color green, it is meant to encourage clubs to forego winter overseeding if possible. While recognizing some high volume winter courses need to overseed to avoid fairway divots, we feel dormant turf can often provide good, firm playing conditions, so our definition rewards courses that avoid purely cosmetic overseeding.

"Note that our definition does not mention rough or bunkers. Those are hazards in which no golfer should expect optimum lies. Note, too, that, unlike the old definition, our new definition does not mention tee boxes. In the past, many panelists scored a course lower if its tee boxes were full of divots. Our editorial position has always been that golfers, not clubs, should replace or fill divots, so it was unfair to penalize a course for the thoughtlessness of its patrons. (Likewise, the old emphasis on tees unfairly rewarded courses that received light play and therefore had flawless tee boxes.)"

How refreshing is that? Hats off to *Golf Digest!*