

On Board: Q & A with a member of your BOD

How are the increases in fuel costs effecting your operations?

Jake Schmitz, Superintendent at Olympic Hills Golf Club



We currently utilize Yocum Oil for our gasoline and diesel needs. In 2010, Yocum rolled out contract pricing on both gas and diesel, where they allowed us to lock in at a set price for the quantity we desired. In 2012, contract pricing was not available for gasoline due to high volatility in the markets; however, this service was offered for diesel, and we locked in at a set price for the quantity we will consume. This has worked well from a budgetary standpoint. In 2010, this strategy was very beneficial financially. In 2011, this same strategy cost us a few dollars - the price of fuel was lower than the contract price. This is the risk of purchasing contract fuel.

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On Board: continued.

Jake Schmitz continues...

Battery operated machinery, along with natural gas powered vehicles, will more than likely be a reality in the not too distant future. It will be very interesting to view the impact that national drilling has on the price of oil. National production with less reliance on foreign oil is definitely a positive, yet it does not address the issue of oil being a non-renewable resource. Fuel costs definitely make one callous to how much is truly being spent to power vehicles. In 1997, when I was filling my Honda Accord



at \$0.94 / gallon, I would have never entertained the idea of paying close to \$4.00 / gallon. I guess we make due and become accustomed to the changes. Will we ever see \$3.00 gas again? I highly doubt it. While greed plays a prominent role in fuel pricing, Americans will continue to pay for the benefits of having their own set of wheels. Likewise, golfers will continue to expect grass that is mowed and a golf course that is tidy. The rest comes down to smoke and mirrors... where can we shave costs without sacrificing quality.

our operations and budgets. With superintendents already being asked to cut budgets, this is another hurdle for them to overcome. Every superintendent looks at it in a different way and each develops a

How are the increases in fuel costs effecting your operations? **Bill Gullicks Superintendent Bellwood Oaks Golf Club.**

Over the last couple of years fuel prices have definitely affected

game plan on how they can address the issue to keep their facility operating to the clubs standards.

A few years ago when fuel prices were on the rise we researched locking in fuel prices for the season. It seemed to be the thing everyone was doing at the time. We found pricing we were comfortable with and decided to lock in. It ended up being a good move for us as we saved a considerable amount of money. The following year we did the same

and thought we had locked at a good price, but ended up getting burned. It's a difficult position to be in when you're rolling the dice with the clubs money. The last two years we have been purchasing fuel at the current price levels, as there have not been the extreme ups and downs in fuel pricing.

Due to fuel prices we have also looked into labor as it relates to equipment operations. Labor directly relates in a lot of ways to fuel use. We have looked closely at our mowing schedules, patterns and routing. One example of this would be our fairway mowing. From three years ago until now we have cut our mowing time

by 18%, which means 18% less: fuel, hours spent on equipment and labor. This was achieved by changing mowing patterns and routing which mower mows certain holes.

I feel the days of \$2 something gas is in our rear view mirror. It's not very often something goes up in price and then returns to the original price. We need to accept our fate and look for ways to become more efficient in our use of fuel. Whether it is in the way we maintain our golf courses or the choices we make when purchasing new equipment. As with any other part of our budgets it all goes back to watching the bottom line.

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