

(Keeping Pace continued)

an acre per hour; vehicles dedicated solely to turf spraying, with application rates controlled by computer; water injection aerifiers; rotary mowers that can mow fifteen foot swaths and still maintain their trimability. We now have automated feed reel grinding equipment that really transforms the mechanic into a machining technician. It is not uncommon for the superintendent of today to rely on a computer in his office to perform tasks that range from controlling the irrigation system, to creating budget reports, to reminding him when to reorder gasoline.

Our friend who was on the edge of his profession with his roller base sprinklers would gasp at the complexity of our business in the nineties. It seems like we have come so far, and we have. But what lies ahead? It is expected that advances in computer chip technology will explode in the nineties and spill into all areas of our lives like never before.

How will this effect the greens industry? We cannot be sure. But we can be sure of one thing. The greens superintendent that monitors the changes and adjusts accordingly will be in position to capitalize on these changes and use them to his advantage. That is his challenge. The superintendent who does not, must be forever contented with his "circle of green."

Legislators Explore Local Nurseries

by Richard Theidel, Hinsdale Nurseries, Inc.

More than 50 Illinois legislators and agriculture and nursery professionals recently embarked on a tour to explore issues facing plant-and crop-producing operations.

Lawmakers and growers visited three sites on September 14, including Hinsdale Nurseries' Yorkville Farm field nursery. Visitors received an overview of the 425-acre facility's propagation, growing, irrigation and harvesting operations.

"In a sense, we can be considered farmers," Hinsdale Nursery General Manager Ken Doty told the tour participants. "We work with and have a love for the soil just as a farmer does."

Growing 182 varieties of trees, shrubs and evergreens on one of Illinois' oldest nurseries requires a multi-year investment of time and money. Doty said, explaining that some trees take 10 years to reach salability. "We're trying to predict far down the road what our market's going to be," he said. "This is not a short-term business."

Environmental issues have affected the green industry as well as food-growing operations, Doty told the crowd, who earlier on the tour visited an agri-chemical facility and a production farm. "We have to comply with the myriad of federal and state regulations like all other growing trades," he said.

"From a legislator's standpoint, the tour was extremely insightful and worthwhile" said State Representative Tom Cross (R-84th), one of a dozen lawmakers who participated in the tour. "It was good to actually go out to a site to see the issues and concerns every nursery operator encounters."

State Representative Brent Hassert (R-83rd) agreed the tour was eye-opening. "I don't think many of the legislators realized how much goes into producing plant material."

The tour was sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Nurserymen's Association, Growmark Inc. and American Cyanamid Co.

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