

A Real Success Story: The Sunset Ridge Plan

Carl Hoppman
Retired Superintendent

Having to search through the daily newspaper a full six or eight pages before you get past all the bad in the world gets pretty old as well as demoralizing. Better yet, read and absorb the following story that has a most pleasant ring to it. Herein is a situation story that warrants strong consideration, one that must be recognized as No.1 on the "Do List."

This is a simple involvement of one golf course green chairman, one golf professional and a golf course superintendent. The plot is short, yet big-time dynamic. Two of the three were speakers at a past CDGA Green Seminar. Their presentation on cooperation and communication between key staff golf course department heads was outstanding; but more importantly, the

audience reaction and the general atmosphere of the entire event really impressed them. On the drive home, a discussion occurred pertaining to how great the morning talks were and how could they help or return the favor. The superintendent responded with, "How about a contribution from our club to support our own Illinois Turfgrass Foundation?" For the past four years, this club billed every member \$5 on their August club statement. This charge was not mandatory, and only a slight few refused to cooperate. Take a good look at this situation; it's a rather simple, effortless, yet terribly rewarding thing to do. Dennis Wilson and the people at the Sunset Ridge Country Club have started a truly great thing, one that reaps a high rate of return.

The turf program and turfgrass research in the state of Illinois, with the addition of Bruce

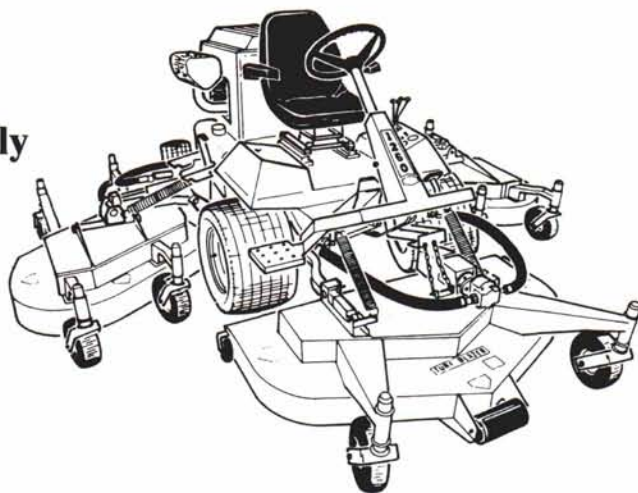
Branham, has turned the corner and is heading uphill toward bigger and better things. The ITF Board of Directors represents the most enthusiastic, knowledgeable and sincere group of people that are uniformly driven to make Illinois turfgrass the very finest. I will attest to the fact that this group will never stop as long as there is room for improvement.

We must understand fully that funding for turfgrass research in Illinois has taken a terrible slashing. Not too many years ago, dollars were available from federal as well as state grants. This has disappeared; for what reasons, it doesn't really matter. Fact is, it's gone; and if the turf industry wishes to be one of the best, we must all pull together, generate funding on our own so that our research scientists become leaders in establishing the very best.

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I Feel Fortunate

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4. For the impressive list of Environmental Steward Awards garnered by the members of the MAGCS. My thought is that this can only encourage others to elevate their standards and motivate them/us toward this level of excellence.

Maybe others feel as fortunate as I. It is easy to see why when we take the time to analyze our profession and all the good things it has to offer us and our communities. Our president, Ed Braunsky, had an interesting spin on our profession: "Golf course superintendents are one big fraternity." I personally feel we are bonded to the common goal of providing a golf facility that is pleasant to view and play, challenging, environmentally friendly and relaxing. ■

The Sunset Ridge Plan

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What a great way to prove to the public that golf course superintendents are part and parcel of a CLASS profession. How about this for a great headline as 1997 draws to a close: Forty Chicago Area Clubs Have Now Joined the Sunset Ridge Plan!!!

We have some of the finest turf and turfgrass managers in the nation. Illinois needs to lead the nation in turfgrass support for its university programs. As Director of Development for the ITF, I am charged with building a bigger support base for our universities so they can support your industry. I am developing new approaches and ideas for achieving levels of support never before realized in Illinois. I would like to discuss these programs with you, get your ideas and encourage you to join in with me. Insuring the future strength of the Illinois turfgrass industry is the responsibility of all of us. ■

Fred Behnke -N- Mt. Prospect Golf Club

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states, "I love this job, everyday! There is nothing greater than to be on the golf course at dawn and see the sun rise to begin a new day." I think we all agree.

Come on out on the 21st and see the manifestation of one man's love for his job. Remember to come and tread lightly, for steel spikes are no longer allowed at any MAGCS golf event. ■

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