

How to Create an Equipment Replacement Program

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Editor's Note: Mike wrote this article during his recent tenure at Ravisloe C.C. Ravisloe's new superintendent is Ed Esgar.

How many of you have ever been asked, "What do you do during the winter?" Between a few of those much-needed breaks, this is the time we prepare and plan for the upcoming season and beyond. Here at Ravisloe Country Club, we are in the second year of a 10-year equipment replacement program. For those of you who have undertaken a similar program, this is the time to update the records on, and conditions of, the current inventory. For those of you who do not have a replacement program in place, this will be an overview of how I put my 10-year program together.

The first step is to write a letter informing the Green Committee of your equipment review and recommendations for replacement. Include your capital expenditures from the last five years or so to give committee members an idea of what you are dealing with. Ravisloe's previous five years' expenditures were a real eye-opener for the Green Committee as they realized that average dollars spent on capital equipment was \$11,750! Explain to committee members that a good replacement program will cut into such costs as labor and repairs.

From here, you should start planning what kind of report you will put together to present to the

Green Committee. At Ravisloe, I compiled a report that contained the following:

- **Equipment Inventory**—Obviously, several reasons to have an inventory exist, but in this case you will be able to determine and prioritize your equipment needs. List every piece of equipment your course has, as well as its year of make, model number, serial number, condition and any comments associated with it. Update the condition of the piece and any comments every year. Also, make sure that you add or delete equipment from the list appropriately.
- **USGA Sample Equipment Inventory**—I made a phone call to the USGA and had them send me a sample of a typical golf course equipment inventory. This allowed the members to have the ability to compare
- **Ravisloe Equipment Description**—In this section, I identified Ravisloe's most utilized pieces of equipment and gave each of them a brief description, history and replacement cost. I also included a color photograph of each piece so that the Green Committee members could actually visualize and therefore, better understand what was being described.
- **Capital Budget Survey**—I called nearly 20 other private clubs that were similar to Ravisloe or familiar to its members. I listed those clubs and their operations budgets for the year, their previous three-year average for capital equipment expenditures and their previous three-year

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average for capital improvement expenditures. This was another eye-opener for some of the committee members.

- **Ravisloe Expenditures**—I dug into my files and put together a list of our expenditures over the last 10 years. This was more than just a figure for a particular year. I listed everything individually, to illustrate exactly what was being spent on capital.
- **Future Equipment Requirements**—I organized this section in the same manner as the section featuring descriptions of Ravisloe's equipment. I listed pieces of equipment that would be needed in the near future. I described each piece, listed its purpose and cost and made some comments on how it would be utilized to make our operation more efficient. I included color photographs in this section, too. By the way, you can find such pictures in the equipment brochures readily obtained from any of our commercial representatives.
- **Equipment Replacement Program**—I developed a 10-year replacement schedule for Ravisloe. I simply determined our immediate needs and planned from there. Because of our lack of expenditures during the past five years, the numbers projected for the first couple years on the new schedule were fairly high, but the numbers tapered off after that. For the most part, the schedule received approval and the membership has been good about following through with it.
- **Articles on Equipment Replacement**—I included articles from various maga-

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zines that discussed how important a good equipment replacement program is. I attached these articles to provide me with backup support.

My experience bears out that equipment evaluation requires a joint effort from the superintendent, assistant superintendent and equipment technician. Don't be afraid to supply your Green Committee with too much information. If your report is professionally done, the members are more likely to respect and understand the information you are providing. As a matter of fact, our finished report constituted approximately 130 pages of information compiled into a 1" binder. The members appreciated our work and effort. If anyone would like to see a copy, please don't hesitate to contact me or Ed Esgar.



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