

North Central Turfgrass Exposition (NCTE) Celebrates Its 19th Year As “Must-Attend” Event For Superintendents



Marking its 19th year as the foremost turfgrass conference and exposition in the Midwest, the NCTE will be held again the week after Thanksgiving on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 3-4 at the Pheasant Run Conference and Mega Center, St. Charles, IL.

Traditionally, the NCTE attracts more than 1,500 turf professionals. Golf course superintendents lead the list, in addition to an ever-growing number of landscape contractors, lawn-care operators, sports-turf managers, municipal and park personnel.

This year's event will feature 32 seminars and 11 workshops that will earn GCSAA continuing education credit for full-registration attendees.

The annual ITF awards luncheon will be a dinner this year on Tuesday evening, December 3. One of the highlights of the evening will be a multimedia presentation on the progress of the “living turfgrass laboratory” and three-hole course established at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

In addition to a strong educational program, this year's exposition will again offer trade-show attendees the opportunity to see and visit with the leading manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of turfgrass equipment, supplies and services.

The 40,000-square-foot Pheasant Run Mega Center affords exhibitors a well-lighted, fully carpeted and column-free show floor. The easy-in and easy-out facilities make the NCTE an ideal choice for companies wishing to reach decision-makers in the green industry market. Exhibitors consistently comment that they find the NCTE an ideal venue to meet with key customers and prospective customers to discuss their needs, write significant new orders

and schedule follow-up appointments for the upcoming season.

A Little History

An annual conference for turfgrass professionals has been cosponsored by the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) since the early 1960s. Until 1980, the Illinois Turfgrass Conference was held on the University of Illinois campus in Champaign-Urbana, IL. This was generally one to one-and-a-half days of educational seminars without a trade show.

In 1980, the conference was moved to Springfield, IL and a small trade show was added. The conference was again held in Springfield in 1981 with a moderate drop in attendance, but with a similar trade show and revenue generation. Attendance by turfgrass professionals was similar for both years to that experienced in Champaign-Urbana.

After the 1981 conference, a number of trade-show vendors discussed with Dr. Tom Fermanian the overlap in timing and audiences among a number of state turfgrass meetings. He suggested that if many of these meetings could be organized into a regional conference, it would attract greater attendance from both turf professionals and vendors. This concept established the North Central Turfgrass Exposition (NCTE), which replaced the Illinois Turfgrass Conference.

The NCTE was first held in November 1982 at the Arlington Heights Hilton Hotel, Arlington Heights, IL. As an umbrella organization, it became the site for simultaneous meetings of six organizations. The ITF, Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, Central Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association,

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The NCTE trade show floor.

Northwest Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association, Illinois Lawncare Applicators Association and the USGA Green Section held their annual meeting over the two-and-a-half-day period. It was felt that this organization would allow for the sharing of speakers and economize on the time required for conference organization. Since only the Illinois Turfgrass Conference had previously included a trade show, it was also an opportunity for the other organizations to partake of this component.

The 1982 NCTE was very successful in increasing both attendance and overall revenue for the ITF. The NCTE was held in the Chicagoland area for the following two years with increased attendance and revenue each year. There was, however, increasing desire from turf professionals in the southern half of the state to again hold the NCTE in a more central location. In 1985, the NCTE moved to Peoria with increased revenue but a drop in attendance. It was decided to generally hold the NCTE in a northern Illinois location, but to move it to a central Illinois location once every five years.

Attendance and revenue rose dramatically as the NCTE returned to the Chicagoland area. In 1987, the conference was moved to the Pheasant Run Convention Center in St. Charles, IL, where it is still currently held each year. The NCTE did return to Springfield at the Prairieland Con-



Pheasant Run offers an easy-in, easy-out show floor for NCTE exhibitors.

vention Center in 1990. With a drop in attendance, it was decided to return to Pheasant Run, where it has been held ever since.


Beginning in 1986, many of the organizations that cosponsored the NCTE felt they were losing their identity in the large joint exposition. Today, all of the founding organizations hold their own annual educational meetings, but still generously support the NCTE.

The ITF has renewed its contract with Pheasant Run for an additional three years following this year's event. Attendees can look forward to marking their calendars for 2003, 2004 and 2005 as the NCTE continues to take place the week after the Thanksgiving holiday. Pheasant Run has invested in a long-term program of facilities remodeling including both hotel and meeting rooms.

The NCTE Conference and Trade Show committees meet each

spring to begin making plans for speakers and topics for the next event. If you are interested in becoming a member of one these important ITF committees, contact Jack Lagerhausen, ITF executive director, for more information.

NCTE is the major revenue-producing source for ITF's program of funding its eight turfgrass research scientists at the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University. The Foundation's level of research support for 2002 is anticipated to be more than \$130,000.

Your attendance and support of the NCTE is vital to the ITF's continuing commitment to financially support turfgrass research and education in Illinois. 



Historically, the NCTE's calling card has been its consistently outstanding education offering for the region's golf course superintendents and other green industry professionals.