



# A Mission with Vision

*On December 9, 2004, your new Board of Directors met officially for the first time to discuss some issues very important for the future of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. First, a warm welcome to our two newest directors, Jay Druhan of Palos Hills Municipal Golf Course and Todd Schmitz of Phillips Park Golf Course, and our new commercial advisor, Sharon Riesenbeck of Waupaca Sand and Solutions. I look forward to working with each of you and am sure your ideas, thoughts and efforts will foster the Association.*

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This first gathering of the Board was not your typical slam-the-gavel, look-for-a-motion and jump-into-an-agenda meeting. It was an introspective look at the MAGCS. Simple questions were asked by our facilitator, Hannes Combest, CAE, the senior director of membership and professional development for the GCSAA; we are in debt for her time and forthrightness in assisting the Board throughout the day. The first task at hand was to simply answer the two-part question: Why does the MAGCS exist and for what purpose?

Look to our by-laws, as we did in the meeting. There is a description as to the purpose of the Association. It reads:

“To advance the rights and sciences attendant upon, pertinent or related to the occupation of greenkeeping, to unite the greenkeepers and golf course superintendents of the Chicago Metropolitan area into a cooperative group for the collection, preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge and information, thus effecting more efficient and economical maintenance for golf courses and thereby improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige and efficiency of the members; the creation of an instrumentality of entity of record capable and susceptible of procuring all benefits to the members both individually and collectively.”

While certainly descriptive and in-depth, it's a tough statement to design into a letterhead and explain to the golfing community, let alone the nongolfing/nonturf world. Backing up a step, we have fielded much discussion as to why it is necessary to develop a mission statement. The answer to this is simple, although the mission itself is sometimes very difficult to articulate. Every organization has a mission, a purpose, a reason for being. The need for greenkeepers to group together was identified years ago and the MAGCS was formed. The overall core purpose and objective has not changed as it reads in our by-laws, however, the way we interact with the world has changed significantly. This is one of the key reasons we need to look at our mission statement and update it to reflect how we have evolved with time.

Our refined mission statement will accurately explain why we exist and what we hope to achieve in the future. As our mission statement has done in the past, the updated version will define the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents' essential nature, its values and its work. Believe me, adhering to a mission is not new to the MAGCS: all the past presidents and Board members who have volunteered their time and efforts have followed and upheld the mission of the MAGCS. What we did in early December was just the formal process of examining, once again, why we are here. Updating the

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mission statement will work to the advantage of this Board and ultimately, the entire membership. The purpose of the MAGCS has not been reinvented, but by going through this process, **reinvigorated** as each member felt an authentic sense of ownership of our Association.

I really feel this couldn't have happened at a better time. With our new Board members in place, committee chairs assigned and my position as executive director finishing its maiden year, the leadership of the MAGCS is making strides to meet the needs of its individual members and to prepare for future leaders. Look for our revisited mission statement to resonate with each of you, as well as all the differing constituencies that we impact now and in the future. By no means is this an easy task, but your Board will be contacting you for your input. The MAGCS mission will inspire commitment and innovation, and be clear to all. Look for our statement to contain words similar to: networking, education, advancement, opportunity, growth and golf.

During this meeting, the Board of Directors also tried to answer the question of where will we be in the year 2020? This question was posed for several reasons, but the most important was to ensure that the Association has a plan to meet the evolving needs of the membership as we continue to evolve in our profession. There is no question that the role and responsibilities of the golf course superintendent have changed and will continue to change. The Board of Directors feels it is very important to prepare the Association to assist its members not only today, but also in the future. The Board of Directors developed goals and principles that were felt to be central in achieving the mission and preservation of the Association. As these goals become solidified, they will be assigned to individuals and committees for completion. And just as important, each goal will be reviewed in a meeting such as this on an annual basis.

As the Board of Directors wrapped up the meeting, a strong feeling of unity prevailed as the

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group defined the purpose of the MAGCS. I'm quite certain this was felt in 1926 as the original group of greenkeepers left their meeting as one proud Association.



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