



# Local, not Regional, Chapters Best for Superintendents

*If you had a chance to peruse the February issue of Golf Course News, you may have read an article by Jim McLoughlin concerning what local chapters are not providing and a suggestion that the establishment of regional chapters would be of greater benefit to us.*

Our Midwest chapter has been very progressive and shown a great deal of advancement during the last few years. Of course, there is always room for improvement, but what has already taken place has been of great value and substance. We have a number of educational opportunities available to each of us at the chapter level, but it is up to each individual to take advantage of these learning opportunities.

In his article, Jim suggests a restructuring of the local chapters by combining them into larger regional chapters (similar to what has been done by the golf professionals). Here are my thoughts on this type of reorganization.

Unlike the case with golf professionals, our business varies significantly from area to area. We are faced with different types of landscapes, climates, soils, insects, etc., that can vary drastically from club to club, sometimes even within the jurisdiction of one local chapter. Golf professionals, on the other hand, deal with a different type of arrangement. Golf equipment, including balls, clubs, clothing, etc., is sold in pro shops across the country and inventory varies little from shop to shop. Styles change from year to year, but usually on a nationwide basis, therefore regional chapters work well for this type of situation. We, on the other hand, have a myriad of different fertilizers, seeds, fungicides, herbicides, etc. to choose from. Due to the fact that situations vary not only from

day to day but also from course to course, the appropriate products for each case are often quite dissimilar. What works on one course will not necessarily work the best on another. Not only do particular situations occur from course to course, they can change drastically from year to year.

For superintendents, networking within local chapters can better meet the needs of local clubs. This is due to the general fact that they are likely to be somewhat familiar with one another's criteria and conditions. However, what works well for a club in one area may be harmful to one in an area that is 10, 20 or 100 miles away. In my opinion, dissolving local chapters, by creating larger regional chapters, would not be beneficial to most clubs.

Also, our Golf Industry Show does a terrific job of promoting education. Members have the opportunity to network and can attend quality programs that are valuable to our profession. These programs are selected to benefit different geographies and different circumstances and all are accessible while spending a few days at the conference. If you have ever attended any of Jim McLoughlin's classes, he encourages you to set aside monies for your educational needs. He suggests that you pay your own way if your club will not sponsor you to attend one of the larger conferences. I agree with Jim, and you will find that investing in yourself is money well spent.

There are many ways to educate ourselves. Besides attending the national conference and local chapter meetings, we can do a few things ourselves that will improve our image around our own clubs. First, to be treated like a professional, we need to act the part of a professional. That means a well-groomed look, hair trimmed, shaven, a welcoming smile on our faces, a good attitude and clean attire. It is a good idea to keep a spare pair of shoes and change of clothes around in case a meeting is called on short notice (and please, hats should not be worn during any meeting).

The most important item mentioned in Mr. McLoughlin's article is the need to set personal goals. This should include a list of needs and wants. You are the judge of how much effort you put into improving your position. You may want to include in your list what your desire is for your next position, and what you need to do to make yourself more desirable for this position. Your local chapter can help you with some of the steps you identify, but most are going to be up to you as an individual.

