

The 2005 Illinois Professional Turf Conference: A Good Value for the Green

This year's IPTC proved to be a success despite a slight downturn in attendance from last year. Registrants enjoyed many of the new offerings that the Conference implemented this year.



The Ferreri family.

The highlight of the Conference was the all-education day featuring professional turf seminars, held on Tuesday, November 29. This was a change from years past and it proved to be a good one. Normally, workshops were held the day after the trade show and attendance was around 50. This year, the education attracted a record number of attendees—115, and who can blame them? For \$75, an attendee could spend the entire day learning, choosing from 15 different topics, earn some PDUs and enjoy an onsite lunch. Please make sure not to miss this “added benefit” of the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation at next year’s show. Overall, the conference offered 56 educational opportunities, including TETA reel training and certification testing and pesticide safety training and testing in Spanish. A total of 1.7 GCSAA credits were offered this year, providing a great value for golf course superintendents.

The trade-show floor opened on Wednesday at 10 a.m. and was bustling from the start. Vendors agreed that the traffic was good and once again, the onsite lunch made for an efficient day for the attendees. One new feature included three separate Solution Centers so everyone could enjoy live demonstrations that covered topics ranging from tree planting and pruning, to how to construct a pitcher’s mound, to how to sharpen and maintain mowing equipment. ITF welcomed 10 new companies offering their goods and services to the Midwest’s clientele.



ITF president Don Altman, CGCS, Don Ferreri, and John Turner.

At 3 p.m., the trade show was favored with music provided by the Michael Heaton Band. This “blue jean” rock band, accompanied by a cash bar and hot hors d’oeuvres, allowed registrants to continue to visit their vendors in a social atmosphere. At 3:30, John “JT” Turner of Bayer Environmental Science presented the 2005 Distinguished Service Award to Don Ferreri, superintendent of Seven Bridges Golf Club in Woodridge, IL. JT highlighted Don’s many accomplishments, both in his career and in his service to the turf industry. Some of the highlights: Don has served as president of the ITF and the MAGCS. His current volunteerism has led him to be the chairman of the Illinois Turfgrass Endowment, which is responsible for the long-term growth and development of turf research and education within Illinois. With Don’s leadership, this fund will continue to grow and play an increasingly important factor in turfgrass research. Congratulations Don! Following the ceremony, four IPODs were given away for participants in the IPTC road rally.

On Thursday, the trade show opened up at 9 a.m. and lasted until 2 p.m. Seminars started earlier with one salon offering an USGA/CDGA putting-green symposium covering topics from topdressing application amounts to the advantages/disadvantages of different rootzone mixes. Another highlight on Thursday was the presentation of numerous scholarship checks to deserving students and for turfgrass research throughout the state of Illinois.

Thursday’s show wrapped up with giving away another four IPODs and a lot of satisfied customers. Following the show, the ITF board held its annual meeting. Afterward, the ITF board oversaw a trade-show “wrap up” meeting. Luke Cella, executive director, dutifully took notes on comments received from this year’s attendees. Committees and plans are already underway for next year’s conference to ensure an even better value for the 2006 show participant.



MAGCS president Gary Hearn presents Don Altman a \$13,000 check for ITF to apply toward turf research.

