

Nothing To Do On Rainy Days? Ha!

When I was in the lawn mower and small engine repair business, I used to find some comfort in a rainy day forecast. It meant that customers weren't going to be coming in the store, landscapers didn't work, and outdoor equipment, for the most part, was not going to be used. It was an opportunity to straighten up paper work, restock parts shelves, tidy up the shop, and shine up the showroom.

When it rains on the golf course (what? it never rains on a golf course?), I'm often asked what we do. Nothing can be done outside and the course is closed. Many think that we just lock up and leave. Maybe going to breakfast and then back to bed sounds good. This is a goody.... "Do you just wash and wax golf carts all day?" In fact, most of us know that a good washout can mean a good day of catch up in the shop.

The employees start arriving around 5:30 a.m. It's been raining since before I arrived at 4:15. The rain gauge shows .750" and climbing. There's a good chance I'll have company for at least the first part of the morning. It's October and a rain out hasn't happened all summer. Many things have been put off or tucked away somewhere. A huge list is waiting just for this "rainy day." Before I get my hopes up and approach the list, I have to wait and see what Mike (Matchen) has in mind. Generally it starts with a good clean up around the club house. So I lose two or three guys to that. I usually get two guys who are used to working with me on time-consuming maintenance tasks that get in the way but are still very important. Most of the PM is up to date. So when the unexpected rain day comes up, what is priority and practical for my suddenly extra hands to take on? Well I'll start with a rack-full of rough mower rotary blades that have accumulated all summer. I know that a good portion of them will soon need to be sharpened and used for leaf season. Years ago I found one employee ideally suited to this task and trained him on the proper sharpening and balancing procedures. He enjoys the solitude of making sparks for hours. Another good task to teach someone is rewinding spare, trimmer-line spools. There are always 30-40 spools to refill. Tasks that may seem too simple and unimportant can be really beneficial for workers. It gives them a sense of accomplishment and wipes those menial items off my list. The pile of flat, golf cart tires that has

accumulated since spring is another job to train someone on. Plugging tires or busting them off rims to replace them is good fun for a couple of the guys, again these are menial jobs I don't have time for. I have someone sharpen hand tools, shovels, spades, sod knives, etc. The guys appreciate these tasks because they know a sharp tool makes their work easier.

It's always nice to think that maybe another six people can scrub-a-dub and wax some equipment. This is another rare occurrence for us. It just does not make the priority list as it should. We pull cutting units off fairway mowers to attack the accumulated grease and junk that sticks to lift-pivot points and drive motors. We degrease and wax painted surfaces as time allows. By this time the rain has stopped, the sun is showing, and guess who is stuck finishing up the detailing? It is all part of the game of golf. The golfers and many others associated with the course do not have a clue as to what happens down at "da barn" on a rain day.

I know all of you have similar lists of things to do on rainy days. The point is to utilize our laborers and operators on these occasions. It not only helps the equipment technician, it also tells the staff that they are valued beyond their usual daily assignments.

If the rain persists into the next day, then consider cleaning the parts room, or vacuuming your office.

Well, time to fire up the leaf equipment once again and wind down some other equipment and routines. Soon it will be time to order winter stock reels and bed knives.

