



Another Chicago First

“The State of the Game Golf Summit” was held on April 19th at Olympia Fields Country Club. The first event of its kind in the Chicago area, the Golf Summit was jointly hosted by the Chicago District Golf Association, Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, Illinois Section PGA, and the Greater Chicago Club Managers Association. Speakers included:

- Dr. Joe Beditz, President and CEO of the National Golf Foundation
 - Paul Metzler, Director of Consumer Marketing and Player Development for PGA of America
 - Steve Mona, Chief Executive Director of the GCSAA
 - Mike Tinkey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the National Golf Course Owners Association
 - Susanne Wegrzyn, President and CEO of the National Club Association
 - Jerry Maatman, Partner of Seyfarth Shaw LLP
 - Rick Jacobson, President of Jacobson Golf Course Design
 - Todd Grey, Senior Vice President of Wells Fargo Financial
- Participants represented managers and decision makers from all facets of the golf industry including: golf course superintendents, course owners, club managers, golf professionals, commercial vendors, board members and club presidents. Throughout the day the discussion focused on trends and economic indicators that affect the golf industry. Demographics, politics, population growth, immigration reform, workers rights, health care reform, and new bills introduced into the legislature all have an impact on the golf industry. The following is a quick recap of just a few of the topics that were discussed during the day long event.
- The Golf 20/20 survey found that golfers identified course conditioning as the single most important factor that contributes to golfer enjoyment.
 - Core golfers are identified as golfers that play 8 or more rounds of golf per year.
 - Core golfers account for 91% of all rounds played and 87% of all spending that is related to golf.
 - Golf is a \$62.2 billion dollar a year industry. As an industry, golf is larger than the motion picture industry.
 - 30 million rounds of golf are played per year. This number has been flat for the last 6 years and is expected to remain flat for the foreseeable future. Any short term facility growth in rounds played and/or revenue will most likely be at the expense of neighboring facilities.
 - Proper course conditioning is a key component to developing a successful financial model for a golf facility.
 - In 2006, the number of golf facilities that closed out paced the number of golf facilities that opened. The last time this occurred was in 1945.
 - 25% of all golf courses in the United States were built in the last 15 years.
 - 87% of golfers use the internet to research golf facilities and book tee times.
 - If adopted, the “Healthy Families Act” would call for employers to provide paid sick days, health care insurance, pension plans, and other benefits to a larger group of core employees.
 - The National Club Association expects that some type of an immigration reform bill will be introduced by congress before the end of the summer.
 - The National Club Association also predicts that soon we will see legislation that clarifies and requires employers to take affirmative action if they receive Social Security “No Match Letters”.
 - Termination law suits represent 90% of all workplace legal claims.
 - The average cost to litigate and settle a wrongful termination suit is \$75,000 - \$100,000
 - Illinois is ranked 4th among states in employee rights.
 - Future population growth is projected to be greatest within the Hispanic community. A projected growth of 63% is forecast over the next 20 years.
 - Hispanic participation in golf is 5.4%.
- Our industry changes and evolves constantly. As superintendents we are directly responsible for the single most important asset at our facility – the golf course. As such we are obligated to stay informed on trends and indicators that affect our industry so that we can better contribute to the facilities overall success.

Tim

