

NEWS FROM ALLIED GROUPS
Don Ferreri, *Seven Bridges Golf Club*



Chapter Delegates Update

I recently attended the chapter delegate meeting in Lawrence, KS the weekend of October 5-7. Many key items were discussed. One item that we all should be aware of is the new schedule for the National Championship and Golf Classic in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show. This event will take place the Sunday through Tuesday in San Diego of GIS week. This member's only event is an unparalleled opportunity to connect with your peers, learn new techniques and practices from your fellow members, and build lasting relationships. If you have not participated in this in the past and have interest, 2013 may be the year to try. The following is a condensed update provided by GCSAA to all chapter delegates after the meeting.

The What and the Why

"It is important that our members know the 'what' and 'why' of GCSAA efforts, but it is equally important that we hear what our members have to say," GCSAA President Sandy Queen said. "We cannot make decisions or shape policy without that feedback. That is why I am so pleased that there was debate on what was presented. I continue to be impressed with the quality of representatives the chapters send to the meeting."

Queen noted that prior chapter delegate feedback helped formulate the new conference and show schedule, implement free GCSAA webcasts and restructure the annual meeting. Discussion this year will be utilized to "tweak" certain aspects of the Rounds 4 Research program, study the GCSAA Chapter Affiliation Agreement and help the board of directors and staff prioritize programs and services.

Chapter Affiliation Deliberated

One of the most lively discussions regarded the GCSAA Chapter Affiliation Agreement, specifically Class A conformity between GCSAA and chapters in terms of membership classification. Ultimately, the board of directors opted to extend the current affiliation agreement to give the association and chapters an additional year to collect data and do further study on the issue.

The extension was also granted to give the association time to analyze the report of the Membership Standards Advisory Group. For the past nine months, this independent

panel of members has been studying the impact of the professional development initiative (PDI) that resulted in the creation of membership standards. The MSAG presented

(more photos on page 25)

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to the delegates its findings that PDI had been successful with increased advocacy with policymakers, the creation of the IPM requirement, expanded education opportunities that were accessible and affordable, and improved playing conditions. It did note that the faltering economy and the cost and time necessary to affect change through a public relations campaign worked against the program.

Recommendations focused on membership conformity, simplifying membership classifications, and strengthening the requirements for Class A status and items to help market it.

Dues Increase Up for Vote

The association presented a proposed dues increase that will be voted on at the annual meeting in February in San Diego. The vote will be to increase dues \$25 for Class A and SM members, and \$15 for Class C members, making annual dues \$365 and \$185, respectively. The increase is a combination of a \$15 increase (for Class A/SM) based on the Consumer Price Index and \$10 (for Class A/SM) to compensate for GCSAA's group life insurance premium being doubled by the provider.

The Bottom Line

GCSAA Chief Executive Officer Rhett Evans shared the association's invest-recover-grow strategy that has shaped the association's budgeting philosophy for the past two years. He described how funds have been invested in new programs such as field staff, Rounds 4 Research, web technology, advocacy and other areas to better serve the members. Giving time to allow these programs to gain traction will ultimately help stabilize association operations.

Evans indicated that staff will present a balanced budget to the board in December, but will pull some funds from the association's reserve just as it has done in the past. Among the new items in the budget will be funds to complete the

filling of field staff, pay for headquarters facility improvements and add technology resources. The Mid-Atlantic and the Southeast regions are the remaining two regions without field staff. The facility improvement plan, announced earlier this fall, focuses on necessary structural repairs and enhancing the efficiency of the building. In all, expenses for the project are expected to be approximately \$1.9 million.

"We are by no means out of the woods when it comes to our financial challenges," Evans said. "Golf has had some struggles. But I believe we have been prudent in what we have done to weather the storm and are positioned for continued success."

Tooting Your Horn

Among the more popular presentations were those that demonstrated how GCSAA resources were being used to advocate on behalf of members. Staff outlined the various government relations activities and the importance of members meeting with federal, state and local lawmakers to be heard on policy decisions. Various examples of GCSAA media placements on television, in print, on the web and on the radio were shared as well. Evans pointed out that NGF studies continue to place a premium on GCSAA members for their role in driving golfer satisfaction and facility success. He said that reaching out to key influencers such as employers, avid golfers and policy makers will continue to be a priority for the association.

On Deck

Chapter delegates will convene on February 7 at 2:30 p.m. for the association's annual meeting in San Diego, held in conjunction with the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show.

I will also be updating the membership at the Midwest's Annual Meeting and the January Meeting prior to the GIS. **-OC**



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