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The 2007 Golf Industry Show at the Anaheim Convention Center.
Photo Credit: Luke Cella.

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance.

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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Tim Anderson, CGCS Naperville Country Club

The Answer is MAGCS

Last month in the president's message we initiated a dialogue on strategic planning. We discussed new goals related to governance and the use of technology. This month we continue our discussion on long-range planning with a focus on education, finance, public relations, On Course, scholarship, employment, and member benefits.

Imagine the benefit of using a video-taped seminar to bring information back to your facility to share with your board of directors.

Education

This is an area where the MAGCS excels. We will continue to offer the best possible education to our members on a diverse array of topics. Recently a news article reported that individuals age-40-and-over identified television and print materials as their main source of information. Individuals age-30-and-under identified the internet as their main source of information. We need to focus on how we make education available. Generation X learns differently than the Baby Boomers. Generation X is connected 24/7. Flexibility is the key. Today, people look to fit education into their schedule on their own terms. They do not want to plan their day around education.

The MAGCS has requested and received permission from GCSAA to video tape regular education seminars. These tapes will be available for members to view at their own convenience. Education credits will still be issued for seminars viewed via video tape. We are also looking into the possibility of making MAGCS education available as a pod-cast that could be downloaded through the MAGCS website. Imagine the benefit of using a video-taped seminar to bring information back to your facility to share with your board of directors. Or perhaps your PDI renewal cycle is approaching and you are short on credits. You would have the option of picking up extra credits at your convenience. Video taping of educational seminars will begin this year.

Finance

A finance committee has been formed. It consists of a board member as well as members from the Past Presidents' council. This committee will provide continuity year-to-year in regard to financial strategies for the association. One responsibility will be the annual review of investments.

Public Relations

This is an area where we see an opportunity to increase our efforts. Over the last couple of years our greatest strides in public relations have been through our executive director, Luke Cella, and his efforts to network with allied associations on behalf of the MAGCS. Luke has established himself as the face of the association. Now it is time to expand our efforts. For 2007 the GCSAA has announced a State/Regional Golf Publication Chapter Tie-In program. This trial program calls for purchasing advertising and providing editorial copy to state and regional golf publications in select target markets. MAGCS has asked to be considered as one of the test markets for this program.

(continued on page 4)

This year the board will work to formalize a public relations plan. We plan to utilize GCSAA staff as we work to accomplish this goal.

On-Course

Easily recognized as the flagship of our association, *On Course* is the platform that presents the MAGCS to the general public. The concept of offering *On Course* as a web-based publication was discussed. This stemmed from a conversation about *On Course* being offered as a state wide publication. While increased circulation and exposure is a goal, it was decided that *On Course* will remain a printed publication.

Other goals include the incorporation of articles geared towards Class C members. These articles will be targeted to meet their needs. We will continue to archive back issues of the magazine in a digital format. Luke Cella has entered into preliminary conversations with Peter Cookingham, administrator for the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) at Michigan State University. We are working to include *On Course* as part of the electronic TGIF database. This would allow electronic searches by key word and topic, eliminating the need for members to save old issues of *On Course*.

Scholarship

The scholarship committee continues to identify sources of revenue for the scholarship program. In 2007 scholarships have been increased to \$2,000 per recipient. The committee is also reviewing the concept of extending scholarship awards over multiple years.

Employment

The board identified several goals in relation to employment. Through education of potential employers, the MAGCS will work to fill job openings in the area with MAGCS members. The employment committee will work to provide information (literature, presentations, website links, etc.) to aid search committees in their understanding of our profession and all its intricacies. MAGCS will not act as a search firm or handle resumes, but it will act as an association that can provide golf facil-

ities with all the information and resources needed to work through the hiring process. An emphasis will be placed on "local knowledge," promoting MAGCS members as the best candidates for positions within our area. Emphasis will also be placed on facility involvement so that the employer has a vested interest in their newly-hired Superintendent. As an added benefit, members who are seeking employment will have access to the association's staff and resources to facilitate their job search. Another goal includes the establishment of a split-fee structure for employment referral announcements. Non-members will be charged the current rate. Members will be charged a reduced rate of \$100. As an example, a superintendent advertising to fill a position for an assistant or spray technician would pay a reduced rate of \$100.

Member benefits

Many of our goals to increase member benefits have already been outlined in this article: paperless job announcements, electronic surveys, teleconferences, more flexible education, video taped education, pod-casts, issues of *On Course* archived in a digital format, topic and key word search options for *On Course* through TGIF, increased efforts in public relations, increased scholarship awards for children of MAGCS members, reduction in fees for posting job announcements, and greater employment resources. Additional benefits will include a project directory that will provide contact names of members who have completed a variety of different golf course related projects. These contacts can be used as an informational resource by members who are preparing to undertake similar projects. Through the technical assistance network (TAN), the GCSAA has allocated five complimentary memberships that are available for distribution by the MAGCS. These memberships are intended for facilities that otherwise would not have the resources to join the GCSAA. The MAGCS will match this offer and include five complimentary one-year memberships to MAGCS as well. We will continue to focus on class C involvement. These members are the

This would allow electronic searches by key word and topic, eliminating the need for members to save old issues of On Course.

future leaders of our association. It is imperative that we identify their needs and establish the MAGCS as an invaluable resource. We ask that as superintendents mentor their assistants in preparation for a career in golf course management, that they also mentor them in the value and professional development gained from association involvement.

Conclusion

A solid strategic plan is in place that will carry MAGCS into the future. Several of the items outlined in this article have already been assigned to committees. Action plans have been developed and implemented. Certain goals will be realized in the coming year; other goals require further refinement and are more long term in nature. These items have been scheduled for discussion at the Board level. As they become better defined they will also be assigned to a committee for implementation.



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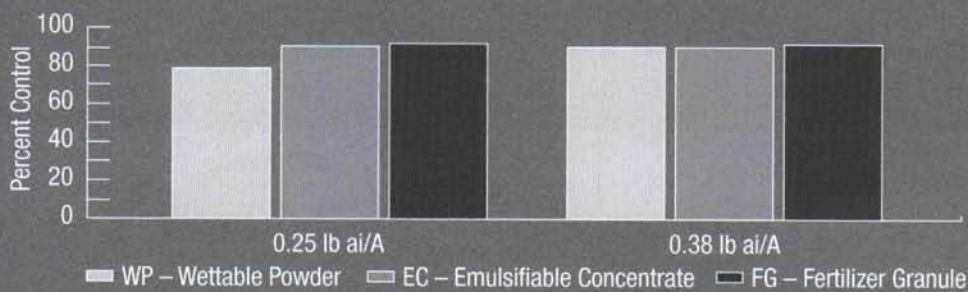


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Midwest Breezes



Brian Mores, Inverness Golf Club

For the past several years at Inverness Golf Club we have been dealing with problems associated with excess muck in one of our irrigation ponds. The muck had accumulated to the point where it was clogging up the intake pipe and restricting flow to our wet well, triggering the low-water-level sensor to shut down our irrigation pumps. Furthermore, debris was finding its way into the irrigation pipe and would occasionally cause sprinklers to stick on. The short term fix was to call in a diver two to three times per year to clean a few feet around the intake pipe. This past fall Mike Bavier and I finally decided it was time to bite the bullet and go for the long term solution — having the pond dredged.

Dredging a pond is something that most superintendents don't look forward to, and it is usually put off. Our reasons, like many other superintendents, were the cost and mess that are typically associated with the process. The most common methods of dredging are draining down the pond and mechanically excavating the

muck, or, using a barge that sucks up the muck below and pumps it to a holding area. Both options are expensive, require large equipment driving across the course, and leave a small mountain of muck that smells, leaves a mess, and must be removed.

After exploring the usual options we discovered another method offered by US Aqua-Vac. As the name implies, they use divers equipped with suction hoses that basically vacuum the muck from the pond floor. Each diver has a hose and works in a small area at a time. They move along the bottom of the pond vacuuming the muck until they reach the original pond floor, which they can determine by feel. Each diver's hose is connected to a pump that sits on the shoreline. From there the muck and water travels through another hose to the point where the material will be stored.

Most golf courses either create a holding pit in a dump area to store the material or haul it to another site

(continued on page 8)

Divers work for 4 hours each day sucking sediment from the bottom of the pond with individual suction hoses.



on the golf course and build mounds out of it. Both options are unsightly and require a long period of time for the material to dry. US Aqua-Vac presented us with another option of using a muck/silt bag for storage. The pump hose is tied directly into this bag which is constructed of a woven material and acts as a filter by allowing water to seep out but retaining the muck and silt. We decided to use the bag and were happy with its performance. Our bag was 74 x 45 feet and would fill to a height of around 4 feet by day's end. The following morning the bag would be back to around 2 feet in height because the majority of the water had seeped out overnight. The location of this pond happened to be next to a seldom-used parking lot that surface drained to an adjacent creek. That made for an ideal location for our bag, although it is more typically placed on the edge of the pond being worked on, allowing the filtered water to drain back into the pond.

Other noteworthy items are that the divers are limited to a four hour work day for safety reasons. They estimate that it requires one week to remove 1 foot of muck from a pond with a one-acre surface area. Also, golf balls do not clog up the pump (this is good considering that our pond is located between the green and tee on a short par 3). Regarding the muck/silt bag, we were informed that, depending on weather conditions, it takes several weeks to months for the material to dry. This project took place in November, so our bag is still sitting in the parking lot because it froze and was not able to dry. We have been told that the material is very rich and has been used to amend soil mixes. We plan to stockpile the material in our dump area for future use. Finally, and most importantly, this method was about 40% cheaper than the barge and excavation methods that we researched.



Right: The 74' x 45' silt bag prior to filling sits on a seldom used parking lot adjacent to a creek.



Below: The silt bag at the end of a day of sucking up sediment. It would fill to four feet high upon completion of the divers shift and water would drain throughout the night leaving only sediment in the bag.





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