

Mr. Chuck Alsdorf
The Toro Company
8111 Lyndale Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55420

Dear Chuck,

The Toro Training School sponsored by Toro and Zaun, and conducted at Lake City Community College this past April was an overwhelming success. Your training team of Dale Atkinson, Mike Bina, Tom Dooley and Fred Greening was outstanding. They represented Toro in a most professional image with their classroom and shop presentations. You would have been extremely proud of them.

This type of presentation will not only help our students to better understand your products but will greatly benefit those "front-line" mechanics in the field who are going to determine the future of golf course maintenance as we know it today.

If it is at all possible and economically feasible to continue this type of session on an annual basis, we would welcome this type of industry relationship.

Thanks for your part in making this happen. Your continued interest and support of our program is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jerry H. Cheesman, Director
School of Golf Course Operations
Lake City Community College

Edgar (Ed) Combest, Instructor
School of Golf Course Equipment Mechanics
Lake City Community College

Interview With

Jerry Cheesman

By DAVID BAILEY

Lake City Community College is the leading higher level institution in the state for producing golf course superintendents. It is also nationally recognized for its School of Golf Course Equipment Mechanics. Jerry Cheesman, director of Golf Course Operations, discusses the following issues.

What is your enrollment policy?

Cheesman: We accept 40 students per year. We would like to have 20 with a turf emphasis and 20 for mechanics. We do not fill our quota of mechanical students. Thus we fill the remaining openings with turf students.

How many mechanical students apply?

Cheesman: Generally about 10. Here is the major problem. That total itself is too small and probably six of the 10 will

switch to the turf program after one year. So we actually produce only around four mechanics per year.

There is a separate mechanical program?

Cheesman: Yes, we give a certificate for mechanics only.

Do all golf operation students take mechanics?

Cheesman: Yes, all turf students do. The program is for two semesters. Landscape students do not take this program. Some of our early turf students did not have the mechanical exposure and have come back after graduation to receive this important knowledge.

How can the college overcome the mechanical recruiting problem?

Cheesman: We need to recruit at the high school level more "mechanic shop" oriented people. We need to work the leading vocational schools for this student. We do not need a strong scholastic oriented student. Lake City needs to place advertisements in high school journals targeted to make this student aware of us and the job being done here.

How can the superintendents help?

Cheesman: Local and national associations tell us they need mechanics. It's rated the top problem in the field. I challenge the associations themselves to work the local schools. Inform students there is a program at Lake City and a good job when they leave Lake City. Superintendents are good salesmen at budget time. The mechanic's image, position and salary must be upgraded to keep trained people in the business.

How should local associations recruit at the local high schools?

Cheesman: Send good speaking superintendents to the schools with appointments arranged ahead with the principal and shop instructor. Show quality slides of the beauty of a golf course, the equipment to be worked, and stress the dependable job status and importance. We can no longer have underpaid mechanics and then wonder why we have a problem. Go for the top mechanical students and count on paying them just that way!

Tell about Lake City's facility for mechanics.

Cheesman: We have as good a staff as there is in the country. We have an excellent shop with over \$250,000 in equipment and parts inventory. If you want to learn about golf course mechanics this is the place to come.

If a golf club wanted to send a mechanical student to Lake City what would it cost and what is the time factor?

Cheesman: Total housing, school meals, fees, and books will cost about \$2,500. The time span would be from August to July for a mechanics certificate.

What do you see in the future for golf course mechanics?

Cheesman: The age of hydraulics makes the mechanic even more important. The technical knowledge must be there and applied daily. In the future the equipment will have computer analysis. This will tell the exact problem. Ten years from today the mechanic will need equipment and knowledge we do not now have. We must have progressive people for these times.