

# DIVOTS

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## Consulting the Professionals

Recently, while attending the Golf Course Superintendents Association Conference in San Francisco, I had the chance to once again meet and consult with many of my friends throughout the United States. While attending one of the many educational classes available I had the opportunity to talk with a friend from St. Louis Missouri. Denny asked me how I had been able to make the transition from the St. Louis area to north Florida. The very first thing that came to mind was consulting your superintendents association. (Incidentally to obtain my job in Florida, I consulted with our national Golf Course Superintendents Association by using our job referral service. For a small fee our headhunter service will let you know of positions opening all over the world. What else could you ask for but a world wide consulting service!) I told Denny that the first thing you have to do is contact your local superintendents chapter, in my case the North Florida Superintendents chapter. By consulting with my local chapter I had access to valuable information that I would need to set up and manage my golf course maintenance operations. Talking with my fellow superintendents via the telephone and chapter meetings I soon had information that only the local superintendents could help me with. This included staffing, discovering if there golf course personnel available in the area, what the average wage is for course personnel, if there are any golf course training centers in the area, etc. Also weather information such as the average amount of rain fall, what months are the hottest, if there is water allocation now or will be in the future. By consulting with your local professional superintendent that have used the services of and equipment distributors you will save suppliers, such as sand companies, irrigation, fertilizer many hours and steps in the wrong direction.

There is one organization with which I have consulted in the north Florida area that is invaluable. This is the extension service which is available in all the areas I have worked from Minnesota to Florida. Your local state agriculture extension service is invaluable in the agricultural service provided. They will have all the current laws and regulations that you will need to study to obtain your pesticides license. I have had to study and take examinations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Florida, all of which were different, all of which I used the services of the agricultural extension service to help me. By consulting with the extension service you can obtain information concerning soil types in your area. You can also discover which grasses are dormant, what types of pests you will have the most problems with and of course, what type of controls are available and what type can not be used under the laws in your area. Each state has laws

that set and regulate the types of pesticides you can use in your turf program. Federal and state environmental agencies are continuously changing regulations by adding and changing existing laws. By contacting the extension service often you can stay on top of these changes. This will not only allow you to have the information needed for a proper pesticide program and records, you will also have the information needed to renew your license when the time comes. You will also have the peace of mind knowing that you have the knowledge to handle and use pesticides properly. Don't forget it is your responsibility to inform and instruct your crew on the safe use and handling of pesticides.

By consulting with the professional staff of the north Florida extension service you can attend the continuing education classes offered for the turf industry. When I first obtained information from the service in another state I have worked in, the information pamphlets were excellent. Also the reference manuals, training films, and slides were very good as training aids. The Florida agricultural extension service not only has these training aids it also has entered the computer age along with Lake City Community College.

You can consult with the educators of the best golf course training facilities in the United States and Canada and I believe as superintendents we are very fortunate to have such facilities to consult with in our own back yard.

With the joint computer programs that these organizations have started we can look forward to more and continuing technical information. Now that Mr. Jones at the extension service has had the foresight to bring the best in training aids to his facility. We can not only consult with Harold but we can also consult with his computer.

Computers are an excellent consulting tool. While in San Francisco at the continuing educational classes I was attending. Dr. Short flashed the computer programs on the large screen in front of hundreds of professionals from all over the world. It made me proud to be part of the Florida association.

Now that Denny and I have arrived back to our respective courses, we have gained knowledge through consulting with the professionals and technical people of our association. By meeting and sharing our knowledge at our local meetings and on a daily basis we will all continue to grow as professionals through consulting with each other. "You have taught therefore I have learned." ■