

2) superintendents and the Audubon School Program and

3) superintendents and their importance in the game of golf.

We will be running these articles here so you can clip or copy and use them at your club or in your community.

• FTGA launches pro-turf campaign. Pro golfer, Lee Janzen is featured in several public service announcements. Five huge billboards touting the merits of turfgrass sprouted up in five locations in Florida early this past spring as part of an ambitious public-relations campaign by the Florida Turfgrass Association. The campaign is an effort by the association to create awareness of one of the state's most precious natural resources..

Besides turf's obvious positive benefits for the general livelihood of the populace, the FTGA advertisements and promotional pieces point out that the turfgrass industry in Florida generates nearly \$15 million in expenditures annually. Almost 4.5 million acres of turfgrass exist in Florida, employing 185,000 people.

• FGCSA Video. A recently completed

*A recently completed video is being made available to all superintendents for employees, members, owners and the general public.*

project by the FGCSA, this video is being made available to all superintendents in Florida to use as an informational tool for employees, members, owners and the general public. It promotes the role of the superintendent in managing golf courses as a community asset and the positive influence a golf course can have on the environment.

Our industry has made public relations a key mandate this year. Use the sidebar on 10 ways superintendents promote and the following "Field of Dreams" syndicated article to do a little public relations on your own.

## Superintendents are creating real fields of dreams

Whether you live in a well-developed urban setting, a sprawling suburban tract or a small rural community, it's likely that many of the people you interact with are golf enthusiasts.

Those who enjoy the sport are aware of the key person at the golf course when it comes to providing maximum enjoyment of the game.

A recent survey by *Golf Digest* revealed that nearly 50 percent of its readers indicated the golf course superintendent as the most important individual at their facility. That figure surpassed combined selections of the golf professional, course champion, club house manager and beverage facility personnel.

The golf course superintendent is the professional entrusted with the management and maintenance of the course. It's a responsibility that has grown in impor-

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tance during the past three decades as golfers have come to demand optimal conditions for playing the game.

Those heightened expectations have been largely fueled by expanding television coverage of professional golf events that highlight the nation's top courses. Also, budget limitations, unpredictable weather patterns, governmental regulations and increased participation all have an impact on the superintendents' operations.

"You won't find one member of the profession who doesn't say their career is a challenge," says Paul McGinnis, certified golf course superintendent and president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

There was a time when a person could climb the career ladder from a maintenance crew member to staff assistant to superintendent through on-the-job training.

But the level of knowledge necessary

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to manage and maintain healthy turfgrass, administer large budgets and comply with environmental, safety and employee regulations has made education paramount.

The vast majority of superintendents have two- or four-year degrees in turfgrass science, agronomy or biology. This professional background is often supplemented with continuing education courses provided by organizations such as the GCSAA.

"I think most people get into this profession for two reasons," McGinnis says. "No. 1, many of us grew up on a golf course either as a worker or playing the

game. And No. 2, superintendents have a love for the outdoors and environmental stewardship. We understand what it takes to manage a facility so that it is a benefit to the community."

Golf courses also are becoming outdoor classrooms for schools, civic groups and junior golf programs. It's not unusual for people to take to the course, not in search of birdies, but of animals, aquatic life, various plant species, composting projects and nature trails.

"The facilities not only offer recreation, but provide an environmental sanctuary to numerous plant and animal species," McGinnis says.

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