

GCSAA News



Florida superintendents were highlighted in the November edition of GCSAA's Newsline.

According to Newsline, Gary Grigg, CGCS of the Poinciana C. C. in Naples was in Washington recently to give staff members of EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs an education in the real life challenges of a golf course superintendent.

These staffers are ones who help originate regulations and policy matters affecting golf courses, and many of them are not familiar with the game of golf or a superintendent's responsibilities in turfgrass management.

Gary described the varying climatic and pest pressures on turfgrass from all different regions of the country and even the micro-climates within a golf course.

He emphasized the complexity of superintendent's jobs today by comparing an ad that ran many years ago with a

detailed position description from a recent advertisement, which demanded a superintendent who had kept abreast of developments of several areas of plant science and biology.

The ad also illustrated the pressures superintendents face trying to please a demanding clientele, be good environmental stewards, and work within their budgets.

The briefing was part of a GCSAA strategy under the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) to work as a partner with the EPA to reduce the risks of pesticide use. This strategy includes elements of research, member education and communication, public education and communication, awards and government relations activities.

Ann Leslie, chemist for the Office of Pesticide Programs thanked Grigg and Cynthia Kelly, J. D., GCSAA's government relations counsel, in a recent e-mail: "Thanks to you and Gary for an outstanding presentation. Our audience was very interested and learned much, so your mission was accomplished."

In another story, the Treasure Coast Chapter was recognized for its work with Audubon International in producing a training video for teachers' to use in the Audubon Sanctuary Program for Schools.

Hobe Sound Elementary School was one of two case studies filmed to explain the various project a school could undertake. GCSAA also deserves credit for helping the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program survive. The U. S. Department of Agriculture was proposing to eliminate funding for the program in 1997.

GCSAA responded by working with its members whose elected officials served on congressional committees that developed the USDA budget. Member phone calls and letters helped save the day as the NTEP budget received a 10% increase instead of being cut.

Kevin N. Morris, national program coordinator for NTEP praised GCSAA's response along with other organizations for sending the message to Congress and the USDA that turfgrass is a viable and growing industry nationwide.

Legislative Update

BY MIKE GOLDIE

Government Relations Consultant

The 1997 Florida Legislature will, for the first time since Reconstruction, be controlled by Republicans. Senator Toni Jennings will be the President of the Senate, where Republicans have a 23 to 17 majority. Representative Daniel Webster will be the Speaker of the House, which has a 61 to 59 Republican majority. Speaker Webster defeated a coalition of Democrats and two Republican Cuban legislators when three conservative Democratic legislators pledged their support for Speaker Webster and a 64 to 59 victory.

What will be the impact of the Republican control of the Legislature? Less governmental regulation and a more pro-business attitude should be expected, but only time will tell.

On November 18 and 19, 1996, Florida Golf held a meeting of the industry in Tallahassee. The meeting coincided with the Legislature's Organizational Session and included panel discussions on the economic impact of golf and related business on the state economy, environmental issues, charitable and educational programs. A reception was held with members of the Legislature to make them aware of golf and its impact on our state.

The meeting was the idea of a task force of the PGA, LPGA, Florida Golf Association and others and was hosted by the Florida Sports Foundation, a public and private group whose purpose is to promote sports in Florida.

Through the efforts of Mark Jarrell, Roy Bates and Dale Kuehner, the Florida Golf Course Superintendents' Association and the Florida Turfgrass Association were asked to participate on all the panel discussions. Other association

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members who attended and participated included David Barnes, Tim Hiers and Ron Garl.

The meeting was the first attempt to form a unified effort to present the voice of golf to the Legislature. Everyone who attended the meetings voiced their support for such an effort. Tim Hiers and others voiced their concerns on environmental issues and public perception of golf and the environment.

The meeting was a good and positive first step in uniting the industry, but it is up to each association represented to continue this effort. Golf has been a sleeping economic giant in Florida, and now hopefully it has been awakened.