

The Florida Green

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ON THE COVER: *The 9th hole, Juliette Falls G.C. Photo by Brian Walters*

FOREWORDS

Four Steps to Success

Golf season is upon us. As we wrap up our summer projects and get everything in place for the golfers, I encourage you not to "over-focus." Certainly you need to focus on doing your job and make sure everything is done correctly, but don't focus so narrowly that you're aware only of your own facility. Often we get busy and have little time to spare. We reduce our staffs while our responsibilities increase. We stop worrying about anything that is not pertinent to the immediate needs of our facilities.

Keeping up with industry news, participating in industry programs, furthering our education and building relationships with other professionals all go on the back burner. While we might feel that there isn't time to do these things, the truth is we can't afford not to. I'm going to challenge you to accomplish four things that will make you a better superintendent and bring more value to your course.

First, attend as many meetings of your local superintendent chapter as possible. If you rarely attend meetings, check your chapter's upcoming schedule and reserve time for the next appropriate event. If you don't know a lot of people and feel like an outsider, call a superintendent or vendor whom you do know and make arrangements to attend with them. It's a great way to extend your network and meet other professionals. Don't be afraid to tell your employer that you would like to attend. Most chapter events have a lot to offer in terms of education and networking. Make sure you communicate to your employer what you plan to gain from your participation. Employers are usually supportive if they can see the value.

Second, complete the Golf BMP Certification if you have not already done so. This program is critical in strengthening our position as golf course managers to continue using fertilizer, water and pesticides in a responsible manner. It is important that as an industry we demonstrate our dedication to protecting the environment through responsible use of resources. If we fail to do so, water, fertilizer and chemicals will be taken from us. Every time we lose a resource, providing an enjoyable golfing experience becomes more difficult.



Kevin Sunderman,
President

Third, sign up to participate in EREF (Environmental Research & Education Foundation), which is backed by a coalition of related industries including lawn care, pest control, golf courses, sod growers, sports turf managers, etc. Its purpose is to raise funds to support our cause through research and advocacy. For years opponents to our industry's use of fertilizer have communicated uncontested claims. Lawmakers and the general public have taken our opponents at their word. EREF's purpose is to represent our views and effectively communicate them to lawmakers and public alike. You can find the link to sign up on the FGCSA website. Your participation involves a 0.6 percent donation billed on all of your fertilizer purchases from participating distributors. This amounts to just 60 cents for every \$100 purchased. Everyone's participation is needed to make this program successful.

Finally, I ask you to do business with those companies that support the FGCSA, your local chapter and the industry as a whole. Our vendors rely on our success as much as we do. Many of our vendors recognize the importance of promoting the golf industry. They advertise in the FGCSA publications. They join local chapters. They sponsor events. While this can be seen simply as advertising, it also has to be viewed as support for our industry. Without their help, both the FGCSA and local chapters would not have the funding needed to provide services and benefits to our members or funds to support the advancement of the industry. Please take the time to thank our supporting vendors and encourage others to get involved.

We superintendents are busy. It's easy to get bogged down in the everyday demands of our own facilities. However, the long-term success of both the industry and your facility depends on many other factors. By accomplishing the above four items, you will be helping yourself, your employer and the industry.