

# The Florida Green

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**ON THE COVER:** Hole No. 24, Pelican Pointe Golf Club, Venice, FL. Photo by Joel Jackson.

## FOREWORDS

### A Capitol Idea – Let's Advocate for Golf in Florida

On February 20th and 21st, Joel Jackson, Jennifer Bryan, Mark Kann, Ralph Dain (GCSAA) and I trekked to Tallahassee to represent the FGCSA at the second Florida Golf Day. Our entourage also consisted of representatives from the Club Managers Florida Chapter, the North and South Florida PGA Sections and the Florida State Golf Association. These five groups comprise the newly formed Florida Golf Alliance.

Also on hand to help pitch the economic and environmental impacts of golf to Florida were representatives from the World Golf Foundation, World Golf Hall of Fame, Golf 20/20, the PGA Tour, Rick McCord of the McCord Golf Academy at Orange Lake, the LPGA, the First Tee Program, the Golf Channel, and Susie Doyens representing the Special Olympics golf program.

Our goal was to raise the awareness of golf's economic contribution to the state, specifically: a large employer, a major tourist attraction and the home of golf in the U.S. We also wanted to put a face to the golf industry and develop relationships with governmental agencies to increase funding for golf tourism and provide data on the positive environmental impacts of golf courses.

On Wednesday, we met for an evening session to be briefed Thursday's agenda. We discussed our game plan and talking points and mingled and met the representatives and staff of our allied organizations as well as a few legislators who stopped by.

On Thursday, golf organizations set up information centers in the Capitol Rotunda to advertise our visit. "We Are Golf" flyers were posted throughout the building emphasizing golf's economic impact to the state and inviting legislators to participate in lunch-hour golf lessons and a putting contest between the House and Senate. In addition the Golf Channel aired an interview with Steve Mona on "Morning Drive" and ran several spots on Golf Day on the "Golf Central" show throughout the day.

Also on Thursday, a representative leadership group met with legislators and regulators. Each association assigned



Nancy Miller, CGCS,  
President

one person to speak on their behalf, each as a part of the overall message. I was honored to represent you in discussing the FGCSA BMP certification program and the superintendents' commitment to environmental stewardship.

Next on the agenda was a productive round-table discussion with department heads from economic development, tourism and FDEP. Throughout the day, we met with Senate President Pro Tempore, Garrett Richter, Speaker Pro Tempore, Marti Coley and Lt. Governor Jennifer Carroll.

Our message was this: Florida is the home of the PGA Tour, the LPGA, The First Tee, the World Golf Hall of Fame and the World Golf Foundation. We have more golf courses than any other state (approximately 1200). Golf's overall economic impact in Florida is \$13.8 billion dollars per year. The industry employs 167,000 Floridians with wage income of \$4.7 billion. Golf, from the pro tour to local tournaments, donates approximately \$312 million to Florida charities. Golf course maintenance is a science, which is based on best management practices for environmental stewardship and water conservation.

We garnered positive feedback and made several significant contacts. We received suggestions as to the kind of information the state needed to assist our programs. In addition to the Golf Channel's Morning Drive coverage of the event, they have aired clips of the event on Golf Central. A resolution declaring "Florida Golf Day" will be read during the full session.

Our next step is to strengthen the Golf Alliance, set priorities and develop a plan to work with the Visit Florida tourism program highlighting golf as a tourist destination. Working together to strengthen the golf industry as a whole will strengthen our association and our livelihoods.