

\$1M endows turf research at Michigan State University

A \$1-million donation from the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation will establish a new endowment to fund faculty and graduate student research at Michigan State University.

"Our members see this as a sound investment in the state's fast-growing turfgrass industry," said Gordon LaFontaine, executive secretary of the foundation, adding that \$100,000 of the \$1-million pledge has been raised.

Annual income from the endowment will enable MSU to attract more graduate students.

Joseph M. Vargas, noted professor of botany and plant pathology at MSU, said, "Because our research is so labor-intensive, bright, dedicated graduate students are absolutely vital."

Vargas said the endowment will give MSU "the flexibility to pursue" research into alternative pest management strategies using biological methods to control pests and diseases and to minimize pesticide use.

The foundation will solicit contributions to the fund from its 1,000

members and others interested in turfgrass research. Groups such as the Michigan Lawn Sprayers Association and Michigan Cemetery Association have also joined the effort.

James H. Anderson, vice provost and dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said the foundation's involvement is "a prime example of a state industry and the university working together to benefit students, faculty, and, ultimately, Michigan's economy."

Modified Golf Assn. picks Puckett president

Troy Puckett, president of Cayman Golf Co. in Albany, Ga., has been elected president of the American Modified Golf Association.

Puckett replaced Bill Amick, architect of the first 18-hole course designed exclusively for modified-distance balls, Eagle Landing near Charleston, S.C.

Joining Puckett as officers are Vice President Charles Stine, who was re-elected, and Secretary John Nichols. Puckett remains as treasurer.

New board members are Gil Barfield, president of Hye Precision Products Co. in Perry, Ga.; and Bob Weber, director of product marketing for MacGregor Golf Co.

A Georgia Tech engineering graduate, Puckett was the key person involved in developing and improving the modified ball when in charge of golf ball production for MacGregor.

Cayman Ball Co. manufactures the Mactec ball for MacGregor.

Turf Managers hire executive

Dale F. Keller Jr. has replaced Mark Hodnick as executive director of the Sports Turf Managers Association, and Keller's R/K Communications Group, Inc. of Las Vegas, Nev., has been named the new management firm for the association.

Hodnick, who had filled the post in a volunteer role, remains on the board of directors.

Keller has more than 20 years of public relations management experience. He has directed projects on regional, national and international levels.

A disaster assistance employee for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, he is a former U.S. Army officer.

The association's headquarters has moved from Upland, Calif., to P.O. Box 98056, Las Vegas, Nev. 89193-8056; 702-739-8052.

Walker leaves GCA leadership

Curt Walker has resigned as executive director of Golf Course Association. Walker served the association first as a founding member in 1982, then as vice president and president and, since 1984, as executive director.

"A search committee has been formed and will be active in finding a replacement," according to GCA President Fred Tingle. Walker's departure will be effective when that person has been chosen.

"GCA will always be home to me," said Walker. "It's financial strength today and its recent growth have assured the association a firm position as a major organization in the emerging pattern of professional golf management organizations."

He said the association's "Marketing Plan Manual," recently published "Accounting for Public and Resort Golf Courses" and soon-to-be released "Management Letters Volume One" have placed GCA "in the center of the emerging demand for better management tools."

"GCA's role as the voice of privately owned public golf courses, and its acceptance by larger golf-related organizations where our interests are similar, has been a key to our recent growth," said Tingle, owner of Springdale Country Club in Canton, N.C.

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