

# President Pierman spells out builders' priorities

By Mark Leslie

A certification program to ensure standards of construction is Jerry Pierman's number-one priority as he enters a two-year term as president of the Golf Course Builders Association of America.

"We hope in five or 10 years people who build golf courses will ask a contractor if they are a member of GCBA and if they are certified. That will tell us our standards are being addressed and recognized," said Pierman, president of Pierman Golf Co. of North Palm Beach, Fla. Pierman succeeded Perry Dye as head of the 125-member organization.

Pierman said the golf boom of the 1980s opened the door for contractors to get in the business thinking it was easy—and big—money. "So we had some problems because of that. Now we've got to settle down, start the certification program, start policing ourselves, and bring the overall quality of work up to a better standard."

"But even more so, we can eliminate some of the problems we've had in the past—like projects over-running budget, getting started and not finished, starting with one builder but needing to call in another in the middle of construction."

Certification, he said, does not only deal with workmanship.

"That is number one in everybody's mind. But there are a lot of other problems that enter into building a course. We're trying to say, 'You've got to be financially solvent. You've got to have built so many golf courses. You've got to have qualified, experienced people. We want to see recommendations from former clients.'"

Saying that when a project runs into trouble, the builder is considered part of the problem, Pierman said: "In most instances that's not the case. The project is probably financed incorrectly to start with, budgeted incorrectly, planned poorly, or the game plan was not stuck to during construction."

To attack the problem, Pierman and the GCBA believe certifying builders is crucial, as is educating developers.

The certification program is being put in place. It allows the members of the GCBA to become certified through testing procedures once a year. "It tells the golf industry we are setting standards for ourselves. It does not mean if someone is not a member they are not a good contractor. But it says our members have met that standard," Pierman said.

The GCBA hopes to conduct the first certification testing in mid-August at its summer meeting during the PGA Championship in St. Louis, Mo. Then, once every year a representative of each company will take the test for renewal.

During this process, GCBA members intend to police themselves. The hope is that future certified contractors will check the work of companies that want to become certified.

Pierman foresees future GCBA-sponsored educational programs as a key for golf course developers, saying, "We're the builders. Who better to ask than us?"

GCBA seminars will address such issues as greens construction and rebuilding greens to United States Golf Association specifications — "what that entails time-wise, material-wise, cost-wise and quality-wise."

"A lot of courses built 20 or 30 years ago need greens reconstruction. There's a big market there today and, as years go on, more and more will want to rebuild their greens," he said.

Pierman said he anticipates educational programs beginning next year.

Pierman said: "Construction is obviously drifting a little away from the

big-budgeted courses. There will always be some around. But we probably won't see anything like we did in the 1980s for a while. There is going to be a large demand for the upscale semi-public golf course and the city- and county-owned course."

Pierman attributes the recent higher visibility and impact of the GCBA to the late executive director, Don Rossi, former presidents Dave Canavan and Dye, and to Rossi's successor, Philip Arnold.

Arnold "is on full-time and is very capable and has taken the position in

a positive, aggressive way has done an outstanding job for the builders," Pierman said.

Arnold said Pierman's presidency is perfect timing. "Jerry is very well spoken, respected, honest and does quality work," Arnold said. "And he wants to take the organization up a couple of steps in credibility and visibility."

Arnold said whereas the GCBA once met once a year, it now meets four times. "That takes a commitment," he said, adding that board members have already proved they will be more active.

## GCBA elects new officers

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—The GCBA has elected a new slate of officers headed by President Jerry L. Pierman. The new vice president is James J. Kirchdorfer, president of Irrigation Supply Co., Inc. Paul Eldredge, president of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. was elected secretary, while John A. McDonald, president of McDonald & Sons, was elected treasurer.



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