

# Allied associations: Strong public sector crucial to golf industry

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track in Maintenance and the National Golf Foundation is co-sponsoring the education sessions on Development, while Golf Course News is conducting the Management & Marketing conference.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA), American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and National Golf Course Owners Association are also participating in the trade show.

"Since the majority of golfers and golf courses are public facilities, it's important to try to reach as many of them as we can," said USGA Green Section National Director

Jim Snow. "We visit a significant number of new public courses throughout the country. But we want to reach out to even more of them, to put information in their hands pertaining to facets of our program that can benefit them and the game."

"Currently, the growth is [in public golf] and, from what we can see, it will be there for the next decade," said ASGCA Executive Director Paul Fullmer. "Public" has a broader definition now because you have so many different types of ownership — from municipalities and other government bodies to strategic alliances between developers and

property owners. It's not as simple as it used to be. I think you need a forum such as this [Golf Course Expo] for people to learn the best ways to do things, so that everybody doesn't have to spend a fortune to reinvent the wheel..."

"As it relates to our mission — to foster the growth and vitality of the game, we see public golf as the most important component to growing and fostering the growth of the game," said NGF Vice President Richard Norton. "The more access the general public has to golf, the more the game will grow. And that's what we're all about."

Pointing to the recent success of public golf facilities, GCBA Executive Vice President Phil Arnold said owners and managers of existing facilities are especially good candidates as future clients.

"I think it is a trend that people running public courses, and doing them fairly successfully, are building additional courses. And we want them to know about the GCBA and our certification program..."

"The renovation and remodeling business is going to be a very good source of work for golf course builders in the next 10 years — just by virtue of how the stakes have risen. People are demanding a little bit more from their local golf course. They want a little bit better this, and a little bit better that, and they want to redo this, or put in irrigation or drainage systems..."

## THE MAINTENANCE ANGLE

Regarding the Green Section's Turf Advisory Service, Snow said: "Most public courses are on a tight budget and don't want to spend the money. In general, they hesitate to pay consultants when they think they can get by themselves. They have hired a superintendent, so they think they need no more help."

"But, if we can identify areas where they are wasting money or spending more than they need to, or spending it in a way that is not as productive as they could, we can save them many thousands of dollars in many cases."

Snow recalled a visit to a nine-hole course in Maine years ago, when the cost of his consultation was \$500. "The course had a \$57,000 budget and \$20,000 was fertilizer," he said. "I saved them about \$15,000 a year just on fertilizer. All that for one measly \$500 visit."

## OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

"In the '80s golf was heavily real estate-driven. But now it's economically driven, which is good," Norton said. "And most of the growth has been fueled by daily-fee development."

More developers and financial organizations are discovering golf is a moneymaker, "but it's not a slam-dunk," Norton said. "It's in the industry's best interest to educate these people so they don't make mistakes. They need to know how to position a product and make sure the investment side matches the income potential."

"There's no doubt the public sector is the most important sector in golf," Fullmer added, "and that's not just because it is around 80 percent of the new course business. More importantly, it demonstrates that golf is truly a game for everyone and not an elitist sport."

## CANADIANS OK EXPO CREDITS

WESTON, Ontario, Canada — The Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) has approved certification points for people attending the education sessions at Golf Course Expo, according to CGSA Executive Director R. Vince Gillis. The CGCS board voted in September to extend the points to members working toward master superintendent status, Gillis said. Canadians must be superintendents for five years before they can begin work toward the master designation. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America had earlier approved continuing education units (CEUs) for Golf Course Expo.

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