



## Degree-carrying 2nd assistants seen as a trend of the 1990s

By J. BARRY MOTHEs

The steady supply of educated turfgrass graduates entering the job market year after year has led to more golf clubs and courses hiring degree-carrying second assistant superintendents, according to directors of some of the country's biggest and most highly-regarded college and university-based turfgrass programs.

"I think we've been seeing more and more head superintendents going with first and second assistants," said John "Trey" Rogers, an associate professor at Michigan State University. "They want more qualified people and for a few thousand dollars more [in salary] they can get an educated person as a second assistant. Their enthusiasm can make up for their

lack of experience and they're worth it."

Rogers said 30 of the 40 2-year turfgrass graduates at Michigan State this year are headed for second assistant jobs. He pointed out there are real practical advantages for superintendents at clubs and courses who have a full-time second assistant superintendent.

"If you only have one assistant and you lose him, you're in trouble," said Rogers. "But if you have two assistants climbing the career ladder, you'll have a second ready to step in when the first leaves which brings some stability to the program."

The story for college and university turfgrass graduates hitting the pavement in 1997 seems to be much the same as in recent years — excellent opportunities at the first assistant superintendent and second assistant level, but extremely tough competition for head superintendent's jobs, where 100 to 200 applicants are becoming the norm for head jobs.

"We're not having any problems placing graduates," said David Willoughby, associate professor and coordinator of the turfgrass management program at Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI). Willoughby said almost all the 35 to 50 graduates from Ohio State's ATI this year will be starting as first or second assistants.

"The trend in the industry seems to be that you need to earn your wings," said Willoughby. "Just because you're a whiz student doesn't mean you're going to go right out and be a [head] superintendent. But most of our students are not ready to be head supers right away anyway. They're being trained to move up through the system." Willoughby pointed out there are exceptions, of course, such as a student who may be coming into a turfgrass degree program after five or six years experience on a golf course.

The hottest sector in the golf course industry job market, according to several turfgrass and golf course operations program directors, is for golf course mechanics — or, as they are known more and more, turf equipment managers. However, there's nowhere near the supply to meet the demand.

"We could place a 100 of them a year if I had them," said John Piersol, chairman of the divisions of golf course operations and landscape technology at Lake City College in northern Florida. "There are just not enough good programs training golf course mechanics, and I don't mean small engine mechanics, I mean golf course mechanics."

Lake City has had a mechanics program since 1973 and Piersol said he's seen the demand soar in the past six to seven years. Lake City will graduate 27 students with degrees in turf equipment management. Piersol said the group received well over 80 job offers.

"The equipment is so sophisticated and expensive that the golf courses have started screaming for qualified people," said Piersol. He said today's golf course mechanic — or turf equipment manager — has to be a far more broadly skilled person than in the past. "He or she has to be 50 percent mechanic and 50 percent manager. Someone who can set up a shop, organize a preventative maintenance program, use a computer, train and equip operators, and fix things... But the potential for a skilled, organized person is excellent."

Piersol said he hopes other turf equipment management programs start developing around the country. Officials at Delhi College in New York visited Lake City to study its program and launched a new program at Delhi last fall. And, as reported in last month's Golf Course News, officials at several Denver-area technical colleges are also looking into establishing some type of degree program for turf equipment managers.

"I hope they're successful," Piersol said. "We can't train all the mechanics in the country, the need is just too huge."

## With DTN Weather Center at your fingertips, you'll never again be whipped by weather.

Unexpected weather can change your plans, cost you a bundle, wreck a project. But DTN Weather Center delivers everything you need to know. Twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week. National weather. Local weather.

**Full color maps, forecasts.** This new technology brings high resolution radar and satellite images with updated forecasts into your business...at low cost. You don't need a computer and you won't tie up the phone lines. Instant access at the touch of a button. The DTN Weather Center includes a small, one meter satellite dish, receiver, color monitor and mouse. There's nothing to buy!

### Cost?

There's a one-time initiation fee of \$318 plus \$49 to ship equipment to you. After that, pay just \$72 per month (\$216 billed quarterly) on a one-year contract. With a no hassle **30-day money back guarantee**. DTN systems serve more than 100,000 subscribers.

### Questions?

Call today about DTN Weather Center for your business.

**DTN WEATHER CENTER**



**1-800-610-0777**

Here's some of the information you get:

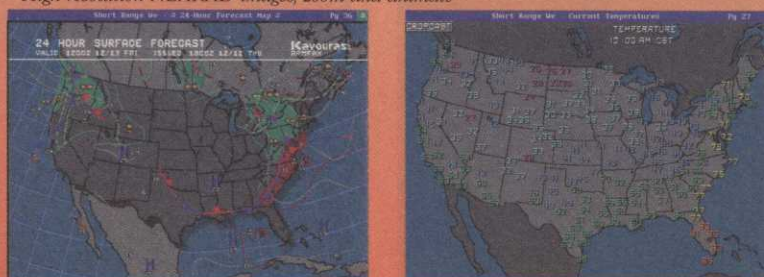
- Today's Weather Report
- U.S. & Worldwide Satellite Infrared Images
- Local & National NEXRAD Radar
- Current Weather Maps

- Hourly Temperatures & Wind Speeds
- Dew Point & Sky Conditions
- 12, 24, 36, & 48hr Forecast Maps
- Forecast High & Low Temps
- Precipitation Forecasts

- 3-5 & 6-10 Day Outlooks
- 30 & 90 Day Outlooks
- Detailed Local Forecasts
- 24-hour Weather Summaries
- Much, Much, More



High resolution NEXRAD images, zoom and animate



"If one of my superintendents knows it's going to rain for the rest of the afternoon and can let the help go, we've paid for two years of the Weather Center service."

*Tom Schlick, Director of Grounds Operations for Marriott Golf.*

"Our tests show it accurately delivers what it promises at a reasonable cost." *Turf Magazine.*

## Win DTN Weather Center FREE for 1 Year!

You could win the use of a DTN Weather Center for a full year just by returning this coupon. Complete system includes high resolution 14" color monitor, satellite receiver, one meter satellite dish and cable.

To enter, just fill out the information below and mail. Drawing to be held Dec. 31, 1997.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Send Info

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Please Call

Is weather important in the daily operation of your business? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Mail to:  
DTN Sweepstakes • 9110 West Dodge Road, Suite 200 • Omaha, NE 68114

GCN1297