

6-7 — GCSAA Seminar on Writing Successfully for Business and Publications in Somerset, N.J. *

10 — GCSAA Seminar on Employee Safety Training in Rhinelander, Wis. *

11-12 — GCSAA Seminar on Golf Greens: History, Theory, Construction and Maintenance in Wichita, Kansas. *

11 — GCSAA Seminar on Maximizing Turfgrass Disease Control in Lexington, Ky. *

11 — GCSAA Seminar on Options and Their Application in Pest Management in Industry, Calif. *

11 — GCSAA Seminar on Wetlands and Golf Courses in Novi, Mich. *

13-14 — GCSAA Seminar on Managing People for Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction. *

15-18 — Associated Landscape Contractors of America Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Conference and Green Industry Expo in Charlotte, N.C. Contact Elise Lindsey at 703-736-9666.

16-19 — Canada's First International Golf Business Conference in Barrie, Ontario. Contact 705-325-2740 ext. 3075.

17 — UMass Extension Biological Control Conference in Amherst, Mass. Contact Mary Owen at 508-892-0382.

17-18 — GCSAA Seminar on Plant Nutrition and Fertilizers in New Seabury, Mass. *

18 — GCSAA Seminar on Advanced Weed Management in Myrtle Beach, S.C. *

18-19 — GCSAA Seminar on Golf Greens: History, Theory, Construction and Maintenance in Garden City, N.Y. *

18 — GCSAA Seminar on Human Resource Management in Myrtle Beach, S.C. *

18 — GCSAA Seminar on Irrigation System Operation and Principles of Design in Myrtle Beach, S.C. *

18 — GCSAA Seminar on Lake and Aquatic Plant Management in San Marcos, Calif. *

20 — GCSAA Seminar on Employee Safety Training in New Rochelle, N.Y. *

20-21 — GCSAA Seminar on Managing People for Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction. *

21 — GCSAA Seminar on Irrigation System Operation and Principles of Design. *

December

2-3 — GCSAA Seminar on The Assistant Superintendent: Managing People and Jobs in Lincoln, Neb. *

3-4 — GCSAA Seminar on Managing People for Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction in Elicott City, Md. *

4 — GCSAA Seminar on Improving Your Negotiating Skills in Jacksonville, Fla. *

5 — GCSAA Seminar on Human Resource Management in Des Moines, Iowa. *

5 — GCSAA Seminar on Irrigation Water Quality in Sacramento, Calif. *

8 — GCSAA Seminar on Integrated Disease Management for Bermudagrass Golf Courses in Slidell, La. *

8-9 — GCSAA Seminar on Managing People for Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction. in Albuquerque, N.M. *

8 — GCSAA Seminar on Maximizing Teamwork in Atlantic City, N.J. *

9-10 — GCSAA Seminar on Managerial Productivity in Milwaukee. *

9-11 — New Jersey Turfgrass & Landscape Expo in Atlantic City, N.J. Contact Richard Caton at 908-821-7134.

9-11 — Georgia Turfgrass Conference and Show in College Park. Contact Doug Moody at 770-975-4123.

11 — Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association State Conference in Sturbridge. Contact Carol Kilcoyne at 508-650-1126.

15-17 — Texas Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show in San Antonio.

16 — GCSAA Seminar on Employee Safety Training in Oklahoma City. *

FROM THE COVER

Stormwater runoff

Continued from page 1

Commissioners, were created in part to help pay the costs of capital improvements to the county's stormwater system. But many courses began receiving annual stormwater bills that increased anywhere from seven to 20 times. Foxfire Golf Club, a privately-owned 27-hole daily-fee facility, paid \$5,466 in assessments in 1993 but saw its bill jump to \$37,840 in 1995. Municipal golf courses are exempt from the assessments.

The Suncoast Golf Courses Association recently won a concession from the county in the ongoing struggle. The county agreed to reduce the annual assessment rate for 1997-98 from .148 to .037, a 75-percent reduction that will mean a combined \$250,000 reduction in the amount paid by the courses. But Linda Talbot, vice-president and manager of the Foxfire Golf Club and president of the Suncoast Golf Courses Association, said the .037 rate is still too high. The association would like to see the rate go down to at least .0257, a difference that represents thousands of dollars.

"It's still a slap in the face as far as I'm concerned," said Talbot. "It's outrageous. The figures they are getting are so out of whack compared with what agriculture is paying. They're paying 10 percent less than we are. We still have to continue the fight. We're sod farmers in the purest sense of the word ... We're being penalized because we allow people to play on the surface we cultivate."

Talbot said the county's assessment rate, even the recently reduced one, is "not based on scientific facts ... it was a politically expedient thing for them to do to send off the litigation..." She also criticized some of the standards used by the county to develop the rate level for golf courses. She said cart paths are factored in, for example, as if they were large-scale parking lots. In developing its original rate, the county also stated that it assumed golf courses irrigated at least 3.5 inches a week and that agricultural concerns did not irrigate, both of which proved to be untrue.

J. P. Marchand, the deputy director of transportation for Sarasota County who oversees the county's stormwater program, said the new, reduced rate for golf courses was the result of using more sophisticated methodology. He said it recognizes that golf courses do not contribute as much runoff as a neighborhood lawn.

"I think our initial rate was fair," said Marchand, the former manager of the stormwater program, "but maybe you could say the new rate is 'more fair.' As we move on we may make even more refinements... Maybe we could have gotten to this step sooner... but we've made some adjustments and some modifications."

Golf courses and government bodies in several other counties in Florida have been watching the Sarasota stormwater assessment controversy with great interest. Stormwater runoff assessments, like fire and rescue, are what are known as non-ad valorem and are assessed against individual property owners according to the benefits to that particular property.

In Florida, except for certain charter counties, non-ad valorem assessments like the stormwater runoff one may be made by the county without a public vote, which is what happened in Sarasota. The concern of golf courses across the state is that Sarasota County's treatment of privately-owned golf courses could become a pattern in other counties.

Talbot said even though her group's legal costs are rising, they will continue to fight the county, and if necessary, help golf course owners in other counties. Don Hemke, an attorney with the firm of Carlton Fields in Tampa, has been representing the golf course owners group since January. "I think we have a challenge and obligation to educate the County Board of Commissioners," said Talbot, "to educate politicians about what we do, and how well we do it, how much oxygen we supply, how much nature we support and how careful we are with the chemicals we do use."

Golf Course Marketplace

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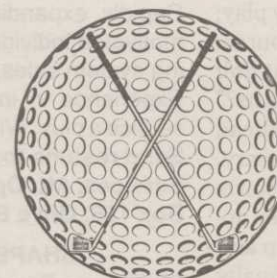
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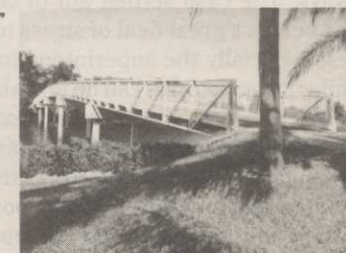
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