

What's the cost of a good idea?

You have everything in order at your public course.

The community at large is well aware of your perfectly-groomed, environmentally-sound facility. Players new to the game are lined up on weekday mornings due to your smart marketing efforts in print and radio for your extensive learning center. School children are walking your course to learn of the indigenous wildlife. Due to your participation in the Audubon program, you've been commended by the community for playing a role in bringing two species of birds back to the area. The local paper has documented this reintegration.

Your public-access course is not only providing top-quality recreation, but it's playing a vital educational role in the community.

You're on top of the all the issues, all the vital statistics, all the business information you need to steer your public course into profitable waters despite the new course opening five miles away.

Everything is rosy.

You're right, you don't need to attend Public Golf Forum — or any conference and expo for that matter.

But since chances are that your public course isn't free and clear of increased competition and pressures for improvement, attending a conference and expo strictly devoted to overcoming those exact business hurdles isn't such a bad idea — it might even bring you a little closer to that "ideal world."

On October 27 & 28 in Oak Brook Hills, Ill. (just outside of Chicago), *Golf Course News* will call to order one the best collections of names in the business for Public Golf Forum.

The structure is simple: Two days; three conference tracks — Management/Marketing, Development and Maintenance; 28 sessions including presentations by Billy Casper, Judy Bell and Michael Hurdzan; and a gathering of exhibitors who service the public golf arena (see ad on page 12 for more details). Within those two days, Public Golf Forum will play host to fresh ideas on how to stay profitable as your golf course continues to compete for America's leisure time.

What Public Golf Forum can do for your facility is up to you. You can come, listen and interact and I'll personally guarantee you'll take something home with you. Cost of travel got you down? Tell me this, what is the cost of a new idea? If you make one new connection, share one war story or make one note inside your conference resources manual, you've paid for your trip.

It's two days out of your month, but two days closer to a better facility. Give us a call at 800-441-6982 ext. 262 to register. And when you figure out the cost of a good idea, let me know.

On the next page you'll find a guest commentary piece by Karen Moraghan of Hunter Public Relations, a company that specializes in golf events. Her column reports the findings of the Sunriver Resort Women's Golf Forum, a gathering of 18 women heavily involved in the golf industry.

If you're looking to increase your customer base, I would suggest you make Karen's column your next read.

I've been hammering away on how the industry needs to develop new players, new customers — so much in fact that we developed a special session at this year's Public Golf Forum. The markets are there, you just have to do the work.

Last month I used this space to relay the story of my golf outing with the son of a colleague. It's within everyone's reach, the column said, to take the time to do his or her part to get kids involved — and keep them involved.

A junior golfer needs encouragement. Think of the first couple times you played 18. Who took you? Who was there to help?

By the way, rumor has it that John Deere is about to get into the golf car business. Stay tuned for details.



Michael Levans,
editor

Breaking down the myths

Did you know that 1 part per billion is equivalent to one bogey in 3-1/2 million golf tournaments? Well, that's hard to relate to, so let's try this: 1 inch in 16,000 miles, or 1 second in 32 years. OK, so after applying dicamba to a USGA-spec golf green, Drs. George Snyder and John Cisar of the University of Florida find 2.5 parts per billion of the herbicide in the leachate from that green. Are you ready to jump off the nearest four-story roof if that were in your drinking water? Do you want to take the nasty stuff off the market? And 2,4-D, for that matter; its leaching was similar.

Many are probably lining up now to say:

"Call in Greenpeace."

"Call in Earth First!"

"Call in Al Gore!"

No, hold on ... but hold that thought.

Tests found that 2,629 milligrams of dicamba per liter of water were necessary to harm a rat, and 1,000 milligrams per liter for rainbow trout and bluegill.

2,4-D is even less of a danger, having a toxicity somewhere between aspirin and caffeine. Trout and bluegill, ducks and quail would almost have to wash down their meals with 2,4-D to cause concern.

Keeping in mind that it's the feds who have determined allowable levels, perhaps it is better to call in ... the National Guard. Do I hear support? Cheers?

Hey, we use these good all-American peace-keeping folks to hand out food in Africa, control order at the voting booths of Haiti and build boat landings. Let's put them to use here in America. I'm sure we could find some good all-American college professors to volunteer to train the troops to take leachate readings — and they could seat the meek Veep at the head of the class.

My point? When the media, and those who use the media, make public statements about this herbicide or that pesticide "being detected in" ground water or drinking water, they put the amount of that detection in perspective.

Is this a new message? No. But it is one that apparently needs repeating. A Rutgers University professor recently warned people not to lick their golf balls and tees, and golf's good friend Paul Harvey was only too willing to be the broadcasting mouthpiece to all America. He didn't even need any prodding from Mr. Gore.

For golf course managers/trend-watchers who want to be proactive pioneers: You might consider assigning spaces in your parking lot for pregnant women and other "mobility-impaired" visitors. Mind you, this may be mandated in a couple of States.

So beat the heat and implement the policy yourself.

The list of superintendents whose courses are on-site testing program hosts for the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program bentgrass and Bermudagrass tests, reads like a *Who's Who*.

They range from Joe Alonzi at Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y., to Ray Davies at Crystal Springs Golf Course in Burlingame, Calif.; Mark Clark at Country Club of Green Valley in Arizona; Walter Montross at Westwood Golf Course in Vienna, Va.; Jerry Colidiron at Boone Links Golf Course in Florence, Ky.; Don Tolson at Fox Hollow at Lakewood in Colorado; Rob Kloska at Jupiter Island Club in Hobe Sound, Fla.; Keith Ihms at Bent Tree Country Club in Dallas; Dan Dinelli at North Shore Country Club in Glenview, Ill.; Ron Wright at Country Club of Mobile in Alabama; David Hein of Golf Club at Newcastle in Bellevue, Wash.; Mike Sandburg at Lakeside Country Club in Houston; Jim Scott at Purdue University North Course in West Lafayette, Ind.; John Martinez at SCGA Members Club in Murrieta, Calif.; and Robert Deardeuff at The Missouri Bluffs in St. Charles, Mo.

Hats off to them all for the personal time and effort this will take. But the rewards to the industry, testing these grasses in real-life conditions, will be great for everyone.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor



A NATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND EXPO FOR SUPERINTENDENTS, OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF COURSES
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