

Survey reveals certified supers earn more, but all salaries are up

LAWRENCE, Kansas — A Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) analysis of member compensation and benefits indicates significant increases in both, due largely to job experience and education levels.

Two survey instruments, which did not vary notably, were distributed to GCSAA members in 1995 and again in 1998. Overall, the salaries for golf course superintendents increased 8 percent (from \$49,269 to \$53,205) during the three-year period.

Certified golf course superintendents (CGCS) with more than 20 years' experience commanded the most significant salary increase on average, at 17.9 percent (from \$56,618 to \$66,774). The certified designation recognizes the achievement of high standards of professionalism through education and experience. Those certified members, regardless of experience, gained 10.4 percent in compensation in the same time span. In total, certified superintendent salaries average 27 percent higher than those salaries of superintendents who are not certified. Fifty percent of all GCSAA members earn more than \$50,000 annually, while 15 percent earn more the \$75,000.

The median response to the 1998 survey profiles a superintendent with 10 years' experience gained at two different golf facilities, with 6.73 years at his/her current position. That compares with the 1995 survey of 12 years' experience with a current

position average of seven years. As also observed in 1995, the average age of superintendents is 40 years old. In 1998, superintendents managed budgets and payroll of \$500,000 (median national response) and averaged

15 direct reports.

"The marketplace is extremely responsive," said GCSAA Board of Director and Career Development Committee Chairman Tommy Witt. "What it is telling us is No. 1, a GCSAA

golf course superintendent's value is increasing; and No. 2, employers recognize the merits of having a certified golf course superintendent managing the physical asset of a facility."

The salary survey also reveals

that superintendents report to a variety of managers/employers. Leading the list is the general manager (26 percent), green committee (22 percent) and owner (19 percent). Those employers also display widespread support of GCSAA activities, with 96 percent paying association dues, 91 percent providing funds of seminar/trade show fees plus travel and 89 percent footing the bill for GCSAA superintendent chapter dues.

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Continued from page 29

in frequent watering we'd see an elevation of CO₂ and a reduction of oxygen. We did not," White said, "which particularly surprised me because we had an insignificant amount of root system at that depth.

"It flies in the face of things we have taught and believed. When we watered every fourth day [on plots with roots extended deeper than 6 inches], the next day we saw a decline in oxygen level. First, I think, because there was more water and a slowing diffusion level because we have thatch in that soil. Second, because there was a greater root mass and root activity below the 6-inch depth, and biological respiration is one of the things necessary to lower oxygen."

White said he feels the four-day water cycle "will help wherever you're growing bentgrass, particularly in the South and transition zone."