

We'd like to hear from you.

E-mail us at gci@gie.net with your thoughts and opinions.

FEEDBACK

Reality check

Thanks to Pat Jones for the call to action to everyone in the industry (February, "The Cold Hard Reality of Spring," page 66). Often I get to tell the story of playing golf in South Carolina at a course with a couple members from that course. I dipped my towel in a creek and they screamed at me, "Don't do that; the water is full of chemicals!" Of course this is where the rubber meets the road for us all. Can we stand up and tell the right story – right then?

Keep up the good work.

P.S.: The end of the story is those guys got an earful after they tried to save my life!

Mark Esoda, CGCS
Atlanta Country Club
Marietta, Ga.

"The Cold Hard Reality of Spring" is perfect and excellent timing. I just published an article in our newsletter asking Iowa superintendents to get involved at the grassroots level with their local and state 'politicians.' Nobody wants to do that, but we know it is critically important. I love your 'five relatively painless little ways' angle and think we could make huge progress if even 25 percent of our people would do that. Thanks, as always.

Jeff R. Wendel, CGCS
Executive director
Iowa Turfgrass Institute
Ames, Iowa

In response to Pat Jones' Feb. column, I'll give a shout for Mike Crawford, TPC Sugarloaf, Duluth, Ga. Yes, he is one of my peers in the TPC Network, but he is a 2010 EGR recipient for his tremendous work in Georgia with water issues. His work was extremely beneficial for superintendents in Georgia during the recent drought in that state.

Roger A. Stewart Jr. CGCS
Director of golf course
maintenance
TPC Twin Cities
Blaine, Minn.

Irrigation system questions

I feel Erik Christiansen's column ("Satellites, Decoders and Disaster," January, page 23) is grossly inaccurate. A new 1,400-head, FD 101 decoder irrigation system was installed five years ago here at Aurora Hills Golf Course near Denver, Colo. The system was installed according to all manufacturer specifications including lightning. The Denver area is a very arid climate with average rainfall of less than 15 inches a year. Denver also receives a high amount of lightning strikes each year. In a five-year period less than 10 FD101 decoders have had to be replaced because of lightning. Christiansen's comments about decoder systems falling short in lightning protection and survivability are just not the case. The performance of our decoder irrigation system is second to none. I am a little confused by Christiansen's statements about decoders, as well. In Jeffrey Brauer's column in the same issue (page 18), he mentions Mr. Christiansen designed a decoder system that was installed at Firekeeper to reduce wire, labor costs, field controllers and should reduce potential for lightning strikes. What gives?

Michael P. Osley, CGCS
Aurora Hills Golf Course
Aurora, Colo.

Erik Christiansen responds

System users, irrigation designers and industry friends responded to my January column with an interesting mix of agreement, disagreement and personal experiences. As with many issues superintendents face daily, no one answer fits; nor does one professional's experience translate to all others. Both system types are proven successful, and both have been around for at least 50 years sporting a variety of brands, versions and applications. Users of each type have had good and bad experiences. Based on my experiences as a professional irrigation consultant, both satellite and decoder systems have very loyal followings. Irrigation designers, superintendents and sometimes even contractors tend to polarize toward one or the other.

Over the years, I've designed both types of systems and have seen both succeed. I openly discuss with clients the pros and cons of both system types and how they apply to their specific projects, site conditions, budgets, crews and other factors. My goal is to use all of the facts, experience and data to provide the absolute best advice to my clients, according to their needs and resources.

I stand by my recommendation under the scenario presented: For a large system in a hot, arid, lightning-prone area, where a lack of irrigation can damage turf within 24 to 48 hours, I would recommend a system that had the greatest back-up watering capability – a satellite system.

I enjoyed the feedback and appreciate everyone who took the time to write in or contact me. To me, this is what makes a great column topic – people openly sharing their depth of knowledge and experiences that offer practical benefits to current and future decision makers.

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