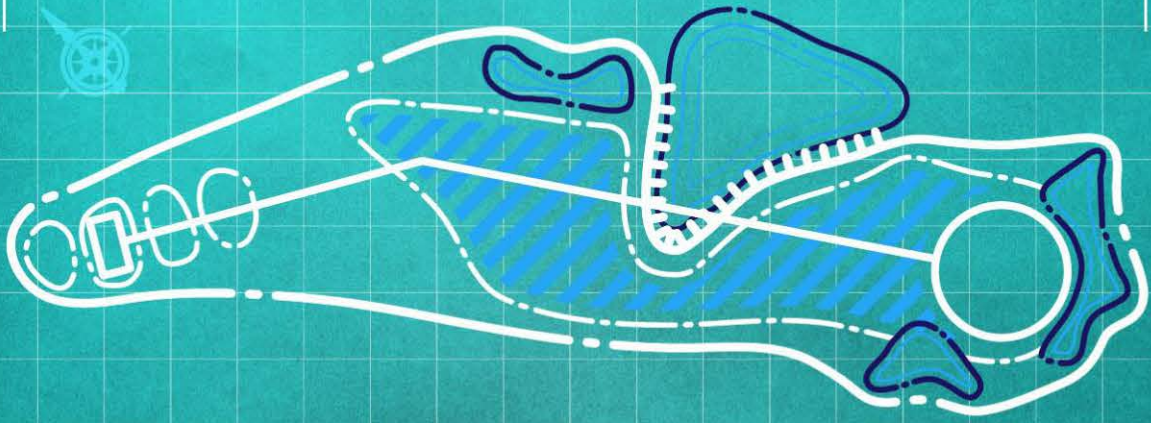


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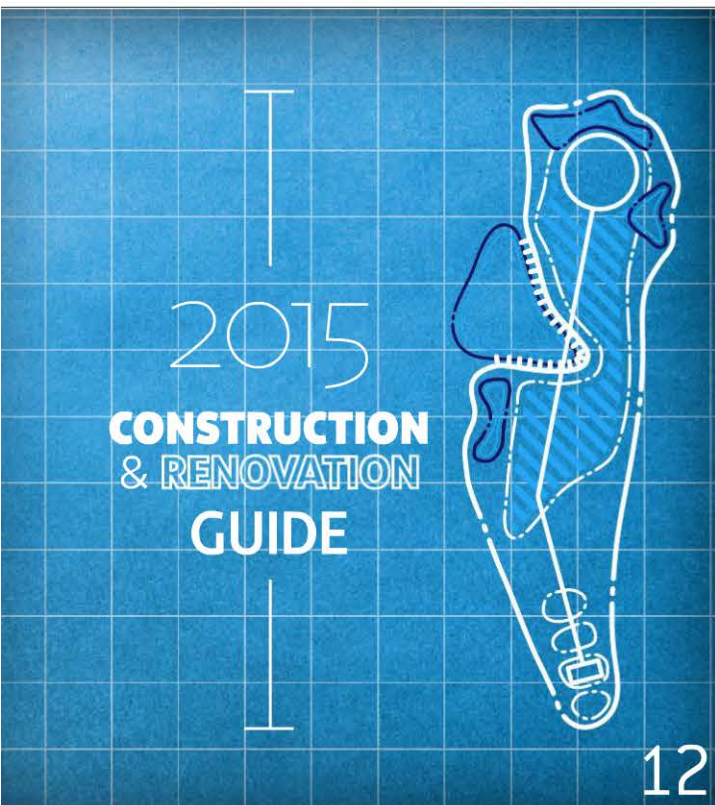


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TEEING OFF

RISING TIDE

In the alphabet soup of golf associations that includes the USGA, PGA of America, CMAA and GCSAA, there are two more that sometimes get left off: GCBAA and ASGCA. Though smaller, these two groups should stand out for some interesting reasons.

First, they are essentially “guilds” as opposed to professional associations that support individual needs or trade associations that promote sales of products. Back in the day, guilds were confederations of craftsmen or specialists. The earliest guilds were stone masons, barbers, blacksmiths and other groups where expertise, business practices and culture were shared by members. They set standards, promoted and preserved good practices, and tried their best to drum up business for everyone.

Our modern-day guilds, represented by the golf course builders and architects groups, perform something of the same function today. Though their members essentially compete against each other for jobs, they recognize they have common needs and goals and that (to borrow one of Steve Mona’s favorite sayings) a rising tide lifts all boats.

Thus, the ASGCA and GCBAA try like hell to make the tide rise.

And, it’s starting to work.

The old golf market, where we insanely built 300-400 courses a year for a while, is dead and nothing is likely to ever revive it. The new golf market, where smart facilities recognize the need to improve their courses to attract a smaller and choosier group of avid players, is emerging nicely. So, today’s rising tide is remodeling, renovation and enhancement.

Our new research in this issue makes it clear that among our core readers, renovation is booming. Half of you told us you were remodeling bunkers or planning to redo them soon. Irrigation upgrades and other infrastructure are also humming along. One final highlight: practice facilities are a hot spot for design and construction as clubs recognize that members want first-class amenities in addition to a first-class course.

Today, both associations are benefitting from grinding years of promoting the value of working with certified professionals. The days when hiring a GCBAA certified builder or an ASGCA member architect were cost-prohibitive are largely over. In a post-recession world, why wouldn’t you spend about the same amount of money to have your master-planning and renovation work done by the best, most experienced professionals you can find?

There’s one final similarity between the GCBAA and ASGCA that’s noteworthy. Both are overseen by younger, energetic



Pat Jones

Editorial director and publisher

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TEERING OFF

people who have embraced new ways to achieve old goals. I'm proud to call both Justin Apel of GCBA and Chad Ritterbusch of ASGCA friends... and I'm even prouder to have them in important leadership positions as our industry rebounds and evolves. Their hard work combined with the wisdom and vision of their boards is a powerful combination at just the right time.

“ In a post-recession world, why wouldn't you spend about the same amount of money to have your master-planning and renovation work done by the best, most experienced professionals you can find?”

Speaking of the right time, we feel that 2016 is the year to celebrate the renewal of our market by bringing back by our builders awards program. And, we hope to make it a little broader to include not just projects driven by GCBA members but also designs done by those guys in the red tartan jackets. Stay tuned for details on how you'll be able to nominate your facility's recent project soon.

Finally, a quick thank you to three supporters of GCBA who underwrote our special report on construction and remodeling this month: Rain Bird Golf, Better Billy Bunker and Best Sand. As always, great companies have a vision to support good ideas. And right now, there's no better idea than improving your course for the next generation of customers. **GCI**



GCI is doing many things to engage members of the Golf Course Builders Association of America (show above) and we will be bringing back our builders awards program in 2016. The awards will also honor the work of American Society of Golf Course Architects members

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Heavy-metal maintenance

Superintendent John Shaw explains his decision to implement a fleet of robotic greens mowers at Valley Brook Country Club.

By Guy Cipriano

John Shaw, the superintendent at Valley Brook Country Club, implemented a fleet of RG3 robotic greens mowers this season at the 27-hole facility in suburban Pittsburgh. Cub Cadet acquired the Precise Path Technology earlier this year, but Shaw spent 2014 using two robotic mowers on nine holes and the putting green.

One of his goals involved reducing turf stress from rolling, a necessary process to provide the surfaces members demanded. Shaw collected data twice a day, comparing the nine holes (the gold nine) mowed by the robots to the 18 holes (red and blue nines) maintained by double-cutting and rolling. The robots mow and roll in the same action, and the greens on the gold nine were running six inches faster than those on the other two nines, according to Shaw.

Selling robots to the membership ranks among his biggest challenge, especially considering only the Bayou Club in Largo, Fla., was using the technology. The concept led to initial member “pushback” and some employees “seemed a little bit nervous” about learning the computers. With his standing with members on the line Shaw lobbied the club to purchase six robotic

mowers, but last season’s improved putting surfaces were worth the risk.

The RG3 is programmed to mow in seven directions, a different one for each day of the week, and Shaw says the mowers are allowing Valley Brook to create dramatic stripping without sacrificing ball speed. Six employees operate the mowers on a typical morning. An employee removes the flagstick and starts the mower upon reaching a green, and repairs ballmarks and rakes bunker edges as the robot mows. Before this year, it took 10 employees to maintain greens each morning, with seven double-cutting turf and three more rolling surfaces and changing cups.

“Certainly it hasn’t been full-proof. We have had issues throughout the year, where a wire goes bad here or there. It might drive some guys crazy, but it doesn’t drive me crazy. It’s just a new challenge... I’m very, very satisfied with it and plan on continuing to go through with it.”

To learn more about the mowers, type <http://bit.ly/1iPdR9K> into your browser for a Superintendent Radio Network podcast featuring Shaw. **GCI**



From THE FEED

We asked superintendents where September ranks among their busiest months. One clever response suggested we picked the wrong month to ask such a question.



Robert Searle

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IT'S ALL IN THE PRESENTATION



Jeffrey D. Brauer is a veteran golf course architect responsible for more than 50 new courses and more than 100 renovations. A member and past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, he is president of Jeffrey D. Brauer/GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas. Reach him at jeff@jeffreymbrauer.com.

The U.S. Open, played this year at the nearly treeless Chambers Bay and is slated for the similarly “tree challenged” Erin Hills in Wisconsin in 2017. Next year, it returns to the course that made those venues possible – Oakmont. The course last hosted in 2007, shortly after undergoing a well-regarded tree removal program. It changed some thinking at the USGA, which had famously favored heavily wooded and very narrow U.S. Open courses.

The 2007 U.S. Open popularized tree removal, much like the 2000 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach started a trend toward more fairway chipping areas around greens to provide a variety of recovery shots over pure difficulty. Such is the influence of major televised tournaments.

While there have been some successful tree removal programs at educated and enlightened clubs, at most courses, tree reductions remain a hard sell. And, most love trees, so leading off with “tree removal” puts many on the defensive. For starters, any proposal calling for “long-term tree management” is more popular.

With general agreement that your tree assets are valuable and should be maximized, the next logical step is to have an arborist create a tree inventory, including number, age, size, species and condition. His survey should be supplemented by observations and recommendations from the superintendent, the USGA (or other) agronomist and a golf course architect. When (and if) it comes time to report findings and make recommendations, you can still expect resistance, and three reasons to remove a tree are stronger than just one.

When asked for tips on “selling” tree removal programs, I usually agree selling is what is necessary. As an architect, I long ago (and reluctantly) concluded that “architectural merit” doesn’t convince them as well as more tangible and direct benefits. These may include agronomic reasons, couched in terms of a better playing experience over ease of maintenance by the superintendent. Score enhancement, aesthetic or playability reasons can also sell in smaller doses.

Here are some of the most compelling reasons for any specific tree removals:

1. They allow for more sunlight and air circulation, and less root competition, resulting in better grass coverage. I use sun angle charts (easily found on the Internet) to show shade conditions in usually critical low spring, fall and (in the south) winter sun. But, the sales pitch is reducing early morning frost delays and lost tee times in spring and fall, when getting in the year’s first and last rounds.

2. And, safety, highlighted by the famous Sergio Garcia “root shot” at Medinah in the 1999 PGA.

3. Addressing environmental issues, tree removal might improve:

- Overall tree health on the entire course. Sometimes, beloved older, larger trees are not as healthy as they appear.
- Assist creating a more sustainable environment.
- Reduce the water bill, because trees consume more soil moisture than turf. And, many trees close to the fairways, tees and greens actually interrupt the irrigation pattern

4. Addressing maintenance cost, tree removals are likely to impact:

- Cleanup costs associated with “trash trees” like Willows, and Cottonwoods, which cost many hours of maintenance work, and some golfer delays and lost balls.
- Re-seeding, sod and hand watering costs.

5. Concerned with course history, examine earlier tree planting closely:

- Were trees planted as memorials over better golf?
- Did locations relate to architecture?
- Were species selected due to cost rather than suitability?
- Were any experts consulted?
- Were the tree planting committees in any way qualified?
- Did values of the day, i.e. the “Tough is Better” mentality of golf course ratings systems of the 1960-1990s influence placement, and are those still valid?
- When a rough area was full, did they stop planting, or just start encroaching on formerly wide fairways?

If your course is typical, many trees were selected for low cost or quick growth, then located without much detailed and long-term thought as to eventual size. But, times change, and with that mission long ago accomplished, and other trees in the mix, can we ask if it’s time to remove them?

(BRAUER continues on page 64)

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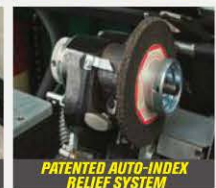
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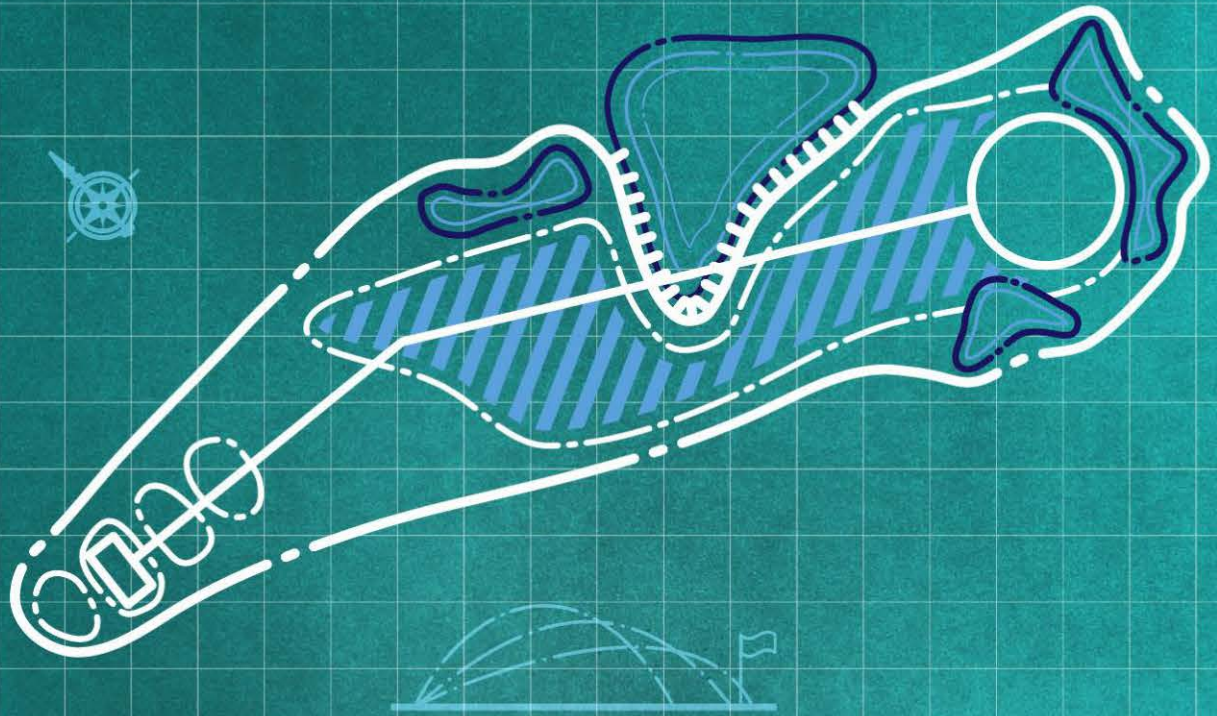
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Davenport Country Club underwent a major renovation that started Aug. 1, 2014 and ended May 29, 2015.

Big stuff on the bluffs

A group of golf construction veterans concocted a plan that allowed Davenport Country Club to complete a massive renovation at a dizzying pace.

By Guy Cipriano

Polishing an aging gem can yield jarring numbers, and director of agronomy Dean Sparks doesn't seek a tablet, laptop or desktop when providing numerical evidence of the scope of work pursued at Davenport Country Club.

One of the largest makeovers in the 91-year-old course's history started Aug. 1, 2014 and ended May 29, 2015. Without prodding or hesitation during a course tour in early July,

Sparks reveals from memory the equipment and materials used during the renovation: 1,100 semi-trucks to haul and 13 bulldozers to move 5,700 tons of USGA greens mix, 4,600 tons of sand and 2,000 tons of pea gravel. GCBAACertified members involved in the renovation, Landscapes Unlimited and Leibold Irrigation, combined to bring nearly 150 workers to the Pleasant Valley, Iowa, site.

"It was massive," Sparks says. "We redid greens, tees, regressed all the fairways, redid

the bunkers, most of the irrigation ... Normally when I have done this before, we have been closed over a year. This we did in eight months. It was pretty spectacular how everything worked together. Guys did a great job. Both construction companies were great to work with."

Before returning to his native Iowa, Sparks experienced multiple renovations as an employee in the TPC Network. He also worked with Pete Dye on projects at Crooked Stick Golf Club and the Pete Dye

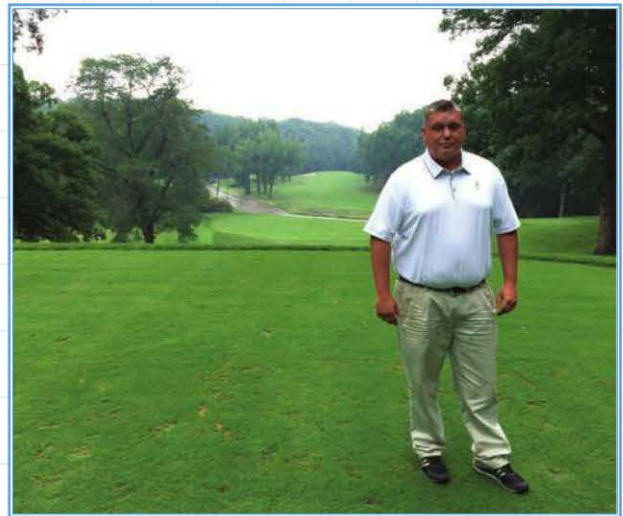
Course at French Lick Resort, a pair of highly regarded Indiana golf courses.

Every renovation, though, features different dynamics, and the ability to work at a dizzying pace without sacrificing quality defined what transpired on the bluffs above the Mississippi River. Sparks arrived at Davenport in March 2014, well after architects Ron Forse and Jim Nagle had established a master plan for the club. Sparks carefully reviewed the plan after being hired and everybody associated with Davenport started entering renovation mode by June. When Forse and Nagle arrived in Iowa for the first day of construction, they didn't need to search for personnel or materials. A staging area adjacent to the par-3 eighth hole had been established a month before the course closed.

Ideal construction weather greeted crews. The club didn't receive any significant rainfall during the first five weeks of work, which allowed seeding to begin in September. "That was key," Sparks says, "but the biggest thing was having everything staged and ready to go so we weren't waiting on anything."

College football represents one of Sparks' non-work passions, and in some ways he resembled a coach who guided his team to a 21-0 lead in the first half of a season opener. He spent last August observing crews execute a plan to perfection.

"Dean spearheaded the preparation and we were in constant contact," Forse says. "We felt like we had a really good plan, and I could tell this was going to be a really good course when it was done. That



Director of agronomy Dean Sparks oversaw the renovation at Davenport Country Club immediately after returning to his Iowa roots.

preparation was really key and Dean just did a great job pulling it together. He saved the club a ton of money because he knew how to work things."

Sparks, like most solid football coaches, quickly credits others. "We had a great plan in place from Ron, which put us in position to be successful," he says.

Forse calls the work at Dav-

enport neither a restoration nor renovation, instead opting for the term "retro rebuild." He describes a "retro rebuild" as a way of reestablishing a course's identity while updating major course infrastructure.

Davenport presented desirable opportunities for all parties involved. For Sparks, this might have been the most personal project of his ca-

Architects Ron Forse and Jim Nagle studied the work of Charles Alison to determine a style of bunkering that fit Davenport Country Club.



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reer because it occurred in his hometown and at a club where he envisions enjoying a long tenure. The project offered Forse and Nagle a rare chance to work on a course originally designed by renowned British architect Charles Alison, who designed less than 40 courses in the United States. The large scope of the work provided Landscapes Unlimited and Leibold with a forum to showcase their abilities to deliver quality work on tight deadlines. "It was high energy, high pressure," Forse says.

Deadlines often spark the best work in talented and driven people guided by a supportive leadership. Seeing your entire golf course ripped apart isn't for the meek, but a trusting membership like the one at Davenport allows creative minds to flourish, according to Forse.

The team Davenport assembled flipped a charming, classic golf course that hosted 1936 and '51 Western Opens into a layout with the potential to host prominent events. Besides modernizing course infrastructure, the project expanded the level of detail found on every hole.

The greens had not been altered since a renovation in the early 1990s, according to Sparks, and improving drainage and creating more space for acceptable pin placements were goals. A member of the Landscapes Unlimited team used GPS technology to help return greens to the way Alison designed them. "They are subtle works of strategic art," Forse says.

The greens were regrassed with .007 bentgrass, a variety touted for its dark green color and disease resistance.

Overview

Seven-figure renovations are no longer anomalies.

Nearly **one in every five renovations (19 percent)** will cost more than \$1 million, according to respondents. Competition among resorts and improving financial situations at private clubs are spurring the large-scale renovation activity.

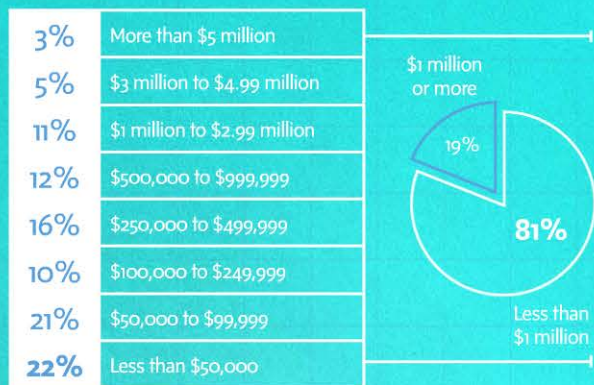
Renovations, though, come in all sizes, and it's important to note that **43 percent of courses making physical changes will spend less than \$100,000**. The leading reason for making a change is **improving maintenance/golfer enjoyment** (36 percent) followed by **enhancing course infrastructure** (30 percent).

For **30 percent** of superintendents, **balancing daily tasks** while overseeing constructions represents their biggest concern surrounding a project. Only **22 percent** of superintendents, by contrast, cited **cost as their biggest concern**.

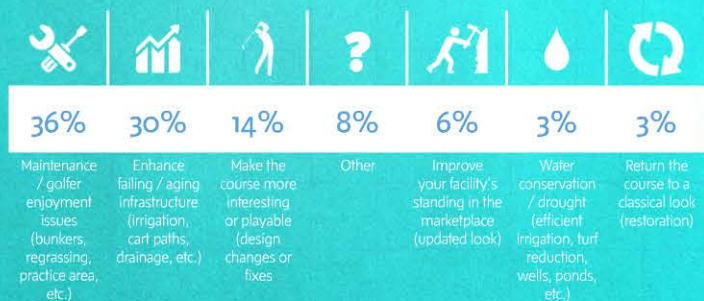
Fairways and tees were also converted to .007 while a turf-type fescue was established in the rough.

Parts of the course that require no grow-in – or even turf – underwent significant aesthetic and playability changes. The number of bunkers was reduced from 49 to 37, but

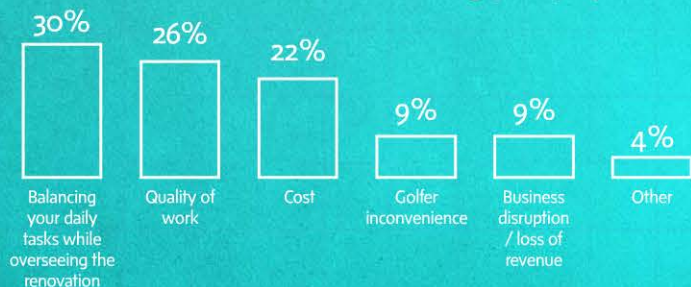
How much will be spent on physical changes between now and the end of 2016?



Primary reason for the change



What's the main concern surrounding your project?



fewer bunkers doesn't equate to less sand on the course.

The right greenside bunker on the third hole is 14,000 square feet. The bunker is so big that crews place seven rakes around its periphery for members. Three holes later, golfers must negotiate – and crews must hand rake – a bunker

measuring 10,000 square feet.

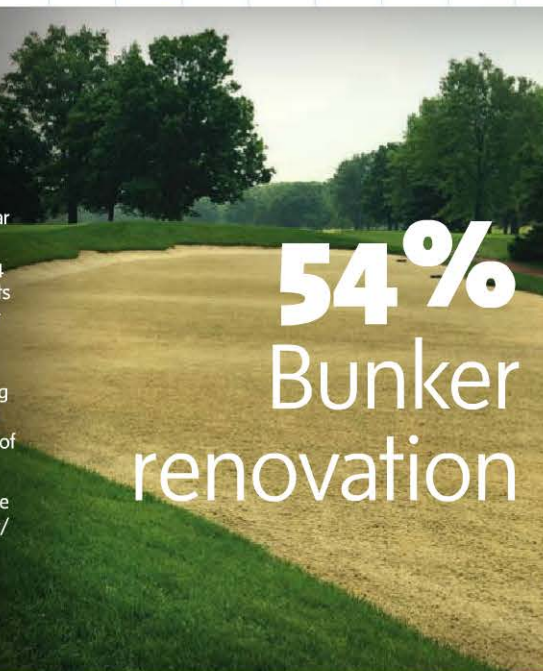
Forse and Nagle studied photographs and aerials of Alison's work when designing the bunkers, which feature a jagged appearance. Inspiration for multiple bunkers at Davenport originated from Hirono Golf Club, a Japanese course considered to be one of

2016 Course Changes

We declared 2015 the “Year of the Rebuilt Bunker” in our State of the Industry report (<http://bit.ly/ryDgsol>). We might as well begin calling 2016 “Year of the Rebuilt Bunker, Part 2.”

Many courses that didn’t get around to bunker projects this year are planning on improving the hazards in 2016. More than half (54 percent) of our survey respondents list bunker renovation as a project their courses will pursue in 2016. Drainage improvements (45 percent) and adding or remodeling tee boxes (44 percent) are second and third, respectively, on the list of planned course changes.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the survey is that maintenance facility/building structure improvements (15 percent) will significantly outnumber major renovations (3 percent) in 2016.



45%	Drainage improvements
44%	Adding or remodeling tee boxes
38%	Cart paths
27%	Significant tree removal program
27%	Practice area enhancement
27%	Regrassing
26%	Irrigation system upgrade
22%	Greens reconstruction
15%	Maintenance facilities, building structures
10%	Fairway reconstruction
8%	Other
5%	Significant turf removal program
3%	Complete reconstruction/renovation/restoration

Alison’s best designs. The bunkers don’t resemble the original ones at Davenport, but they fit the setting. “We brought in the highest form of Alison’s art that we know of into a course that

didn’t originally have that,” Forse says, “but it fits.” The bunkers are also the scene of the course’s flattest lies, according to Sparks.

Forse spends most of his

working time enhancing older courses, and he says he doesn’t remember a cold-weather project accomplishing as much in such a short period as Davenport. “The challenge was the pressure,” he says. “We wanted to do it perfectly in a short amount of time. I’m so happy. Jim and I are elated, because it was a big team effort with us. We are really elated. The have their old course back, but better.”

And, according to Sparks, others looking to achieve a similar feat need can rely on

old, yet proven, tactics. “I think the key to a golf course renovation is preparation,” Spark says. “If you are really ready to go when the project starts, that eliminates a lot of the problems. Having the materials on site, making sure the architect is there when you are going to need him that way he can make the decisions he needs to make when you are going through the project ... All of that is really important.” **GCI**

Guy Cipriano is GCI’s assistant editor.



The scenic 18th hole changed dramatically following the renovations to Davenport Country Club.

GCBAA executive **Justin Apel** reflects on challenging times and looks ahead to what could be a welcomed messy period for the industry.

Digging again

If you have attended an industry event, there's a good chance you have bumped into Justin Apel and members of his Golf Course Builders Association of America team.

Apel, the organization's executive director, oversees

the organization from its headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., although sometimes it seems like he's everywhere but home. His job requires plenty of traveling, and numerous meetings with GCBAA members, industry leaders and anybody else with an interest in the renovation

and construction side of the business.

He brings a different perspective to the GCBAA because he didn't experience the industry boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Despite seeing some GCBAA members endure a lean era, Apel is confident the past

decade strengthened the organization and that the next decade will be filled with exciting opportunities for the industry's earth movers.

The energetic and easygoing Apel recently provided GCI with his observations on the renovation and construction side of the golf market.

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Crooked Stick Golf Club • Camargo • Fox Chapel Country Club • Pete Dye at French Lick • The Homestead-Cascades • True North
Fallen Oaks • The Greenbrier (Old White) • Turning Stone • Forest Dunes • Longaberger • The Classic at Madden Resort
The Quarry at Giants Ridge

You were named executive director in 2011. How have you seen the overall industry change and evolve— for better or for worse – over the last few years?

I became part of the GCBAAs team in 2006. Next year will be my 10th year with this fantastic group, half of which I have been in the driver's seat. GCBAAs has an inventory of experienced members and association volunteers who have stood by their staff and helped us through some very difficult times. Having entered the golf industry during the beginning of the "decline" was a challenge right out of the gate. When I look at the last decade and think about the changes, both good and bad, we definitely experienced attrition of membership, however, we weathered the storm much better than what could have been expected. The one common denominator in our members that survived the downturn is they remained involved in the organization. This was invaluable to the staff. The membership shows us how to work closer together during difficult times, as did the industry and our allied organizations. I have been honored to collaborate with industry leaders on initiatives to improve the game.

Take the temperature of the builders' segment of the golf industry. What's its health as we close out 2015 and head into 2016? Are they better today than, say, three to five years ago? Why?

As the economy improves, so does the attitude of the membership. The recovery seems most prevalent in the past 24 months as financing and money has become more available for golf course capital

improvements. Most companies have been able to pull out of survival mode and now are seeing small-, medium- and large-scale projects available for competitive bidding. These projects have gone through rigorous review and have a clear scope and expectations prior to bidding. This has created a need for hiring experience and for that owners look to our membership. Challenging times help all industries. Remember that the lowest bid is not necessarily always the best option. Today we are seeing bids awarded using a broader criteria. This helps the golf industry recover stronger, allowing bid openings to have a chance for owners and builders to work together as a team helping ensure project success. Our members are now marketing their company value and owners are fact-checking references.

How have builders been keeping busy? What seem to be the hot golf renovation and construction projects everyone is doing this year?

Golf course construction is the most challenging type of landscape construction, period. Following a tight construction schedule, unique designs, weather, along with a respect for working the environment, has created a small army of skilled individuals who can tackle any kind of "horizontal construction" in most any type of environment or condition. For many years, we have had members building sports fields for NFL practice areas, new high school football stadiums, soccer complexes, along with softball and baseball complexes. We also have many members involved in



With water leading conversations in golf, GCBAAs leadership believed it was important to link irrigation contractors to the association.

reclamation projects repairing the landscape after large-scale mining or municipal improvement projects. With so many influences to facilities to either lower maintenance costs, upgrade their irrigation system or improve drainage, the bottom line for today's projects involves minimizing any course downtime and balancing the weather with a narrow completion date.

How is the GCBAAs evolving to meet the changing needs of its membership?

I think GCBAAs has been and is going to stick with what we do best – networking. There is nothing more exciting than when you put this group of day-to-day competitors together in the same room. The

energy and camaraderie is indescribable. Walking around the room eavesdropping on the conversations, you will hear a little bit of everything under the sun that you can talk about all with a common theme; everyone helping one another. Each year at the Golf Industry Show when GCBAAs hosts its Opening Reception (also the presentation of our Don A. Rossi Award) the event turns into the who's who of golf course construction and design. The roar of the room is filled with plans for the following year around the globe. The latest trends in construction, technology available and areas of growth all can be heard about. With the organization representing not only the builders, but equally as

important the suppliers and consultants for construction, we have been creating opportunities for our membership to keep networking beyond the receptions. GCBA has been offering more educational opportunities today than ever before and we have plans to expand the networking at our national events into regional opportunities.

Tell me a little bit about the new irrigation contractor program that the association has launched. What feedback have you heard?

This program hit the ground running. With water leading the conversations in golf for the indefinite future, the importance of having specialized contractors through our irrigation contractor program will grow and expand each year. With the latest technology available along with the challenges and improvements that comes with the technology, we have a great opportunity to help our membership be the best installers on the market. The golf course irrigation contractor industry has proved, much like golf landscape construction, to be the most challenging of its type. Everyone in the industry knows the demand put on a golf course irrigation system. Most often it is one of the largest investments for the facility that is buried out on the course. It needs to be dependable and efficient all while cycling between the final round of golfers and that first early morning tee time.

Last question, the association is going to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2021. That's just a few years away. Could you share some association goals you'd like to

2016: The Year of the Renovation

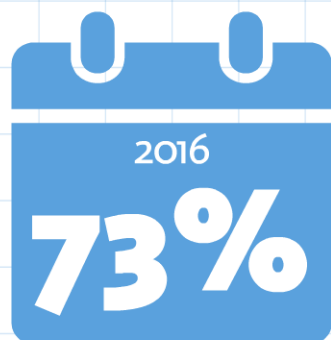
Ready for the renovations?

Superintendents from all regions are asking this question as 2015 turns into 2016. As part of its construction and renovation report in conjunction with the Golf Course Builders Association of America, GCI spent September determining whether facilities are investing in improving their golf courses.

The answer is encouragingly dirty. More than a third (73 percent) of the 176 head superintendents or those with an equivalent title who completed our survey indicate their courses are planning improvements or physical changes between now and the end of 2016.

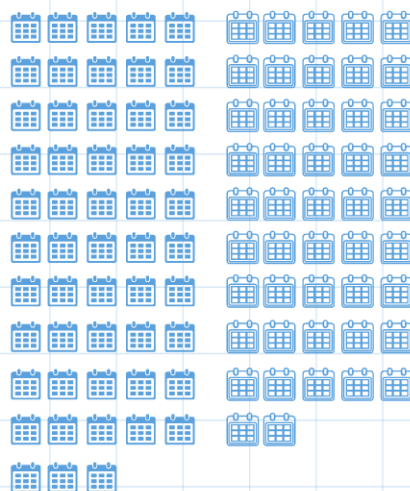
The response should excite golf course builders, many of whom struggled finding sustained work during the recent economic slowdown. The work should also continue past 2016 as more than half of the survey respondents (53 percent) indicate their courses have major renovations scheduled for 2017 and beyond.

Are any improvements or physical changes planned for between now and the end of 2016?



Yes
No 27%

Long term: Do you have major renovation plans scheduled for 2017 and beyond?



Yes 53% No 47%

And of those that responded "Yes," 60% said it was bunker work.

have accomplished in time for or to coincide with that anniversary?

It seems like such a short time ago we were celebrating our 40th and on stage with the legendary and founding member Mr. Jim Kirchdorfer Sr. congratulating him on his individual anniversary, as well. Before his passing the following year, he had shared his appreciation for what the organization has evolved into since his first meeting in 1971. To think

about the 50th celebration, and while I have some personal accomplishments I would like to see for this organization, I cannot help but think about Jim and the other founding members and remember their vision on keeping GCBA a member-driven organization. It reminds me that we must keep an open mind of the challenges our members are facing and how we as an organization can work together to turn the challenge into an opportunity.

I would also like the group to focus on our success at helping grow awareness of the profession of golf course construction that now reaches recognition globally, as well as having the leading suppliers and consultants available for education. I think it is also important to keep our relationships growing with our media partners and allied associations, and grow our participation and involvement in the industry initiatives that are growing the game of golf. GCI

CONSTRUCTION BLITZ



Henry DeLozier is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. DeLozier joined Global Golf Advisors in 2008 after nine years as the vice president of golf for Pulte Homes. He is a past president of the National Golf Course Owners Association's board of directors and serves on the PGA of America's Employers Advisory Council.

During the Blitz, Prime Minister Winston Churchill famously advised his fellow Britons, "When you're going through hell ... keep going." The same advice has applied for golf course builders since 2007, when construction slowed from the previous record-setting decade. During golf's blitz, most course builders soldiered onward, adapting to new market conditions and tepid demand. What's next for course construction? For answers, the wisdom of recent presidents of the Golf Course Builders Association of America is insightful.

THE BEST OF TIMES

After the National Golf Foundation produced findings in the late 1980s suggesting that golf demand was sufficient to sustain 365 new golf courses per year – a golf course a day – high net worth individuals, homebuilders, fraternity brothers, land developers and darned near anyone who ever wanted to own a golf course wanted to build one.

The exuberance for new golf courses led to a boom in construction like never before. NGF data indicates that more than 3,400 golf courses were built between 1995 and 2005. Then the housing market went cold and the oversupply of golf in most markets revealed a serious market imbalance. All of a sudden, it wasn't a great time to be a course builder.

The downturn that impacted course development so dramatically forced many builders to adapt and reinvent themselves. They became smaller and more nimble. Some diversified beyond golf – into sports fields and playgrounds. Today, as many developers look to less capital-demanding amenities for master-planned communities, most builders are keeping their lights on through renovations and remodeling.

As the housing cycle built momentum over the past year, new golf projects have emerged. But the pace is a drip compared to last cycle's flood.

DESIGN, BUILD WITH END IN MIND

Tommy Sasser, who has built more than 100 courses with Jack Nicklaus and others, believes golf construction will become an even more detailed endeavor as environmental limitations, zoning and cost restraints impact construction. "Design and construction will have to develop ways and means to decrease or at least stabilize the cost of construction and the impact on long term maintenance cost," he says.

Designers and builders need to bring courses online with the end result in mind. "The developer wants to sell real estate; the membership wants a facility

for recreation, and a place to enjoy community living at a price that won't break the bank," Sasser says. "Developers eventually turn clubs over to a membership. So they need to design and construct a facility that makes that easier."

LIMITED BUDGETS FOR 'COOL'

Tom Shapland of Wadsworth Golf Construction was GCBA president during the toughest years of the recession. He offers these insights: "Do not overreach. When someone says, 'Wouldn't it be cool if we...,' remind yourself that your business plan did not include large sums of money for cool. And, third, borrow enough to pay for the project plus a contingency plus the interest on the loan. Everyone needs to be paid and decisions critical to the success of the project should not be made on a cash-flow basis."

Why does anyone develop golf projects in today's market? The answer remains the same as it has for decades: Only big views of water and mountains rival golf as a source of incremental revenue from lot premiums. In addition, golf serves as a means to meet permitting and planning requirements for the open-space and community-drainage stipulations with which developers must reckon.

From our vantage point, we see the next generation of courses characterized by the following:

- Efficient and sustainable designs with reduced maintenance costs.
- Changes in irrigation planning and bunker design and shaping that reduce construction costs.
- Grasses that require less irrigation, drainage and mowing.
- Courses that address a wider audience of players, especially women and beginners.

Courses will be built – although not at the pace as the '90s. Nor will they resemble immaculate landscapes. That's just one of the ways the game is adapting to a changing marketplace. **GCI**

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The Jimmie Austin Oklahoma University Golf Club is completing a bunker renovation in phases.

'Pecking away'

By **Guy Cipriano**

Sometimes you can improve maintenance, playability and aesthetics while keeping the cash register ringing.

The shadows a long defunct military facility and a construction project where golfers regularly encounter bulldozers are colliding in the same renovation.

The Jimmie Austin Oklahoma University Golf Club occupies a plot of Norman, Okla., land where the navy operated an annex to its Norman Naval Air Station in the 1940s. The end of World War II eliminated the need for a naval facility located nowhere near a major body of water, so the government donated the land to the University of Oklahoma in 1949.

Two years later, the university opened a Perry Maxwell-

designed golf course on the land. The course is now undergoing a bunker renovation and construction details might initially appear problematic. Work started on a trial basis in spring 2014 and will likely stretch into next spring – and plans to halt play are non-existent.

Nothing happening in Norman has been pulled from the bunker renovation textbook. “Normally, a bunker renovation we will either do it in two nine-hole phases or everything at one time,” architect Tripp Davis says.

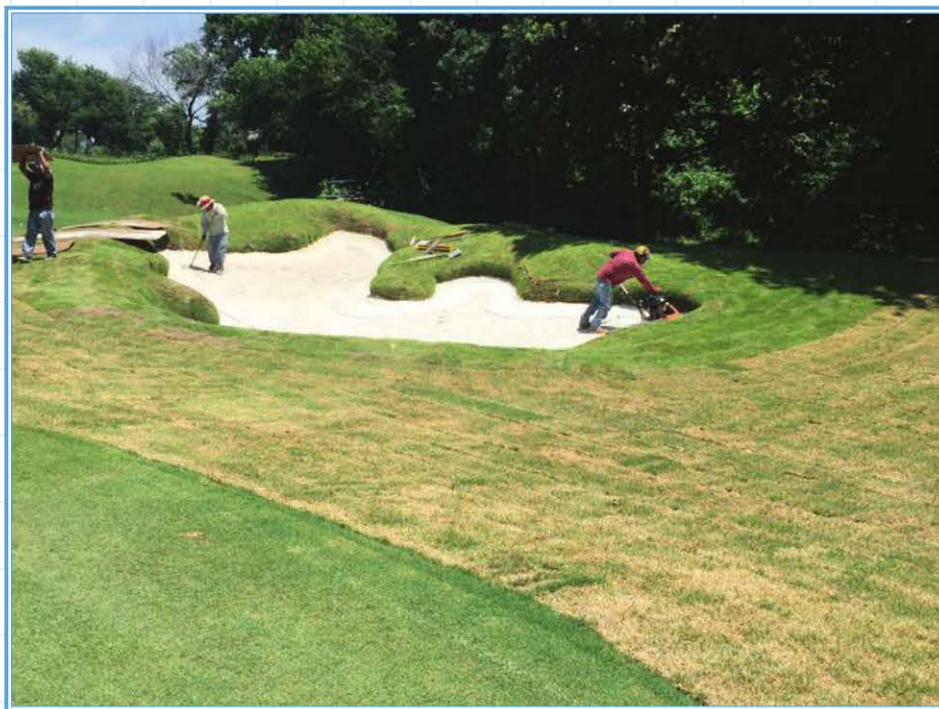
Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club “pecking away” at the renovation as part of a master plan, according to superintendent Eddie Roach. The club is operated by the university, and represents a social hub for alums,

donors and community members. It also serves as the home course for Oklahoma’s competitive men’s and women’s golf teams. University decision makers deemed it important to keep the course open to maintain a consistent revenue flow. Keeping the course open also aids fundraising efforts required to improve the 89 bunkers along with other parts of the course.

“It would be a lot easier to close it down and knock it out,” Roach says. “But we’re not trying to upset the membership base. There’s a lot of work to be done. If we had to close down and do it all at once, we would be down for quite a while. We are trying to minimize disruption.”

For GCBA member Course Crafters, the bunker renovation at Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club presents a unique challenge. Chris Hill, president of the Georgia-based company, says goals are short term, as the renovation is being completed in two-hole segments.

“We figured by just doing a couple of holes at a time it keeps the course open, it keeps play going and it also generates quite a buzz,” Hill says. “I think it helps in fundraising and monies being available, and more people being accepting of the project when they actually see what’s going on and where their money is going to. They are able to come out and see each stage of the bunker renovation and what everyone might be doing, and I think it generates enthusiasm. It makes it a little easier to sell the project. It makes it black and white where they can see a blueprint of what they are paying for and in the meantime, they won’t have to shut down and imagine



Crews from GCBA member Course Crafters are working around play at the Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club.

what it's going to look like.”

Instead of having 25 to 30 workers in Norman, Course Crafters completes segments with eight-person crews. Roach has become adept at balancing the demands of daily maintenance with a lengthy renovation, although he admits the course can resemble a “zoo” at times. Cultivating strong relationships with members of his own crew, the Course Crafters team and Davis are easing the strain on Roach.

“I might have to wear three or four different hats in a day, just trying to oversee construction and trying to oversee general golf course maintenance,” he says. “Having a good staff and guys that can share the load on my end is the biggest key and then ultimately the construction company that we have is top-notch. Guys are here, they know what’s going on and we communicate. They have a major golf background. They know what we are trying to do, they understand what we are trying to do.”

Upfront communication



Tripp Davis is the architect overseeing the work at Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club. Davis is working closely with superintendent Eddie Roach and the team from Course Crafters.

between course personnel and the contractor and an approach that treats the renovation as multiple projects within one umbrella can simplify a project, Hill says. Effective communication with Roach has allowed Course Crafters to work around daily play at Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club, which receives 25,000-30,000

rounds per year.

“For example, if we are renovating a right greenside bunker on hole No. 14, I might go to Eddie and say, ‘Hey, Eddie today we’re working on the right greenside bunker. Do you mind putting the pin placement on the left side of the green or the back left?’ These guys will come in and the majority of the golfers are good enough to hit it to the left side of the green, which brings us out of play. It’s things of that nature that goes into coordinating it.”

The bunkers are the “most visual” part of the renovation, according to Davis, an All-American golfer at Oklahoma. They were redesigned in the early 1990s to include deep, round sand faces such as the bunkers at Augusta National and Southern Hills. Maintaining a look typically reserved for elite private clubs on a university budget isn’t always feasible. “It’s hard to keep the sand from getting contaminated on a regular basis,” he says.

The new design resembles

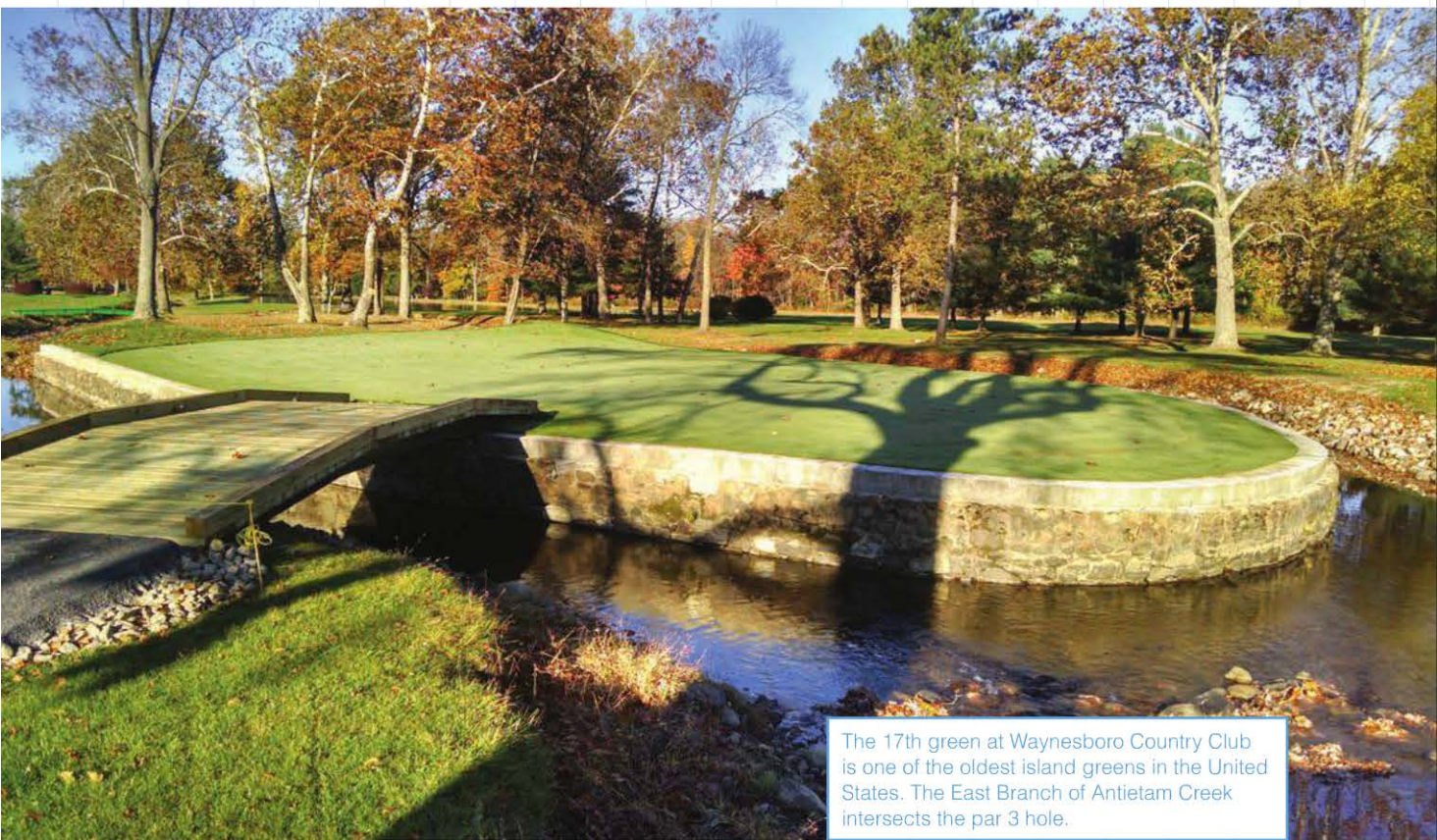
the grass-faced bunkering at Maxwell’s renowned Kansas course Prairie Dunes. Besides eliminating the nettlesome saucer-like faces, the bunkers are being constructed with the Better Billy Bunker method to improve drainage. “We have used fabric liners in the past, but with a fabric liner you need a lot of maintenance time in the bunkers to keep the sand depth and distribution where it should be,” Roach says.

Ordering the desired amounts of sand and turfgrass immediately after selecting a bunker design and drainage method has become an important part of the bunker renovation process. The Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club is using zoysiagrass on its faces, and Davis says rising demand for the variety in Oklahoma and Texas are creating challenges securing the turfgrass in a timely manner. Davis also recommends determining whether the greens and tees will remain in their current places before beginning extensive bunker work. If renovating greens and tees are in a course’s master plan, then it might be worth waiting on a bunker project until it fits with the other changes.

When executed properly, a bunker renovation can energize a facility. The one at Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club evokes memories of the naval facility and Maxwell while sparking interest in bringing major events to the site. Getting it completed takes the right demeanor, Roach says.

“A lot of it is just patience,” Roach explains. “A lot of patience, a lot of research and a lot planning and thinking ahead, knowing your course of action and what works best for you.” **GCI**





The 17th green at Waynesboro Country Club is one of the oldest island greens in the United States. The East Branch of Antietam Creek intersects the par 3 hole.

Improving an aging island

When everything else failed, Waynesboro Country Club rebuilt a signature hole in an interesting spot.

By **Guy Cipriano**

Layers of sand, silt and what superintendent Faron Stoops calls “nastiness” had accumulated on a green Waynesboro Country Club members consider the most memorable square footage on their course.

Stoops and his crew tried masking the problem. They performed sod work – multiple times. They replaced poor soil with higher-quality mixes.

Finally, midway through May 2014, a persistent problem needed a permanent fix. One of those South Central Pennsylvania storms that Stoops thought would hit Waynesboro once every two decades caused the East Branch of Antietam Creek to overflow, submerging the

17th green for the fifth time in his tenure at the course.

Clean. Haul. Replace. Resod. Reopen. None of that was going to work following this storm, which dumped four inches of rain into an already saturated valley. One of the oldest island greens in the United States officially reached a crisis unlike any other in its 86-year history.

"The stream overflowed the wall," says Stoops, who arrived at the club 14 years ago. "And when it came up over the top, it hit that front sod and just underwashed it and pushed the rest of the green up like an accordion or like a dog would hit on the floor on a throw rug. It ruined the entire green."

The scene disturbed anybody with an emotional or financial interest in the green, a remaining piece of architect Roher Elder's original nine holes. It also convinced the club to rebuild instead of continuing

to repair the green.

Lacking a master plan because of the economic slowdown, Stoops leaned on connections established through the Central Pennsylvania GCSA. He sent images of the green to industry friends, and Hanover Country Club superintendent Bill Brooks referred Stoops to Pennsylvania-based architect Mark Fine.

The green proved a difficult study. Waynesboro didn't have a supply of old sketches, aeri-als and paperwork, and Elder didn't have a vast portfolio like Donald Ross, William Flynn, A.W. Tillinghast or other notable architects who designed course in the 1920s. Still, it became clear after Fine's first visit that using pictures of the green before the submersion could aid the rebuild.

"There was a lot of history in this green," Fine says. "I'm kind of a purist and I wanted to try

to keep the hole and keep the history there and at the same time, we had a problem that we wanted to try and solve."

Construction near bodies of water have implications extending far beyond a course's boundaries. To ensure the club was taking the proper approach, the site was studied by Mark Gutshall, principal and vice president of Land Studies, a Pennsylvania-based firm specializing in environmental restoration and land planning.

"It's a historic hole and it's around water," Fine says. "Anytime you are working close to a stream like that, you have to make sure you are handling all the permits properly and if you are going to do anything that could potentially change something downstream, you

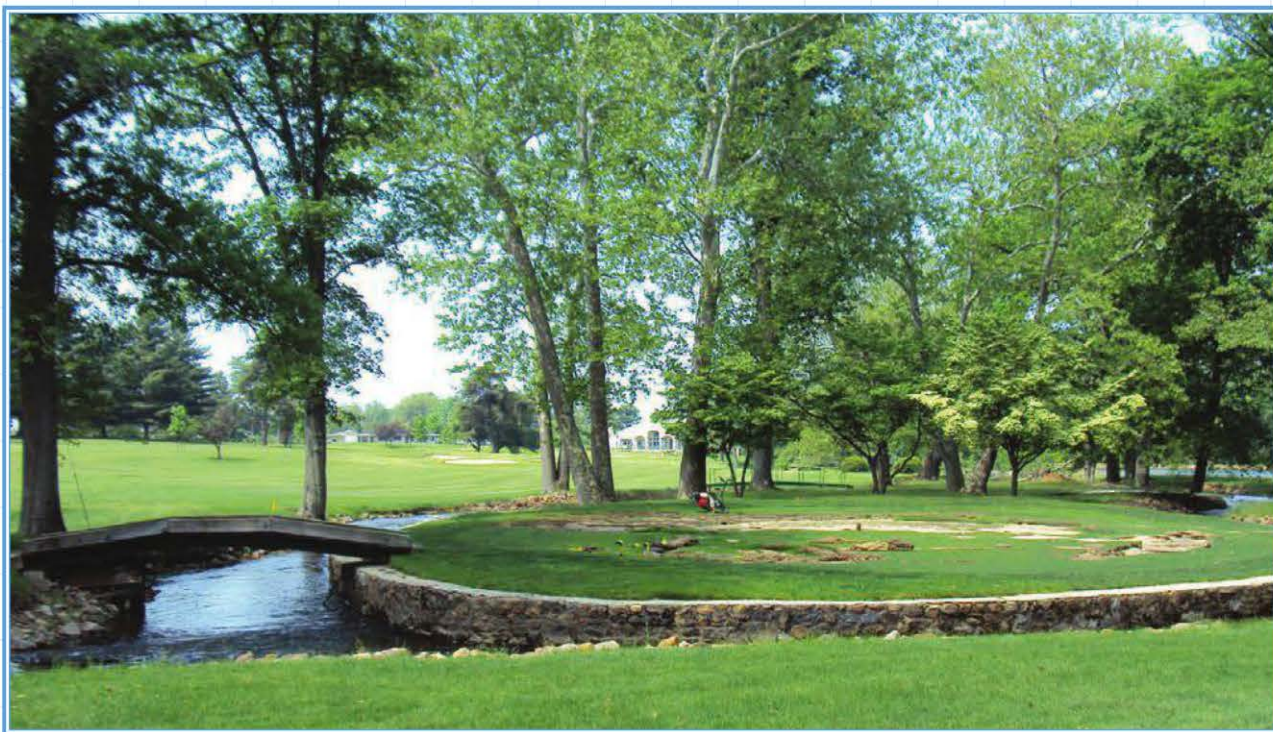
have to make sure you have permits to do that."

Multiple plans to rebuild the green were concocted, including an elaborate one that would have restored the entire floodplain. The primary objective of the plan pursued by the club involved reducing the possibility of water submerging the green.

GCBAA member George E. Ley Co. of Glenmoore, Pa., was selected as the contractor for the project. The company has worked with Fine on multiple Pennsylvania projects.

"My first impression was, 'This green needs a lot of work,'" says Brian Ley, who served as the project manager. "A quarter of it had been washed off the top and the sod and other stuff was just

GCBAA member George E. Ley Co. worked with superintendent Faron Stoops and architect Mark Fine to renovate the 17th green at Waynesboro Country Club.



eroded. It was just a mess when we got there.”

Waynesboro, fortunately, had a spare hole, allowing members to still play 18 while providing a distraction-free zone for construction crews to work. Rebuilding the green represented the biggest outside project Stoops has been involved with at Waynesboro.

The project enhanced the entire hole, with Ley and his crew also enlarging the tee and removing trees that made growing grass on parts of the green a challenge. The tree removal also opened a view of the 18th hole and the clubhouse.

The green was rebuilt to include surface drainage, something it lacked before the renovation. The size of the green increased from around 3,000 to 6,000 square feet. Encircling the expanded putting surface is 4 ½-foot collar. A local mason rebuilt the stone wall. Internal columns support the green. The old green rested 24-30 inches above the water level and the new green is 12 inches higher than the previous one, according to Ley. Crews also rebuilt the walking bridge to the green.

“We had to make sure we weren’t going to build a green that would collapse that wall, so we had to make sure the integrity of that wall was correct and then we were going to raise that wall up,” Fine says. “We didn’t want to build it at the same level. We wanted to raise that wall up so we were above that 50- or 100-year floodplain. We wanted to raise it up as high as it could without making it tilty.

“It’s a short hole, it’s an island green,” Fine adds. “If it gets perched up too high, it can just get very difficult. To get these things done right, it

requires the right team, then we needed a contractor like George Ley, who I was confident would know how to do this and would do it at a good price and do it in a timely manner because the club wanted this hole back in play as quickly as possible.”

The green was sodded with Pure bentgrass, and Stoops says he’s “hopeful” increased sunlight will prevent *Poa annua* from encroaching on the putting surface. Dispersing foot traffic – a challenge on every island green – is a concern. Stoops, though, envisions the changes producing an easier-to-maintain hole.

The green endured multiple tests this past spring, as Waynesboro experienced an ultra-soggy stretch in late May and early June. “Every three days we would get an inch or more in one rainstorm,” Stoops says. “Everybody was calling me and asking, ‘How did it work out?’ I kept on saying, ‘No problem, no problem.’”

After 400 days of analysis, construction and grow-in, Waynesboro reopened the hole with a ceremony on Aug. 1. “The reception has been great,” Stoops says. “The members love it.”

The project represents an example of how separate parties can quickly come together to solve a problem. Stoops, after all, had never met Fine or Ley before last year. Ley says Stoops and Fine’s personalities made the project “an easygoing job.” And this job, unlike the ones Stoops and crews encountered at 17th following big storms, included a tidy result.

“Just knowing that you accomplished the goal of making a signature hole for a course is really satisfying,” Ley says. **GCI**

Contractors

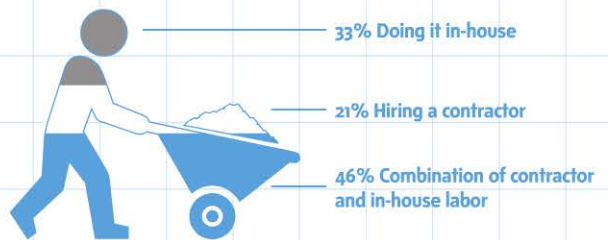
Members of golf course maintenance crews are bracing for significant multi-tasking.

More than two-thirds of superintendents (79 percent) will use in-house labor to complete at least part of their planned renovations. Forty-six percent of those superintendents will split work between in-house labor and a contractor.

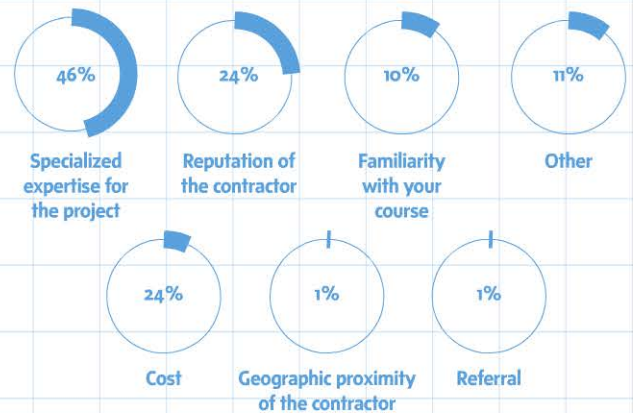
Cost isn’t the No. 1 reason for selecting a contractor, but it can play a big factor in a superintendent looking in a different direction. Project expertise (46 percent) is the leading reason for using a contractor. Cost (67 percent) is the leading reason for not selecting a contractor.

Forty-three percent of superintendents have experience working with a GCBAAs-certified builder.

Who is doing the work?



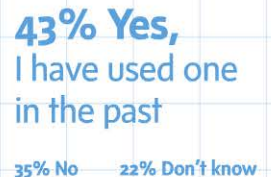
Why are you using a contractor?



What is your primary reason for NOT selecting a contractor?



Have you ever used a GCBAAs-certified builder?



The small program that could

One of many golf association sponsored programs available for facilities, the GCBAA's Sticks for Kids is a tool to help recruit and retain golfers.

By **Helen M. Stone**



More than 350,000 children have participated in Sticks for Kids, which has programs in all 50 states.

Interest in golf has been declining. The number of players dropped from 30 million in 2005 to 24.7 million in 2014, according to the National Golf Foundation. While there are several ideas about changing the game to make it faster and easier, if the Golf Course Builders Association of America has anything to say about it, the game needs to reach out to youngsters to

make golf a lifetime pursuit.

Founded in the 1970s, the GCBAA read the writing on the wall in 1997. The game of golf needed to engage young people to keep the sport thriving. The result was the GCBAA Foundation and the creation of the Sticks for Kids Program.

This simple program provides clubs and teaching materials to get kids out on the course. Marketing and teaching materials are provided to golf clubs and groups to help children from 5-18 learn the game's fundamentals. They are also taught life skills such as self-control, etiquette and timeliness.

"Some of my students are so enamored with the courses that they have secured jobs as cart boys, counter help, and even tournament helpers," says Rachele Renee, teacher at Expo Alternative High School in Waterloo, Iowa. "They

come away realizing that golf is truly a lifetime sport."

In Rock Island, Ill., Big River Juniors has exposed an estimated 3,000 children to golf over the past seven years. "We have a large group of our former students playing high school golf, and a few more playing at the college level, as well," says William Fetty, golf services manager with the city of Rock Island. "We seem to get almost as many girls as boys these days, and it is rare to find a kid who has participated not wanting to come back and mentor the 'little kids' in the program."

Any golf course, company or youth organization can launch a Sticks for Kids program in their community. After an application is approved, the local program can receive up to 10 sets of junior golf clubs and bags and teaching and marketing materials. Depending on available funds, up to \$1,000 can be awarded to reach program objectives. Individuals or groups can also start a program

with their \$1,000 donation and specify the recipient course or youth group for the funds.

Since the program has been successful for so long, some clubs have worn out their equipment. The Foundation comes to the rescue with Maintenance Grants to replace worn-out clubs and bags.

To date, more than 350,000 children have participated in the program and GCBAA has donated about \$600,000 to get kids golfing.

"Sticks for Kids is one of many golf association sponsored programs available for facilities," says Justin Apel, GCBAA executive director. "It is one tool in the toolbox of programs to recruit and retain golfers. We are proud of our program in that it can be catered to other initiatives to compliment and encourage the growth of the game." **GCI**

Helen M. Stone is a freelance writer on the West Coast specializing in turf and landscape.



Irrigation contractors welcome

By Helen M. Stone

Recognizing the importance of precision irrigation installation, the GCBAA offers a membership category and certification especially for irrigation contractors.

A quality golf course irrigation system is critical to successful maintenance. And, of course, quality installation is critical for system performance. A bit of carelessness during construction can mean huge headaches down the line, impacting every other component of the course.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America recognizes the importance of precision irrigation installation, and offers a membership category and certification especially for irrigation contractors.

GCBAA offers several membership levels. First-timers join as builder applicants, followed by associate builders, builder members and certified builders. Each level has a unique set of requirements and qualifications. As members expand their skills and professional standing, membership upgrades are available to reflect their career and/or company development.

At the pinnacle of membership is certification. The Certified Golf Course Builder category was established in 1992, when GCBAA launched its

certification program. As well as longevity (an applicant must have been in the golf course construction business for five years and provide references), applicants take an exam to show they are familiar with the latest construction techniques. Topics include grading, drainage, seeding, and fertilization.

Once certified, an applicant must renew annually. Continued education is required to ensure members don't rest on their laurels. CEUs are offered by the GCBAA with both classroom and hands-on training at its annual conference.

In the fall of 2013, several Southeast contractors sat down with GCBAA members to talk about industry challenges. At the time, GCBAA had in Irrigation Contractor category. However after a lively and lengthy discussion, it was decided to expand the category and offer even more benefits to irrigation contractors, including certification.

"Specifically everyone wanted to network GCBAA manufacturers, suppliers and consultants with contractors to coordinate education and troubleshooting," says Justin Apel, GCBAA executive director.



In 2014, the GCBAA's Board of Governors adopted the criteria for a Golf Irrigation Contractor Certification Program.

"GCBAA was up for the task and in 2014 expanded the category, using group feedback."

The GCBAA moved quickly, and at the Golf Industry Show in 2014, its Board of Governors met and adopted the final criteria for a Golf Irrigation Contractor Certification Program.

Certification requirements ensure a contractor is one of the best in the business. Companies must show they have been in the course construction business for at least five years. A company also must have completed successful installa-

tion of the equivalent of 90 holes of golf irrigation during the past five years, with at least one complete 18-hole irrigation system installed within the past two years.

References are also required – from their bank, insurance provider, owners, developers, architects, engineers, superintendents, irrigation designers, municipalities and an existing certified member of GCBAA. After an applicant has been qualified, they must also face an interview with the Board of Governors. **GCI**

TEACHING CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION



John E. Kaminski, Ph.D. is an associate professor, Turfgrass Science, and director of the Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program at Penn State University. You can reach him at kaminski@psu.edu.

A SELFISH CALL FOR ADVICE

As the Director of the Penn State Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program (the 2-Year Program), I am charged with teaching a lot of classes. In fact, I teach a total of eight classes ranging from communications to construction and renovation. It's kind of ironic that I teach construction, because it's definitely not my wheelhouse. I often rely on the idea of hands-on work as well as the use of outside speakers who have experience in specific projects.

We constantly tweak the class to stay current, but I thought that I would take advantage of my column here to talk about some of the things we do, some of the things I would love to do and some of the things that you (as leaders in the industry) think should be done.

I would start out by saying that I think we are fortunate to have a class dedicated to construction and renovation. Students are exposed to a variety of lectures, they must do an agronomic assessment of a real golf course and they do some hands-on construction projects. I'm not sure what other university students are exposed to, but I would already argue that we are unique in what we offer.

WHAT WE CURRENTLY DO

Over the course of eight weeks in the 2-year program's construction class, students are exposed to a series of lectures from golf course superintendents and industry experts who have a unique experience around a particular topic. This year, we have a golf course superintendent who recently renovated bunkers to discuss the thought process that led to their decision of a certain construction method. We have a course manager who just rebuilt their maintenance facility talking about that experience, including the difficulties surrounding the permitting. A series of lectures throughout the semester may provide insight into these areas as well as greens construction, architectural design, selection of turfgrass species, importance of tree management programs for renovation and several others.

In addition to the lectures on specific topics by key industry representatives, we also perform a mock USGA agronomic assessment of one of the Penn State Golf Courses. Students meet with the general manager and golf course superintendent to find out what their long-term goals are for the course. In groups, the students then take a set of holes and perform a full assessment based on the goals of the golf course. Soil tests are taken and sent off to the Penn State soils lab for analyses, data on speeds, firmness, soil moisture and others are collected, and a full assessment of all areas (bunkers, greens, tees, rough, etc.) is performed.

In addition to the group course assessment, each student is given a greens complex that requires a renovation. They must visit the course and determine a plan to complete the renovation. Students must come up with a list of materials needed including the costs and also determine the time and labor that will be involved.

The final component is an actual hands-on project. In the past, we have rebuilt bunkers, renovated greens or installed irrigation. This year, we will be building a small mock USGA green prior to heading to Centre Hills Country Club to actually expand and reconstruct their ninth green and rebuild a portion of the greenside bunker.

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DO

In an ideal world, students would be given even more opportunity to see and complete a large-scale renovation. Unfortunately, time is always a hindrance when all of the above must be completed in a mere eight weeks. Ideas that have been thrown out include a long-term project that the students oversee over the entire 18-month program, sending students to golf courses that have construction projects planned during their internship or even bringing the students back for a "work week" in which they spend working on planned projects.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO

This is an open-ended question that I'm sure opens me up to a lot of responses, many of which we will likely not be able to actually do. Having said that, I have been proud that our program is always interested in staying on top of our game and also on top of the latest trends within the industry. As someone who's not a construction and renovation "expert," I figured I would use my article here to reach out to you as the leaders.

If you have an idea that you think the students could benefit from when it comes to construction experience, then share your ideas. **GCI**

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By **Helen M. Stone**

FOR THE **birds**



Former superintendent **Brian Beckner** retains a link to turf through custom bird houses.

Brian Beckner glows. The 42-year-old former golf course superintendent radiates so much positive energy anyone around him can't help but be moved by his enthusiasm, wonder and sheer joy. Talk to him for any length of time and pretty soon you'll be glowing, too.

Beckner loves his job and it shows. After 20 years on the management end of golf courses, he found his calling in a unique niche that allows



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him to enjoy the beauty on the courses and the camaraderie among superintendents while avoiding the stresses that accompany the job.

Beckner builds bird houses.

Well, there is much more to the career he has carved out for himself. He might be called a golf course ornithological consultant. Or a wildlife tour coordinator. Rather, all of the above are true. "I'm living the dream," he says.

Like many superintendents, Beckner grew up with golf in his life. He golfed as a young-

ster, but being outdoors was the great lure. "There was a 1,000 acres surrounding the golf course, and I would often toss the clubs aside and go wandering in the woods," he recalls. A charming picture from his youth shows a beaming boy showing off a birdhouse he built himself.

While in Texas Christian University studying to be a CPA, he took a "leap of faith" and found a job as a general laborer on a golf course. "I had played and caddied, but I never considered working on

course maintenance," he says. "I loved it."

The job led him to classes in plant pathology, horticulture and eventually a degree in golf course management. After graduating and working at Shady Oaks Golf Club in Fort Worth, Texas, a former classmate told him about a job in Naples, Fla.

With family in the area, Beckner made the move in 1996, working as the assistant superintendent at Wildcat Run Country Club for a short stint. "Then I accepted the assistant superintendent job at The Club Pelican Bay in Naples, where I had the incredible opportunity working under Robert Bittner, CGCS for five years," he recalls. In 2001, he landed his "dream job" as superintendent at La Playa Beach and Golf Club in Naples.



Brian Beckner builds birdhouses, but it may be more correct to call him a golf course ornithological consultant.



Through his business, Brian Beckner helps spread the word that a golf course can be a true sanctuary amidst urban sprawl.

As his career progressed, so did his woodworking hobby. Beckner was always interested in wildlife and the outdoors and began learning about the birds on his course. First, it was simple identification, which then grew into learning about habitat, nesting, migration and the whole fascinating world of birding. Now, he can identify a bird just by the sound it makes.

His outgoing personality also made him pursue membership – and eventually leadership – in the Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association. He became a board member and president of the association, which increased his local network and resulted in many friendships and eventual business contacts.

Beckner worked a dozen years on the course, but always felt there was something more he wanted from his career. A local wildlife enthusiast, George McBath, had spent many years in the region supplying birdhouses and enhancing avian habitats at local courses. "He would help us with our Audubon certifications and give wildlife tours, and I thought it was so cool he actually made a living doing what he did," Beckner says.

As McBath started phasing out his services to pursue retirement, Beckner took a



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hard look at his own career. “A lightbulb went on in my head,” he says. “Here was a chance to take an opportunity. I had the woodworking skills, which had been a hobby all my life, plus my professional development skills from my work in golf course management. I had to go for it. All the stars lined up at the right time.”

Beckner was married with two children, and credits his wife for her support and encouragement to follow his dream. With only a small withdrawal from his retirement savings, he took yet another leap of faith to start Native Bird Boxes in the fall of 2013. “It’s a very humbling experience,

walking away from guaranteed income and full benefits,” Beckner says.

Long hours, hard work and perseverance are paying off. Now in spring 2015, he’s built, installed and now manages 2,500 birdhouses throughout golf courses and communities in Southern Florida. But one of his favorite parts of his job is conducting wildlife tours.

“I can take a single-digit handicapper and show them the course in a way they have never seen it before,” he says. “Those have been some of the most rewarding conversations I’ve had.”

“He’s very passionate about what he does,” says Brad



Environmental stewardship is Brian Beckner’s focus. Making people aware of their connection to wildlife and the landscape that surrounds them brings him satisfaction.

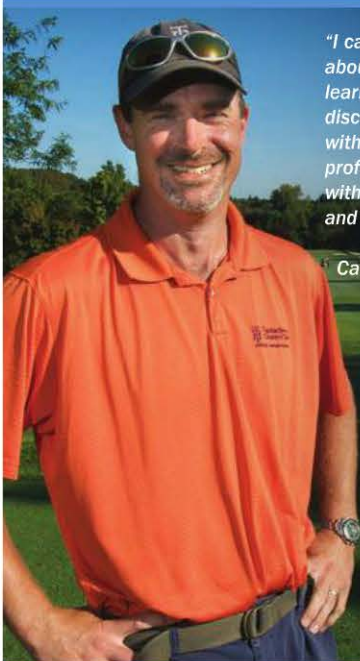
Haynes, superintendent at The Club at Olde Cypress in Naples. “He’s an extremely good speaker and gives a great presentation on wildlife on the course.”

Haynes is working on getting Olde Cypress certified as an Audubon International

Cooperative Sanctuary, and knew Beckner through his involvement with Everglades GCSA. “It was a matter of time and expertise,” Haynes says. “Instead of me trying to buy materials and build boxes, it made sense to have a professional do it.”

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"After he built and installed our boxes last summer, I wasn't really sure if we would get any birds," Haynes admits. But now he's excited to note about a dozen purple martin fledglings, plus three bluebird nests.

"I was happy for Brian to start the business and help us spread the word that a golf course can be a true sanctuary amidst urban sprawl," says Bill Davison, CGCS, superintendent at the Country Club of Naples. Davison's course was already an Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary, but the membership was relatively unaware of its significance.

"We didn't have any wildlife tours or events," Davison says.



"Now Brian comes out monthly or bi-monthly, depending on the season. The members really love it. He helps them understand the stewardship side of the job we do."

For Beckner, environmental stewardship is his focus. Making people aware of their



Brian Beckner: "When you find that opportunity in life to take a leap of faith, I would encourage anybody to go for it."

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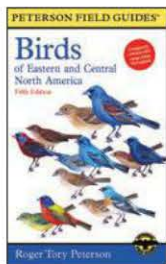
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Going **native**

If you are ready to make your course a habitat for birds and other wildlife, you can go as simple or as complex as your time and budget allows. The best way is to lead by example, so here is a crash course on becoming a birder.

First, you need a good pair of binoculars and a birding guide. "Binos" are classified by two numbers such 8x42. The first number is the magnification and the second number is the objective lens diameter (at the large end of the lens) in millimeters. Magnification should be between 6 and 8. Full size binos are 40-45 mm, while midsize are 30-35 mm. A good quality "budget" pair will cost about \$150.



As far as guides go, "A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America" by Roger Tory Peterson is considered one of the best. However, there are guides by David Allen Sibley, Kenn Kaufman, the Audubon Society, National Geographic and many others that can be helpful. In addition, you can take advantage of your smart phone and explore apps such as Thayer Birding Software (www.thayerbirding.com), iBird Pro Guide to Birds 7.2, National Geographic Handheld Birds and Merlin Bird ID.

You don't have to be an expert to rapidly develop a working knowledge of the birds on your course and in your region. Once you have that knowledge, you can get to work creating an inviting habitat for them. Sometimes this can be as simple as easing off "cleaning up" a bit. Let shrubs grow naturally instead of shearing them. Leave trees with cavities and hollow branches for nesting. Allow grasses to go to seed.

As far as supplying nesting boxes, Beckner's birdhouses are available at nativebirdboxes.com. Because each species requires different sizes and configurations, you will need to do a little research in other areas of the country. You can develop local leads through Audubon International, which offers a steward network.

In fact, why not go for certification? Joining the program is easy. Then you take stock of your current situation and develop an environmental plan. Audubon International will provide you with all the tools you need to get going.

Once you have your program in place, it is important to publicize it to your membership at every opportunity. If you or a staff member can offer wildlife tours of your course, it's a great way to engage your players. In addition, many superintendents include environmental information in blogs and newsletters.

For "seasonal" locations, wildlife tours can generate interest and appreciation from members who live in the area all year. The payoff is a supportive membership and positive publicity not only for your course, but for the golf industry as a whole.

connection to wildlife and the landscape that surrounds them brings a smile to his face and joy to his heart. "Since I was 18 years old, I've always punched a clock or been responsible for a golf facility at someone's beck and call," he says. "All the sudden that special star shot

in front of me and bingo! There it was. When you find that opportunity in life to take a leap of faith, I would encourage anybody to go for it." **GCI**

Helen Stone is a West Coast horticulture writer and a frequent GCI contributor.

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FIRST THINGS FIRST



Monroe Miller retired after 36 years as superintendent at Blackhawk CC in Madison, Wis. He is a recipient of the 2004 USGA Green Section Award, the 2009 GCSAA Col. John Morley DSA Award, and is the only superintendent in the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame. Reach him at groots@charter.net.

I sense a better feeling in the golf community these recent days, and many colleagues I work and visit with are feeling the same. Memberships have stopped hemorrhaging, stabilized and even increased in some organizations. Interest in the game seems to be on the rise.

Golf organizations like the USGA have made some bold moves to broaden golf's appeal. Not long ago no one imagined courses setup like Pinehurst would host the men's and women's opens on consecutive weeks. Chambers Bay was a whole different experience for both players and fans. And whether you loved it or hated it, it created a lot of interest and conversation.

Golf courses have started to offer alternative uses – FootGolf, for example. Some clubhouses have added exercise equipment and other amenities to complement the golf experience. Dress codes have been relaxed and menu offerings updated. Anything and everything that was affordable and could make a trip to the golf course more enjoyable has been tried, and I think the results are finally beginning to show.

Superintendents are finally feeling more optimistic about the game. The past decade has been tough. No or small pay raises, less retirement money contributed to our plans and an erosion of health benefits have hit close to home. We've pulled back on equipment purchases, reduced staff numbers and gotten by with decreased budgets. The bucket list of worthy projects was pushed way back.

If there is an uptick in golf prosperity, then I have a few common-sense suggestions, born out of my 36-year superintendent career and seven years on the road as a turf organization exec:

- Although it would be impossible to recapture the losses, a strong case can be made to improve health, retirement and salary plans before spending on anything else, including renovations.
- Replace worn out equipment. I have seen a lot of golf course shops since 2009, and there is a lot of junk machinery held together with gum and wire.
- Get irrigation systems back up to par. This equipment suffers like mowing machinery.
- Fix problems that cause aggravation, cost money and diminish playing conditions. Tree maintenance programs are among the first things dropped when budgets got tight. Cart paths, individual drainage problems and a thousand other things need attention. I view most of these items as separate from renovations.
- Finally, the time is coming when we can actually think about some significant, needed and exciting golf course renovation projects. The whole decision-making process can be a great experience for all involved – superintendent, green committee, owners, architects and players.

If you want to know the status of renovation work, Chad Ritterbusch is a good resource. Chad, the executive director of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, confirmed his members are seeing increased renovation activity throughout the country. "Courses built during the golf boom of 30 and 40 years ago are in need of updates and another look at their design," he says. "Water issues are a significant catalyst for renovation work, and a long list of infrastructure problems factor in. Additionally, a change in golfer profile – more families with higher handicaps and less time – is inspiring some renovation proposals."

GCI columnist and golf course architect Jeff Brauer gave an excellent presentation at the San Antonio GIS that detailed how renovations can actually increase a golf facility's return on investment. He used data from improvement projects on public golf courses in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to show renovations can make fiscal sense, too.

It's logical that renovation and master plan implementation will come before new construction. So you have to be even a little more optimistic when you witness news of new courses or even planning. We are pretty lucky here in Wisconsin because Mike Keiser is in the middle of construction of his new Sand Valley golf courses in the central part of the state. There have been some indications the Kohler Co. is planning to build another course to add to its existing four courses, one of which hosted the PGA championship a couple of months ago. Those are two more good signs. Added to that, a few courses have moved in the direction that the club I worked for has moved lately – inviting their architect in for a look at some future potential work.

I don't know many supers who don't love the challenge of golf course renovations. Just maybe those days are slowly returning. Let's hope so. **GCI**

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In the classic film National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, Clark Griswold spoke of "the silent majesty of a winter's morn." We in the golf and green industries appreciate a winter morning, too. But where Clark's perfect winter morning is ruined by Cousin Eddie, the turf pro's perfect winter morning is disrupted by our knowledge of what's sleeping in all that snow: weeds, fungi, and whatever else nature will throw at us come spring. That's why we plan in the fall.

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FAR-REACHING PROBLEM

DOLLAR SPOT HAS BEEN WITH GOLF TURF FOR A LONG TIME AND IT'S NOT GOING AWAY. HERE ARE SOME KEY STRATEGIES TO UNDERSTAND, ADDRESS AND CONTROL THIS DISEASE.

Rick **Woelfel**

Dollar spot affects an abundance of grasses common to golf courses, including annual and Kentucky bluegrass, bentgrass, Bermudagrass, fine and tall fescue, and zoysiagrass. It thrives in climates that are warm (temperatures between 55 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit) and moist. Morning dew stimulates the spread of the fungus.

The disease generally does not wreak the structural devastation on a plant that some other turf diseases do. Its impact is largely aesthetic. But aesthetic issues cost golf facili-

ties significant dollars each year and superintendents are as passionate about combating it as they are about dealing with other turf issues.

Some superintendents report relatively few dollar-spot related problems. Chris Tritabaugh is in charge of the turf at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., southwest of Minneapolis, where he is in the midst of preparations for the 2016 Ryder Cup. As he prepares to host one of golf's most significant events, he has an abundance of issues on his plate, great and small, but dollar spot is rarely one of them.

Tritabaugh, though, notes other facilities in the Twin Cities area weren't so fortunate this summer. "In August and September we had some massive dollar-spot pressure," he says. "Places around the Twin Cities were fighting it left and right. It was perfect weather for it, but we didn't have any and I had no fungicide down. Maybe [the golf course] could get it if you put it in the Transition Zone, but up here you get a little bit of a breeze."

A key to keeping dollar spot at bay is keeping dew off the fairways. "We drag the dew first thing every morning," he says.

Tritabaugh does have to take care with his tees, some of which consist of older grasses and thus are more susceptible to dollar spot.

"Some of our tees have older grasses, but as they've been rebuilt or reconfigured over the years they've been grassed with different things," he says. "Our tees do get some of it, even tees with the newer grasses. I really believe you take the newer grasses that have resistance to dollar spot, then you get that dew off first thing in the morning, that's just about all that they need, at least in our climate."



When it comes to chemical control Tritabaugh emphasizes that he tries to use as little fungicide or other chemical compounds as possible regardless of the issue he's dealing with.

"The new products the companies are coming out with now are really [designed for] low usage rates, which is great," he says. "You're using very little actual chemical. They're taking great care of the disease in a contact type of manner which is going to keep the resistance low or not allow resistance at all."

Tritabaugh will readily admit that the climate in the Upper Midwest has been an asset in his efforts to keep dollar spot at bay. Other superintendents don't have that advantage.

Eric Nelson is the superintendent at the 1757 Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia, not far from Washington, D.C., and the Washington Redskins' practice facility is just a short drive away. While the club offers memberships, it is essentially a daily-fee facility.

Nelson's primary weapon against dollar spot is chlorothalonil. "There's an old saying, 'Paint it white, sleep well at night,'" he says. "When you apply this chemical, it goes on kind of white and it combats

nine out of 10 pathogens."

But efforts against dollar spot are complicated by the fact that over time the fungus develops resistance to the chemistries used to eradicate it. Chlorothalonil, as effective as it is, is highly unlikely to eradicate dollar spot on its own. Conventional wisdom stipulates that a superintendent have multiple weapons in his or her arsenal.

Jim Goodrich is the product manager for fungicides, insecticides and PGRs for PBI-Gordon in Kansas City. He spent five years as a superintendent early in his career. "One school of thought, and it's become kind of antiquated, is that use one chemistry and continue to use that chemistry until it starts to fail on you. Then you switch," he says. "That happened to me. I applied some product to some dollar spot that popped up and it just didn't work ... You always to have something else in your back pocket. The idea is to have a rotational partner. If you apply something for early season dollar spot control, your next application should usually be another chemistry."

Nelson points out that over time turf diseases build up resistance to chemicals, just

as illnesses afflicting humans become resistant to antibiotics over time.

"If you use [a chemical] constantly, fungi and bacteria adapt," he says. "It's why antibiotics become less effective. They change and you face that on a golf course. You face that with everything you do. A lot of companies say they have the cure-all, but the truth is, if you don't constantly alter your chemistry, you're going to have resistance issues."

Nelson embraces the idea of having an abundance of resources at his disposal. His spraying program encompasses 16 applications over the course of 32 weeks. "I base the [spraying schedule] on a 32-week season where we're susceptible to dollar spot," he says. "[In the fall] the pressure has eased and I'll go out and spray as needed. But in June July and August, I'll spray every 14 days come hell or high water. Otherwise you leave yourself susceptible."

Nelson typically alternates between chlorothalonil and some other compound. Over the course of his 32 week "spraying season," he estimates he'll use five different chemical combinations.

Jeff Marvin is PBI-Gordon's manager of field research. He has nine years experience as a superintendent and has waged his own battles with dollar spot. He notes that his company is in the process of introducing a new dollar-spot product.

"PBI-Gordon is releasing Kabuto, a new SDHI fungicide for the control of dollar spot," he says. "Kabuto is a newer generation SDHI that shows good resistance management for dollar spot." But Marvin is quick to note that Kabuto is intended to be used in conjunc-

tion with other chemistries.

"We still require applicators to not apply more than two consecutive applications of Kabuto before switching to a different mode of action," he adds. "Most universities have programs they recommend or guidance on the different modes of action for fungicides. With the addition of Kabuto and our current Product, Segway for pythium diseases, PBI-Gordon provides two very good options for two of the most damaging disease on turfgrass."

Marvin stresses that Kabuto, like any product, must be used responsibly. "You cannot use Kabuto every single week throughout the course of the year and realistically expect not to see resistance," he says. "That's not responsible stewardship of a product, in my mind. We're promoting Kabuto as a tool in the toolbox for dollar spot. It works extremely well, but it's on a 14-day rotation, so after 14 days, you have to come in with another mode of action. If you want to go back to Kabuto, you're more than welcome to [but] you've got to rotate your modes of action."

Other key steps will help reduce the impact of dollar spot, including scheduling irrigation to minimize the effects of dew, which stimulates dollar spot growth. Irrigate at night or in early morning; avoid early-evening hours. It's also important to infuse the soil with nitrogen to delay outbreaks in the spring and reduce the severity of those that do occur, according to Purdue University Extensive Service research. **GCI**

Rick Woelfel is a Philadelphia-based writer and frequent GCI contributor.

Rick Woelfel

FORWARD-THINKING DECISIONS

DEPENDING ON YOUR LOCATION, FALL MEANS A SUDDEN COOLDOWN IN TEMPERATURES OR ACCELERATION IN GOLFER ACTIVITY. PROPER PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ENSURES YOUR GREENS ARE READY TO HANDLE WHAT AWAITS.

In much of North America the golf season is winding down and turf professionals are planning for seasons yet to come. In other locales, the season is shifting into high gear and superintendents are preparing their turf for heavy traffic.

Preventative work does a lot to ward off potential problems. Dr. Karl Danneberger, an associate professor at The Ohio State University, stresses the importance of adding the right combination of nutrients to the soil at this time of year,

particularly in regions where cool-season grasses prevail.

“As you go into the fall, your soil fertility levels need to be adequate,” says the turf prof. “Phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen are the major elements. If you’re deficient on those or on the low end of that going into winter, that plant is just not going to be as healthy.”

Don’t underestimate the value of aeration, says Jim Goodrich, product manager for fungicides, insecticides and PGRs for PBI-Gordon, and a former superintendent.

“Some guys like to pull cores in the spring and then just punch holes if you will in the fall,” he says, “and not affect that much material as far as pulling it out of the ground. A lot of guys, and I was one of those guys, we pulled cores in the spring and also in the fall to get ready for next spring.”

“A lot of guys are of that school of thought, if you can remove a lot of material at the beginning of the season after you’ve overwintered and maybe you’ve had some compaction issues, then maybe you come

back at the end of the season when you’ve had fertilization all year and maybe built your thatch layer up,” he says. “You don’t necessarily want that thatch layer. A lot of bad things happen when you have too much thatch. It’s a disease layer and it also leads to shallow rooting, as well.”

Superintendents often will adjust their winter preparations in light of practical (i.e. fiscal) concerns.

Eric Nelson is the superintendent at the 1757 Golf Club, a daily-fee facility in Sterling,



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Va., just outside of Washington, D.C. He does his fall aeration in mid-August. Ideally, he'd wait until Sept. 15 when nighttime soil temperatures drop into the 50s, but that's not feasible because of the amount of fall play at the club.

This scenario is far from unique. While some clubs in northern latitudes will shut down for the winter months, many more do not, leaving superintendents to find the right balance between protecting their turf and satisfying members' wishes.

"I would love to be able to bury my greens in sand every year on December first," Nelson says, "That's not feasible, but I still have to protect against snow mold. So you have to do a preventative fungicide application in late November."

Whether a facility closes for the winter or remains open, there are ways to protect the turf and minimize potential problems.

For example, many superintendents cut their greens a bit higher than normal during hot weather to reduce heat stress. Danneberger says a new school of thought is this strategy can be effective in preparing for the winter, as well.

"Generally the height of cut has not really been a factor in winter injury," he says. "But a couple years ago there was some correlation, although nothing has been published on it. From my experiences and some other people's experiences, if you're one of those people who maintained an extremely low height of cut, you're going into winter bring that height up slightly. Normally, you wouldn't think that but these guys are mowing so low it potentially can be an issue."

ADDING A LAYER

Superintendents' concerns for turf health intensify with the approach of winter. Chief among those is protecting their greens. In northern locales, where many golf facilities close for the winter, some superintendents cover their greens with sand or straw. But others will use plastic or some similar material to provide, literally, an additional layer of protection against snow or ice damage.

Jeff Johnson, the superintendent at the Minikahda Club in Minneapolis, covers his greens with a product developed by GreenJacket in Genoa City, Wis. Essentially, it's a sheet of plastic (the company refers to it as an ice shield) cut to fit each green. Johnson also utilizes WatchDog data loggers to track what was going on under the plastic.

"If we had an anomaly and turf died, I could maybe look back at those records," Johnson says. "If we had a January or February thaw and the air temperature reached 50 or 60 degrees... What happened under that cover, there was no way of knowing."

About a decade ago, GreenJacket introduced an additional component; a layer of foam one-eighth-of-an-inch thick to provide an additional layer of protection, an approach favored by some Canadian superintendents, for obvious reasons. The full GreenJacket system includes not only the covers and foam, but also a series of sensors at each green site that measure soil temperature and CO₂ levels. The system also includes ventilation tubes that allow fresh air to circulate over the greens if CO₂ levels get too high, which happens about once a week in some parts of Canada.

Today, Johnson protects 19 of his 21 greens with a cover. Two of his practice greens are comprised of bentgrass and aren't covered.

There are a number of artificial covers on the market, as well. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages and the turf conditions at a particular facility may dictate what is appropriate or practical.

In preparing for a winter shutdown, Danneberger suggests applying a topdressing might be in order. "It's an old practice," he says, "but late in the fall, when play is almost non-existent, do a heavy topdressing to provide some protection for the crown."

If the facility is going to remain open during the winter, utilizing temporary greens may be a prudent step. There is also the option of alternating between two cups on each green.

"They have these awesome new plugs now," Goodrich says. "You'll have two cups. You can put one in play for the day and then switch the flags."

Danneberger notes heavy traffic on greens during fall and winter can impact what happens in the spring. "*Poa annua* germinates in the fall," he says. "When you have winter play, that can be a real problem. You have golfers playing on those greens and they're not growing while the *Poa* is germinating.

Greens get a little more compacted and that can enhance *Poa* establishment, which you'll see in the spring."

Superintendents in warmer climates face different challenges. Jeff Marvin, PBI-Gordon's manager of field research, says courses in warmer climates will see a lot of play in a concentrated timeframe, the bulk of it coming between Thanksgiving weekend and the end of April. This pattern of play impacts fall prep work.

As a former superintendent, Marvin would apply extra nutrients to the soil, the customary blend of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous, to strengthen the root system. He would also monitor his Bermudagrass greens to determine the best time to schedule his fall aeration.

"I would try to schedule my last aerification as close as I could to the Bermudagrass wanting to slow down," Marvin says. "It's kind of a fine line. I

wanted to get an aerification in to keep the greens opened up, but you've got to allow enough time to heal up." Marvin would schedule that aeration for late September or early October, which theoretically would have his greens ready ahead of the occasional cool that occurs in Florida in the fall.

In warm climates, it's often necessary to aerate periodically throughout the winter, perhaps as often as once a month.

"You can't core aerify because the plant is not going to heal up," Marvin says. "You're going to have half-inch holes in your greens. What you have to do is come in with what I call needle tines; it's very small, maybe an eighth-of-an-inch in diameter. You needle-tine your greens to first, allow water infiltration if you do get some rain, and allow some gas exchange ... If you're not draining, then water is going to sit on the green and you start getting algae." GCI



'SPECIAL EFFECTS'

AS COURSES ENGAGE IN FALL PREP, OVERSEEDING OFFERS SOME KEY ADVANTAGES WHEN PUTTING A COURSE TO SLEEP, OR TO MAKE IT COME ALIVE.

Rick Woelfel

Sometimes superintendents need to utilize some “special effects” to achieve a certain course esthetic. Their turf may be under stress due to warm, humid conditions, or it may be in protection mode due to evening or early morning chill. That’s where overseeding comes in. Call it the industry’s way of giving Mother Nature an assist.

Some superintendents, notably in the Transition Zone, overseed to bolster turf in the aftermath of a long, hot summer, says PBI-Gordon product manager Jim Goodrich, a former Kansas City superintendent.

“Overseeding is a consider-

ation for guys in the Transition Zone and north after a rough summer,” he says. “We had a lot of moisture this year, but I talked with some of our distributor partners and they’re looking at a good overseeding year, just because of the fact that the turf didn’t really have a chance to dive down and search for water.

“Everything stayed so moist that the root systems were really shallow and then once it got hot and it was still wet all the turf cooked,” he adds. “[Golf courses] lost a lot of the roots; [the heat and humidity] boiled the roots and they lost a lot of turf in the rough areas. That’s the other side of the coin where you have to overseed

those rough areas and maybe even some fairways if you have cool-season bluegrass to get it ready to go in the spring.”

Conditions vary at each facility, but Goodrich says Transition Zone superintendents often rely on rye or creeping bentgrass to overseed their fairways. Bluegrass is a popular choice for roughs, although an increasing number of clubs are utilizing tall fescue as an alternative. “It looks and plays like bluegrass,” he says. “It’s a little heartier, and it’s more heat tolerant.”

In warmer climates south of the Transition Zone, the decision to overseed is based largely on aesthetics, but is no less significant because its im-

portance is measured in dollars. High-end resorts regard lush green turf as marketing tools, says PBI-Gordon manager of field research Jeff Marvin. “The resort golf courses are catering to snowbirds,” he says. “They want a nice green golf course so they tend to be the ones that overseed.”

Typically, resort destinations can afford to overseed. “Overseeding looks great,” says Dr. Karl Danneberger, an associate professor at The Ohio State University. “I love playing golf on warm-season greens that have been overseeded, but it costs a lot of money. You’ve got to mow them, you’ve got to water them.”

Goodrich notes overseeding

must be carefully scheduled, ideally for a period when nighttime soil temperatures drop into the 50s and Bermudagrass begins to lose its color. “You want to have a smooth transition so you’re not left with a period where you just have brown turf,” he says. “The timing is really critical. The Bermuda starts to go dormant and then you’re overseeding at the same time so your ryegrass is green or your *Poa trivialis* or whatever your turf of choice is to overseed.”

Marvin spent his time as a superintendent in central Florida, where overseeding generally begins around Oct. 1, later in the southern part of the state. He notes some superintendents will simply put their supply of seed into a large rotary-type spreader and spread it over the entire golf course. The process requires a lot of seed.

In its Central Region, which includes a large portion of the Midwest, the USGA Green Section recommends using 1.5 pounds of Kentucky bluegrass per 1,000 square feet, or as alternatives for the same coverage area, five pounds of ryegrass, five pounds of turf-type tall fescue, two pounds of fine fescue, or three-quarters of a pound of creeping bentgrass.

Every turf manager has his own preferences of course and Marvin was no exception when he was a superintendent. “If you’re overseeding a tee, a fairway, roughs, you’re going with ryegrass,” he says. “Typically what I would run on my course would be about 400 pounds (of ryegrass seed) to the acre (an acre encompasses 43,560 square feet).”

The amount of seed required varies from one region of the

TO OVERSEED OR PAINT?

Not overseeding? Then the use of paint may well be a viable option. Paint adds color to a golf course and provides visitors with the green look they crave, even if Bermudagrass greens lose their color during the winter months. The reality is, if a course is green, golfer will come.

There are, however, other tangible benefits to painting, including:

- The cost of overseeding 18 (or more) greens is far greater than the cost of painting, perhaps twice as much or more. At a time when many superintendents are having to get creative to make their budgets work, those are dollars that can be utilized elsewhere.
- A coat or two of paint or pigment will increase the soil temperature. In effect, the paint forms a protective blanket over the turf beneath it. Research has shown that turf that was painted in the fall or winter came around more quickly in the spring.
- Golfers playing on painted turf will enjoy the ambiance of a green golf course and will also be taking advantage of a golf course that is playing firm and fast. Because the turf is not growing, the golfer will benefit from more roll and thus greater distance.
- It should be noted, however, that thin or dormant turf painted green is still thin or dormant turf, and all necessary precautions must be taken to protect it. That includes spreading out hole locations to minimize wear in any one particular area, including areas where players enter and exit the greens.

country to another. Facilities in the Carolinas or southern Virginia require less seed than a southern Florida course.

“The farther you go south, the higher that [amount of seed per acre] ratio is to be,” Marvin says. “You’re going to lose some of that newly seeded ryegrass to heat stress. I’ve heard people in Miami talk about overseeding courses in that area up to about 800 pounds an acre. You know you’re going to have some mortality just from the heat; the plant’s not going to make it.”

Marvin would always be sure to overseed the entire golf course (tees, roughs and fairways) and would be sure to order enough seed to have some left over for unwanted, but not totally unexpected occurrences. “You’re always going to have areas that may not establish well,” Marvin says, “or you may get a 2-inch rain the next day and wash away some of your seed. You always want to have an extra pound or two lying around so if that does happen you can go out and touch up certain areas.”

Soil temperatures also influence turf management prac-

tices. In portions of Florida, soil temperatures may not fall low enough for Bermudagrass to go completely dormant, although the loss of chlorophyll will cause the turf to lose color.

In parts of the Southwest it’s a different situation. Bermudagrass goes dormant for six to 10 weeks, roughly from mid-December until sometime in February depending on the temperatures in a given year.

The prime time to overseed is just prior to the beginning of the dormancy period with ryegrass being the seed of choice. During this time, the golf course will close to allow for efforts to limit the growth of the Bermudagrass and allow the ryegrass to germinate more effectively. This downtime allows for application of additional water to accelerate the germination process.

The USGA has other recommendations for handling overseeding, including sowing the seed in two directions with a slit seeder, drop seeder or broadcast seeder, and dragging with a steel mat or chain. It also suggests watering more deeply than normal to strengthen the

root system.

While a number of courses overseed, relatively few take this approach with their putting surfaces. “Some superintendents will go with a bentgrass or a bentgrass/*Poa trivialis* blend,” Marvin says. “What you hope for with the bentgrass in there is as it germinate it helps to fill in and around the *Poa trivialis*. The *Poa trivialis* tends to be clumpier and doesn’t tend to spread as well as creeping bentgrass would. A superintendent might run something like an 80/20 or 70/30 *Poa*-bentgrass mix.”

It’s important not to let the seed overwhelm the existing Bermuda surface. “You need to be particularly careful on greens to not allow the overseeded grass to get too dense or too mature to where it crowds out the Bermudagrass,” Marvin says. “I typically started with a very light rate on greens when overseeding and would add additional throughout the year if I need a little extra color for certain areas. I would lightly groom the greens one or two times per week to keep the *Poa trivialis* leaf blades narrow.” **GCI**

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NEED AN IRRIGATION RENOVATION?



Brian Vinchesi, the 2009 EPA WaterSense Irrigation Partner of the Year, is president of Irrigation Consulting Inc., a golf course irrigation design and consulting firm headquartered in Pepperell, Mass., that designs irrigation systems throughout the world. He can be reached at bvinchesi@irrigationconsulting.com or 978/433-8972.

Irrigation renovations are a hot topic. It's funny how a little brown turf gets the membership and the board's attention. Many superintendents are explaining why a single-row system results in wet, soft middles and dry, hard edges.

Courses that put off irrigation improvements for years are now very interested in making improvements. Unfortunately, if it rains, they will quickly forget how the course looked in the dry weather. If you need an irrigation system renovation, take lots of pictures to document how your course looked so you can jog their memories.

While you have brown grass, you may have to do some selling to show the need. One way is with an irrigation system evaluation by an irrigation consultant who will document the good and bad parts of the system, as well as what improvements will accomplish. However, if your owner or membership knows the system is already past its useful life, then an evaluation is a waste of money. Move on to planning.

Renovating an irrigation system doesn't happen overnight. It takes planning and input. It also requires accurate hard costs. Estimates no longer work; you can't just say "about \$2.3 million." If you seek approval, have bid numbers that can be written into a contract to show an owner or membership. You may have to spring for a design to get to the hard numbers, but the cost is worth it.

Many owners or clubs want to phase in an irrigation renovation for cash-flow reasons. Phasing is discussed by most courses, but rarely is it done due to the increased costs. Phasing or not, you will need a plan that accounts for a system installed in phases. This design details where the installation is going in the future and so you don't end up doing things over in a subsequent phase.

Since most irrigation system renovations end up watering more area, your water use may go up, so make sure you have enough water. Also, consider future water availability issues for your course. Will you have less water or a different source of water? Will regulation impact your supply quantity or quality? You may have to plan a system that is flexible if the water supply changes.

Weight technology because you don't want a new system that is technically outdated in only a few years. New technologies include soil moisture sensors, top-serviceable sprinklers, smart solenoids, and system integration.

Unlike the old days when pump systems and irrigation systems were independent of each other, today's technologies allow the irrigation control system and

the pump system to communicate and make changes based on what each is doing. Add soil moisture sensing to the communication mix and let the irrigation schedule adapt to what the sensors are seeing in the field – much like a weather station, but with a more localized reading. With today's 2-wire control technology, no one really knows what the future holds.

An irrigation upgrade may be part of a larger project that includes a golf course renovation. This can be good and bad. Many times the course renovation requires the upgrade or replacement of the irrigation system to support the enhancements to the course layout. On the other hand, needed irrigation system upgrades have died on the vine waiting for the powers that be to decide on the extent of the course renovations. When renovation costs or indecision kills the overall project, out goes the much needed irrigation system.

How you package the irrigation system renovation, upgrade or replacement is important. The first question from boards will be how quickly will the new system pay itself back with water, electrical and labor savings?

News flash: Never!

Irrigation is a necessary part of a golf course. The system wears out like any other piece of equipment or, like bunkers, deteriorates over time. Just like the irrigation system needs to be planned, so does its expense. Every club is different in how they find money for large capital projects. Know how the club finances large capital projects and include it in your planning and schedule.

Today's irrigation renovations are expensive and accurate cost estimating is essential to getting projects approved. Plan out the irrigation system, its financing and how to sell it to the decision makers. **GCI**

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ACHIEVE CLARITY

OUR RESEARCH IDENTIFIES WHAT PERPLEXES YOU THE MOST ABOUT MANAGING YOUR COURSE'S WATER FEATURES, AND WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL.

This fall GCI, in partnership with SePRO, conducted research to determine how superintendents were managing their courses' water features. GCI editors developed a survey via the online portal SurveyMonkey, which was distributed to superintendents pulled from its circulation list. Of the 174 respondents, 90 percent had water features on their course. Of those superintendent respondents, 42 percent were from private courses. Overall, 17 percent of respondents were from the Northeast, 27 percent from the Midwest, 37 percent from the South, 14 percent from the West and 5 percent from Canada. The majority (58 percent) were from non-private courses. On average, respondents manage just over 10 acres of water features (ponds, lakes, etc). Data was then broken down between all respondents, those who manage their water features in house, and those who hire an outside professional.

The combination of algae and weeds perplex superintendents the most when it comes to

water features, with nearly a third of respondents (62 percent) consider managing "both" as their biggest challenge. That concern leads to multi-pronged treatment as 60 percent of superintendents indicated they handle water features preventatively and curatively.

Courses using dyes and colorants to enhance their water features are in the minority as 57 percent of superintendents reported they don't use them. Aerator and fountain usage is more widespread, with 55 percent of respondents indicating they use them at their facilities.

Superintendents are split on how to identify invasive aquatic plants. Forty-nine percent have used an outside source such as an extension agent or consultant for formal identification. Superintendents aren't as split on treatment method. Sixty-five percent listed chemical treatment as one of their control techniques. Chemical treatment is a popular technique at courses that rely on outside help to manage aquatics, as 100 percent of facilities using outside management resort to some form of chemical treatment.



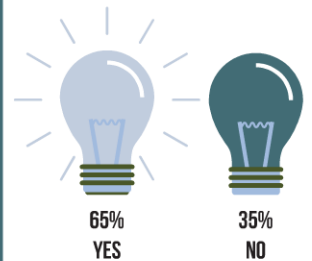
PRIMARY CHALLENGE IN MANAGING YOUR COURSE'S WATER FEATURES?



STICKING TO THE PLAN

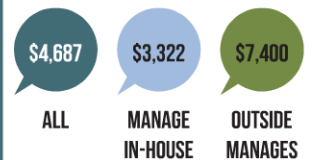
THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS MANAGING THEIR AQUATIC RESOURCES IN-HOUSE INDICATED THAT THEY HAVE A MANAGEMENT PLAN IN PLACE FOR THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THEIR WATER FEATURES.

DO YOU HAVE A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WATER FEATURES?

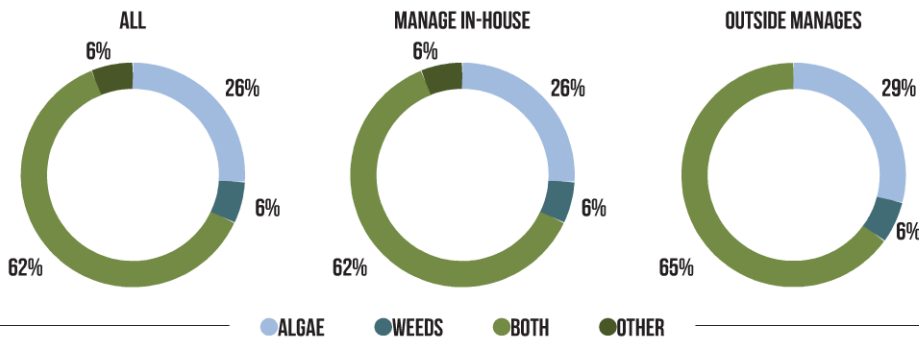


MONEY MATTERS

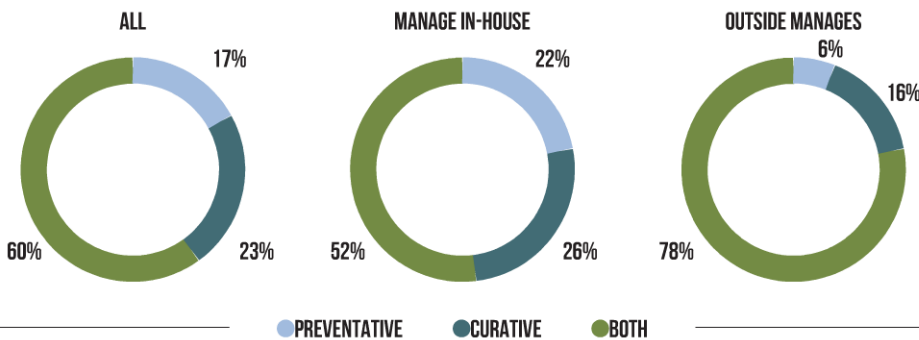
MANAGING AQUATICS REPRESENTS A SMALL SLICE OF A MAINTENANCE BUDGET, WITH THE AVERAGE COURSE SPENDING \$4,687 ON MAINTAINING WATER FEATURES IN 2015. COURSES USING OUTSIDE HELP ARE SPENDING \$7,400. THE AVERAGE MAINTENANCE BUDGET IN 2015 IS \$697,000, ACCORDING TO GCI'S 2015 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT.



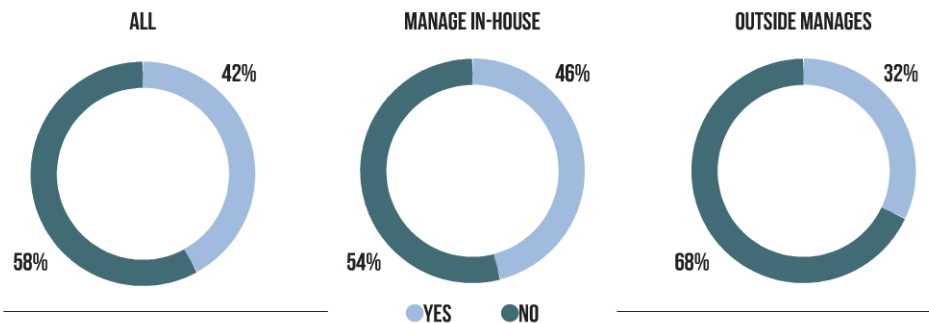
- THE AVERAGE AMOUNT SUPERINTENDENTS BUDGETED IN 2015 FOR THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THEIR WATER FEATURES



PREVENTATIVE VS. CURATIVE TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY



DO YOU USE DYES AND COLORANTS IN YOUR WATER FEATURES?





OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

WHILE THOSE SUPERINTENDENTS WHO RELY ON OUTSIDE FIRMS TO CARE AND MANAGE THEIR AQUATIC RESOURCES BUDGET NEARLY TWICE THE AMOUNT THAN THOSE WHO MANAGE THIS TASK IN-HOUSE, THE MAJORITY (84 PERCENT) ARE HAPPY WITH THE MONEY SPENT.

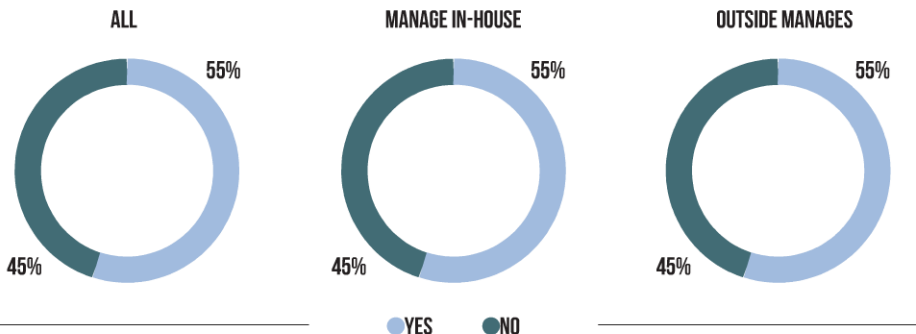
WHAT IS THE PRIMARY REASON YOU EMPLOY AN OUTSIDE FIRM?

- 23% DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO DO IT INTERNALLY
- 23% DON'T HAVE AN AQUATIC APPLICATOR LICENSE
- 23% DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT AQUATIC MANAGEMENT TO FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING IT MYSELF
- 13% IT'S WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN DONE
- 13% OTHER
- 5% DON'T HAVE THE BUDGET TO DO IT INTERNALLY

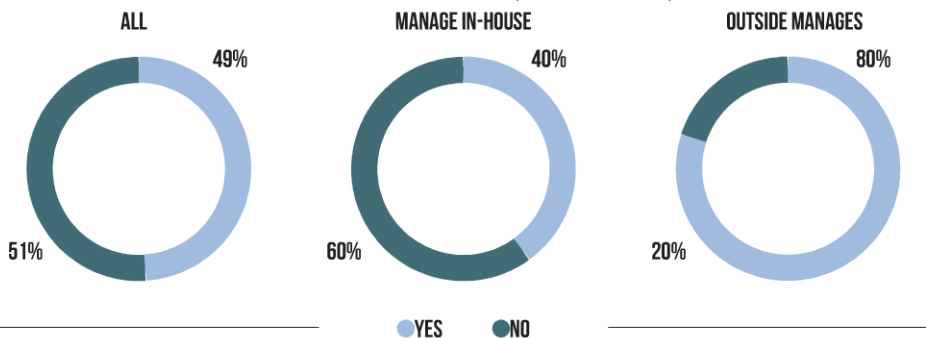
EDITOR'S NOTE: "OTHER" RESPONSES INCLUDED: LIABILITY ISSUES; RAINFALL AND LAKE LEVELS CHANGE SO FREQUENTLY DELEGATING TO A PROFESSIONAL MAKES THE MOST SENSE; EASIER AND MORE EFFICIENT; "ALL OF THE ABOVE."



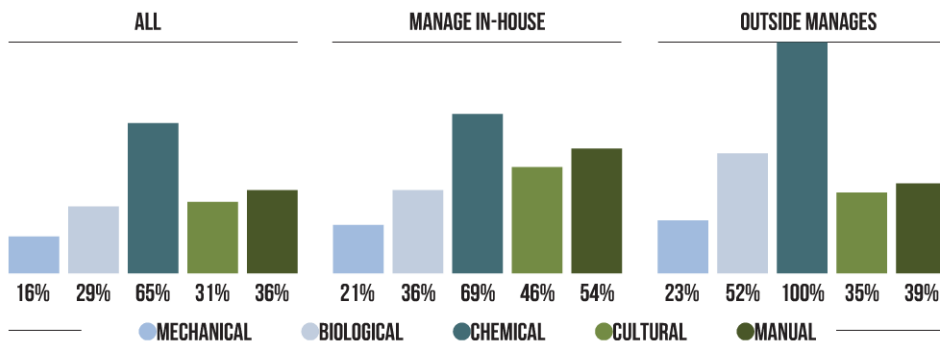
DO YOU USE AERATOR/FOUNTAINS?



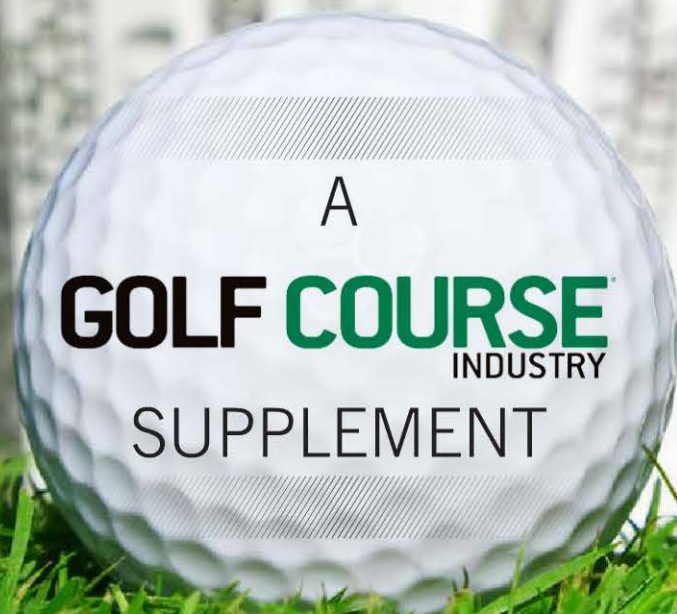
HAVE YOU HAD INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS, HAVE THE PESTS BEEN FORMALLY IDENTIFIED (EXTENSION AGENT, CONSULTANT, ETC)?



CONTROL TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS



2015
Product
PAYBACK



NEW SMART BATTERY VALVE INDICATES WHEN WATER LEVEL IS LOW

BY **DAN GRIGSBY**

Western States Regional Sales Manager,
U.S. Battery Manufacturing



A close-up of the valve shows the built-in probe that is connected to a micro sensor that sends a signal to an LED light.



The Sense Smart™ replaces most standard-type golf car battery valve caps, and most BWT single point watering systems.

The number one reason most golf courses say why the batteries in their golf car fleet go bad is due to improper watering maintenance. With a fleet of golf cars to maintain, it's difficult for a service manager to keep the vehicles fully charged, let alone try and keep track of when the batteries in all those vehicles need water.

To make it simpler to know when batteries need water, a smart battery valve was developed by Battery Watering Technologies, a leading single point watering system manufacturer. Distributed exclusively by U.S. Battery Manufacturing, the new Sense Smart™ Electrolyte Sensor Valve replaces one of the cell caps on a single battery of a vehicle's battery pack. It uses a built-in probe and LED indicator to let operators and service managers know when the golf car's batteries require watering. Similar systems require drilling into the battery, but the Sense Smart™ is installed without any drilling and can be used with or without a single point watering system.

Studies show that a battery pack in one golf car will lose water at the same rate, simply because they go through a cycle (charge and discharge) at the same time. So only one Sense Smart™ valve is needed per vehicle. Once installed, the built-in processor and probe triggers an LED indicator light, mounted to the battery pack. A solid green light indicates the electrolyte level of the batteries is OK. A solid red light tells operators to add water after the next full-charge. A blinking red light indicates the electrolyte level has been low for more than 10 days and requires immediate attention. An optional system includes a dash mounted LED indicator with a six-foot wire lead, so service managers can immediately see the condition of the batteries without lifting the seat and looking into the battery compartment.

The Sense Smart™ valve fits a variety of 6-volt, 8-volt, and 12-volt batteries and works with most BWT single point watering systems. Installation takes only a few minutes, and the benefits of knowing when batteries need water, and providing the proper maintenance at that time, can be a big relief knowing not a single battery will get damaged from an inadvertent lack of maintenance. Furthermore, by extending battery life and reducing the need to purchase new batteries, your annual operating costs can drop dramatically, making the Sense Smart™ valve a definite payback product to consider.



The LED indicator light illuminates solid green to indicate that the electrolyte level is good. A solid red light tells operators to add water after the next full charge while a blinking red light indicates the level has been low for more than 10 days.

NEW!

Sense Smart Valve



***TAKE THE GUESS WORK OUT OF
YOUR BATTERY MAINTENANCE!***

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FROM



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SUPER 500/600



The Super 500/600 can perform a variety of tasks, including collecting wet and dry leaves, sticks, pine cones, pine needles, and grass clippings.

The Super 500 and the Super 600 are heavy-duty sweepers/verticutters/flail and fraise mower collection systems that will pay for themselves time and time again due to the many functions they can perform. The Super 600 is similar to the Super 500; however, the Super 600 has an increased hopper capacity of approximately 80%. The optional multi-purpose sweeper head allows for sweeping, verticutting, fraise mowing and flail mowing while collecting clippings into a high dump hopper with a reach up to 83". With the quick installation of the pulverizing kit, it can also be used to pulverize cores either during verticutting or without verticutting.

The Super 500/600 does a superb job of collecting wet and dry leaves, sticks, pine cones, pine needles, grass clippings, etc. It also performs some mulching of material while sweeping and collecting. The air-flow is so great that the multi-purpose sweeper head does not come in contact with the surface. Another feature is the enviro-friendly chute, which guides the dust towards the ground, thereby reducing dust to the operator and the surrounding environment. Once collected, debris can then be deposited into a dump truck or a container with the high dump feature allowing dumping up to 83".

The Super 500/600 verticuts and collects thatch in one pass. This allows for verticutting without making a mess. Verticutting becomes a one-man, one-tractor operation. Most golf courses are required to close while using a typical verticutter due to excessive mess and the necessity of using many resources for cleanup. With the Super 500/600, you can verticut during play with optional spacing of $\frac{3}{4}$ ", $1\frac{1}{2}$ ", or $2\frac{1}{4}$ ".

By replacing the verticutting blades with flail blades (no tools required), the Super 500/600 becomes the ultimate tool for mowing native areas and collecting the clippings in one pass. The robust design of the Super 500/600 and the flotation axles of the unit allow for operation in difficult areas. When equipped with flail blades, the Super 500/600 is a great tool for scalping for overseeding prep or cool season grass removal in the spring. The Super 500/600 can also be used as a fraise mower. Again, debris can be dumped in a container or dump truck by using the high lift feature of the Super 500/600.

The Super 500/600 works extremely well as a core pulverizer by installing brackets on the rear door of the hopper, creating a 4" gap, which allows materials to fall back to the surface. Due to the verticutting blades and paddles on the multi-purpose head, cores are turned to dust and redistributed onto the surface. Verticutting can be accomplished at the same time as core pulverization. After verticutting and/or pulverizing, the hopper brackets can be easily uninstalled for the final sweeping of the surface after it has been dragged with a drag mat. The fairway is ready for watering and recovery at this point.

For more information, please contact Wiedenmann North America, LLC at www.wiedenmannusa.com.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE!



SUPER 600
Fraise Mowing



SUPER 500
Collecting Pine Straw



SUPER 600
Verticutting



SUPER 500
Mowing Native Areas



SUPER 500
Core Pulverizing



SUPER 500
High Dump



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(BRAUER continued from page 10)

6. Of course, the ultimate direct benefit is how trees affect golfers' individual games, and scoring, in general or on specific holes. While many object to the general idea of tree removal, everyone probably has a few select holes where tree removal would help them. You can ask:

- If recovery shots through scattered trees are more exciting than a forced sideways chip out from underneath the low branches?
- Do encroaching trees require you to play a forced fade/hook not in your bag?
- Do your wild tee shots need to negotiate a narrow chute of trees on every hole?
- Do you lay up on too many doglegs made too short by trees?
- Wouldn't it be fun on some holes to really "rip it" without fear of landing in trees?

7. For those concerned with making the course too easy:

- Find wider courses that are more difficult and have higher ratings.
- Use Augusta National as an example. Masters scores didn't go drastically up after they planted trees and narrowed fairways, suggesting that widening fairways and removing trees probably won't reduce scores.
- Besides Oakmont, Merion is a parkland course getting back in the U.S. Open rotation.

Certainly, trees are both beautiful and necessary – in the right spots – on most golf courses and any tree removals deserve careful consideration. While tree removal is a sensitive subject, there are many good reasons to pursue it. If desired or necessary at your course, as with most renovations and improvements, the plan will usually only pass if influential members support it and a compelling case is made. Achieving approval is typically "all in the presentation." **GCI**

COMPANY	WEBSITE	PAGE
AMVAC	amvac-chemical.com	39, 41, 55
BASF	betterturf.basf.us	33
Billy Bunker	billybunker.com	15
Cushman	cushman.com	44
Fairmount Santrol	fairmountsantrol.com	19
Foley United	foleyunited.com	11
Gempler's	gemplers.com	40
Grigg Bros.	griggbros.com	37
Jacobsen	jacobsen.com	68
Koch	KASTurf.com	35
Lebanon Turf Products	LebanonTurf.com	4, 5
Neary Technologies	nearytec.com	9
PBI Gordon	gordonsprofessional.com	49, 53*
Penn State	turf.psu.edu/apply	38
Plant Food Systems	plantfoodsystems.com	6
Rain Bird	rainbird.com	23
SipcamAdvan	sipcamadvan.com	67
Standard Golf	standardgolf.com	7
Syngenta	GreenTrust365.com/Golf	cover tip
Toro	toro.com	2
US Battery	USBATTERY.COM	60-61
Wiedenmann	wiedenmannusa.com	62-63

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PROUDLY PRESENTS

RISE
25TH

**ANNIVERSARY
SUPPLEMENT**

**CELEBRATING A QUARTER-CENTURY
OF INDUSTRY ADVOCACY**

CONGRATULATIONS TO RISE ON ITS SILVER ANNIVERSARY



Celebrating a quarter-century of industry advocacy on behalf of manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry stakeholders involved with specialty pesticide and fertilizer products.



Publishers of





Proud Supporters of RISE



Before you read our special section honoring the 25th anniversary of RISE, just take a minute to do this:

Imagine trying to do your job without the thoroughly tested, rigorously approved and carefully applied chemical tools you have today. How would you effectively control harmful, damaging pests? How could you successfully maintain America's much-needed greenspaces or keep bugs out of family homes? How would your business survive without the benefits those scientifically sound tools provide?

If you're like most of GIE Media's 150,000+ readers in the turf, horticulture and pest control markets, a world without proven control solutions would be a bleaker place. And you might very well be in a very different business.

But, thanks to a quarter century of remarkable work by the leadership, volunteers and staff of RISE, the unimaginable has yet to happen. For that, we should all be very grateful.

I'm particularly grateful for RISE's track record of fighting for common-sense solutions despite the nonsense we sometimes face from activists and the uninformed. It's tough to play defense against a team that doesn't follow the rules, but RISE has done an admirable job.

I'm also grateful to be part of a uniquely volunteer-driven association. We work with dozens and dozens of non-profits in the many markets our company serves, but none relies on the talents and dedication of individual members more than RISE. I learned early on that serving on a RISE committee is a real and important commitment. RISE volunteers are engaged and active, something nearly every other association would envy.

But, as I think back on 25 years of our company's deep involvement with RISE, it's the people and the passion for which I'm most grateful. I have made and kept many wonderful friends that I met at annual meetings. I treasure those relationships not just because RISE members are supporters of our publications but because they are truly passionate about helping their companies and customers survive and thrive. They may compete like warriors against each other every day, but RISE brings all of them together as allies for a common and very important cause. The association unifies us as a community in a very special way.

Finally, I'm grateful to RISE members who have been important partners of ours in the lawn, pest control, golf, nursery, greenhouse and garden center markets. Their investment in advertising and sponsorships allows us to deliver great business education to you and tens of thousands more people like you who keep our nation healthy, beautiful and clean.

As a small way of saying "thanks" to RISE and its members, we are publishing this tribute to the association's 25th anniversary in all of our industry publications without sponsorship. We're grateful for all the association has done for you, our readers, and we will always continue to be proud supporters of RISE. ●●○

Sincerely,

Christopher Foster
President
GIE Media



Foster



Defending Specialty Pesticides for 25 Years

You may not realize it but **every time** you reach for an active ingredient **you can thank RISE** for its availability.

by **Anne Nagro**

When members of RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) gathered for their annual meeting in September, they had a major milestone to celebrate: 25 years of successfully defending specialty pesticides.

That's significant for industry professionals serving a number of specialty markets. "Our job is to make sure the chemistry and the tools in their toolbox are always there for them to use," said Aaron Hobbs, president of RISE.

RISE helps shape the regulatory playing field so "there are more options and more freedom for the pest control operator and green industry professional to make decisions that are best for particular pest conditions," explained Josh Weeks, who led Bayer

CropScience's North American professional products division and also was the association's governing board chair. It would be very hard for them to do their jobs if they didn't have that toolbox, Weeks noted.

Preserving tools and use patterns so industry professionals can deliver value to customers "is the center of what RISE brings to the table," added Dave Morris, former global business leader for Dow AgroSciences and RISE governing board chair. The association does this at the local, state and federal levels of government.

While groups like the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) represent users of specialty pesticides,

RISE History & Milestones

As RISE celebrates its silver anniversary as the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders involved with specialty pesticide and fertilizer products, we look at the history and milestones that made the 25-year-old organization what it is today.

U.S. Senators Harry Reid (D-NV) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), hold hearings to examine possible health problems associated with lawn pesticides; exploratory meetings are held by industry representatives to discuss the possibility of establishing a new national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators and distributors involved with specialty pesticide products.

In January 1991, the steering committee, along with NACA's Jay Vroom (now CropLife America's president and CEO), interviews job candidates who will serve as the specialty pesticide association's first executive director. **Allen James** is hired and begins work on Feb. 1, the official birth date of RISE. Twelve founding members were there to welcome James to the new association that was established to address the critical needs of the specialty pesticide industry.

In cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National School Board Association, National Pest Management Association and Professional Lawn Care Association of America, RISE develops an "IPM in Schools" kit, mailed to more than 16,000 school districts. RISE hires consultants **David Crow**, founder of D.C. Legislative & Regulatory Services, and Angela Bendorf Jamison, a PR specialist and owner of Communicopia Marketing Services.

The Food Quality Protection Act (FOPA) is passed unanimously by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton. It fundamentally changes the way pesticides are scientifically evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Pestfacts.org, the new RISE website, is launched providing facts about pests, tips on how to use pesticides responsibly and links to member company websites.

Funding from RISE helps establish the Environmental Sensitivities Research Institute to support sound scientific and media research as it relates to environmental intolerance issues (multiple chemical sensitivity), and to compile and disseminate information on such issues.

The organization begins to reach out to the consumer media, sending letters and Rolodex cards with RISE contact information on them to "Inside-the-Beltway" media contacts. A series of syndicated news releases are written and distributed to mid- and small-sized newspapers across the country.

1990

1991

1993

1994

1995

1996



GET INVOLVED

"RISE is a great place to do networking, to gain a different experience and some broader perspective" on issues, said Dan Stahl, current governing board chair of RISE and vice president of marketing and business development at OHP Inc. He encouraged professionals to get involved and to give back. "You can't underestimate the importance of the volunteer workforce that we're able to employ effectively within the RISE association," he said.

▶ Learn more: (202) 872-3860

RISE advocates on behalf of 220 manufacturers, formulators and distributors of these products, which are used in structural pest control and lawn care, but also nursery and greenhouse use, aquatic weed control, vector mosquito control, forestry and consumer markets.

"We are unmatched in our ability to have a positive influence on public policy; there is no one that does the work that we do" or has made the long-term investments in community building, said Hobbs.

Strong partnerships play a key role.

Over the years, RISE and NPMA have "accomplished a lot because we were able to work together," said NPMA CEO Bob Rosenberg. RISE is NPMA's "closest ally in Washington" and the two groups hold a weekly call to coordinate efforts; on the rare occasion they don't agree on an issue, they "respect each other's charges," said Rosenberg.

"It's been a great relationship" with NPMA and is one that's "vital to our continued ability to be successful," said Hobbs. In October, RISE will host its third breakfast at NPMA's annual PestWorld conference to build member unity and thank PMPs for their grassroots support.

Working with groups like NPMA, GCSAA and NALP, RISE has built a stronger industry. Most notable is getting state pesticide preemption laws passed in 41 states in the late 1990s. These laws established FIFRA, which regulates the in-

dustry at the federal level, as the law of the land and made state regulatory agencies the rule makers at the state level. This prevents local governments from passing their own pesticide regulations on private property.

Preemption gives industry professionals certainty. If every locale could set its own rules on pesticide use, it'd be "total chaos" from a business operations perspective, said Morris. With anti-pesticide groups constantly trying to erode preemption, the issue will be a major focus of RISE going forward, said Hobbs.

Even the pollinator issue isn't just about pollinators. It "generally is being used as a tool to attack preemption," Hobbs noted.

Being proactive helps RISE take the lead on these and other issues.

It all stems from a fundamental shift in strategy eight years ago. Back then, RISE was more defensive; it relied mainly on traditional advocacy and responding to the activist agenda. RISE tracked issues and got involved once they were burning. "We were fire fighters," explained Morris.

Today, the association is "involved early in the conversation" so it can "build up good will" for how specialty products solve problems and for the local professionals who apply them, said Dan Stahl, RISE governing board chair and vice president of marketing and business development at OHP Inc.

The associations begins its long relationship with **Dr. Jerome Goddard**, who speaks about the "Impact of Pests on Human Health" during a Tosemite Media Tour in New Orleans. Dr. Goddard will lend his expertise to later campaigns for West Nile virus and children's health.



The Children's Health Act of 2000 reaffirms the FQPA definition of IPM. The law states that "Integrated Pest Management" means an approach to the management of pests in public facilities that combines biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health and environmental risks."

RISE convenes a Children's Health Task Force to create "Pest Threats: A Resource for Decision Makers." The Pest Threat educational materials are distributed nationally with the support of the Annapolis Center to all school superintendents, public health officials and their associations, school nurses and their associations, allergy and asthma associations, and all members of Congress.

A RISE staff position is added to focus on fertilizers and plant health issues as formulator members who produce combination products for the consumer market are impacted by regulations and restrictions on fertilizer use.

RISE undertakes a campaign to pass state fertilizer preemption. Six states adopt fertilizer preemption as a result of these advocacy efforts. The Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association names RISE's Allen James the Environmental Communicator of the Year. Canadian activists begin using the term "cosmetic use," defining it as using pesticides for "non-essential or cosmetic purposes," calling for bans on lawn and garden products.



The California West Nile Virus Grassroots Mobilization Plan is implemented by RISE, its California members, state alliance groups and other interested stakeholders who want to protect public health and minimize the threat of WNV through the safe and responsible use of mosquito control products.

RISE has become “much more flexible and nimble in our work,” explained Hobbs. It uses social media to track hot topics in real time, pinpoint the localities where they’re heating up, and identify where not to get involved — where doing so will only lend credibility to anti-pesticide efforts.

The association has developed an extensive grassroots network, which lets it “quickly reach out and ask for help if we’ve got a local issue or state issue,” said Stahl. This empowers volunteers — “really smart, passionate people in the industry” — to advocate for their business and the industry, he said. These messages are received much better from local business people than folks from Washington, D.C. “That local

voice with a positive message makes a huge difference,” said Morris.

Plus, it lets RISE be more visible in more places. Earlier this year, 450 local pest and lawn management professionals attended two meetings in Montgomery County, Md., to oppose a proposed ban on turf pesticides for private property. Not many associations can claim to have achieved that level of grassroots support, said Hobbs.

As such, the association has forced environmental activists in Maryland to “work very hard these past two years,” said Hobbs. In Connecticut, grassroots efforts helped RISE defeat legislation for five straight years, he noted.

No surprise, it is one of the four pillars of RISE’s new strategic plan. “If there’s been one game-changer for this association, it’s the addition of grassroots to our tool box,” said Hobbs.

The national, state and regional scope of RISE provides immeasurable support, said Terry Higgins, general manager at OHP, whose company specializes in products for the nursery and greenhouse production market.

“You can’t put a price on the value of a group like RISE. Being based in

D.C., they can look out for our industry’s needs on a national level, but they’re just as effective when it comes to local challenges,” Higgins said. “RISE is able to cut through the noise of an issue and promote the benefits our products provide society.”

RISE provides impartial support, no matter the chemical specialty of the company they represent, said Arden Bull, national greenhouse/nursery accounts manager at Nufarm.

“All of the chemical companies are on a level playing field when it comes to working with RISE,” he said. “They’re an advocate to our industry, and they do a superb job of addressing the public when it comes to the safety and necessity of our products. They use scientific reasoning to address the products being used and being introduced in the marketplace.”

Still, challenges will continue. Issues like pollinators and clean water rules, especially on local levels, will remain hot topics. “It would be silly to expect that those people that want to put our industry out of business are just going to fold up their tents and go home,” said Hobbs. “We will continue to be in those conversations wherever they may happen.”

The decidedly green attitudes of Millennials, who now make up the largest share of the U.S. workforce, will influence these issues, said Weeks. So will pressures from abroad. Montgomery County’s proposed legislation



RISE members have been pro-active throughout the organization’s history, becoming engaged locally when the industry is threatened by onerous regulations.

The first RISE Issues Breakfast is held at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference and trade show in Orlando, Florida. Superintendents are invited to the early-morning breakfast.

Specialty pesticide use regulations are proposed by non-government organizations in U.S. communities as well as at the state level, emboldened by such bans in Canada. RISE promotes the benefits of maintaining healthy turf, flowers and trees and the public’s personal rights to do so.

As a way to remind consumers to select the right products and use them properly, RISE implements the Choose Right—Use Right Consumer Campaign using educational signage at point-of-selection. RISE creates a set of English and Spanish educational pieces for consumers and works for two years with large format retailers, independent hardware stores and nurseries to place the pieces.



RISE creates its first 30-second television ad and 60-second radio spot that air on garden shows in the greater Washington, D.C. and Baltimore areas, reaching an audience of more than 35 million people. Titled “Just Two Minutes,” the ads explain it only takes two minutes to read the directions on products used to control weeds and pests.

The RISE Governing Board begins discussion and investment to transform how the association manages issues and communicates with policy makers and consumers. They vote unanimously to fund a research-based and targeted outreach program.



Debug the Myths, which transformed the association’s advocacy model to positive and proactive, is launched as the industry faces an ever-increasing number of policy and regulatory challenges and opportunities.



Direct action at the grassroots level by its members has been critical to the success of RISE in representing the interests of the specialty chemicals industry.

“is right out the Canadian playbook, and a bit out of the European playbook,” said Weeks. What happens in those countries is a “harbinger of future trends,” he said.

“We fill our space perfectly today and we’re doing an outstanding job representing our members and supporting our customers,” said Hobbs. “But we need to grow to address those challenges in the future.”

To do this, RISE is expanding its staff to six professionals by year end, is re-evaluating its brand, and creating more opportunities for member engagement. The more people engaged, the greater the voice, the bigger reach, Hobbs explained. This also will help the association “assimilate future leaders and participants” as senior Baby Boomer leaders phase out, said Weeks. “A constant education process” is required to bring them up to speed on “the history (of RISE) and the importance of advocacy,” he said.

Today the specialty products industry is mature — when RISE was founded in 1991 it was just emerging — and that brings additional considerations. “When you’re a mature industry, there’s always the concern for resources,” and as the business climate changes opportunities may open up for some products and markets but not for others, said Karen Reardon, vice-president, public affairs, RISE.

That makes preserving industry unity job number one. It might appear that an issue affects only one segment of the specialty products industry but “we know that is a very short-term view of the challenge,” said Hobbs. The anti-pesticide lobby doesn’t dislike one use pattern over another, “they dislike them all,” he reminded. These groups constantly look for chinks in the armor. One year a bill may target


the golf industry; the next year the same bill may have structural pest control in the cross-hairs.

“By having the industry unified, speaking for the most part with one voice about the safety and appropriateness of the development, supply and use of products, has meant everything to the continued success of the industry,” said Allen James, former president of RISE (now retired). Because of this, the association is respected at federal agencies like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and at state and local levels, he said.


“We are very successful in the work that we do due to the great investment that our members make in the association, the support that they give us,” which allows RISE to be flexible and innovative, said Hobbs.

There is no issue too big or too significant that RISE can’t influence, he noted.


Working with “very smart, thoughtful leaders” — some who’ve been involved since RISE’s founding — makes for “an exciting time” and will help RISE prepare for what lies ahead, Hobbs said. ●●○





2010
In June, **Aaron Hobbs** is named president of RISE, taking over the association's leadership position following the retirement of Allen James. Hobbs served as the association's president-elect from May 1 - Aug. 31, and was the RISE director of legislative affairs and grassroots outreach since March 2009. The E. Allen James Leadership Award is established.

2011
★ 
The Debug the Myths Road Show moves west to California with activities in Fresno, Modesto and Sacramento.

2012
The Pesticide Registration Improvement Extension Act (PRIA 5) of 2012 becomes law, reauthorizing PRIA, creating a pesticide registration tracking system, additional resources for registration information technology improvements, and other process changes intended to reduce due date renegotiations.

2013

Karen Reardon becomes the first to hold the newly created position of vice president at RISE, becoming vice president of public affairs. RISE completes the work of fully integrating the tools of public relations into all aspects of its advocacy.

2014

The RISE Governing Board and Strategic Oversight Council create a new mission and vision for the association along with a five-year 2020 strategic plan.

2015



Q & A

With

Aaron Hobbs



RISE President Aaron Hobbs is a passionate advocate for the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry, serving as Director of Legislative Affairs and Grassroots Outreach before being named President of the organization in 2010.

Q: What specific factors/market conditions prompted a committed group of industry leaders to create RISE 25 years ago?

RISE was created in 1991 to address the critical needs of the specialty pesticide industry. At that time the most critical need was addressing attacks at the federal level on the lawn and turf uses of pesticides and on federal preemption.

Q: How has the organization's mission evolved over time?

We have stayed true to the RISE mission, which has always been to protect our industry's ability to operate and to provide effective pest management and plant health solutions to the marketplace. We have and will always represent all sectors of the specialty industry — both pesticides and fertilizers. Over time we have become very flexible, which allows us to shift our focus to meet the needs of our members and their customers in the current environment. We have been strategic about expanding our capabilities to become the only association defending preemption at the state and local levels.

Q: On a day-to-day basis, how does RISE protect/advance the interests of the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry?

Everything we do supports our advoca-

cy. We work across all channels, mainly through engagement with EPA, policy makers, members, members' customers, allies, consumers, and media. Our engagement includes old fashioned face-to-face dialogue and collaboration, along with social and traditional media and grassroots.

Q: What are some of the key issues being addressed by RISE today? How are those issues different/similar to issues of the past?

Maintaining federal and state preemption is job one and a job we continue to do very well. I believe this issue will always need our leadership to promote and defend it. Pollinator health now forms a big part of the preemption issue, and has changed relatively quickly from being something new into simply a different tactic to attack preemption — both EPA's regulatory authority and policy at the state level.

The expansion of the Clean Water Act is another issue that has evolved over our history. We've worked state and local issues related to nutrients and most recently worked to oppose expansion of the Clean Water Act at the federal level. Overall, our issues remain somewhat constant, but evolve with time as does our approach to them.

Q: In your opinion, what has been RISE's most significant accomplishment since becoming an association?

Building our grassroots advocacy capacity has been one of our most important strategic activities and began virtually from the day the doors opened at RISE. Also, our work to defend preemption is the other defining activity of the association.

Q: What has been the organization's most significant disappointment?

“We have stayed true to the **RISE mission, which has always been to **protect** our industry's ability to operate and to provide effective pest management and plant health **solutions** to the marketplace.”**

— RISE President Aaron Hobbs

Ongoing efforts to dilute and weaken the federal definition of IPM are something we find very challenging to address because of the range of stakeholders and many definitions being promoted and published.

Q: What is RISE doing currently to remain relevant for the next 25 years?

We are always asking, listening, observing, learning, and are flexible in our approach to our issues. We really focus on being successful as defined by our members, and not by being bound to “the way we've always done it.” This means we are willing to take risks in our approach to issues, in the use of new tools, and being in any conversation about our industry anywhere.

Q: There's been some discussion about rebranding the organization. What has prompted those discussions and where do those efforts currently stand?

Our Communications Committee volunteered to kick off the discussion this summer. The discussion about our brand was prompted by good questions from our members about what our brand is delivering for us at the 25-year mark, especially given all of the new communication channels available to us. We know there are some challenges communicating who we are to certain audiences. Our goal is to

be as accessible as possible to all of our stakeholders, so the Communications Committee's look at our brand is timely and relevant.

Q: What are your hopes/aspirations for RISE members in the years ahead?

My aspiration for our members is that they continue to be innovative leaders and that they expect the same from their association. Our goal is to deliver value every day in an innovative

way. Also, I want members to continue to expect us to be leaders for the industry and to make the necessary investment in the association for it to grow and become even more effective with a broader reach.

Q: At the end of your career, what would you like RISE members to say about your tenure leading the association?

I would like them to say we learned, we grew, we tried new things and we were successful. We weren't afraid to take risks to be successful and we listened and responded to the industry's needs.

Q: Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to comment on?

We are just wrapping up a very successful first year executing against our new five-year strategic plan. Our volunteer leaders have fully embraced the new plan and are working hard to achieve our mission. I'm excited about the future of our industry and association as we work to achieve our vision: an industry free to create inspiring and healthy places where we live, work and play. With the continued leadership of our governing board and all of our member volunteers, I know we will have many more successes to discuss over the next 25 years. ●○○



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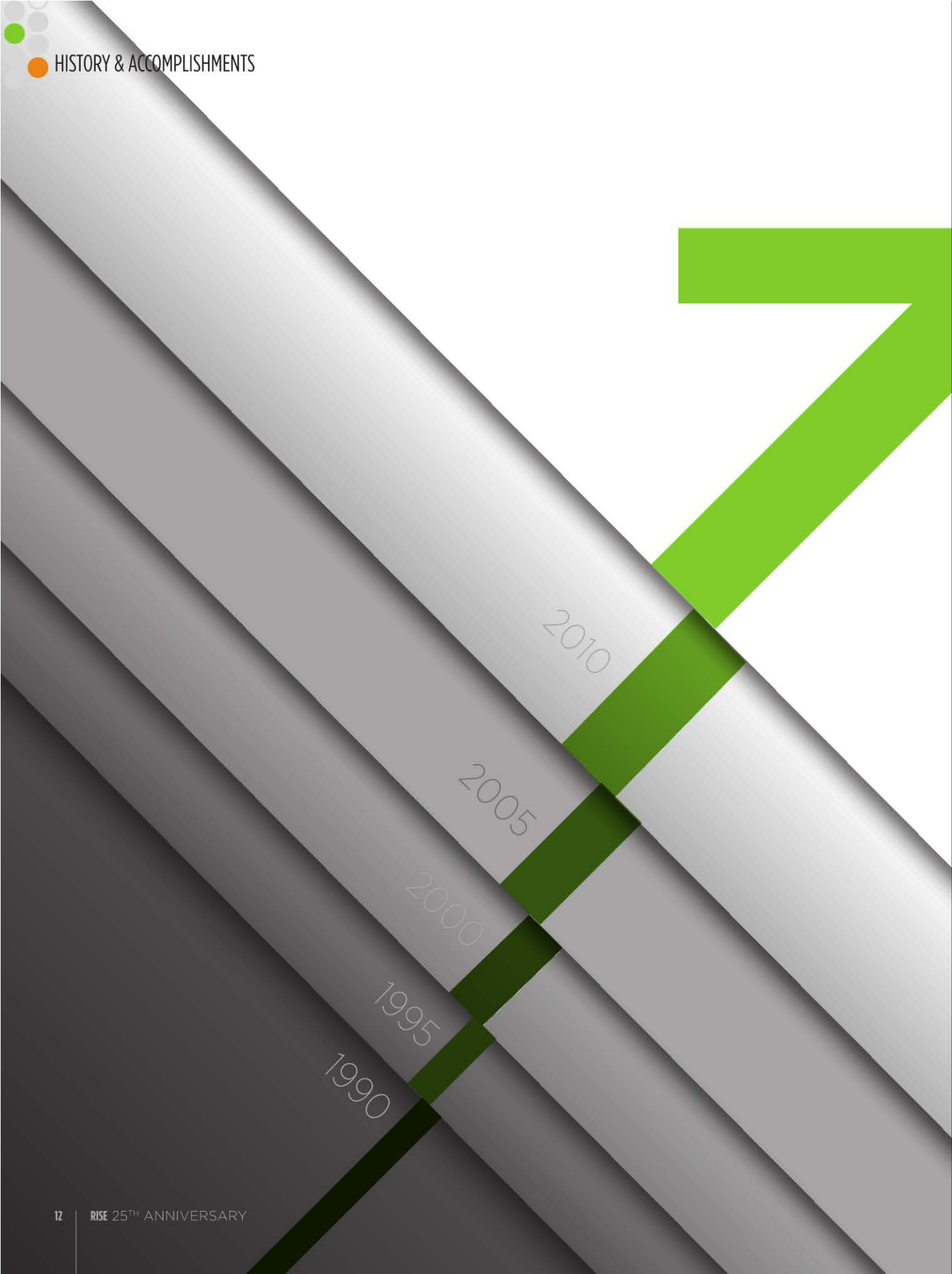
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2010

2005

2000

1995

1990



2015 ○ ● ●

Looking Back: The Rise of RISE

by Anne Nagro

At the risk of sounding simple, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) started with a single phone call.

“It was Joe Lieberman making noise that initiated the conversation,” recalled Bill Culpepper, president of life sciences company SePRO and a founder of RISE. He woke one morning in 1989 to the former U.S. Senator questioning the use of pesticides and herbicides on turfgrass and lawns.

Activist groups had begun arguing these products — used in public spaces like golf courses, athletic fields and parks — were harmful to people, pets and the environment. Manufacturers, they claimed, were selling unsafe products; state and federal pressure increased.

Eventually Senator Lieberman’s concerns blossomed into Capitol Hill hearings with Senator Harry Reid. The hearings were “horrible” and “staged in an era when staging wasn’t so common,” recalled Bob Rosenberg, CEO of the National Pest Management Association. It was “a black

eye for the lawn care industry but it spilled over to the pest control industry,” he said.

For Culpepper, it was a wake-up call in more ways than one. With “no industry organization whatsoever” for the emerging turf and lawn care business, attacks like this were likely to happen again and perhaps with greater intensity, and “we were not prepared to have a discussion to defend ourselves,” he said.

Culpepper, who at the time was director of non-agricultural products at Elanco Products, phoned his counterpart at Ciba-Geigy (now Syngenta). The two agreed to call colleagues at other green industry companies; the group met at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America meeting that year in Anaheim, Calif. “Not everybody was as passionate or concerned as we were,” but “most had been impacted to some extent and were beginning to ask the question, what do we do as an industry,” recalled Culpepper.

Over the next two years the group hammered out the association’s mission

and structure and formed a partnership with CropLife America (then the National Agricultural Chemicals Association). This let RISE operate as a separate entity but tap existing legal and administrative support functions. The alliance made sense as many manufacturers made active ingredients for both agricultural and specialty product markets. RISE also was fundamentally inclusive: Beside manufacturers, its membership included product formulators and distributors.

With 12 member companies, RISE officially started in 1991, hiring Allen James, its first president, that February. James was charged with building the association, speaking for the industry, and working with other groups like the NPMA, GCSAA and NALP (formerly PLANET) to build an ally base.

Finally, industry people didn't have to "throw somebody else under the bus to take the pressure off of themselves," recalled Dave Morris, a former RISE governing board chair and global business leader for Dow AgroSciences who now leads the company's seeds affiliates business. "We didn't want anybody to be the problem, because that meant there was a problem." RISE "really made sense because you could pool your resources and have a unified voice on an issue," he said.

Preemption Challenges Heat Up.

And it was just in time. On June 21, 1991, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Wisconsin Public Intervenor v. Mortier* that local governments had the power under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to regulate pesticides in their own jurisdictions. For decades prior, FIFRA was viewed as preempting state and local regulations. The ruling was a game-changer with the potential for 83,000 local units of government to enact their own pesticide laws.

RISE, along with CropLife America and a host of other organizations, led the initiative to pass state pesticide preemption laws. Within a few years, the coalition had successfully passed laws in 41 states.

"There's probably not much of anything

WHAT IS JAMES UP TO THESE DAYS? A LOT!

Allen James was RISE president through the association's formative years. He retired in 2010 after 20 years. But "retired" is a relative term.



Today James does "a lot of volunteer work." He is president of the North Carolina Agricultural and Life Sciences Research Foundation, which helps North Carolina State University researchers find funding and bring the individual chemicals they have developed to the marketplace. "There's always a challenge of getting products from the bench to commercialization," and the foundation aims to streamline this process, he said. James makes good use of his industry contacts, especially those in Research Triangle Park, N.C., and encourages colleagues to serve on the foundation with him.

James is involved in other volunteer groups at N.C. State, is an alumni advisor for his college fraternity (he once served as national executive director) and travels with his wife. He's also an avid college sports fan, attending as many baseball, basketball and football games as he can. Go Wolfpack!

today that you could write and get enacted into law in 40 states, particularly something that's limiting municipalities' ability to regulate pesticides," said Rosenberg. "It was an enormous accomplishment" and it would be a "very different" industry today without those laws in place, he said.

In the fall of 1991, RISE won a local battle in Missoula, Mont., that secured

its future. The city had proposed a ban on pesticide use for lawn care. It was the association's first chance to "prove we had some value to the industry," recalled James. Through advocacy and media and education campaigns, RISE defeated the referendum.

"That was an early and very important challenge" that had national implications,

said James. “Our industry began to believe in what we could do. Membership recruitment became quite easy after that.” By year’s end, RISE had nearly 100 members, within two years it had well-surpassed the 100-member mark. Today, RISE has 220 member companies — representing 95 percent of the manufacturers, formulators and distributors of specialty pesticides and fertilizers.

“Allen, through his tenure, was able to bring most every industry player into RISE as a member, which I think was a tremendous accomplishment,” said Culpepper. “It was a ripe scenario where conflict could have existed but I think Allen’s demeanor and the way he approached things and his goal of getting the industry together worked out very well,” he said.

RISE brought groups together “across markets, across artificial boundary lines,” and “as a result, the industry has gotten stronger,” said James, who retired in October 2010 after 20 years leading the association. Aaron Hobbs, current RISE president, joined the organization in 2009.

Over the years, RISE became a respected voice of the industry, working closely with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies, as well as state and local regulatory bodies. James and Rosenberg even testified together before Congress. “We were successful in that no negative legislation has ever really passed Congress during the 25 years that RISE has existed, that I’m aware of, that would have restricted the development of these products,” said James.

Adding Capabilities. RISE upped its game in 2008 when it made the strategic shift to be more proactive. “You have to realize you’re moving an entire organization with a variety of member companies and a variety of perspectives, and this was going to cost money,” recalled Joshua Weeks, the RISE governing board chair who worked with James to develop the plan and led the two-year transition.

Following significant research, testing

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AUDIENCE OUR FOCUS

- RISE member companies
- Federal, state and local public policy makers
- Regulatory agencies



and assessments, members were presented the findings and individually told at the association’s annual meeting how adding the new capability would raise their dues. “It’s not often people vote themselves a dues increase, but that’s what they did,” recalled Weeks, an industry consultant who then led Bayer CropScience’s North American professional products division.

“For me, it was a moment,” he said. “It was an overwhelming kind of support and a validation of what RISE means to the people who understand it and participate in it. They voted with their wallets. It was sort of a turning point in the organization,” Weeks explained.

Led by RISE Public Affairs Vice President Karen Reardon, the proactive component “has been a huge success” and complements the “very good traditional advocacy work that goes on at RISE,” said Weeks.

What’s happened over the last decade

is “pretty dramatic,” added Dan Stahl, current governing board chair of RISE and vice president of marketing and business development at OHP Inc. Through focus groups, RISE learned that talk of LD₅₀s and scientific studies “wasn’t resonating with the general public,” he said. It became clear that the public recognized the value of the industry but RISE had to communicate this value differently. “That was a huge shift,” he said.

Bringing “the conversation down to a personal level” like how pesticides control ants in the kitchen and help prevent Lyme disease, has had a big impact, said Culpepper. So has building grassroots support and using social media.

RISE is aiming high for the next 25 years. “We have in place an organization that can deal with issues as well as improve the industry, itself,” said Culpepper. ●○○

RISE

MEMBERS

2015

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AG Rx	Conserv FS, Inc.	GreensPro, Inc.	National Association of Landscape Professionals	Southern Seeds, Inc.
Agra Turf	Control Solutions	Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies	National Pest Management Association	Specialty Products Consultants LLC
Agri-Turf Distributing LLC	Corbin Turf Supply	Gulf Coast Organic	National Railroad Contractors Association	Spring Valley
Allen's Seed	Crop Production Services	Hawaii Grower Products, Inc.	New Jersey Pest Management Association	S.R.C. Corp. dba Steve Regan Co.
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AmeriTurf LLC	Diamond R. Fertilizer Co., Inc.	ITODA-Independent Turf & Ornamental Distributors Association	North Coast Media	Superior Turf Services, Inc.
AMVAC	Dickens Turf & Landscape	John Deere Landscape Inc.	Nouvel Inc.	Supreme Turf Products
Andre and Son	Dow AgroSciences, LLC	Joshua H. Weeks Consulting	Nufarm Americas, Inc.	Swanson Russell Associates
Applied Biochemists	E. H. Griffith	JRK Seed & Supply	OHP, Inc.	SynaTek
Aqua Services, Inc.	Eastern Shore Association of Golf Course Superintendents	Kadant GranTek Inc.	Oklahoma Vegetation Management Association	Syngenta Crop Protection
Aquatic Control Inc.	EC Grow	Kenneth D. Morris, Esq., LLC	Orkin Pest Control Company	TenBarge Seed and Turfgrass
Aquatic Plant Management Society	Engage Agro	Kline & Company, Inc.	Owen Tree Service H.D., Inc.	Tennessee Vegetation Management Association
Aquatic Vegetation Control	Environmental Aquatic Management	Knox Fertilizer Company	Palm Beach Aquatics, Inc.	The Andersons Inc. Lawn Products Group
Aquatrols Corporation of America Inc.	Environmental Care Association of Idaho	Landscape Supply, Inc.	PBI-Gordon Corporation	Tom Irwin, Inc.
Arborchem Products Company	Everris, North America	Lawn Care Supply	Phyton Corporation	Turf & Garden, Inc.
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Ball Publishing	Florida Nursery and Landscape Growers Association	Louisiana Vegetation Management Association	Progressive Solutions LLC	Utility Arborist Association
BASF Corporation	Florida Vegetation Management Association	Meister Media Worldwide	Prokoz, Inc.	Valley Green
Bayer Environmental Science	FMC Corporation	Metro Turf Specialists	Red River Specialties, Inc.	Vegetation Management Association of Kentucky
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Brewer International	Georgia Vegetation Management Association	Mid-America Green Industry Council	Residex Corporation	Weed Control Inc.
BTSI	GIE Media, Inc.	Midwest Aquatic Plant Management Society	Rhodes Chemical Company	Westchester Turf Supply Co.
California Association of Pest Control Advisors	Golf Course Superintendents Association of America	Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents	Rivard's Turf & Forage Inc.	West Virginia Vegetation Management Association
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**GOLF COURSE
INDUSTRY**

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management
Vol. 27 No. 10

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TRAVELS WITH JONESY



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It's been a crazy few weeks. To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, "Oh, the places I have gone..."

AUG 31: Cruised out to D.C. to support the Mid-Atlantic Association of GCS's Stewards of the Chesapeake fundraiser at Columbia CC. By "supporting" I mean playing bad golf on Steve McCormick's amazing old golf course and saying a few words about the importance of their cause: developing BMPs for water and nutrition for the Maryland/Virginia region that gets so much scrutiny from regulators and activists.

Takeaway: Loved seeing a chapter with many younger members involved and engaged. Wish that was true everywhere.

SEPT 1: Got up early and enjoyed a rare treat: walking Chevy Chase Club with the iconic Dean Graves. Dean has been a leader within his club, his chapter, GCSAA and just about everything he's been engaged in over his remarkable career. He's the uber-mentor to about two dozen successful supers, many of whom are now at other great courses in the greater D.C. area.

Takeaway: As much as I love events and conferences, there's nothing better than some one-on-one time with a legend like Dean.

SEPT. 7-14: Mrs. Jones took me to England for a week for a conference for HER business. It was awesome to be a tagalong corporate spouse for once. I originally had big plans to play golf around London and Oxford, but there were too many cool non-turfy things to do.

Takeaway: A weeklong break from the world did me a world of good.

SEPT. 21: I finally made it to the fabulous Pine Hills CC for the 12th annual Wisconsin Wee One Foundation tournament hosted by Rod Johnson. I got to enjoy Rod's amazing course (which is a pitching wedge from the Kohler courses but completely different character and very old-school) and spoke about Wayne Otto, and the importance of the industry's best charitable organization. Wayne would have loved the camaraderie at the event.

Takeaway: If you only choose one thing to support in our business, it should be the Wee One.

SEPT. 25: Shot down to Westfield Companies CC about 45 minutes south of our HQ in Cleveland to hold our annual Horticulture Group sales meeting and enjoy Mark Jordan's course. Sadly, we didn't see Mark because he was at

a GCSAA board meeting in Far Hills. My schedule might be crazy, but it's nothing compared to the commitment that Mark and his colleagues on the national board make every year.

Takeaway: Team strategizing and bonding helps our group create better information products for the entire Green Industry. Maybe your team could have a sales retreat too.

SEPT. 28-29: Headed to Orlando for the 25th anniversary RISE annual meeting. This was special because I've been a part of RISE since it was founded and our company, GIE Media, has been a member since Day 1. (In fact, we created and donated a special 25th birthday supplement you'll find inserted in this issue.) The best moment was seeing nearly all of the past chairman assembled.

Takeaway: Without a quarter-century of great leadership and strong volunteerism from RISE members, we'd be in a world of hurt.

OCT. 2: Bopped up to the nearby Catawba Island Club for the Northwest Ohio GCSA fundraiser for Ohio State turf funding. So impressed with the culture of this relatively small chapter.

Takeaway: The wind coming off Lake Erie in the fall will kick your ass.

OCT. 6-8: As I write this, I'm returning from a great visit to FarmLinks for a few days of relationship-building and knowledge-sharing hosted by Koch T&O. Polyon is a keystone golf market product and our friends in lawn care are also catching on to the ROI value of enhanced efficiency fertilizers. I played golf with FarmLinks owner David Pursell, J.D. Dockstader from GCSAA and Koch Fertilizer president Chase Koch. I can't remember having a better time on a golf course.

Takeaway: Koch is investing in its T&O business, including major plant upgrades, and I was impressed with their executive team, commitment to the business and candor. Good people. **GCI**

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