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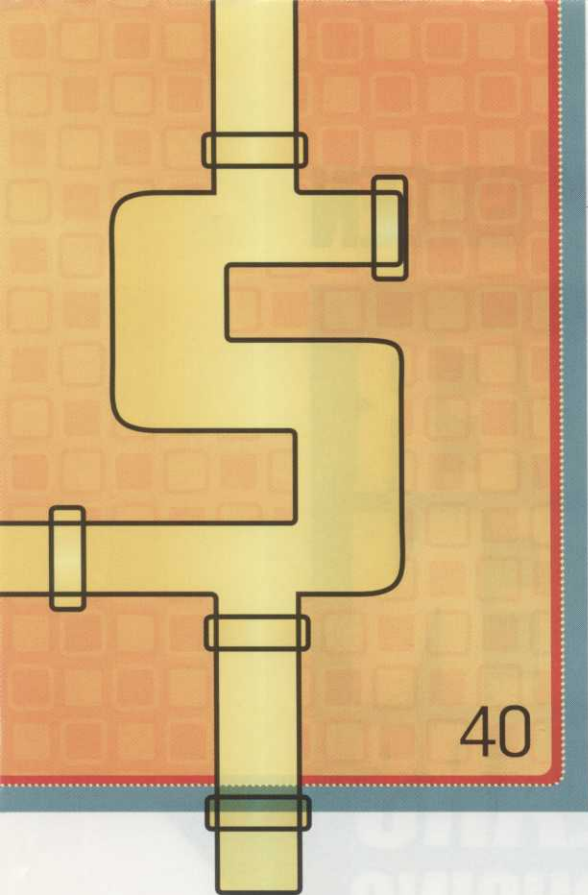
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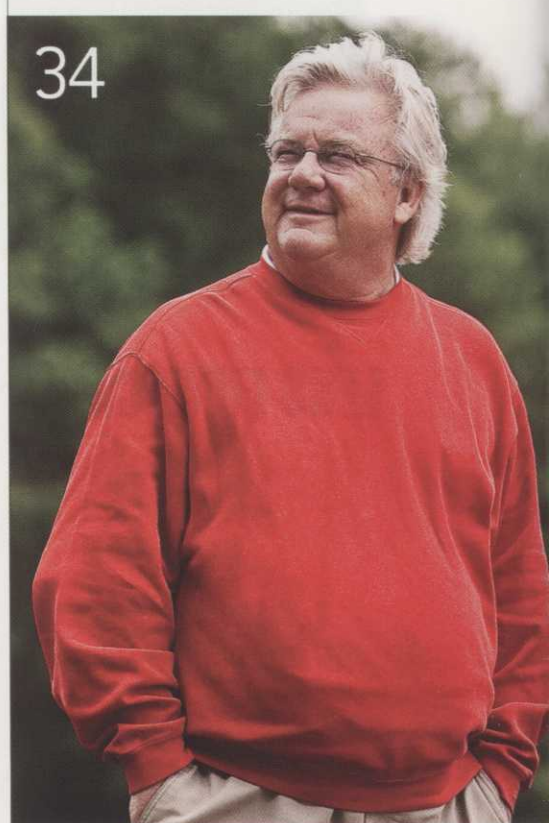
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There's a spot for a new controller on your course. How will you fill it?

Fact is, this used to be an easy answer. There were only a few choices in irrigation system controllers, and more or less they performed roughly the same. Well, that has changed quite a bit.

The demand for increased water conservation, more flexibility, and better efficiency has led to dramatic breakthrough technologies, and many new options.

So what used to be a routine decision isn't. (And, of course, irrigation controller technology isn't something most of us stay as up-to-date on as say who's at the top of the leaderboard at a PGA TOUR event, or who was just voted off the island last night.)

So where to go from here? That's the million-dollar question. Literally — the right controller system can have that much of an effect. First off, don't just consider the brand. Instead, look at capabilities too. If you do, you'll discover your choice is simpler than you might think. Because there are significant differences. For instance, there's a control system that can offer much greater precision (to the second instead of the minute) in setting rotor run times. Why is this important?

Because shaving seconds of program run time can save hundreds of thousands of gallons of water over

a year. Sometimes as much as 40% in total power and water costs. This same system also allows any controller to act as a central control for all the rest. Why does this matter? It's

a huge time saver if you operate without a central, or during a renovation. Instead of having to visit each and every stand-alone controller on the course, you can just go to one. (Or simply hook one up to a maintenance radio and control them all. Or even better, connect one to the internet with a modem, and manage the whole irrigation system from anywhere you can access the internet, like the clubhouse—or perhaps the couch in front of your TV at home.) Then, there's the question of how easy the controller is to upgrade in the future—as more and more sensor and web-based technology comes online. Here again, the answer is simpler than you might expect. Only one control system is totally software-based. Which means upgrading is just a matter of connecting the controller to a laptop and taking only a few minutes to upload the latest software. What is this advanced system? It's the John Deere Aurora Control Series. Sure it might not be the first name you consider in irrigation, but when you look at everything it offers, it might be just

the right one to fill the position. Like to learn more? Call your local John Deere Golf distributor or visit www.JohnDeere.com/Aurora.



For the full story visit
www.JohnDeere.com/Aurora.

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #11



JOHN DEERE
GOLF

Through the first half of 2009 there have been 71 golf course closures (18-hole equivalents) compared to 16.5 openings, the National Golf Foundation reports. There were 106 closures in all of 2008.

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FEEDBACK

We'd like to hear from you.

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

Change starts within

More people need to think about what Pat Jones is saying in "Golf's reality show," (May issue, page 98). In the same issue, Doug Carrick addressed course design in terms of problems of growth and suggested all stakeholders get involved in growing the game (page 14). Unfortunately, there is not a unified golf industry trying to fix this problem of declining golf that has been going on ever since Golf 20/20 came up with a plan to grow the game in the year 2000.

When we talk about stakeholders, we tend to think about the obvious ones directly connected to the game, but don't really look at the entire supply chain...from paper products to other soft goods. Those suppliers have a vested interest, and it was perceptible for Pat to make note of that. I think he's a little conservative on the attrition over the next few years. In fact, instead of about 1,000 courses failing or falling away, I think it could be more like 3,000, mainly because of declining players and rounds. Recently NGF reported core golfers declining and that's alarming.

The industry needs to come up with a sound marketing program that reflects fundamental change in the way the industry offers its products, goes after new golfers and tries to keep what golfers it has. Pat noted "People seeking exercise and a taste of the outdoors will realize that walking a round of golf is more fun than jogging or running on a treadmill." I couldn't agree more, but nowhere do I see the industry talking about physical fitness and exercise in the outdoors. Change starts within first! People today are more health conscious and fitness oriented, golf offers that, and golf isn't talking about it. What a shame.

While Doug Carrick makes some very good points, I think he makes a serious mistake in

suggesting baby boomers are going to be a demand source of any significance. Boomers are heading towards retirement age, not retirement...they haven't saved enough to retire and will continue to work or won't have enough money to play golf. The boomer boom is a myth perpetuated by the NGF.

Tom Durbin
Former vice president of sales
SoloRider
Castle Rock, Colo.

Job well done

Just a quick note to compliment Marisa Palmieri on a job well done on the social media article in the May issue ("Is social media right for your career?" page 32). Nice job taking a timely issue and boiling it down. The end user profiles were also helpful.

Mike Sisti
Marketing manager
LebanonTurf
Lebanon, Pa.



SEEN ON **twitter**

@JustinRuizCGCS:

After reading the article in GCI about Facebook, LinkedIn and Blogging, got a LinkedIn account.

(In reference to the May cover story, "Is social media right for your career?")

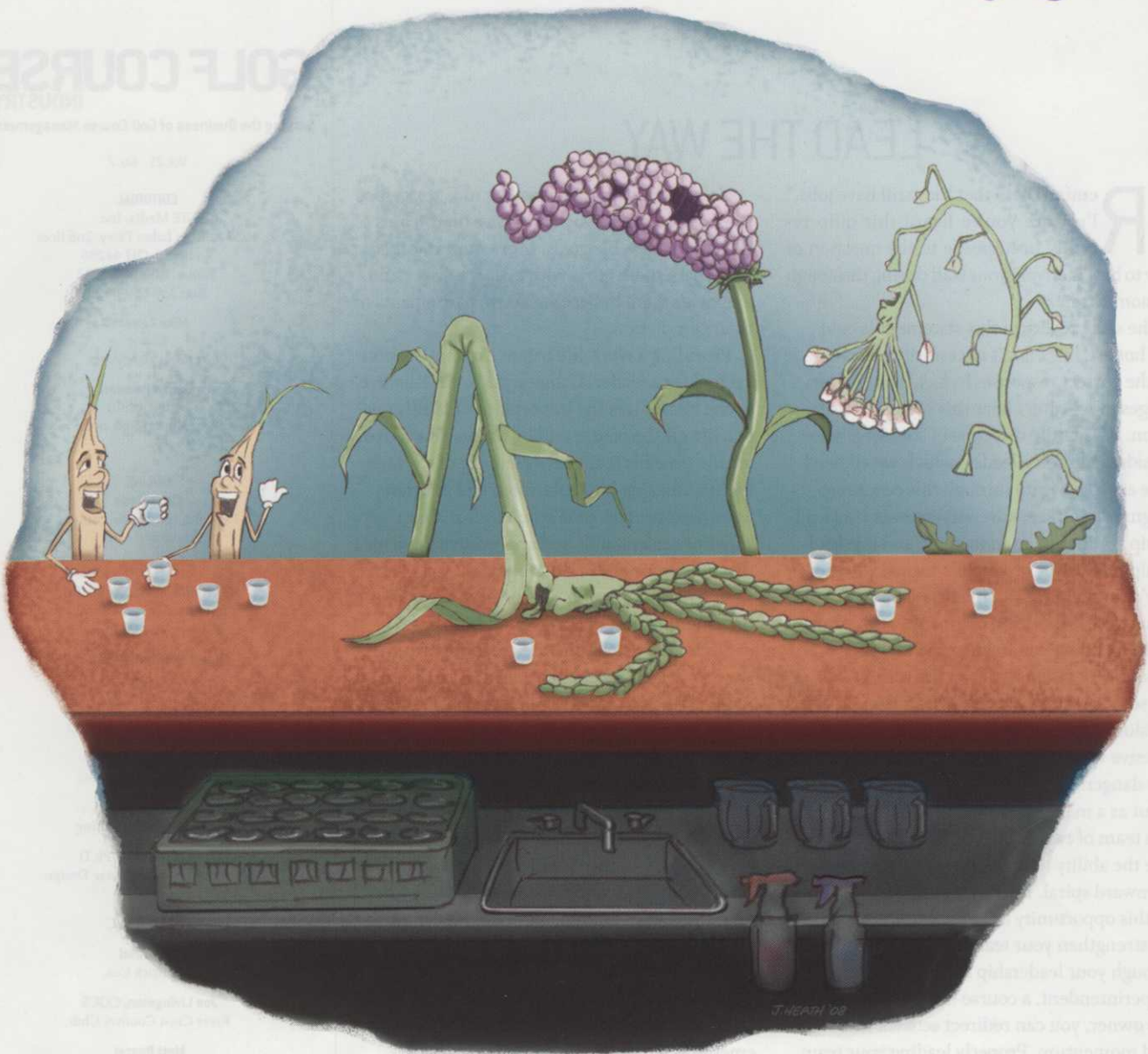
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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course Industry reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those professionals responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset.



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LEAD THE WAY

“Remind them that they still have jobs.” I’m sure you’ve heard this quip recently in response to the question of how to best motivate your staff during this tough economic time?

The stark reality of this statement is cold and honest, but I don’t necessarily believe it’s the correct response. In fact, a part of me cringes every time I hear this used in conversation. It’s not the response of someone who considers himself a leader, which we all need to be as we navigate through this economic quagmire. You see, adversity exposes true leadership abilities in an individual, and it is leadership that drives productive teams, whether they’re maintaining a private golf course or running a Fortune 500 company.

I don’t doubt you made some tough personnel decisions prior to the start of this season. But beware, I’ve seen these decisions sap the morale from a once cohesive workforce, which can be a very dangerous scenario.

But as a manager, whether it’s a team of two or 20, you have the ability to prevent this downward spiral. Instead, use this opportunity to build and strengthen your team. Through your leadership as

a superintendent, a course manager or even club owner, you can redirect setback into forward momentum. Properly leading your team will not only improve morale this season, but also boost performance.

So how do you improve this quality in yourself? It starts with your mind-set and how you approach and interact with your team, says business consultant Joe Calhoon, president of Kansas City-based PriorityAdvantage. While qualities such as courage and integrity are often inherent in a leader, exercising greater patience and humility are traits anyone can improve to better guide their teams.



Mike Zawacki Editor

Calhoon explains that leaders must prioritize the tasks before them and inspire their teams through achievable goals. More importantly, they share these goals with every member and empower them to become active participants in their completion.

Providing a work-life balance is another critical tool for a leader, Calhoon adds. An effective leader recognizes the importance of family and of a life off the course and he makes allowances for the time his team needs outside of the facility. It’s amazing how motivated and effective team members become when they realize their superior understands and appreciates the issues that are important in their lives.

And often forgotten, you need to recognize the emerging leaders in your midst. These circumstances provide great opportunities for “accidental” leaders to rise to the top. And remember, leadership can be contagious. If you’re inspiring individuals, then their actions could influence those around them to achieve and excel, as well.

So the next time someone asks how you’re motivating your crew during this summer slump, tell them you’re focusing them on shared goals this season and you’re using this opportunity to train everyone to become leaders in their own right. And who knows, you may emerge as a more effective leader yourself.

When you have a moment, please tell me how you’re leading your team this season, and perhaps how you’ve had to become a more effective leader to accomplish your goals. E-mail me at mzawacki@gie.net. I look forward to receiving your insight on this topic. **GCI**

On a side note, I’d like to take a moment to recognize everyone who has worked tirelessly on Golf Course Industry over the last year. Recently, GCI’s editorial and design team received a number of accolades, including best opinion/editorial writing, best cover design and best overall publication design in the 2009 Turf & Ornamental Communicators contest. Art director Andrea Vagas received a best-of-show Gardner Award for GCI’s July 2008 issue. In addition, GCI received Best Trade Publication and best trade report for its 2008 Smart Irrigation supplement, as well as other writing awards at the Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards in June.

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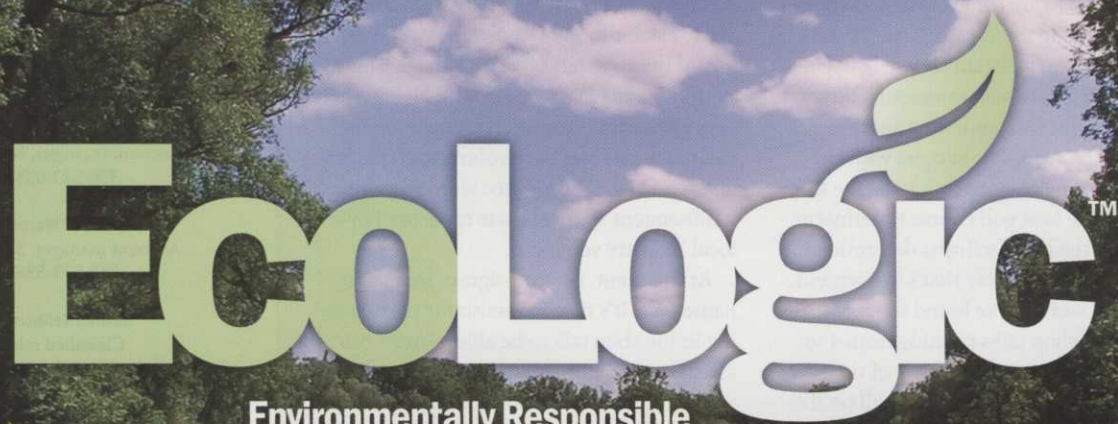
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TALKING SHOP

The Michigan Assistant Superintendent Committee has been organizing assistant shop talks for a couple of years. These gatherings are a great way to engage assistants. Assistant shop talks can be simple to plan and execute and cost little or no money. Here are some of the ways we go about organizing them.

Organizing an assistant shop talk begins with finding a host maintenance facility. It could be your own course or another one down the road. The success with the assistant shoptalk begins by having the full support of the host golf course superintendent. Once the host facility is determined, establish a time and date that's convenient for the host facility. I've found the most success with shop talks running from 4 to 6 p.m. These hours allow plenty of time for assistants to work a full day and still be able to attend an event. It also allows assistants to be home at a good time.

The next item to consider is the agenda. The topics can be technical or non-technical in nature or something that's a trend. One recent shop talk we held included learning about a bunker renovation from beginning to end; many of them include talks on leadership, communication and daily tasks like irrigation, chemical management and staff management. Remember, all shop talks should include a tour of the maintenance facility and meeting the golf course superintendent. Most superintendents are happy to do a small presentation on any topic from a recent construction project to sharing interviewing tips and resume-building skills.

Talk to your local association or chapter president and ask them for help in sending out e-mails to the assistant members advertising the shop talk. I'd suggest sending out an e-mail about four weeks in advance to allow assistants plenty of time to manage their work and personal schedules. Always include a deadline for registration, which is important to finalize your number of attendees so you can plan for refreshments.

Using a core of assistant volunteers can help make your shop talk run smoothly. For example, to ensure good attendance, ask a group of assistants (possibly those on the chapter's assistants' committee) to divide

up a phone list of prospective attendees and make calls to personally invite assistants to the event. Don't worry about not getting a huge turnout the first time. Whether you get 12 or 30 assistants participating in the event, there's still something to learn.

The budget is nothing to worry about. I've yet to ask for money from our association for any of the shop talks I've organized. The superintendents I've worked with all have been very excited and happy about opening up their facilities and have volunteered to purchase pizza and pop. Once word got around, a subsequent shop talk was sponsored by a local industry vendor.

At the event, create a sign-in sheet and name tags. It's nice for assistants participating in the shop talk to be able to meet other assistants and immediately see their names and what courses they're from. A sign-in sheet will prove useful if you plan to organize another shop talk. You also can use it to send an e-mail thanking attendees.

Allow the host assistant the opportunity to chair the shop talk and give an introduction. This is a great opportunity for the host assistant to show off his facility and practice communication and leadership skills.

I've also found that it's good to have a few assistants in the crowd who are prepared to ask questions and initiate discussion should things get quiet. But trust me, there's always enough to talk about and the two hours goes before you know it.

Bring a camera and take notes. You never know what you might see and want to discuss with your own superintendent back at work. Take pictures and share them with your employer the next day. The pictures also can be used to prepare an article for your chapter's magazine or Web site.

When the event is over always thank the host superintendent and assistants for taking time out of their busy schedules to organize and host an assistant shop talk. Always follow up with a handwritten note.

A successful workshop takes planning, but it's worth it. Organizing assistant shop talks is about creating an opportunity for assistants to get together in a familiar environment that promotes networking and learning opportunities. **GCI**

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