

# Mechanics Inclined

### CAROLINA TECHNICIANS FORM ASSOCIATION

By Trent Bouts

**T**he founding members of a new professional association believe their formation will offer a significant boost to golf course maintenance in the Carolinas.

More than 50 service technicians from across the two states formed the Turf Equipment Technicians Association of the Carolinas late last year. Brandon Gale, from Cheviot Hills GC, in Raleigh, N.C., was named the first president.

"We're really excited about what such an organization could achieve, not only for its members but for golf course maintenance in general," said Gale, who credited Rex Floyd, past president of the Carolinas GCSA and superintendent of Wilson CC in Franklinton, N.C., for spearheading

the association's start. "We have a lot of work to do before we make the next step, but the foundation is there and so is the enthusiasm."

Gale says the association's goals fall into three main categories: education, communication and professionalism. Gale said the association wants to find ways to provide more frequent and accessible education opportunities for members. A primary asset for communication would be a member directory that not only lists the names and contact details of who is in the association but also lists their equipment inventory. Such a list would allow individual technicians to speak directly with colleagues experienced with similar equipment to share knowledge and solutions.

Gale added that turf equipment technicians were eager to take a leaf

from the book of superintendents in terms of elevating their profession.

"Years ago, superintendents were seen as farmers out mowing grass," he said. "Any credit for a providing a good golf course went to the club professional. Superintendents have really raised their image over the years, and that's something we would like to see for ourselves because ours is a technical profession. We're not just shade-tree mechanics anymore."

A few other states have technicians' associations in placed. There's been talk in technicians' circles of a national association forming, but Gale believes more state associations are needed before that can happen.

*Bouts is communications director for the Carolina Golf Course Superintendents Association*



## Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews [www.reeusda.gov](http://www.reeusda.gov)

(All sites are preceded by <http://> unless otherwise noted)

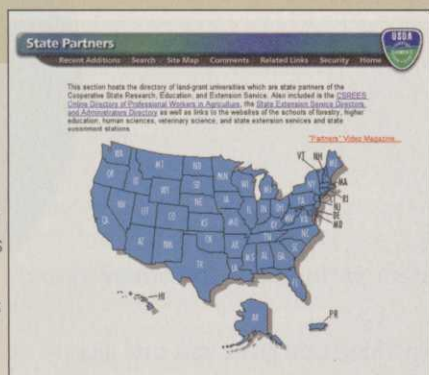
If you need to find a turfgrass extension specialist quickly, this site would be the place to start. It's the official site of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, and it provides information clearly and concisely.

You can click on the latest news from the USDA (which may alert you to which pesticides are on the EPA's hit list), or you can find your congressional representative to lobby against legislation that will harm your profession.

The best part of the site, however, is the interactive map, where you can click on your state to reveal the extension programs there. This portal will allow you to find out whether your state has extension specialists who

focus on turfgrass. After you've clicked on your state, you'll find links to the Web sites of your local extension programs (and most of them have easy-to-use Web sites as well). From there, you're just a few mouse clicks away from finding the person with whom you can discuss your particular problem.

If you're having trouble getting your club to fund a course improvement, there may be a USDA grant program to help you defray the cost if you can link it to a research project it's doing. In an era of tight budgets, extra money is always helpful. The USDA frequently funds a variety of research studies, and creative superintendents can create proposals that allow their projects to fall into one of them.



Superintendents should bookmark [www.reeusda.gov](http://www.reeusda.gov) because its ongoing value will keep you coming back time after time.

*Golfdom's managing editor Frank H. Andorka Jr., who often admired The Ohio State University extension campus from afar as a student at The College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, compiles Scanning the Web. You can reach him at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.*