



# We Need More Superintendents to Step Up at Local Levels

*Editor's note: Allen James, president of RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), is writing a bimonthly column for Golfdom beginning this month. RISE is the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders involved with specialty pesticide and fertilizer products. James' column will focus on legislative and regulatory issues in the industry.*

By Allen James

**A**s I write this column, we've just marked our National Grassroots Program's one-year anniversary. The golf industry was the first to step up in this campaign, which focuses on preventing local municipalities' attempts to restrict the availability of pesticide and fertilizer products used by consumers and professionals. The golf industry continues to play an essential role in grassroots issue management.

In particular, we would like to rec-

ognize the leadership of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Carrie Riordan, the GCSAA's director of information and public policy.

Without the help of Riordan and her members, we would have been in tough shape with needless and emotionally based anti-pesticide and anti-fertilizer ordinances going unchallenged, especially in Westchester County, N.Y.

In one Westchester public hearing, we relied upon a local golf course superintendent to defend pesticide use — not on golf courses — but on homeowners' properties. The superintendent did so with professionalism and dedication.

During the past year we've seen many local policy proposals impacting homeowner use of pesticides and fertil-



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izers. However, we have also seen proposals impacting golf — back to New York where one locality has passed a law requiring a permit for every pesticide application by any user, including farmers, homeowners, pest control and golf courses.

You are probably also aware that local boards increasingly challenge new golf course permits with emotional and unsupported assertions about how pesticides and fertilizers used on courses impact water quality. As with homeowner use, there are many suburban

myths about the golf course environment, even though science shows the water coming out of most golf courses is cleaner than when it went in.

We need everyone in the golf industry, especially given the highly visible

## Golfdom's Blog of the Month



### Is Golf a Sport?

Chalk one up for the ... well ... out-of-shape people in this world.

Angel Cabrera's U.S. Open win over Tiger Woods Sunday was a victory for all of us who aren't in fine fettle.

There was the beefy, cigarette-sucking Cabrera hoisting the 2007 U.S. Open trophy on national TV after defeating the sculpted and sinewy Woods by one stroke at Oakmont Country Club to win the nation's cham-

ampionship. It was kind of like Luciano Pavarotti putting the hurt on Hulk Hogan in a steel-cage match.

Seriously, though, what does Cabrera's win over Woods say for the argument that golfers don't have to be athletic to succeed? With that question asked, it brings up the age-old question: Is golf a sport or a skill?

We want to know what you think.

E-mail your thoughts to Larry Aylward at [lalward@questex.com](mailto:lalward@questex.com).

# syngenta Business Tip of the Month

community profile and professionalism of superintendents, speaking up about the benefits of healthy turf and the products necessary for its growth.

Often, it is this segment of our RISE members' customers who are most comfortable in public meetings and are well acquainted with their local elected officials — a first line of facts and relationships that are essential to maintaining product choice.

We are witnessing an alarming trend at the local level, particularly in Florida, Wisconsin, New York and most of New England, with local policymakers dismissing the life's work of our nation's leading and most distinguished turf researchers as being irrelevant to local policy making. Some localities are even choosing to ignore current, state-of-the-art research in favor of outdated information because it supports bad laws.

Where do we turn when seemingly unassailable science and common sense are not allowed to inform public debate? We turn to grassroots — to product users of all stripes to show up and defend the necessity and benefits of product choice. Recently, our first grassroots manager Stacey Pine left RISE for a new career as a federal lobbyist. This change gave us the opportunity to tap two industry veterans, Karen Reardon, who now takes on grassroots and communications duties for RISE, and Elizabeth Lawder Grotos, who helped me grow the RISE organization for nine years and is now our grassroots consultant. For those who are not members of GCSAA, please contact Elizabeth at [egrotos@dclrs.com](mailto:egrotos@dclrs.com) or 202-872-8440 with information about local action or for more information about our program's resources.

Meanwhile, we'll continue our partnership with GCSAA and continue to count on superintendents when and where we need them. ■

## Secrets to Success in Public Speaking

**B**ruce Williams is a veteran superintendent who knows a thing or two about agronomy. And over the years, Williams, the director of golf and grounds for the Los Angeles Country Club, has learned a few things about making presentations to boards, green committees and other golf course decision makers. In fact, Williams presents a seminar at the Golf Industry show entitled "Mastering Your Communication Skills."

Williams says it's vital to know your audience before presenting. Presentations to community groups are different than those to green committees or the maintenance staff. Consider the audience's knowledge base and primary interests so you can find the common denominator between speaker and audience and speak on the same wavelength as the recipient of the message.

Superintendents also must prepare differently for presentations, whether they be motivational, educational or for marketing purposes. For example, when seeking approval for something, ask for it at the end. Otherwise the audience might mistake the presentation as simply an informational session.

No matter the presentation, it should have an introduction, body and conclusion, Williams says. And he advises presenters to know the subject better than anyone in the audience. For example, if the presentation concerns budgeting, know the numbers backwards and forwards, he says.

It's also important to be aware of the time allocated for a presentation. If a green committee meeting convenes for an hour and the superintendent is allotted 20 minutes, then people will generally stop listening after 20 minutes. The audience is generally happier when a speaker finishes early, Williams points out.

Williams advises presenters to practice. Novice speakers can rehearse with staff, at home and elsewhere. No one is a natural-born speaker, but practice improves ability.

And bring notes if needed. It is better to see a person with notes who knows the material rather than someone who stumbles over key points, Williams says.

One final tip: Avoid caffeine before the presentation, Williams suggests. Coffee and carbonated beverages will only make you more stressed.

*The "Tip of the Month" is provided by Syngenta to support superintendents in their agronomic, business and professional development. To comment on this column, submit a lesson from your own experience, or suggest a topic to be covered in a future issue, please visit [www.golfbusinesstips.com](http://www.golfbusinesstips.com).*

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