

I'm scanning a list of the "Best Jobs in America" compiled by MONEY Magazine and Salary.com. I'm sorry to report that the job of "golf course superintendent" didn't make the top-50 list. However, that doesn't mean what you do for a living didn't make the list. Let me explain.

About 20 occupations did make the list that many superintendents also do in their jobs in addition to providing golfers with finely manicured turf. It's no secret the profession has evolved to a point where superintendents have myriad responsibilities beyond just turf maintenance. The modern-day superintendent wears more hats than the entire Boston Red Sox roster.

Let's take a look at the list. At No. 2 is "college professor." The many superintendents I've talked to over the years are educators. And with the constant turnover many of them have on their crews, they're always instructing.

At No. 4 on the list is "human resources manager." As I understand it, most superintendents hire and fire employees. They also listen to their crew members' gripes about the stale cookies in the vending machine. Sounds like human resources to me.

At No. 7 on the list is "computer/IT analyst." Don't tell me that superintendents don't know the ins and outs of their high-tech computerized irrigation systems. They might not be geeks with dark-rimmed glasses, but they are technologically savvy.

At No. 10 on the list is "psychologist." I've talked to many superintendents who gladly take on the role of mental mentors to help crew members who are down on their luck.

Also on the list is "accountant." Last time I heard, superintendents were in charge of their maintenance budgets. They might not like the numbers game, but they have to play it.

"Property manager" and "landscape architect" are also on the list. These are self-explanatory as they relate to the golf course maintenance profession.

Then there is "optometrist." I've always thought superintendents take good care of their eyes so they can spot turf diseases in their earliest stages.

You Didn't Make the Lineup, But ...

BY LARRY AYLWARD



WHAT YOU DO FOR
A LIVING IS LISTED
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"Dietitian/nutritionist" also made the list. Most superintendents I've met are in good shape, especially the ones who like to get down and dirty. I'm convinced they're careful of not consuming too many triple cheeseburgers.

While I'm not a big fan of the profession, "lawyer" was No. 37 on the list. And yes, like it or not, superintendents must play this role, too. I've talked with many of them who must "make a case" to obtain the extra money they've asked for in their maintenance budgets. Like lawyers, superintendents must serve to convince.

"Environmental scientist" and "biological scientist" also made the top 50. Most superintendents I've met know a lot about the great outdoors. And, regarding the latter, they are able to diagnose the weird-looking muck growing in the pond alongside the 16th fairway.

One of my favorites on the list is "public relations specialist." I don't think many superintendents thought they needed to be this when they opted to get into the profession. Now they're expected to deal with golfers from all of life's walks, including the 25-handicappers who have the nerve to complain about green speed. Talk about having to refrain from telling a high-maintenance golfer to take a hike.

The last "best job" I'd like to highlight from the list is "dentist." Why "dentist," you ask?

Because I've heard from many of you that it's like pulling teeth to convince your green committee or your owner to cough up the money for a new irrigation system or other expensive but important project.

On that note, here's a toast to you— and all of your responsibilities as superintendents.

Larry Aylward can be reached at 216-706-3737 or larylward@questex.com.