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## Off The Fringe Well-Taught

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS  
LEARN FROM THE BEST AT  
GREEN START ACADEMY**

By **Larry Aylward**, Editor in Chief

**John Deere's  
Brad Aldridge  
makes a point  
during an outdoor  
demonstration.**

**S**ome day, when they look back on the Green Start Academy, the assistant superintendents who attended the event will realize what an honor it was to be there — if they haven't already.

Last month, about 50 assistant superintendents from across the country were selected to attend Green Start Academy, a two-day educational and networking event sponsored by John Deere Golf and Bayer Environmental Science held in Clayton, N.C., and Fuquay-Varina, N.C.

It's a dynamic program and assistant superintendents get to rub elbows with some of the movers and shakers in the golf course maintenance business. This year, attendees were treated to a Who's Who lineup of speakers. If this were Major League Baseball, this all-star lineup would win the World Series. It included Ken Mangum, certified golf course superintendent of the Atlanta (Ga.) Athletic Club, and Bruce Williams, director of business development in the West for ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance. Mangum and Williams are veterans in the business and call it like they see it.

One thing Mangum and Williams harped on to the assistants was the importance of getting themselves noticed in their quests to move up in their careers. "You can't be better than everyone else if you're doing the same thing," Mangum said.

Of course, there were questions for Mangum and Williams about the struggling economy and job security. "I think everybody is concerned about their jobs," Mangum said.

Stan Zontek, director of the Mid-Atlantic Region for the United States Golf Association's Green Section, talked about golf course trends. More courses are adding first-rate practice facilities to accommodate more golfers who don't have time to play 18 holes, said Zontek, who also spoke about golf course conditioning. While more people say con-

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PHOTO BY: LARRY AYLWARD

# Off The Fringe

## MOVIES *Continued from page 9*

calls I've been on where people tell me they have a water leak," Petersen says. "Then they tell me they're watering seven days a week. And I tell them, 'You don't have a water leak. You've saturated your ground so much that you think you have a water leak, but you don't.'"

The event, organized by Rain Bird's Jennifer Riley-Chetwynd, featured a screening of the finalists' films in front of a live audience.

"The filmmakers in this year's competition have genuinely expressed the importance of efficient, effective and responsible use of the Earth's most precious resource by using the creative and personal power of film in an original and compelling way," said Dave Johnson, Rain Bird's corporate marketing director. "Rain Bird strives to deliver an influential platform where filmmakers like these six finalists can raise awareness of the important issues surrounding water conservation so that others will be inspired and take their own personal action."

Pope also had a good word for Rain Bird, in addition to the filmmakers.

"Rain Bird sets an example of corporate progressiveness, which is just so vital at this time," she said. ■

## WELL-TAUGHT *Continued from page 10*

ditioning has become too extreme, Zontek says he's fine with that. "People say to me, 'Stan, when will it end?' I hope it never ends because it's job security."

Speaking of which, the bet here is Thom Nikolai is secure in his job as turfgrass professor at Michigan State University. That's because the man can outright teach.

You know someone is a top-notch presenter when you can pay attention to him/her for almost two hours. That's Nikolai, who spoke on a variety of subjects, including green speed. "I don't think speed kills," Nikolai said when discussing green speed. "Speed doesn't kill — ignorance does."

While Nikolai was a hit, so was Nick Hamon, Ph.D., and director of development and technical service for Bayer Environmental Science, who gave a presentation on sustainable development. Hamon provided a fascinating presentation on what's coming to the industry in that regard.

The assistants also got to hear longtime John Deere engineer Ron Reichen present on, "Details of Bedknife/Reel Composition." As Matt Armbruster, John Deere Golf's marketing manager said when introducing Reichen, "Ron has forgotten more about this subject than I'll ever know." Reichen's the type anybody would want to listen to and learn from. ■



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