

**M**ost people agree that communication involves sending and receiving information. You know communication is important because we talk all the time about improving it or we easily recall situations that resulted from poor communication.

Professional development seminars talk about communicating with club officials and members to enhance a superintendent's value to his or her club. Operationally, you must communicate with your crews to get the work done, and to keep your club officials informed of course conditions, maintenance schedules and departmental needs.

In some cases, there's feedback to the initial communication. Club members might comment on your newsletter article, bulletin board posting or committee presentation. And crew members ask questions if they have any.

In an association's world, chapter administration folks send out information on membership renewals, surveys, educational events, chapter meetings and special event deadlines. There's usually not a lot of feedback in these cases, unless you count the registration forms returned for an event — and that often only happens after the second and third notices go out for the event. Then the registrations come flying in at the last minute.

But you can't wait until the last minute to set up maintenance schedules with the green committee. You can't ad lib your daily maintenance schedule. You plan ahead to be successful, so why are we notorious Last Minute Charlies when it comes to responding to an association's communication?

Most association communication is only one way. There may be a certain validity to the notion that many superintendents might not know until the last minute whether they can attend an event; hence their reluctance to sign up before then. Of course, head counts for food-service guarantees can cost a chapter money if it has to guess the number of people attending instead of actually knowing it.

But some folks don't hold up their end

## Not Too Much to Ask For a Response

BY JOEL JACKSON



YES, YOU'RE BUSY.

BUT DEVOTING

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of the communication equation. They don't read the bulletins, newsletters, magazines or e-mails. Association staffs can't dial up every member to invite them to a function. It just isn't practical. And the chances are you won't find a superintendent sitting at his or her desk anyhow. So you leave a message. That would be the same message already contained in e-mail blasts, newsletters, etc.

Chapter boards of directors, committees and the administrative staff spend lots of time planning and scheduling events for the benefit of their members. Much of that time is volunteer hours by superintendents, followed up by staff execution of the plans by communicating with the membership.

It can be frustrating to have to respond to last-minute phone calls or e-mails from members who ask where they get registration forms or information on events or issues — after all that information has been communicated to them via mail, e-mails and/or Web postings.

Two-way communication requires a certain amount of responsibility from both parties. The senders need to be timely and thorough with their messages and not clog up e-mail inboxes or waste a lot of postage. On the other hand, receivers need to take some simple action when the newsletter, magazine or e-mail arrives with information about an event. Jot down the time, date and location on your desk or computer calendar, and please R.S.V.P. when asked.

Yes, you're busy. But devoting 10 minutes a day to respond or make note of the communication from your national, state and local associations isn't much to ask for to hold up your end of the two-way communications equation.

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