

Off The Fringe

Superintendents serve their profession at National Golf Day 2011

By Tim Connolly

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The positive energy was palpable during the recent National Golf Day activities on Capitol Hill, when golf's main organizations converged to engage members of Congress with powerful messages of the game's impact on their constituents.

We Are Golf, a coalition of the industry's top organizations, including the GCSAA, CMAA, NGCOA, PGA of America and the World Golf Foundation, is determined to put a face on the game.

"We're trying to let Congress know that when they make decisions on golf,

to use us as a resource so we can provide them the necessary information so that they're not just making a decision in a vacuum," Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, said.

Jay Goughnour, owner and superintendent of Raccoon Valley Golf Course in Jefferson, Iowa, was there to talk disaster relief for golf courses. His nine-hole course was devastated by flooding in May of 2008.

"When natural disasters affect golf courses, courses should be treated like other small businesses and placed in the same playing field," he said.

Goughnour wants Congress to know that golf faces the same hardships as any other business in this economy. "There are a lot of courses

that struggle to make ends meet. They employ a few people and they're great meeting places and valuable assets to the community, but they're not rich people. I own a nine-hole golf course and I can promise you I'm not rich. I'm just a hard-working individual."

Mike Barrett, CGCS, has been the superintendent at Argyle CC in Silver Spring, Md., for 15 years. For Barrett, We Are Golf's mission to put a face on the game is a key point. "I tell people that the survival and success of Argyle Country Club is paramount to me. It's how I make my living, how I support my family. I have 15 guys. That's how they support their families. People lose sight of just how important golf is. It creates jobs."

"When you look at politics, it's really local," Evans said. "There needs to be a grassroots effort. Just think what that would do to spread the word even that much faster. And that can be done. It just takes some folks who are motivated."

Folks like the group of superintendents who served their profession in the nation's capital on National Golf Day.

Tim Connolly is the assistant superintendent at TPC Potomac at Avenel Farm in Potomac, Md.

Rafael Barajas, CGCS, Robert Randquist, CGCS, and Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, share a laugh during National Golf Day.

