



How Do We Compare?

By Monroe S. Miller

Here's a new twist to the SURVEY feature: I'm going to show you how Wisconsin rates and ranks in various golf course management categories with other states around the country.

The source of this information is the 1990 "Golf Course Superintendents Report." It was prepared by the Center for Golf Course Management (CGCM). CGCM is a subsidiary of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The organization's primary function is to collect information about buying habits and maintenance practices of golf course superintendents. The information is especially valuable to industry manufacturers and suppliers.

But it is also valuable to all of us in the field. The data gives us a chance to see how our own operations compare to the averages in Wisconsin and the 49 other states.

Since labor constitutes over 50% of most golf course budgets, the pay rates take on particular importance. The report gives detailed information by course type and position for the four general categories of positions most of us have. The average base hourly wage on a national basis for those categories of employees are as follows:

Position	COURSE TYPE			
	Private	Semi-Private Daily Fee	Municipal	Resort
Assistant Superintendent	\$9.32	\$8.82	\$10.95	\$9.68
Mechanic	\$9.70	\$8.72	\$9.86	\$9.79
Full-Time Crew Member	\$7.16	\$6.70	\$8.46	\$7.10
Seasonal Crew Member	\$5.46	\$5.26	\$5.35	\$5.65

The figures for Wisconsin are tabulated as an average of all different golf course types:

POSITION	HOURLY WAGE
Assistant Superintendent	\$8.49
Mechanic	\$8.52
Full-time Crew member	\$7.13
Seasonal Crew Member	\$5.09

Draw your own conclusions; they seem rather obvious, however. We pay lower wages than most states, making golf an especially good bargain in Wisconsin. Personally, though, I don't view low wages as something you can brag about.

Averages and medians are one thing; sometimes it is better to look at highs and lows. The top 5 states by wage at each position are shown below.

Assistant Superintendent	Mechanic	Full-time Crew Member	Seasonal Crew Member
Connecticut \$12.18	Wyoming \$14.79	Idaho \$11.06	Idaho \$8.00
Hawaii \$11.50	Connecticut \$12.49	Connecticut \$9.82	New Jersey \$7.12
New Jersey \$11.43	Idaho \$12.26	Massachusetts \$9.67	Massachusetts \$7.01
California \$10.99	Massachusetts \$11.76	Vermont \$9.00	Connecticut \$6.97
Rhode Island \$10.93	New Jersey \$11.60	New Jersey \$8.77	Rhode Island \$6.94

The five lowest paying states by wage at each position are:

Assistant Superintendent	Mechanic	Full-time Crew Member	Seasonal Crew Member
North Dakota \$6.75	New Mexico \$5.00	New Mexico \$5.00	West Virginia \$4.14
West Virginia \$6.81	South Dakota \$6.17	West Virginia \$5.40	Mississippi \$4.29
South Dakota \$7.15	West Virginia \$6.20	Kentucky \$5.53	South Dakota \$4.39
Michigan \$7.61	North Dakota \$6.31	Texas \$5.55	Louisiana \$4.41
Kentucky \$7.74	Arkansas \$7.40	South Carolina \$5.64	South Carolina \$4.44

The final table of information about golf course staffing is closely related to a SURVEY question we had in a previous GRASS ROOTS—the average number of employees by position and course type for 18 hole golf courses. Remember—these are national averages:

Position	COURSE TYPE			
	Private	Semi-Private Daily Fee	Municipal	Resort
Assistant Superintendent	1	1	1	1
Mechanic	1	1	1	1
Full-Time Crew Member	5	3	3	6
Seasonal Crew Member	6	4	6	6

There is a lot of other good information contained in the 1990 CGCM report. It is available to members of the GCSAA free of charge. For others, there is a \$15.00 cost. Either way, it's a bargain!