



Chapter Delegates Meeting

By **David Brandenburg**, Golf Course Superintendent, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

The ninth annual GCSAA chapter delegates meeting was held on December 1 and 2 at the GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas. Ninety-nine of the 102 chapters were represented for the two days of meetings on our associations' activities.

First on the agenda was the dedication ceremony for the life-size Old Tom Morris statue in front of the headquarters building. The statue is part of GCSAA 75th anniversary celebration and was to be unveiled at the 75th ceremony that was cancelled due to the tragic events of September 11th.

Steven Mona, Chief Executive Officer, gave a State of the Association address. Although investment and advertising revenue has been reduced in the current recession, GCSAA will tighten its belt and has savings in reserve to allow programs to continue uninterrupted. The association is in good financial shape. Currently GCSAA has 21,750 members in 61 countries and had

12,000 participants in its educational seminars.

Quite a bit of time was dedicated to how the current economy has affected courses around the country and how to cope with budgetary constraints at courses and local chapters. GCSAA produced a free packet entitled "How to Help Your Course Weather an Economic Downturn" and is trying to add some discussion on the current economy to the 2002 conference and show agenda in Orlando.

Current goals of the association include enhancing career opportunities while promoting the industry through public and governmental relations. Also, GCSAA wants to be an authoritative one-stop source of information and services to chapters and members.

The PDI program continues advancing as we approach the July 1, 2003 start date. It looks like the program should enhance local educational opportunities without adding to the workload of chapter adminis-

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trators. Affordable and accessible education is the goal of the PDI program so all members can participate.

The Internet offers an ever changing venture and things are no different with the GCSAA. Soon 24 x 7 member service will allow us to receive information and make changes to our own files 24 hours a day through the Internet. Online education is available with three online courses and more are being planned.

Last spring GCSAA tested an online Golf Super Market that was not well received by members or vendors. Of concern was the possible sidestepping of the distributor/superintendent relationship. In response GCSAA will only offer The Online Mall portion to link superintendents with manufacturers and local distributors to obtain information about products online. It will be an advertising venture that protects the distributor/superintendent relationship rather than a buy.com.

The website is also undergoing changes with a new forum starting in December and work is underway on a Knowledge Management Program. This program will allow GCSAA.org to be a one-stop shop with personalized information on weather, agronomic conditions, etc., much like MSN can be customized to your requested information.

The Limited Budget Outreach Program started last year to help smaller or lower budget courses and has been revised beginning with a new name. The "new" Technical Assistance Network will be less formal and not force itself upon a course. Instead it will have a simple brochure offering no-obligation help if you want it, along with information on contacting extension agents, the GCSAA and the local chapter. The revised program will allow a chapter to adapt it to their local needs and desire.

Most of what GCSAA has to offer is on the website and can be accessed there. If you do not have Internet access or want personnel help, call the association. We have staff who are there for us in areas including environmental and governmental relations and watchdogging, turf research, environmental stewardship, education, career advancement, chapter relations and public relations.

Last but not least we met and interviewed the candidates for the GCSAA board. All of the candidates are very qualified and willing to give time and efforts to the association. Choosing who will best serve the association in the future is a challenging venture. Information on candidates can be seen online or from mailings sent by GCSAA.

Overall, the trip was very educational for me and I would encourage all our members to use the resources GCSAA has to offer. Anyone with questions on the delegates meeting or the candidates can contact me at 920-929-3185 to discuss them. ♣

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