



Attendance Record Tied at EXPO

By **Tom Schwab**, O. J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Was it the good weather, great speakers, new and improved trade show, or thorough organization that pushed EXPO into another record year? The Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO 2002 held January 7th through 9th had it all. The weather was perfect. It was like the rest of winter 2001/02 — mild with no snow or, heaven-forbid, rain. It was nice walking into EXPO without the polar goose down for protection. Jackets were hardly even needed with temps in the 40s. This allowed many people that are usually on-call for snowplowing to attend this great event. The talks were enlightening and entertaining. The trade show was reorganized and full of knowledgeable exhibitors. And there was so much more.

All these factors pushed attendance to the top again. There were 415 attendees, beating the old record set in 1999 by 10 people. But with budget cut-backs and the slumping economy, the number of exhibitors working the 42 booths was exactly 10 fewer than that record year. So the total number of people

was actually dead even with the 1999 record year. It was impressive to see so many old and new friends converge for one common goal — to gain knowledge in our green industry careers we love so much.

The superb lineup of educators and instruction was probably the number 1 reason the green industry professionals of all types came to EXPO. An extra day of workshops was added to and started off the conference this year. The “Pesticide Applicator Training” workshop was super successful and filled to capacity. Three other workshops were likewise well received, so that this extra day of instruction will likely become a mainstay of future EXPOs. Those three workshops were “Setting Up an IPM Program”, “Learning Basic and Conversational Spanish”, and “Basic Math Calibration.” Stay tuned for more interesting subjects bound for 2003.

The second day of EXPO started out with a keynote address by Mr. Tom Jadin from the Winnebago Mental

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Health Institute. He gave an educated presentation for career, family, and self that was thought provoking and often humorous, including many ideas I will use often and not soon forget in my life. Some of his ideas were:

- Find someone who understands what you do, is not a competitor, and can give constructive feedback. This will make your life more successful.
- If you are not laughing anymore, then hang around funny people. Laughing recharges your personal batteries. Likewise, foster creativeness in yourself by hanging around creative people.
- Use his patented "awfulness test" whenever you feel slighted by an event. It will put things in perspective. How it works is when something bad happens in your life, you rate the event from 1 to 100, with 1 being "not a big deal" and 99 being "tortured to death slowly."
- Don't let bad habits, like talking behind someone's back, become a routine. Bad routines get you stuck in a rut, and a rut is like a grave with the ends dug out.
- All situations have something you can be in control of that will give you a better outlook, no matter how uncontrollable the circumstance seems.

Mr. Jadin's keynote address was held during the opening session, which also included an update on the status of NR151 from Mr. Russell Rasmussen from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Watershed Management. NR151 is legislation to reduce non-point source pollution to help clean up Wisconsin's lakes and ground water. The DNR wants our industry to use common sense initiatives that I hope we are already aware of, to control non-

point pollution from our activity. This legislation will affect the way many of us conduct our business because it will apply to any properties over five acres where fertilizer is applied. The legislation will become fully effective by March 2008 and will correspondingly require municipalities to have education in place for its residents to reduce their non-point pollution, including handling pet waste. Mr. Rasmussen said the legislation is still being worked on but should be finalized this winter. I'm sure we'll hear more information in our respective industry newsletters.

The new and improved trade show came next. Booths were laid out in a user-friendly maze pattern, which allowed attendees to visit each and every vendor as they moved through the trade show floor. Almost every vendor and attendee said they enjoyed the more personal attention this layout provided. I heard about 98% positive feedback on the trade show, so hats off to the 2002 EXPO exhibitors for helping make the conference a success. All this year's exhibitors are listed below, with contact numbers and names, for you to use throughout the year. Please enjoy the collage of pictures that Jeff Gregos put together for us, which captures much of the excitement from the trade show

and may have even captured your smiling face.

It would have been smiling if I caught you during the luncheons for sure. The conference food was outstanding like it is every year, and the time to sit and chat with friends is always rewarding. There was an awards and scholarship program during Tuesday's lunch time. Many dedicated Badger Turf and Grounds students received scholarships to help them through these financially lean school years. These students are going to be the leaders in our industries in the near future and I'm sure they appreciated the monetary help from the donors that are likewise listed below. There were also many donors that gave to the WTA general funds to support research initiatives and yet others that gave to the Wisconsin Turfgrass Research and Development Fund. The last part of the luncheon program introduced the winners of the 2001 Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association's "Field of the Year" program. Those who received recognition were: Baseball "Field of the Year" — Craig Schlender (Baraboo Parks and Recreation), Soccer "Field of the Year" — Peter Vanney (Appleton Area School District), and Football "Field of the Year" — Dave Palmer (School District of Cambridge).

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The concurrent educational sessions started after lunch, so the luncheon area emptied quickly as people headed off to immerse themselves in the education. There were speakers from near and far to teach subjects ranging from tree care, to athletic field construction, to choosing turfgrass cultivars for golf course fairways. The sessions focused on Golf/Lawn/Landscape, or Sports/Grounds — but you could move between sessions if you thought another one had a more pertinent presentation. That's the beauty of EXPO! The downside is that often there are two or more talks of interest going on at the same time, and you can't decide which one to attend.

I missed many good talks because of time conflicts, but was glad I went to see Dr. Bruce Clark from Rutgers University speak on managing turf diseases. Some of his comments were:

- Nitrates lower summer patch severity.
- Pink snow mold and take all patch are more severe in alkaline soils.
- Compaction and disease go hand-in-hand, but don't try to relieve compaction when disease is active.
- Don't irrigate between 7 - 11pm or 7 - 10am because this increases the duration the leaf is wet in combination with nighttime wetness. This allows disease, which needs long periods of wetness to infect.

I also heard Dr. John Ball's presentation to the Lawn/Landscape group where he discussed how to sell landscaping services. Some of his points could be used across all of our professions.

- Know whom you are selling to — (62% of landscaping decisions in a married household are made by women, 36% are joint, and 2% are made by men).
- Take care of people ordering landscaping services. Most landscapers know how to care for turf and ornamentals yet their businesses fail because they don't take care of the customer.
- 80% of homeowners are unhappy with their landscapes so there should be lots of business out there.

Dr. Wayne Kussow always gives informative presentations during EXPO. I caught his fertilizer basics talk where he gave many good points.

- Do your soil testing. If soil phosphorus and potassium are high to excessive, then adding more to your turf is neither needed nor will be of benefit.
- Natural organic fertilizer is very sensitive to moisture deficits, has a slower color response, is relatively expensive, and all increase soil phosphorus. These limitations have encouraged the development of "Bridge" fertilizers, which combine organic and inorganic fertilizers.
- An ideal fertilizer has similar amounts of water insoluble and water-soluble nitrogen.
- Use fertilizers with at least 25% water insoluble nitrogen.

So many other presentations were given during the show that make EXPO the show to always have on your calendar. Other notables were Dr. Trey Rogers from Michigan State University who is known throughout the country as one of the leading sports turf

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researchers. Dr. Tom Voigt from the University of Illinois is similarly well known for his extension work in turfgrass. He gave presentations on selection and maintenance of ornamental grasses and considerations in using Kentucky bluegrass fairways. The list goes on to include local industry representatives like Tom and Bob Emmerich speaking on irrigation issues, to golf course superintendent Dan Barrett telling how to get the most out of you budget. And let's not forget the rest of the researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Drs. Jull, Stier, Jung, and Williamson, who all gave excellent messages.

Other highlights included two round table discussions. One was on Immigration and Migrant Labor Issues and the other was on Sports Field Construction Issues. And that's not all — - The Wisconsin Turfgrass, Wisconsin Sports Field Managers, and Wisconsin Sod

Producers Associations all conducted annual meetings for their members at EXPO. And lots of friendships were shared during the annual Wisconsinizing social hour. It's no wonder this conference keeps growing in attendance. The

planning committee will already have met to start planning next year's show by the time you read this. And don't be surprised to see an even larger show, with more top-notch education that you've come to expect.

**2002 Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO
Research and Scholarship Recipients**

Scholarship Donor	Recipient	Amount
WGCSA J.R. Love Scholarship	Jon Baus	\$750
WTA	Grayson Harms	\$600
WTA	Jason Grode	\$600
WTA	Phillip Spitz	\$600
WTA	Zac Todd	\$600
Aventis	Doug Soldat	\$500
Aventis	Tom Nies	\$500
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Dave Murgatroyd Memorial	Steve Houlihan	\$500
Spring Valley	Michael Hoff	\$600

Turf Research Donor	Recipient	Amount
Horst and Milorganite Program	WTA	\$1,890
Wisconsin Turf and Milorganite Program	WTA	\$1,330
Reinders and Daconil Program	WTA	\$7,825
Oshkosh Country Club	WTA	\$2,540
Wisconsin Sod Producers	WTA	\$1,375
Bulls-Eye Country Club	WTA	\$295
Stevens Point Country Club	WTA	\$945
Northern Great Lakes GCSA	WTA	\$1,000
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Westmoor Country Club	WI Turfgrass Research and Development Fund (WTRDF)	\$2,600
Gary Zwirlein	WTRDF	\$250

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