

Some Suggestions for Tough Economic Times

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



What a strange spring! It started early but never really got going. It was nearly June 6th before things really took off for us in Fond du Lac and winter damage starting filling in. I hope as you are reading this your course is having a successful season with happy golfers.

Sometimes I wonder what it takes to make golfers happy. A foursome can play the same course and come into the 19th hole (28th hole for us) with very different attitudes about how the course played. It does not matter if you are at a private or public golf course, golfer expectations are getting higher while budgets do not keep up with increasing costs. I often am my worst enemy when it comes to this by offering to do more than our budget allows. It works for period of time until normal maintenance starts to slide while we do all the extras.

As golf course superintendents, we are self-starters and try to do all we can with what we are given to work with. The hardest thing I have to do is to look at our budget and say this is all we can do. It is very easy for any of us to get caught up in trying to please every customer and honor every request. I am very guilty of this. I need to learn to just say "no!"

To control my own zest for getting more done at the expense of my home life, I am in the process of writing maintenance standards. I will combine the normal maintenance schedule, budget for supplies and job time-sheets to put a price tag on all activities our department does. I will also add in the non-regular maintenance such as rain-damaged bunkers, irrigation leaks and projects. These items are often forgotten when budgeting staff time.

If a customer, owner or committee member suggests a change, I can show him exactly what it will cost in increased green fees to accomplish this new program or task. More importantly, it will allow James and me to better plan what changes we will make to our programs each year.

As the business of golf becomes more competitive among courses we all want to offer our best and continue to improve what we offer the customer. But we also need to remember that each extra task takes money and time, and we need to budget for that or we end up doing more at work and less at home.

Congratulations go out to Natalie Lohman daughter of Guy Lohman, golf course superintendent at Voyager Village in Danbury. Natalie has been selected to receive a GCSAA Legacy Scholarship worth \$1,500. Natalie is attending the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and is studying biology and pre-veterinary medicine.

This is the third Legacy Scholarship Wisconsin families have received in the past two years. Remember, GCSAA has many programs, not only for scholarships but to help you as you maintain your golf

course. Spend some time perusing the website and seeing what the different departments have to offer you and your course.

Don't forget to get your disease samples in to the Diagnostic Lab at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. Steve Abler is ready and waiting to give you a proper and quick diagnosis so you can take the appropriate action.

You can meet Steve and all the Facility and University Staff at the WTA Summer Field Day August 12th. The WGCSA stopped having a regular meeting in August, not because it is too hot to play golf and the speakers are all taken, but so you and your staff can attend the Field Day to see the latest research. Nowhere else can you get a great lunch, learn about the diseases that effect us and kick some tires. Enjoy your summer! ♣



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