



# A Look to the Future

## 2006 Chapter Delegates Meeting in Kansas City

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Being a first time delegate I was on the list to tour the GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence. Although this was not my first trip to headquarters it was an eye opening experience. When we arrived we were greeted by staff and given our assignments for the afternoon. Each delegate that so chooses to attend this section had the opportunity to see his or her dues money at work. We received presentations on the updates to the website, communications, corporate sales and marketing, the GIS show, staff members and my favorite part, the session with Steve Mona. The meeting time with the CEO of the association only further validated why I choose to be a member. Mr. Mona opened with a few comments and then turned back to the delegates. Our group was 10 members of the 100 plus delegate contingent. Steve took the time to answer any topic or any questions we had.

Day two started at 6:30 AM for breakfast with the first sessions beginning at 7:30. The first topic of discussion was GCSAA mission vision and goals. The topic focused on three main themes: they include the development of long term revenue streams, increasing membership and retention, and positioning of the GCSAA member in the marketplace. The next section centered on the establishment of a long-term dues pricing strategy. At the request of the delegates, the board and staff presented a proposal that would tie the establishment of membership dues to an index (Consumer Price Index). Historically, the association has enacted a dues increase in larger increments on average every five to seven years. The result has been a loss of members. There was widespread agreement at the meeting that smaller dues increases would be more easily absorbed at the facility level and less likely

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to result in membership declines. In 2001, the association hit a high of 22,000. Today almost a 10 % decline (to 20,000 confronts GCSAA). The consensus of the group is that the drop has been created by the struggling golf industry and PDI. GCSAA presented a seven-phased membership growth and recruitment campaign enacted late last year. Delegates supported the efforts, realizing it will take time to yield results.

The most heated debate was on GCSAA's philosophy regarding the positioning of the association and its membership classes. Delegates shared a variety of opinions, but ultimately agreed that for membership standards to have value in the marketplace, they must be promoted externally. There was unanimous support that resources be dedicated to marketing the association, with a focus on Class A. It was noted, however, that promoting Class A does not mean that marketing other membership classes should not be part of the program.

The next section centered on the GCSAA chapter liaison. This concept was introduced back at the 2003 delegate meeting. It got started from a need to have more personal communication and outreach to the chapters. The GCSAA wants the position to become a conduit between the members and the association. The pilot program that is funded for 2006 and 2007 has a great deal of support from the delegates.

After a very brief break we covered the TAN program, which stands for Technical Assistance Network. The program is a one-year complimentary membership to the GCSAA. The purpose is to introduce the facility and the representatives to the benefits of belonging to GCSAA. Currently there are 14 memberships in this classification. Each chapter has 5 memberships to use for the national membership. Please contact the GCSAA or myself if you have questions.

The last part of the very long day was meeting the candidates. Each candidate for the board of directors and the slate of officers to be elected had their own room for presentations, and questions and answers. The time was well spent listening to what each had to say and how they felt they could help the association. The secretary/treasurer positions have the greatest impact for the next four years. Essentially they run unopposed for the next two years for vice president and president. Two of the candidates stood out for the director position. John C. Miller and Robert M. Randquist were, in my mind, the strongest for the positions.

Sunday morning we had a few more sessions to discuss; they included GIS show, long term dues proposal and open discussion. The topics that were covered in the open form were brought from the floor. They included: pesticide registrations (methyl bromide and PCNB), chapter effectiveness, logo, and branding.

Each delegate had the opportunity to speak on these topics. The conversation of branding and the logo took most of the allotted time. The overall feel is the need for brand identity (GCSAA) and how it is to be placed into the market.

I would like to leave you with a few key things. Over and over, questions were asked about how the GCSAA comes up with the proposals. They stated that it was from surveys of the membership. Please, if a survey comes across your desk take the time to fill it out. Most times the association awards points to those who take the time. If you have not gotten involved on the local level, volunteer for a committee, board service, or just simply attend the meeting. This is our association; are you a passive member or an active member? 🌱

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