



# Best Bang for the Buck

By **Dustin Riley**, Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Oconomowoc Golf Club

Fall has past. Indian Summer actually came this year, but now it has gone and winter will soon be here. The winter preparation checklist includes the irrigation blowout, final mowing, dormant fertilizer and snow mold protection applications. I'm sure each of us has other unique tasks to complete prior to any snow. However, I'm guessing most of us are excited to complete the list as winter provides a great opportunity for each of us to relax our minds a little and begin the recharge process.

This process is different for everyone. Some hunt, fish, travel or just enjoy the holiday season with family. Every season is different and brings challenges that we are hopefully prepared for. The off-season is a perfect time to catch up on those *Grass Roots* articles that you haven't read yet. Regional GCSAA Seminars and the Golf Industry Show are great educational opportunities to help stay current on turf management trends. Unfortunately, the current trend is a decline in golf rounds, memberships and capital spending. The financial stability of our country is affecting all of us and we are all being asked to make budget cuts or management adjustments with the understanding that quality has to be affected also. Most owners, members and golfers understand that these cuts will affect the quality of the conditions they've grown accustomed to. They understand it now, in December, with the start of the new fiscal year. But will they have the same understanding in April when Tiger Woods tees it up at Augusta National GC, with its impeccable conditioning? Will they still understand it when June arrives and the flower beds are bare or the edges of the water ways are shaggy and aren't as trim as prior years? Or when there are a few blemishes on our playing surfaces as disease management tools have been scaled back? Whatever the cutback is, we can not rely on the old saying "I told you so!" We, as the golf course managers, must be proactive and continually remind our owners, members or golfing public how the golf course conditions will be influenced by the "tightening of the belt."

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent Association isn't any different. The WGCSA is committed to serve each member by promoting the profession and enhance the growth of the game of golf through education, communication and research. In this difficult time, it is even more important that the Association provides the best bang for the buck. In



order to achieve the vision and goals developed by the Board of Directors, we are investigating the potential move to Chapter Management, either through an association management company or a contracted individual. A Chapter Manager will provide this organization with consistent attention to the needs of the membership. This consistency will allow programs to succeed and provide growth in the membership. A Chapter

Manager will assist the Association enforce our strengths, improve our weaknesses, explore new opportunities and assess potential threats. With a Chapter Manager responsible for the WGCSA's day-to-day business activities, the Board of Directors would be able to explore Association advancement through membership expansion, committee involvement and Industry Partnerships.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been developed, describing goals of the WGCSA and the duties of the proposed Chapter Manager. This RFP has been distributed to 5 various association management companies and their responses are being reviewed. Although interviews are likely to take place soon, the Board of Directors will also be opening the option of contracting with an individual, rather than a company, to assume the proposed duties. This decision to hire a Chapter Manager is a significant step in the advancement of the Association. This step will only be taken to further strengthen the Association and directly benefit the membership and our wonderful profession.

I hope many of you will be able to attend the Opening Session of the 2009 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, where Monroe Miller, Superintendent at Blackhawk CC, will be a recipient of GCSAA's 2009 Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Award. Congratulations Monroe!

In addition, I'd like to issue an advance "thank you" to Shelley Biro and our friends at the Milorganite Division - MMSD. Shelley has coordinated the WGCSA Hospitality gathering, set to be the evening of Thursday, February 5th. This year we'll be at Café Giovanni, located only 5-6 blocks from the convention center. Because of our guest count, we'll have the restaurant to ourselves. Please check out their website [www.cafegiovanni.com](http://www.cafegiovanni.com). It appears the only thing missing in their photo gallery is...a few WGCSA friends. Happy holidays and safe travels. 🌿