



# Chapter Delegates Meeting and More!

By **Jeff Millies**, Golf Course Superintendent, Edgewood Golf Course

91 GCSAA chapters, represented by 87 delegates participated in the 2010 Chapter Delegates meeting, Oct. 22-23-24.

The meeting began with an orientation session for first-time delegates at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., followed by a networking reception and dinner. The meeting continued with solid discussion on a variety of subjects for two days at the Airport Hilton in Kansas City, Mo.

The meeting included an update on GCSAA including financial metrics, new association initiatives, GCSAA candidate presentations, a town hall question and answer session, and chapter case study presentations. The responsibility of a delegate at this meeting is to represent their members and to take back information to share with them.

## Member Dues Increase Discussion

Certainly the most discussed item was a proposed GCSAA member dues increase which would take effect with May 2011 renewals and new member applications. Class A and SM dues would increase \$20 annually and Class C dues \$10 annually.

Proposed GCSAA member dues are established through a process that was created by the delegates that uses the Consumer Price Index as a guide. The members then vote upon the proposal at the association's annual meeting in February. The process calls for the association to consider a dues adjustment every two years as a means of ensuring a sustainable organization. The process is not automatic, and the GCSAA Board of Directors may elect not to bring forward dues adjustments according to schedule. Such was the case last year when the board opted to forgo consideration of an increase. Dues account for 27 percent of the GCSAA budget, which is below the average of 38 to 40 percent for associations of similar size.

GCSAA has seen a decrease in revenues of \$5 million over the last three years due to a struggling economy, but proactive expense management by the board and staff has resulted in a reduction of expenses by \$5.4 million during that same period. GCSAA will have projected revenues of \$15.6 million by the end of 2010.

## Field Staff Gains Traction

Popular with the delegates was the presentation of an expanded field staff program first announced earlier this year. The board has made public its desire to have all nine GCSAA regions staffed by a regional field staff representative as soon as possible. It is expected GCSAA will have five field staff employees by the end

of 2010 (one at headquarters and four in the field), and seven by the end of 2011 (one at headquarters and six in the field). No timetable for staffing all of the regions has been created, but the success of the program has been duly recognized by the board.

The objective of the field staff program is to create a tie between chapters and GCSAA so that programs are utilized at a higher rate, communication is enhanced and membership is grown. The feedback from chapters who have utilized the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

## Additional Discussion Items

- The search for a new GCSAA CEO was outlined. The position description has been posted on the GCSAA website and interviews are targeted for January 2011.
- Six chapters made presentation on programs they have instituted with the assistance of GCSAA resources in the areas of government relations, corporate partnerships, consolidation/sharing of resources and communications.
- New program initiatives in the area of web services, environmental programs, marketing communications, surveys and data and media public relations were shared.
- Considerable advancements were noted in the area of professional development resources with the new job board, self assessment tool and webcasting software.
- Outlined were new features for Conference and Show including education programs, networking opportunities and cost-saving options available to attendees.
- Candidate presentations for the offices of president, vice president and secretary/treasurer and a minimum of two and potentially three directors.

The meeting's presentations are available online at <http://www.gcsaa.org/chapters/delegatemeeting.aspx>.

Shortly after the delegates meeting GCSAA instituted a realignment and downsizing of staff due to economic concerns. According to GCSAA President James Fitzroy the association has reduced expenditures by 5.4 million dollars over the past three years while reducing full time staff from 122 to 85.

Current reductions include Bonnie Stephenson, director of conference and meeting planning who was the association's longest tenured employee at 36 years. Teri Harris, Senior Director of Development for the Environmental Institute of Golf a 20 year GCSAA employee.

Ed Hiscock, Editor in Chief of Golf Course Management magazine is leaving after 14 years serving

as a voice for GCSAA and the golf course superintendent. Director of Research Dr. Clark Throssell was also let go after 14 years in his position.

The association has plans in place to replace the valuable work these leaders were doing but it will be impossible to replace their expertise. Fitzroy went on to say "GCSAA is experiencing many of the same challenges that you and your facilities are facing. Having to part with talented and dedicated staff is not easy or pleasant. We owe much of our organizational, facility and individual successes to our GCSAA staff. But the actions are necessary. We cannot stick our head in the sand and hope for better times. We have to be in the right position so that when those better times do come back, we are invested to reap the return."

The GCSAA Nominating Committee has ratified the slate of candidates for the 2011 Board of Directors. The following members have been nominated and will appear on the ballot at the Annual Meeting and Election:

For president:

Robert M. Randquist, CGCS at Boca Rio GC

For vice president:

Sandy G. Queen, CGCS at City of Overland Park

For secretary/treasurer:

- Patrick R. Finlen, CGCS at The Olympic Club
- Keith A. Ihms, CGCS at CC of Little Rock

For director:

Four members are on the slate to fill three open director positions.

- Rafael Barajas, CGCS at Hacienda GC
- Peter J. Grass, CGCS at Hilands GC
- John J. O'Keefe, CGCS at Preakness Hills CC
- Mike B. Wooten, CGCS at Cedar Ridge CC

Bill H. Maynard, CGCS at Milburn G&CC, will remain on the board with one year remaining in his two-year term. James R. Fitzroy, CGCS, will serve on the board as immediate past president, and Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS, will retire from the board. The candidates' complete bios and statements will be published in the January issue of GCM. 🌱



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