

Spring Fever

By David Brandenburg, Editor

Governor Scott Walkers recent Budget Repair Bill grabbed the attention of Wisconsin residents and the nation as groups from opposite ends of the political spectrum let their opinions be known. The discussion briefly flowed onto the turf industries listserve, Noernet.

I say briefly because the Noernet is an extension of the University of Wisconsin – Madison so discussions are to be used for purposes that fulfill the mission of teach-

ing, research and public service. That leaves out politics, sports and religion. Listserv caretaker Tom Schwab needs to remind us of that from time to time.

The entire topic was a great reminder for those in the golf and turf industry to keep an eye on local, state and national issues and how they affect us as individuals and industry professionals. We are lucky to have many organizations and professors to keep an eye on pending regulation changes so we are not taken by surprise. However we as individuals still need to keep our ears to the ground and let chapter leaders know what is going on in your area.

I suggest you reach out to your state senator and assemblyman as well as your city or county elected official when they first take office to introduce yourself and let them know what your concerns are, and what experiences you have that they may be able to take advantage of. Getting to know them early will give you an advantage when they are considering an issue you have an opinion on.

If you hear of a local or statewide issue please contact Colin Seaburg and Mark Storby who serve as Chairmen for the WGCSA Environmental and Governmental Regulations Committee.

A new regulation that does affect every golf course is the new ban on landfilling used oil filters and absorbents. It is a good idea, but does add a budget and labor cost to our already stretched budgets. It is estimated that Wisconsinites throw away 187,000 gallons of used oil in disposed oil filters. The recycling effort will also save over 4.5 million pounds of steel for re-use each year.

Most homeowners can take their used filters to businesses that do oil changes but for a golf course that is not feasible. Crushed filters can be recycled at the scrap yard however applicable crushers cost a few thousand dollars and cause quite a mess.

Most oil recycling companies provide 50 gallon barrels to store the used filters in and then charge around \$50 to pick it up when it is full. At this time hydraulic oil filters are not included in the law, however common sense would say to include them on your own.



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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The filter law is cut and dried but there is some thinking to do with the absorbents. Absorbents include rags, kitty litter, floor dry or sand but there is a exemption to allow the disposal of up to one gallon of oil absorbent materials from a non-routine spill. That is one gallon of rags or floor dry not one gallon of oil. You can go to the DNR website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/recycle/newpages/oilabsorb.htm> for more information or just do a google search if you don't want to type all that in.

I put on my general managers hat for a few hours recently and attended the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin Spring Meeting at Hilly Haven Golf Course. WGCSA President Jeff Millies was there to represent the WGCSA and presented information on the Par4Research Program.

Phil Immordino presented "Increasing Golf Outing Business" on steps facilities can take to attract and keep golf outings along with how to help outings grow their participation rate.

Many courses need to increase their communication with current and new groups through phone calls and offers of help to existing events and follow-up communication for groups that call with questions. Often in the hustle of the season customer follow-ups get forgotten so Immordino

suggested busier courses may want to add staff to act as event coordinators.

He also gave tips on how to service a outings every need to increase your value by making it easier to administer a event. The GCOW offers a nice book on how to run a golf outing for its members.

GCOW Executive Director Jeff Schwister presented information on tourism and the possible availability of courses or groups of courses using local room tax dollars on advertising programs. Jeff presented that Michigan spends more to advertise just its golf courses in Wisconsin markets than Wisconsin spends on a whole advertising tourism.

Steve Stumbras, President, GCOW gave a presentation on the composting program the Bruce Company is using to reduce fertilizer and chemical use on some of their golf courses.

March 14 is the day spring fever hit me. A combination of the melting snow and forecast that might hit the upper 50's later in the week has golfers and non-golfers excited for the warm days of spring. I hope to see you at Geneva National on April 18th for our first meeting of the 2011 WGCSA season. I guarantee you a good time.



WGCSA Members recently won awards from the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin

Above : Kasey VandeBerg, Scenic View CC - Leadership Award

Above Right: Harold and Mary Spink, Fairfield Hills - 9 Hole Maintenance and Appearance Award

Right: Pete and Kathy VanDeHey, Mid Vallee - 18 Hole Maintenance and Appearance Award