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# THE GRASS ROOTS

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## NOER CENTER RECEIVES \$100,000 ANONYMOUS CHALLENGE GRANT!

By Monroe S. Miller

There have been some incredibly good developments in the effort to provide funding for the O. J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The project is now the recipient of a challenge grant of \$100,000. The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association has been informed that if the various segments of the turfgrass industry are able to raise \$200,000 through fund raising efforts, an anonymous donor will provide \$100,000, a sum which will make construction of the Center possible.

A second important and critical factor for the Noer Center has been its acceptance by the University of Wisconsin Foundation as an official University project. This means it is recognized by faculty, involved departments, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Leo Walsh and the Chancellor's office as an important segment of the State University's mission. In addition, Tom Harrison and I now have access to some excellent advice and counsel from Foundation staff members. This kind of help in organizing a fund drive has been sorely needed and should considerably shorten the time frame that will be required to get the project fund raising underway.

We've learned of another option available to us from the UW Foundation. In order to spread donations over time, for obvious reasons, givers will be asked to sign pledge cards committing them to an amount of money for each of three years. The UW Foundation considers pledge cards to be firm collateral and will loan a project money

against these cards. The advantage of this feature is that if construction of the golf course is underway sooner than anticipated, development of the Noer Center can begin also, with funds borrowed from the Foundation against the pledge cards. We could, conceivably, see the Center started as soon as pledge cards are collected.

So where does that leave us on July 1, 1987? First and foremost, convenient and thorough informational materials are nearing final development. As has been experienced by many WGCSA members, most potential donors to the Noer Center want to know what's being discussed. "What is it? Where is it? Why do we need it? How do I give?" The literature that is nearing completion answers those questions and many others as well. Included with these informational sheets will be pledge cards for people to sign and forward to the UW Foundation. By the way, the Noer Center has an "account" of its own at the UW Foundation. Donations given prior to actual construction earn a very respectable rate of interest.

Secondly, there are a lot of organizational efforts going on among the various groups that make up the turfgrass industry. Manufacturers and distributors, golf clubs, golf players, lawn care services, landscape contractors, sod producers and individuals will all be addressed on a personal basis and given an opportunity to offer financial support to the Noer Center. Golf tournaments are being planned. Other professional groups have indicated their support. Good organization is go-

ing to be a fundamental and key feature to this whole project.

There is also a lot of thought going into developing an appropriate way to recognize those generous and concerned people who extend their support to the Noer Center. It may be an "Honor Roll" of donors; we may have "clubs" recognizing various levels of giving; there is the possibility of presenting a memento to each and every participant. Whatever vehicle is finally chosen, it will definitely be one of class, distinction and good taste.

The question has been asked, "How was the \$300,000 goal determined?" The land, obviously, comes to us gratis, free of charge. The \$300,000 represents the cost of developing that property into an independent research

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