

ASSOCIATE'S CORNER

by JAMES BROWN
PJ'S TURF PLUS, INC.

After our first full year in the lawn care and nursery business we can look back at our decision to move from being a golf course superintendent and assistant superintendent into our own business. What were the deciding factors that prompted us to make the decision?

Primarily our business is total lawn care with additional services such as irrigation design and installation and a nursery-garden center to better service our customers. New London- Spicer is an area that is surrounded by many lakes and also many summer people who do not wish to take care of their own yards.

The first thing we looked at before going into business was the competition. We noticed that although there were plenty of people to mow lawns, there didn't seem to be anyone who knew any more about turf than just that "it needs to be mowed". We also checked with local nurseries and found

that no one was maintaining plants on a regular basis after they were put into the landscape. We purchased a minimum of equipment, printed flyers and started part time. Our first two customers were just what we had expected...people who had been looking for someone who was able to do more than just mow their lawns. We provided full line maintenance and a program to beautify their lawns and properties. Now two years later, 80% of our lawn customers want this service.

In looking back at the reasons why I wanted to leave the golf course, they are the same reasons any superintendent faces. I would say that #1 is the frustration of old equipment and repairing repairs; #2 is seeing money spent in areas a superintendent doesn't feel has priorities; #3 is succumbing to the stress of the job. If I would have decided to stay with the golf course, there are two things I would do differently. #1 I would have been more forceful for the needs of the golf course at board meetings and especially with the greens committee; #2 I would have made the monthly meetings and involvement in the

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M.G.C.S.A. as important as mowing greens on Men's Day. Along with dedication, you need those two to be successful.

Lastly, but most important, in my change was the fact that I wanted to do what God wanted me to do. Knowing that when some doors are closed, He opens others, the credit for any success must go to Him.

EDITOR'S CORNER

by DOUG MAHAL
CHAIRMAN
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The season is about over for the golfer but not necessarily for the superintendent. Late October and November is as important maintenance-wise as any period of the year. One must be concerned about having a strong healthy turf going into the winter, the irrigation system must be blown and winterized, snow mold fungicides must be applied, tons of leaves must be processed, those fall projects must be completed and time must be allotted for discussion of the

Vikings chances to make the playoffs this season. Many superintendents must start scheduling tree pruning and turf dessication protection - all with limited manpower inventory. I think it is very easy to begin "over-relaxing" once October 1 arrives but as "keepers of the green", our season doesn't end until that first permanent snowfall. We must stay motivated - we can get a lot accomplished in late fall which can make next July a bit more tolerable.

In general, Minnesota superintendents produced some awfully fine turf this past season. Some areas may have been too dry and some too wet but I've heard of no maintenance catastrophe that created unusual heartache this year. We can all remember worse! Let's hope the winter allows us a good start again next spring.

As winter does approach, let's not let our club members forget about us or give them the feeling we've forgotten about them and their valuable real estate. If your club doesn't have a regular publication which is

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