

GCSAA Explores Internet Opportunities, Strategy

GCSAA recently kicked off a new initiative focused on using the power of the Internet to enhance its existing member services and deliver new products and services to the industry. The initiative is also designed to streamline the way the association currently conducts many of its business processes.

To assist with this effort, GCSAA hired META Group Consulting in late March to help GCSAA develop a comprehensive Internet strategy for the organization. Phases of the project will include examining and prioritizing member needs, exploring new Web-only services such as e-commerce and online education, evaluating the association's current use of technology, and looking at options for providing more technology education to increase member utilization of GCSAA Online.

To assist in the initiative, META and staff will rely heavily on the input of two member groups established for this project:

(1) The Web strategy committee, which consists of superintendent members who will provide ideas and input on needed online products and services for the profession.

(2) The Web industry advisory group, which consists of industry representatives who will serve as a sounding board for new ways of bringing the information and resources of the industry together to provide enhanced services for members.

The umbrella group is chaired by GCSAA President R. Scott Woodhead, CGCS, with GCSAA's Secretary/Treasurer Mike Wallace, CGCS, serving as vice chairman.

Although members involved with the project have signed non-disclosure agreements because of the sensitive nature of strategic discussions, GCSAA will be providing regular updates on the group's progress through the web site and its discussion forums, as well as through several publications including *Newslines*, GCSAA's *NewsWeekly*, and the *GCSAA Online Report*.

In initial steps of the project, all members involved with the project are undergoing extensive private interviews directly with META to offer their ideas and provide a baseline assessment of GCSAA's offerings. To gain greater member perspective, META will also survey members of the membership standards resource group and the career development, education, membership and certification committees, which will meet concurrently in mid-April. A broader survey available to all web users is also being planned.

Although a timeline for implementation cannot be determined until specific services have been defined, plans currently call for the strategy development phase to be completed by early summer.

The META Consulting Group specializes in helping organizations leverage technology to help them better meet their business needs. The group was chosen from a field of 12 highly-rated information technology consulting firms. Staff reviewed all proposals and narrowed the field to three candidates who were then asked to formally present their methodologies to the committee chairmen and staff. Other clients of the META Consulting Group include IBM, EDS, 3Com, Georgia-Pacific and Ciba Specialty Chemicals.

If there are particular online services you would like to see addressed by this initiative, contact Sharmion Linseisen-Kerley, senior manager of Internet services, at (800) 472-7878, ext. 620, or e-mail slinseisen@gcsaa.org.

Blue Tag Reminder

Turf-Seed/Tee-2-Green is continuing to contribute 50 cents for every Turf-Seed variety or mixture blue tag and \$1 for every Tee-2-Green Penn Pals variety or mixture blue tag turned into The GCSAA Foundation as part of The Foundation's five-year endowment campaign.

Half of the money donated goes toward the campaign, "Investing in the Beauty of Golf," and half goes to each participating GCSAA member's affiliated chapter.

Superintendents can clip the blue tags from the appropriate turf seed varieties and mixtures and send them to The GCSAA Foundation, 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049, along with their membership number and affiliated chapter.