

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL UPDATE

On the Road With the USGA

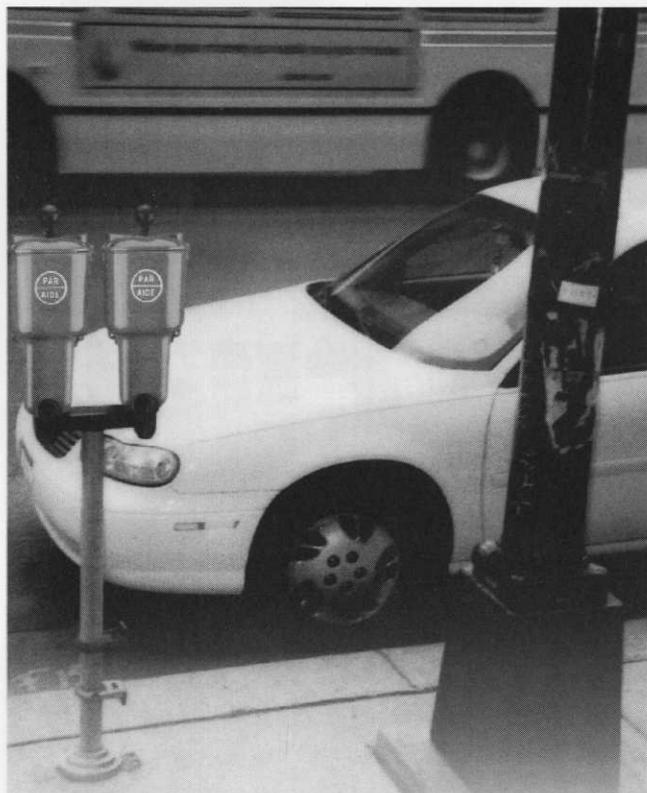
By R.A. (Bob) BRAME

Director, North Central Region

A new year has arrived and in fact, 2001 marks the beginning of a new millennium. For most, the focus at this time of year is family, friends, and New Year's resolutions. A good New Year's resolution for us all to adopt is that relationships will take precedent over our jobs. By no means is this to imply that we should not be offering our very best efforts on the job. However, relationships are the glue that holds other aspects of our lives together. Why not resolve as we enter a new millennium to guard priorities.

Snow Mold Protection

The very cold December weather, along with snow cover throughout most of the region, has prompted a few calls regarding snow mold disease prevention. If



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the cold and snow blocked your planned fungicide application then be prepared to insert a treatment should we experience a midwinter thaw. If this is not possible, consider making an application in late winter/early spring as soon as the snow cover thaws and soil conditions make a treatment possible. Past history is an important criteria. It is common for some golf courses to skip a preventative snow mold treatment and still experience little to no damage. Yet, if past history on your course points to the importance of control measures, then be prepared for an application when weather conditions allow.

Employee Issues

The winter months provide an excellent opportunity to train year-round staff and plan for the hiring of seasonal employees. Books, videos, and attendance at select conferences, seminars, and workshops can help prepare your staff for the golfing season ahead. Clearly, the operating budget should include funds to support ongoing educational activities.

Recognizing the challenge that has existed over the last several years in hiring and retaining quality seasonal employees now is the time to begin the process. Be sure the compensation and benefit package is competitive with surrounding courses. Flexible work hours, bonus incentives and golfing privileges also should be part of a competitive package that will draw and retain quality employees. The operating budget needs to reflect the above-mentioned components so that maximum flexibility is available in the recruiting and hiring process. After all, the golf course maintenance is directly tied to staff and equipment. The winter months provide an ideal time to ensure adequate resources are in place to address these two (staff and equipment) vital components of the maintenance operation.

Upcoming Conferences

On the immediate horizon is the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation Conference in Indianapolis, IN on Jan. 9th and 10th, 2001. Following close behind (February 11th-18th, 2001) is the GCSAA Conference and Show in Dallas, TX. Hope to see you in Indianapolis or Dallas. In the meantime, give our office a call if we can assist with your planning for the season ahead. There will be a late January mailing to those golf courses in our database regarding the 2001 Turf Advisory Service. If you're not sure whether or not your course is in our database or if you just want to get a jump on scheduling a visit, give us a call (859/356-3272).

(Editor's Note: Bob Brame may be reached at 859/356-3272 or bobbrame@usga.org)