

HOLE NOTES

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of the MGCSA

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From Your President's Desk



Rick Fredericksen, CGCS
MGCSA President

State Board of Electricity Wants Golf Course Personnel To Be Licensed

The Board of Directors of our association met with John Schultz, Executive Director for the State board of Electricity for two hours at our March BOD meeting. To say there was little ground gained was comparable to saying the low voltage prep course was an educational seminar. John Schultz was firm in his stance of representing the State Board of Electricity and that there was no room for golf course personnel not to become licensed for low voltage electricity. The original law that was passed in the early 1980 was refined and passed last summer to include people who work on electricity under 30 volts has been interpreted to cover golf course staff. Unfortunately for us and approximately 8,000 other applications, someone will need to be licensed to perform the low voltage electrical work on irrigation systems. A licensed contractor can represent the golf course if they are overseeing the work. The original dead line to be tested and licensed was April 29, 2003. Schultz felt confident that this deadline would be extended to September 30, 2003.

The MGCSA was not involved in the bill and if we had known about the legislation pending the Board would have done everything possible. Regrettably, the State Board of Electricity has the legal means to interpret the way the law was written and force irrigation contractors, installers, and maintenance personnel to abide by the law. There is a proposed law requiring all irrigation systems to have a rain switch installed and operational by July 1 of this year. The MGCSA does have representation starting at the committee level.

Mike Nelson, Membership Chairman and Jack MacKenzie are leading an initiative to reach out to non-member clubs throughout the state. One of the goals of MGCSA is to keep our members abreast of the ever changing regulations influencing the golf course superintendent. Appreciating that ignorance of the law is no longer being tolerated; the MGCSA has stepped up its participation in legislative issues and communicating this to our members. As an organization we also feel it is our responsibility to notify all non-member clubs of the rules and regulations that golf courses are having to abide by. We will be sending out a letter to all non-member clubs located in the state explaining current laws and the benefits of belonging to our association. The MGCSA Board will be creating a new membership category called the "Facility Membership" and will be voted on at our next Annual Meeting in January. Until then we have created an interim membership called a "Temporary Facility Membership". This new membership will relinquish a golf course's exposure to dual membership, thus making it affordable to be a participant in the state organization.

It is the intent of the MGCSA to embrace all of the golf courses across the state of Minnesota. By providing a consistent educational level, no golf course will be left uninformed. By bringing all golf courses into the organization our industry as a whole will be safer, better regulated under the law and more knowledgeable about current events.

The BOD has also begun an initiative to gather a larger Affiliate Member base. Currently most of the Affiliate Members are directly related to turf management. However, it became very obvious at the Green Expo that there are many opportunities to encourage other green industry representatives to join our group. Businesses such as plant material wholesalers, tool distributors, hardscape handlers and specialized professionals showed interest in our member base for future relationships. It is an opportunity too good to pass up for both our members and the nursery industry.

In closing I wish you all the very best this spring and encourage you to participate with your State Chapter of the GCSAA. It wouldn't be the same without you.

-- Rick Fredericksen, CGCS
President

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