

The 2005 Minnesota Green Expo

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MTGF Executive Director

The 2005 Minnesota Green Expo was quite an event by anyone's standards. Exact figures are still being developed. However, some facts and numbers can be reliably reported. Over 7,000 people attended this year's event in Minneapolis. Over 100 educational sessions were offered during the three days of the Expo featuring speakers from various universities, companies and other governmental agencies from around the country.

Pre-Expo workshops were held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Tuesday before the Expo. Three of these had great attendance and feedback forms indicate that attendees were very excited about the content and presentation of the workshop they attended.

The trade show filled two domes in the Minneapolis Convention Center. There were 377 companies occupying the equivalent of 881 booth spaces. That is the maximum that the two domes being used can accommodate. Even with that number of spaces available there was a waiting list of companies that either wanted to exhibit or companies that requested more space than they were currently occupying. In addition to the Trade Show displays, the University of Minnesota filled the lobby area in front of Exhibit Hall E, non-profits occupied the isle on the second level and Association booths were on display behind the registration area in the lobby area of Exhibit Hall D. In total there were 901 exhibits located throughout the show in addition to the University display area.

This year there were several changes made in order to offer additional or different opportunities or events. Some of these were very successful. Others were not. As the Joint Programming Board meets next month to start refining offerings and schedules for the 2006 Expo, these will be addressed individually. The Wednesday All-Industry Reception was moved from the trade show floor to the Ballroom. This change of location was in response to a number of exhibitor requests. A survey of both exhibitors and attendees is currently being conducted to determine if this will be continued next year. The always popular Casino Night on Thursday was



Tim Commers, Cushman Motors, pictured on the right, worked the trade show floor at the Minnesota Green Expo January 5, 6 and 7 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

changed to Carnival Night featuring a state fair atmosphere. This change was made in an attempt to not have attendees experience "burn-out" due to having the same offering too many years in a row. Again, surveys are being conducted to determine which offering is preferred or what other options might be of interest to attendees.

The Keynote Speaker, Mike McKinley, kicked off the Expo in rousing fashion. Those of you who attended this session were treated to a great presentation of inspiration, relationship building and attitude suggestions. Nearly 1,300 people gave McKinley a "Standing O" at the end of his presentation. Following the Keynote there were nine educational sessions offered in the following hour on a wide variety of topics including pavers in the landscape, PGR's, tree planting options, Poa/bent competition, Turf "101" and others. The only negative comment that I've received about the educational

sessions throughout the three days was "there were so many good things offered I couldn't get to everything I wanted to attend." That is quite a testimonial to the quality of the program that was offered and is an awfully good "problem" to have! Plans are already well underway for the 2006 Expo. There will be a major change that will be noticeable immediately when exhibitors and attendees arrive. The Expo Trade Show is moving to Halls B and C. This will result in several major improvements. First, it will provide an additional 20,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space so that current exhibitors wanting to expand their displays can do so. In addition it will allow new companies who are on the waiting list to be accommodated. In addition, the non-profits and associations will be provided better visibility in a new location. Also the University of Minnesota display area will have much better traffic flow due to a new location.

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The new space will also give us access to the newer, state-of-the-art meeting rooms. The newer room layout also offers the benefit of vertical movement as opposed to having to walk so far between classrooms. Beginning in 2006 much of the travel between sessions will be via escalators and elevators when moving from one classroom to another. No more having to walk great distances to get to your next educational session. While possibly being on a different floor, most classrooms are within a relatively short distance of the escalators and elevators and the areas to be used have a much more open floor plan.

As mentioned above, plans are already well underway for the 2006 Minnesota Green Expo. The dates will be Wednesday through Friday, January 4 - 6, 2006 with educational sessions and the Trade Show offered on all three days. There will be pre-Expo workshops offered again on Tuesday, January 3, 2006. Pesticide Recertification day will again be on Friday. Again, complete details will be available on the Expo web site, www.minnesotagreenexpo.com, or you can link to that site through the MTGF web site which is www.mtgf.org. The Minnesota Green Expo is one of the best and largest regional events of its kind. It would not be possible without the support of the many companies that exhibit and sponsor this annual event. Please remember this



Lots to see on the Trade Show floor at the Minnesota Green Expo held January 5, 6 and 7 at the Minneapolis Convention Center

when it comes time to make your buying decisions for the coming year. Supporting those who support the Expo is the best way to ensure that this event will continue to grow both in size and quality in the coming years. Have a great 2005 and watch for more information on the 2006 Minnesota Green Expo as plans develop.

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