

Win Some, Lose Some

By LARRY VETTER
MTGF Executive Director

The MTGF has been recognized for its contributions to the turf and grounds efforts at the University of Minnesota with membership in the President's Club of the University. This recognition is a result of a funding level that has become significant in recent years. We are very fortunate to have great people like Brian Horgan and Eric Watkins, along with Don White on the faculty and Bob Mugaas in Extension at the University. These individuals, together with their support staffs are making great strides in research, teaching and outreach that directly benefit the turf industry. This is the "Win Some" mentioned in the headline.

Unfortunately, along with this comes the "Lose Some" portion of that headline. By far the biggest disappointment in recent memory is that the University, because of its Strategic Planning process, placed "a hold" on capital developments which included the construction of a building on the TROE Center site. As most of you know, the University had allocated an additional 16 acres on the northeast corner of Larpenteur and Cleveland Avenues for turf and grounds research. Subsequent to that land allocation a great deal of work and a very large monetary investment was made on the site installing research projects, teaching aides and demonstration areas. The ultimate goal for the past few years has been the construction of a building that would provide some permanency to the turfgrass research, outreach and education efforts on campus.

Last year the MTGF was given the go-ahead to fund the pre-design work for such a building. The MTGF Board of Directors allocated up to \$25,000.00 for that effort. A timeline was established and a number of meetings were held. Brian Horgan, University of Minnesota Turfgrass Extension Specialist; Jay Pomeroy, MASMS' MTGF board member, and others put in a great deal of time and effort toward moving those plans forward. When it became apparent that the time lines were not being met, it was discovered that this project was officially "on hold," along with a number of other projects, and would continue to be for the foreseeable future. Needless to say, this has been a major disappointment.

Given this development, the MTGF Board made a formal request to the University for the return of those funds with the understanding that if and when this project is allowed to go forward, the MTGF would most likely provide funding at that time. The majority of these funds have been returned with the remainder being in question.

The MTGF Board at its March, 2005 meeting approved funding for an economic impact study of the turf and grounds industries in this area. This study will be done by professionals and will provide a great deal of much-needed information regarding the size and scope of these industries. A committee was selected to spearhead this effort so that all related market segments would be represented and to assure that the study will be designed and conducted according to proper protocol. This will be an extensive effort that will require the cooperation of all professionals within the MTGF. We already know that these industries have a huge economic impact. However, to state a total without a detailed study for verification is merely speculation at this point.

Also at its March meeting the MTGF Board approved an additional \$84,000.00 for funding various projects and programs at the University of Minnesota. The MTGF continues to search for a way to partner with the University to get some form of

pathology assistance for the Green Industry. Drs. Michaels and Ishimaru, the department heads of Horticulture and Pathology respectively, are engaged in discussions in an attempt to find a way for this to be put in place. They have the blessing of the Dean to pursue this, so hopefully something can be found that is workable for all parties in the near future. As mentioned by MGCSA President Panuska in his column in last month's issue, there are other possibilities of making this happen. All avenues are being pursued that might lead to achieving this important goal. While funding and the ultimate structure are the key hurdles that remain for achieving this objective, continuing efforts are being made that will hopefully result in success in the near future.

Planning is well underway for the 2006 Minnesota Green Expo. Complete details will be published in *Hole Notes* in one of the Fall, 2005 issues. The dates are January 4-6, 2006 with pre-Expo Workshops scheduled for Tuesday, January 3rd. Big changes are in the works due to the move to Exhibit Halls B and C which gives us newer meeting rooms with more convenient movement between educational sessions.

Pesticide and Power Limited Technician recertification will again be offered in the fall of 2005.

Have a great 2005 season and I look forward to seeing many of you at the the Field Day on July 28 (see page 13).

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