



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

The end of October means a lot of things in Minnesota. For us guys and gals in the golf course industry

but I just haven't even given the upcoming election much thought at all- which is kind of strange and definitely not good.

it means leaf clean-up, tree work and the prepping of the course for winter. It means football, hunting, and hopefully less time on the grind. It also means election season is about to reach its end. I don't know if you have noticed, but it seems to me that political ads have been a lot less this year. I can recall being bombarded with negativism to the point of nausea in years past, and it seems like a lot less this year.

Now, it's not like I am a huge political wonk. I am not glued to Rush Limbaugh over the lunch hour or spending my evenings with Anderson Cooper on CNN. My political views lean to the right but contain many central views. They have been shaped by primarily my parents, my education and my life experiences both in the U.S. and abroad. But as I have advanced in years my interest in who is making the decisions that will shape the world in which I operate have increased dramatically.

Now granted, the elections are a week and a half away from the time of this writing, and the ramping up of ads surely will begin shortly. The year 2014 also isn't a presidential year, so the buzz clearly isn't as great if it were, but there are very important elections coming up in this state for governor, the senate and house, and many state and local contests.

When I was young, I didn't really care too much about government matters. I was just working for the man, making my money and grouching when looking at my with holdings for a short while. My attitude was pretty much that one guy can't make a difference and my vote didn't count for much anyway. I am now ashamed to admit there was a few times I just plain didn't vote.

Maybe it's because of the perceived lack of political ads, or more likely my being distracted by any number or work and family things,

I bring this up because as soon as I am done writing this column I

will be heading to the Woodbury administrative building to absentee vote. I realized I would not be around next Tuesday and so will have to do this for the first time. It would have been easy to just say: “well I’m not here, why bother,” and would have in the past, but not anymore. Here are my reasons why.

First and foremost is the fact that the political landscape has changed, and in my opinion not for the good. The politicians on both sides of the fence have become so adept at taking a large portion of all of our hard-earned money and blowing it like sailor on shore leave that to stand back and not do at least the most basic of things- to vote- and at least have the satisfaction that I made my choice is incomprehensible to me anymore. If anything I should be doing a heck of a lot more, but voting is a start. It also allows me to voice my opinions to others and state my case, because if you are one of those people who sound off or complain about anything governmental and you didn’t vote I kindly invite you to shut your cake hole. You have no basis for discussion.

The second thought is that, once again due to the current political landscape, our industry is under siege. Special interest groups are formidable, organized and have their collective hooks in every level of government.

There are a lot of them that would like nothing better than to take away a bunch of the tools we need to get our jobs done and most of them are due to bad information, ignorance or a combination of both. It is important that we in the green industry understand that, and inform ourselves where candidates stand on these issues and at least do the most basic of things to ensure people are in office with a level-headed viewpoint of our industry. The most basic thing is your vote.

I just presented a couple pretty compelling reasons to vote, and I am sure you can come up with plenty more. I’m guessing most of you do vote. For those who don’t, or know people who don’t, ask them how many men and women have died in the line of duty to allow them that right to vote. If that doesn’t motivate them then I don’t know what to say. But I request you and anybody else you know make an informed vote. Find out about the candidates from an impartial source. Take 15 minutes to find out where they stand on environmental issues. Do some due diligence on this. Your livelihood in the future, or at least the ability to do the job, might be depending on it.