

weather pattern continues, and golf courses opening in May instead of April becomes the norm, it will greatly impact our industry locally. April for many public golf courses is essentially a make or break month. It's the difference between a good revenue year and a bad one. Take away April a few years in a row and I'm afraid there might be a few courses that simply will give up and close.

Now there is a line of thinking out there that is just exactly what needs to happen. The dwindling golf market has hit the point where there is more supply than demand and the natural attrition of golf courses is better in the long run for the industry. That might be somewhat true unless you happen to work at one of the shuttered properties. Then April means a whole lot more than it used too.

I prefer to think that if one golf course dies, we all take a hit. It means that all the guys on the crew are out of a job. It means they will be looking for employment in a full market and probably have to look elsewhere. It means one less course for our vendors to sell to, meaning they then will have to find ways to keep their margins up, potentially raising prices and lowering industry support. It means the scaling back of our industry. So what can be done about it?

Well, obviously we can't change the weather. (Although you and I know that there are people at your club who think that maybe you should be able to). So perhaps it's time to get really creative with things like budgeting, labor scheduling, expense tracking and the like. If it means saving your job, and the jobs of your crew, I can imagine you would do just about anything. I can see real potential in equipment sharing and maybe even people sharing in the future if things deteriorate.

In any case, maybe it is time to get out ahead of the curve and start to investigate these kind of money saving ideas if they haven't been done before or revisit some of them if they were not fully explored. The sky is the limit when it comes to imaginative thinking and while not every good idea is workable, creative thinking usually brings about efficiency and cost saving. After all, looks like you will have plenty of time to ponder while watching the snow slowly melt. You can use your time to think of ways to streamline your operation, or pray for 60 degrees and sunshine.

Either way you are doing something. C'mon spring, hurry up!