

I had the privilege of attending the GCSAA Chapter Delegates meeting on behalf of the MAAGCS held in Kansas City on October 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>. The major topics of the meeting were the CEO search, a potential dues increase, Board of Director candidate presentations, the new Field Staff program, the Environmental Institute of Golf, and new programs and initiatives the GCSAA will implement. Below is a report of the meeting from GCSAA.

### **Candidate presentations, chapter success stories, dues discussion featured**

#### **GCSAA conducts its 2010 chapter delegates meeting, Oct. 22-23-24**

A total of 91 GCSA chapters, represented by 87 delegates participated in a highly-engaging GCSAA Chapter Delegates meeting, Oct. 22-23-24.

The meeting began with an orientation session for first-time delegates at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., followed by a networking reception and dinner. The meeting continued with solid discussion on a variety of subjects for two days at the Airport Hilton in Kansas City, Mo.

#### **A Positive Experience**

"Awesome is all I can say," said Larry Balko, CGCS at Park Ridge Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Fla. We had great discussion and learned about the outstanding work that is being done on behalf of the members. If a delegate did not leave with a greater appreciation for the association and its members, then they just weren't listening."

The meeting included an update on GCSAA including financial metrics, new association initiatives, GCSAA candidate presentations, a town hall question and answer session, and chapter case study presentations. The responsibility of a delegate at this meeting is to represent their members and to take back information to share with them.

"I received several comments from delegates indicating the meeting went well," meeting chair GCSAA Vice President Bob Randquist, CGCS at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, Fla., said. "They came prepared to ask good questions and offer constructive feedback. The meeting is a key element of our governance system and the board and staff got a clear picture of what the members want from their association. At the same time, it allowed us as a board to share information that we need them to take back to their members. The meeting may have ended, but the process continues in pushing the information to all levels of membership."

#### **Member Dues Increase Discussion**

Certainly the most discussed item was a proposed GCSAA member dues increase which would take effect with May 2011 renewals and new member applications. Class A and SM dues would increase \$20 annually and Class C dues \$10 annually.

Proposed GCSAA member dues are established through a process that was created by the delegates that uses the Consumer Price Index as a guide. The members then vote upon the proposal at the association's annual meeting in February. The process calls for the association to consider a dues adjustment every two years as a means of ensuring a sustainable organization. The process is not automatic, and the GCSAA Board of Directors may elect not to bring forward dues adjustments according to schedule. Such was the case last year when the board opted to forgo consideration of an increase. Randquist said the board supports a dues increase for 2011 because it represents an opportunity for members to help ensure the success of their career and their facility. Dues account for 27 percent of the GCSAA budget, which is below the average of 38 to 40 percent for associations of similar size.

"The board fully realizes raising dues in this current economic climate is difficult," Randquist said. "But we see this as a necessary investment by

members. The increases allow us to make up the ground lost to inflation, which has been at 5.8 percent since our last dues increase three years ago. It allows us to continue to offer programs the members have deemed valuable to them and their facilities. We also believe the process developed by the members to implement dues increases does not create the hardship of larger increases in the past. Ultimately, the members determine whether the dues will increase or not by voting on the proposal in February."

Randquist noted that GCSAA has seen a decrease in revenues of \$5 million over the last three years due to a struggling economy, but proactive expense management by the board and staff has resulted in a reduction of expenses by \$5.4 million during that same period. GCSAA will have projected revenues of \$15.6 million by the end of 2010.

#### **Field Staff Gains Traction**

Popular with the delegates was the presentation of an expanded field staff program first announced earlier this year. The board has made public its desire to have all nine GCSAA regions staffed by a regional field staff representative as soon as possible. It is expected GCSAA will have five field staff employees by the end of 2010 (one at headquarters and four in the field), and seven by the end of 2011 (one at headquarters and six in the field). No timetable for staffing all of the regions has been created, but Randquist noted the success of the program has been duly recognized by the board.

The objective of the field staff program is to create a tie between chapters and GCSAA so that programs are utilized at a higher rate, communication is enhanced and membership is grown. The feedback from chapters who have utilized the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

#### **Additional Discussion Items**

- The search for a new GCSAA CEO was outlined. The position description has been posted on the GCSAA website and interviews are targeted for January 2011.
- Six chapters made presentation on programs they have instituted with the assistance of GCSAA resources in the areas of government relations, corporate partnerships, consolidation/sharing of resources and communications.
- New program initiatives in the area of web services, environmental programs, marketing communications, surveys and data and media public relations were shared.
- Considerable advancements were noted in the area of professional development resources with the new job board, self assessment tool and webcasting software.
- Outlined were new features for Conference and Show including education programs, networking opportunities and cost-saving options available to attendees.
- Candidate presentations for the offices of president, vice president and secretary/treasurer and a minimum of two and potentially three directors.

#### **Presentations Available Online**

The meeting's presentations are available online at <http://www.gcsaa.org/chapters/delegatemeeting.aspx>.

I would be more than happy to discuss any of the candidates for the Board of Directors or any other information from the meeting. Please contact me at (301)601-9240 or [mburton@montgomerycountygolf.net](mailto:mburton@montgomerycountygolf.net). It was an honor to represent the MAAGCS at the Chapter Delegates meeting.

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