

Golf's Big Show Just Got **Bigger**

A record 22,227 golf course management industry representatives attended the GCSAA Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas, surpassing the previous record set in Orlando last year. Other records for the week included: 5,300 seminar registrants breaking the previous mark of 4,978. Total exhibit space at the Trade Show was 221,400 square feet occupied by 685 exhibiting companies, 12,500 square feet more than the 1996 record.

GCSAA President Paul S. McGinnis, CGCS offered these comments on the Conference; "With a record of more than 22,000 attending the 1997 Show in Las Vegas, we're pleased with the results and look forward to achieving new levels of excellence as we plan for 1998."

Is **Bigger** Really Better?

By Bob Costa

I don't know, maybe it's just me. What were your impressions of the GCSAA Conference Trade Show in Las Vegas? It seems everyone I have spoken to since I have returned was less than inspired. That has been my impression for the last several years. This year I thought I'd try a different strategy, split my show experience into two days. Well, unfortunately the results were much the same. I still found myself at times wandering almost dazed through endless isles of merchandise. My personal feeling is that the Trade Show, for purely economic reasons, has grown to a size that has become counter productive.

The numbers from Lawrence were impressive, 695 vendors, an increase in Trade Show square footage by 12,000 feet. If the yardstick for measuring the show's success only measures in feet, then by all means the shows organizers should be proud. I for one am not convinced that it's appropriate. Do bigger numbers necessarily

translate into increased value for golf course superintendents?

It appears quite clear to me that revenue generated from selling floor space has taken over the Trade Show drivers seat while educational value occupies a spot in the back. Equally disturbing is the fact that because of the physical size of the show, attractive conference sites such as San Francisco will no longer host golf course management's "big show."

I'd like to think that I'm not so naive to realize that the revenue generated from the Trade Show is necessary to subsidize other show costs and services. It's role at the conference is in part to do just that, raise money. I can accept that. But where does it end? Or maybe the question is, will it ever end? The reality of a bigger show next year with new records for square footage may be more than I can take, but then, maybe it's just me.

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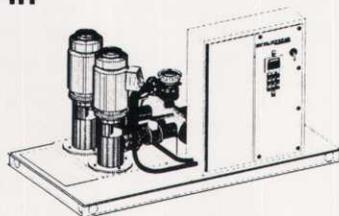
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