

THRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

October/November 2024

Northern California Chapter
GCSAA
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*The GCSANC Holiday Meeting
Returns to Monterey
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December 6, 2024*

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- Assistant Superintendent Profile: Sam Rothwell
- Executive Director's Report: Regulatory Updates
- First Green



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The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

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ON THE COVER
Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa



NORCALENDAR

Monday, November 18
Annual Meeting
Contra Costa Country Club

Friday, December 6
Holiday Meeting
Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa

Monday-Tuesday,
February 24-25
Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp
Bayonet & Black Horse

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Thru The Green is published bimonthly by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California.

In response to member requests, we are now pleased to offer full-color, printed copies of Thru The Green for \$40 per issue.

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President's Message

By **STEVEN SPATAFORE**, *Golf Course Superintendent, Contra Costa Country Club*

This past week, I had the opportunity to represent the GCSANC at the Chapter Delegates Meeting at GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas. During these two days, the Board of Directors and GCSAA staff solicited feedback from members on a variety of topics, including: 1) education and career development pathways for existing and future golf course maintenance professionals, 2) priority issues of members that the Governmental Affairs Committee members and staffers can focus on when they advocate for us on Capitol Hill, and 3) consideration of future dues increases to allow the association to better support the expanded offering of member services in the past decade.

The membership dues strategy was by far the most heavily discussed portion of the event. In 2006, the membership voted to tie future dues adjustments to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and increases have occurred every other year as a result based on the correlated CPI. This allowed our association to merely maintain its membership offerings. After extensive research, discussions, and listening to members about our needs, the Board of Directors has proposed an increase of \$65 for Class A/B Members (\$40 CPI + a \$25 adjustment) and an increase of \$35 for Class C Members (\$20 CPI + a \$15 adjustment) at the 2025 GCSAA Annual Meeting. This increase will better support the expanded membership offerings that have and will continue to benefit our industry into the future. Some notable programs developed since 2006 include the Field Staff Program, Grassroots Ambassador Program, the Best Management Practice Guides, The First Green Program, and Equipment Managers Education and Certification. These programs have aided superintendents in the incredibly important areas of government advocacy and workforce development. With elevated funding, our GCSAA staff can further raise the bar in the continual pursuit of excellence. At the meeting, staff members unveiled partnerships with National Future Farmers of America (FFA) for turfgrass management-focused curriculum, competitions and industry exposure. With over 1 million FFA students in the United States, this is an excellent talent pool for future team greenskeepers, assistants, and superintendents. Additionally, education programs specifically targeted to aid in educating and developing our staff members from Day 1 greenskeepers to irrigation and spray technicians. I will deliver a further report at the GCSANC Annual Meeting, on November 18 at Contra Costa Country Club. I hope that you will join me in supporting this dues increase.

Also, during this event, delegates had the opportunity to meet the candidates seeking office at the annual meeting next February in San Diego. As members of the GCSANC, you're able to either vote collectively as a part of the GCSANC, or you can vote in person or via a proxy as an individual on Thursday morning, February 6, during the annual meeting of the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show.

Finally, I hope the cooler weather has given all of us the opportunity to breathe and relax a little bit. As challenging as our weather can be, it has paled in comparison to the storms that our fellow members have had to face and overcome in these past few months in the Southeastern portion of the United States. I spoke with many delegates of chapters affected by the storms; the stories were harrowing and the road to normalcy for some will be long and difficult. The GCSAA Disaster Relief Fund is a benevolent fund that directly serves members facing hardship due to natural disasters. The board recently donated on behalf of the entire GCSANC, but I encourage all who can join me in personally donating an amount you feel comfortable with to the fund. Thank you for your consideration. You can easily donate at the following link: <https://gcsaa-foundation.snbll.com/disaster-relief-fund-giving-portal>.

Sincerely,

Steve A. Spatafore

Steven A. Spatafore
Contra Costa Country Club



Executive Director's Report

By MARC CONNERLY, GCSANC

At the time of this writing, Election Day is 12 days away. However, by the time you read this, and barring any election surprises or shenanigans (which are by no means a certainty given recent history), we will know the identity of our 47th US President, not to mention the members of our state legislature.

The outcome of the presidential election is likely to have minimal impact on the manner in which superintendents in California do their jobs, although President Trump demonstrated in his first term a propensity for reducing or repealing regulations and eliminating red tape.

At the state level, although the members of the state legislature might change, the party composition is unlikely to shift much, if at all, and almost certainly not enough to result in a change in the state's regulatory climate.

Staying on the topic of regulations, the past year has seen the passage and/or implementation of several state regulations, some of which might be under the radar of many superintendents, but potentially significant, nonetheless.

In June, Cal/OSHA approved an indoor heat illness prevention standard that took effect in July. The standard is similar to the outdoor heat illness prevention standard that has been in place for many years, but applies to indoor workplaces where the temperature reaches 82 degrees (e.g., warehouses, maintenance shops, etc.).

Similar to the outdoor standard, the indoor standard requires a written plan and access to suitably cool water, cool-down areas and rest breaks. Details about the indoor heat illness prevention standards may be found at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/HeatIllnessInfo.html>.

Also approved in June, but not taking effect until January of 2026 (with a long phase-in period that extends until 2038), were the zero-emission forklift regulations. Promulgated by the California Air Resources

Board (CARB), the regulations will lead to the eventual elimination of propane-, natural gas- and gas-powered forklifts throughout the state of California.

The regulations include a requirement that operators of large, spark-ignited (LSI) forklifts contact their electric utility provider no later than March 31, 2026, to initiate discussions regarding potential electrical-service installation or necessary upgrades for facilities where LSI forklifts are operated.

More details on the forklift regulations may be found at https://www.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/Fact%20Sheet_Zero%20Emission%20Forklift%20Overview_July%202024_1.pdf.

Finally, earlier this year, Cal/OSHA approved a very complicated and restrictive expansion of the current lead regulation that will take effect on January 1, 2025. The 174-page regulation is split into construction safety orders and general industry safety orders, with the latter applicable to golf course employees. While most golf employees will not be affected by the standards, mechanics and others who come in contact with engines and/or batteries will likely be subjected to blood testing, monitoring and other requirements.

It is anticipated that Cal/OSHA will issue a compliance guide in December of this year, but rumors on the street suggest that the compliance guide will be even lengthier than the regulation, which can be found at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/oshsb/documents/Lead-apprvdtxt.pdf>.

It would be easy to overlook the lead regulations, but doing so could be costly to employers and potentially hazardous to employees exposed to lead, so please watch for more information and resources on the lead regulation in the coming weeks in order to stay in compliance and avoid costly fines or liability.

Marc Connerly

CAL/OSHA LEAD REGULATION – Quick Compliance Overview

Cal/OSHA lowered the state's permissible exposure level (PEL) for lead from 50 micrograms per cubic meter to 10 micrograms per cubic meter as an eight-hour time-weighted average. Cal/OSHA also reduced the action level (AL) for lead from 30 micrograms per cubic meter to 2 micrograms per cubic meter as an eight-hour time-weighted average. The goal, of course, is to maintain employees' blood lead levels below the PEL.

These new requirements will go into effect on JANUARY 1ST, 2025.

ACTION PLAN FOR LEAD COMPLIANCE

As a result of this change, numerous regulatory requirements will be triggered resulting in a lot of work ahead for many employers. The action plan for Cal/OSHA's Lead Standard compliance is as follows:

- Air Monitoring
- First, conduct air monitoring in affected areas to determine exposure levels.
- Written Compliance Program
- Next, based on findings, there may be a need to develop a written compliance program that includes:
- Instituting hygiene and housekeeping practices
- Implementing appropriate engineering controls such as ventilation and dust control
- Establishing proper work procedures
- Training
- Assigning the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators
- Routine exposure monitoring and medical surveillance may be required as well.



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From the Field

By **JEFF JENSEN**, GCSAA Field Staff, Southwest Region

I hope this finds everyone's fall season off to a productive start. It was a tough summer with the heat and fires, so let's hope that Mother Nature brings us some early season precipitation.

I have been busy with GCSAA Conference and Trade Show activities and just returned from a visit to the San Diego area. The 2025 event will take place February 3-6, 2025, at the San Diego Convention Center, with the GCSAA Golf Championships being held February 1-3, 2025, at Torrey Pines Golf Course, Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, Aviara Golf Club and Del Mar Country Club.

There are some great events already planned for San Diego, including the opening reception aboard the USS Midway, the Health in Action 5K in downtown San Diego, interactive facility tours at some of San Diego's finest golf courses, the Sustainability Showcase, Sunrise Celebration to open the trade show floor, hundreds of educational seminars and power hours, GCSAA Annual Meeting and Election, and the closing reception.

Also, do not forget about the California Room, which will be held Wednesday, February 5, at Petco Park. Located directly across from the Convention Center, the California Room is the premier networking event during show week. Stop by for drinks, great food and to mingle with more than 600 members and guests of the California GCSA.

Registration for the 2025 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show and Golf Championships is now open at

<https://gcsaaconference.com/>. You can register separately for the California Room at <https://cgcsa.wildapricot.org/event-5846255>.

In other news, the annual GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting was held October 28-30, 2024, in Lawrence, Kansas. The meeting brings together representatives from each of GCSAA's affiliated chapters to discuss initiatives and issues facing GCSAA and the profession as well as providing the opportunity to meet Board of Director candidates who will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in February in San Diego. T.A. Barker, CGCS, will serve as the 2025 GCSAA President with Paul Carter, CGCS, serving as Vice President. The remainder of the candidates can be viewed at <https://www.gcsaa.org/about-gcsaa/annual-meeting/2025/2025-annual-meeting-preview>. Steven Spatafore, GCSANC President and Chapter Delegate, will provide the board and membership with a breakdown of the meeting prior to the conference and trade show.

Thank you for your continued support of GCSAA, and I look forward to seeing you at the GCSANC Annual Meeting at Contra Costa in November. If I can be of assistance or answer any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at jjensen@gcsaa.org and follow me on X at GCSAA_SW.

Jeff

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Assistant Superintendent Profile: Sam Rothwell, Orinda Country Club



What made you decide to get into golf maintenance?

I was very interested in golf architecture and started working as an intern at Myopia Hunt Club. I was thinking that I would intern there for the summer to study the course and then try to get a construction internship afterwards. That summer, I fell in love with waking up every day and being a part of the maintenance team. I realized that the maintenance team has such a big impact on the architecture of the golf course. I really like the idea of being at a course for a long period of time and making small changes to improve the playing experience.

What is your proudest accomplishment in the industry?

Being on the grow-in team at the Sedge Valley course at Sand Valley. I got to help with the first 12 holes and being able to be a part the construction/grow-in process was very special.

Who would you consider your most influential mentor in the industry?

Michael Breuer. I worked for him at Pacific Dunes course at Bandon Dunes and he spent a lot of quality time with me talking about leadership and managing a team.

Where did you grow up?

Hilton Head, South Carolina

What are your best nicknames?

Some of my friends from home call me "Sammy time." It was an old gamertag.

If you could drive any vehicle, what would it be?

I love my 2006 Toyota 4Runner that I have now. But since I was a kid, I always loved the Nissan GT-Rs.

Curly fries or regular, and why?

Regular. Curly fries are good occasionally, but you can get regular fries every time and not get tired of them. Curly fries are all crunch. I love a good crunch, but you need some potato in the middle.

What is the funniest thing you have ever seen on a golf course?

Whenever my dad double hits a chip, I can't contain myself.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I've been skydiving twice.

What was your lowest score playing golf, and where?

75 at Orinda Country Club.

What is your favorite manual labor job on the golf course, and why?

Cutting cups. It's super satisfying; you get to check all the greens. And you can get creative with pin locations.

Greatest piece of advice anyone has given you?

Take it one day at a time. It is super cliché, but using it as a mantra has helped me so much. I always find myself stressing about the future and I need the constant reminder to focus on what I can control just for today.

If you had to survive on a deserted island for one year, aside from food and water, what five items would you bring with you to occupy your time?

A solid tent, pillow, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, and boogie board.

Favorite beer?

I've been sober for 5 years :).

If you had your choice, what would you do in retirement?

I would travel around the United Kingdom playing golf and seeing all sorts of different towns.

Favorite sports teams?

My parents are from Boston, so I am an all-Boston sports fan.

What's your favorite type of grass to manage as a putting surface and why?

Poa annua and bentgrass mix. I like that the bentgrass thrives in the summer and the Poa does great in the wet winters.

If you could have lunch with anyone, past or present, who would it be and why?

My friend Brennen Reeves. He was one of my favorite people to go to lunch with. Always had super interesting conversations and made me laugh a ton.

What is your favorite golf maintenance-related quote?

"The course has been there for 100 years; it'll still be there tomorrow with or without you."

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The Truth about Hosting a First Green Field Trip

By **BLAKE HERTZOG**, Superintendent, Monterey Pines Golf Club

Can we host a First Green field trip?

What stations would we include?

Who would we need to help us?

What is the benefit of hosting a trip?

Could I instead volunteer on another field trip?

These were the questions on my mind when I was an Assistant Superintendent at Monterey Pines Golf Club working with Superintendent Austin Daniells. We discussed on several occasions the potential of hosting a field trip, but were not sure of the coordination and logistics.

As I learned of the amazing stories about successful field trips and was involved in a school field trip at Pacific Grove Golf Links in 2015, I became more interested in hosting an event. After two years as Superintendent at Monterey Pines Golf Club and based on conversations with Assistant Superintendent Tom Laycock, I was convinced the maintenance team at Monterey Pines could support a First Green field trip.

In preparation, I spoke to Richard In, School Liaison Officer for Naval Support Activity in Monterey. Richard has many contacts with our local school district,

including principals, assistant principals, teachers, and superintendents. Richard was able to coordinate a meeting with La Mesa Elementary School's assistant principal, which then led to contact with two fifth-grade teachers.

We hosted our first field trip on May 25, 2023, and it was an immense success. The students and teachers were grateful and had a wonderful time. We had about 55 students our first year. With this many students, we wanted smaller group stations, so we made eight of them. It helped that Brian Boyer, Superintendent at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club, was hosting an event a few days before ours because I was able to discuss ideas and obtain input from him and those who attended his event.



We hosted our second field trip on May 16, 2024, and the event was just as successful as the first. Students left the event saying that this was the best field trip they have ever been on, and the teachers were so thankful. This year, we hosted the same teachers with their students and welcomed a home-school cooperative that includes my wife and children. To accommodate 62 students, we added a ninth station and involved all of our team members throughout the different stations; this allowed everyone to see the impact of the event and how we can get kids involved in golf. I am very grateful of the support from other superintendents who either attended or sent one of their assistant superintendents or employees. We had 13 volunteers from local courses, which provided us with at least two expert people at each 10-minute station.

Continued on page 14



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The Truth about Hosting a First Green Field Trip

After two years of hosting these events, I have learned:

- A field trip is NOT a normal day of work.
- Coordinating and corresponding with superintendents and assistant superintendents to host events takes time and thoughtfulness.
- Gather all the tools, tables, and equipment well in advance and be well organized.
- Make the event fun.
- Be engaged and let the kids ask questions.

The First Green field trip was an excellent experience. I had a lot of fun both years, and we saw the excitement of teachers and students. In the days leading up to the event, I was slightly anxious that something would be forgotten or someone might not be there to help at a station. But once things were going, the events moved very quickly. I enjoy working with kids and thought many years ago I would like to be a teacher, so this gives me a bit of an opportunity to teach in a small way. This event could not have taken place without the help of our maintenance team and pro shop staff as well as the support of other superintendents. This demonstrates the comradery we have with one another in our industry, and I am very thankful to have a wonderful network of people through GCSANC.



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