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When bad publicity becomes a memory...

Initiatives being implemented by the GCSAA include a 'partnership' with the EPA and outreach to schools.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America foresees a time when bad publicity is just a lingering memory of a by-gone century.

As 2000 approaches, the GCSAA is planning a series of public relations programs to solidify the reputation of golf course superintendents as leaders in environmental stewardship.

The latest image-enhancement measures include three programs announced by outgoing president Gary T. Grigg during the association's annual meeting in February:

- 1) Improve the GCSAA's chapters and its chapter relations;
- 2) Enhance the professional image of the superintendent;
- 3) Solidify the GCSAA's reputation for environment preservation.

"Golf has had its share of negative press, centered on environmental issues," admitted Grigg. "Through our proactive approach, I believe it's time to turn the tide. And I feel that now, for the first time, GCSAA's initiatives this year have included a leadership role in drafting environmental guidelines for golf courses.

"We've also entered into a pesticide environmental stewardship program," reported Grigg. "This program fosters a collaborative—rather than combative—problem-solving relationship between industry groups and pesticide regulators in the EPA, Department of Agriculture and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Association)."

GCSAA has given the EPA a pesticide

risk reduction strategy, which Grigg said is a voluntary initiative on the part of GCSAA.

"This strategy," explained Grigg, "includes elements of research, education and communication, to promote the adoption of environmentally-sensitive management practices.

"During a time when budget cuts threaten to strangle the EPA, agency partnerships are increasingly important ways for government-regulated agencies to work together for reasonable goals."

Get children interested

The GCSAA has expanded its Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program to include a school division. The ACSP for Schools is designed to help schools enhance their grounds to attract wildlife, conserve resources and provide environmental education and stewardship opportunities for students.

A \$100 annual membership fee helps offset costs of program administration and materials from the Audubon Society of New York State. Included in the program are relevant curriculum, field trips to golf courses and other types of environmental education that meet the needs of each member school.

GCSAA has encouraged its member superintendents to "adopt a local school," by getting in touch with the school principal to explain the program, pass along information, and even make an offer to pay the \$100 fee.

For more information on any of these programs, contact GCSAA at (913) 841-2240. □



Grigg: GCSAA wants to work with EPA for 'reasonable goals'.

—Terry McIver

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