

[GOLF/GROUNDS]

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Field 'downtime' a rarity

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Soaking sodium from greens

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Delegation a way to grow staff

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Low maintenance at links course

A look through our 1996 volume shows we covered the major issues of the day for you: equipment and chemical safety; drug and alcohol abuse; legislative issues; hiring and firing; wages; weather; budgeting; immigration.

Guess what? None of those issues show any sign of evaporating into the blue. And one or more of them will continue to play a part in your day-to-day operation.

Many of you, however, can reflect on the summer of '96 with glee rather than gloom, in spite of all of your business concerns, and you're downright looking forward to 1997. That's because you plan ahead, you hire the best people you can find, you train them well and you know how to keep your equipment up and running.

You also attend at least one good trade show in the off-season, such as the Green Industry Expo, which takes place again this month, in Cincinnati. Or maybe you're a regular at the GCSAA's annual show, which is in Las

Vegas in 1997. Or maybe you're a regular at a good regional show. And you don't go to a show just to fill a bag with trinkets. You go to a show to learn!

We know that much of your success or failure has to do with the quality of your work force.

It's getting scary out there. As our feature series on Hispanic labor (page 14) shows, the legal immigrant workforce is out there, and doing fine work. The scary part is what's happened to the American work ethic when it comes to manual labor. I always thought it was the lethargy of American youth that was to blame, but after talking with some fellow industry observers, I'm not so sure it's not endemic of people of all ages. The willingness to work hard isn't there as it used to be.

Challenges ahead include labor & the learning curve



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The song went, "Once I built a railroad, made it run against time..." Not anymore, at least not in the non-union labor force of America today.

It's all up to you. Learn all you can about advertising for and finding the best people. You are going to have to increase what you pay, though. Sorry, but that's the way it is in a buyer's market.

Words to remember as you sift through the American labor force of the 1990s: "screening," "incentives" and "alternative labor."

Equipment innovations you may want to look into include anything of quality that is light-weight; easy to maintain; and offers quick repairs and parts availability from dealers.

And as we've said before from these pages, we want to hear from you. We have a new Internet number, our phone bill is paid and the mail always gets through. **LM**

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