

IA supports Illinois contractor case

The Irrigation Association reports it will start a matching fund of \$7000 to help the Illinois Turf Irrigation Association pay legal fees in a case currently before the Illinois Supreme Court.

At issue is the right of irrigation contractors to assemble irrigation components downstream of backflow prevention devices. The issue centers around where a plumbing system starts and where it ends. In the past, the backflow device was considered the point where the plumbing system ends. However, a Chicago irrigation contractor was cited in 1995 for assembling an irrigation system downstream of a

backflow device, which is legal according to common industry practices.

Contractors say the Illinois Health Department does not require licensed plumbers to install overhead fire sprinklers, water conditioners and softeners and agricultural irrigation.

"If the Supreme Court does not correct this mistake, then our industry will be prevented from pursuing our trade and the price of irrigation system installation in the state will rise dramatically," says Michael Clark, irrigation manager for the Brickman Group, Ltd. "Licensed plumbers charge twice as much as landscape contractors to

install turf irrigation systems. Furthermore, the error might set a precedent for other states to follow. That would be devastating to our industry."

Dan Cassidy, president of the Illinois Turf Irrigation Association, says it takes five years of apprenticeship to become a licensed plumber, and there is only one question on the plumbing exam about irrigation systems.

Cassidy says the backflow device manufacturers contributed to the heightened fear of backflow potential in the state health department, which led to this controversy. □

GCSAA/USGA/NTEP pick research greens

The GCSAA and USGA and National Turfgrass Evaluation Program have begun an on-site research project to evaluate new and widely-used cultivars of creeping bentgrass and bermudagrass. Trials will be conducted on golf courses where the cultivars can be maintained at the exacting standards of today's golfer.

"On-sited testing of turfgrass cultivars is not a new concept," reminds Dr. Bob Shearman, NTEP executive director,

"however, the joint sponsorship of on-site putting green trials to evaluate creeping bentgrass and bermudagrass cultivars by [the three associations] is new. That's why we like to refer to this program as 'back to the future,'" says Shearman.

Golf course superintendents have been asking for some time to have information that bridged the gap between small-plot university trials and their end-use needs. This program will do just that and will be

NEW OTF ADDRESS

The Ohio Turfgrass Foundation has a new address: P.O. Box 340546, Columbus, Ohio 43234; 614/760-5442; fax: 614/760-5431.

based on sound research approaches," continues Shearman. "It really brings the industry together in a cooperative effort to meet its informational needs."

Research sites include: CC of Green Valley, Green Valley, Ariz.; Westwood CC, Vienna, Va.; Westchester CC, Rye, N.Y.; The Missouri Bluffs, St. Charles, Mo.; The Jupiter Island Club, Hobe Sound, Fla.; The Country Club of Birmingham, Birmingham, Ala.; SCGA Members Club, Murrieta, Calif.; Purdue University North, Purdue Univ. West, Ind; North Shore Country Club, Glenview, Ill.; Lakeside Country Club, Houston, Texas; Fox Hollow at Lakewood, Lakewood, Colo.; Crystal Springs Golf Course, Burlingame, Calif.; Country Club of Mobile, Mobile, Ala.; Boone Links/Lassing Pointe Golf Course, Florence, Ky.; Bent Tree Country Club, Dallas, Texas.

Seed company sponsors are: Tee-2-Green Corp; Lofts Seed, Inc.; E.F. Burlingame; Seed Research of Oregon; Zajac Performance Seeds; Pickseed West; Jacklin Seed Co.; Turf Merchants, Inc.; Lesco; Sunbelt Seeds; International Seeds, Inc.; Seeds West, Inc.; Cascade International Seed Co.; Thomas Bros. Grass Co. □



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