TEE TO GREEN

A Quarterly Publication of the Louisiana-Mississippi Chapter GCSAA

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SUMMER 2011

From the President

I know many of us are grateful summer is finally here after spring/winter seemed to linger well into late May. This year has been a unique one so far with all the many weather extremes that we have endured, such as drought, tornados, rainfall and flooding. Weather is the one controlling factor that we must remember that we only can attempt to implement but cannot control. I think that we all have been affected by one of these weather extremes this spring and hope that everyone has been fortunate to overcome Mother Nature.

We kicked the spring off this year with a couple successful events in Louisiana and in Mississippi. Thanks again to all the vendors that supported these events and the speakers whom volunteered their time to speak at these events. Also, a special thanks to the superintendents who allowed these events to take place at their golf courses.

Our next event will be at the Preserve Golf Club in July. Go ahead and mark this event down on your calendar.

We would be pleased to listen to any suggestions on how we could better serve our members at these events. If there are any educational topics or activities that you would prefer, please contact us. Remember that we are here to serve our members.

Neil Mayberry
New Orleans Country Club
Madisonville, LA ■

Inspirations...

...Guess who is now two years old? Our miracle babies, Mary Louise and David LeBlanc, reached the "terrible twos" in April and are driving mom and dad nuts! Praise God!

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✓ Mark Your Calendars!

What: **Seminar/Lunch/Golf**
When: **July 12, 2011**
Where: **The Preserve Golf Club**
Vancleave, MS

What: **MTA Yard Dawg Classic**
When: **August 22, 2011**
Where: **Old Waverly Golf Club**
West Point, MS

What: **MSU Annual Turf Research Field Day and Turf Equipment Expo**
When: **August 23, 2011**
Where: **MSU North Farm**
Hwy. 182 East, Starkville, MS

What: **Louisiana Ornamental Turfgrass Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertificatiion**
When: **October 5, 2011**
Where: **Lafayette, LA**
Location TBA
Contact Karen Nix at knix@agcenter.lsu.edu

What: **World of Golf Tailgate Party**
When: **October 15, 2011, MSU vs SC**
Where: **Mississippi State University**
Starkville, MS
Time: **TBA**
Host: **Ben Nelson Golf and Utility Vehicles**

What: **Fall Flowers and Garden Festival**
When: **October 21-22, 2011**
Where: **MSU Truck Crops Station**
Crystal Springs, MS
For more information: http://msucares.com/fallfest/

What: **SuperPro Tournament**
When: **October 24, 2011**
Where: **New Orleans Country Club**
New Orleans, LA

What: **Seminar/Lunch/Golf**
When: **November 7, 2011**
Where: **Koasati Pines Golf Club**
Kinder, LA

What: **Louisiana Ornamental Turfgrass Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertificatiion**
When: **November 16, 2011**
Where: **Kenner, LA**
Location TBA
Contact Karen Nix at knix@agcenter.lsu.edu

What: **Mechanics Workshop**
When: **December, 2011**
Where: **Grand Bear Golf Club**
Saucier, MS

What: **Turf Short Course**
When: **December 12-16, 2011**
Where: **Mississippi State University**
Starkville, MS

INSPIRATIONS... *continued from page 1*

…Update on Richie Woolwine who received the liver transplant — Richie is doing well and working with Jerry Palmer at Colonial Country Club in Madison, Mississippi.

…And now we need to support another colleague, Scott McNeer, who is Director of Golf at Spring Creek Ranch Golf Club in Collierville, Tennessee. He is 38 years old and has been diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer. Scott underwent surgery in February to remove four feet of his colon; the cancer was also found in his adrenal gland and lymph nodes. He is presently undergoing chemotherapy. Scott records his trials and tribulations of chemo treatment on his blog http://caringbridge.org/visit/scottmcneer. Good days and bad days.

Scott and his lovely wife Kim are the proud parents of two daughters, Molly and Emma. Emma was diagnosed with liver cancer when she was 18 months old. Thankfully, she is now in remission and is considered "cancer free."

If you would like to make a contribution to the Scott McNeer fund, make check payable to Scott McNeer and mail to:

12671 Monterey Road
Collierville, TN 38017

Top Five Ways to Make Sure Your Sod Fails

Dave Han, Ph.D. • Alabama Turf Times, Spring 2011

Nobody likes to see turfgrass fail at establishment. Yet it happens from time to time. Even more common is turfgrass that seems to establish well initially, but then thins and has trouble growing well over the long term. All too often, mistakes made at the time of establishment cause maintenance problems for years afterward. If you want to be sure that your sod fails, here are the top ten ways to do it (and maybe you can increase your chance of success if you stay away from these common mistakes).

5. Use the wrong turfgrass for the environment / plant in too much shade

Everybody likes to save money. That doesn't mean that the cheapest grass is always the best choice long-term, however. One example of this is seen all the time: bermudagrass planted where there is way too much shade for it to survive long term. Yes, bermudagrass may only be half as expensive as most other sod, but there are limits to what it can do. It's true that the improved shade tolerance of TifGrand bermudagrass will help here, but there are still many places where bermudagrass is not the right choice. Sure, you may save some money up front, but you will pay more in the long run in the headaches associated with thin turf and the eventual cost to replace that turf.

Remember that landscape plants grow and choose a grass with the long term in mind. Back in the days when people bought houses to flip them in a few years, perhaps nobody cared about the long term maintenance of their lawns and landscapes. But if you plan to live in a house for ten or more years, then it becomes a concern. Why plant a bermudagrass lawn that will be shaded out in five years when you could plant a grass that is less bad in the shade and not have to worry for 15?

We also have to face facts: there are many areas where turfgrass is simply not going to survive in the long run due to heavy shade. And it is a part of a good landscaper's responsibility to recognize these areas and to suggest alternatives to turfgrass. I like to say that the best tool to use for improving turfgrass health is often a chainsaw. That is true, but people tend to like trees and sometimes we turfgrass people have to realize that and give in to plants that are truly shade-loving.

4. Don't know where your sod is coming from

One of the only good things about the lagging economy these days is that there is plenty of sod available for purchase (unless you are a sod farmer). This makes it easy to shop around for sod and to deal with only reputable growers who know what they are doing and will sell you high quality grass. If possible, check out their references and remember that a well-run sod farm won't be offended if you want to see the grass before you buy it, especially if you are a regular customer. Buying certified sod will guarantee that there are no noxious weeds in the sod and will provide a paper trail of the sod's origins to help ensure you are getting the variety you expect. Many of the newer varieties of turfgrass must be grown under license and also provide safeguards to ensure the genetic purity of the sod you are buying. It costs more, but in many cases it is worth it to ensure a uniform product over the long term.

3. Plant during periods of heavy stress

Although one of the best things about laying sod is that it gives the maximum flexibility in terms of establishment timing, there are limits to what sod will take also. Sod that is laid during the heat of the summer, especially if irrigation is not available (see below), is much more likely to fail than sod laid in more mild temperatures. Sod is also more susceptible to problems when it is laid in the late fall while it is still partly green, but going into dormancy. Early cold snaps while the grass is not yet well rooted, but not yet fully dormant either, can result in winter kill. If it is possible, consider putting off laying sod for a few weeks until it is dormant before transplanting sod.

Another period of stress when it is best to avoid transplanting sod is during greenup in the spring. Often, turfgrasses will outgrow their root systems early in spring when air temperatures are high enough for shoot growth but soil temperature still lags below what is needed for good root growth. Sometimes sod will not even hold together well enough to harvest and stack right during greenup. Again, it is better to plant while the grass is still dormant or after it is fully out of dormancy.

One of the major advantages of sod is that it offers instant coverage. But just because sod looks pretty right away, that's no reason to allow traffic too soon. Sod needs time to root down into the soil and to grow lateral shoots to knit the pieces together. How long this takes will depend on a number of factors, like the weather and how well the soil was prepared (see above). As a rule of thumb, for regular sod allow 3–4 weeks during normal growing conditions before subjecting the turf to heavy traffic like sports play.

2. Mismanage water

Especially in the summer, irrigation is a key to a good start with new sod plantings. Sod is especially prone to going dormant in hot, dry weather since it has such a limited root system. A continuous supply of moisture is needed to encourage roots to grow down into the underlying soil. Even

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FIVE WAYS TO MAKE SURE SOD FAILS *continued from page 5*

in areas that prohibit outdoor watering during droughts, exceptions usually are made for the first 30 days or so after planting sod.

If an area to be sodded will have a permanent irrigation system, it is always best to have the system finished and properly working before laying sod. Although schedules can sometimes become tangled during a construction project, make every effort to have some way of watering newly laid sod unless it is being laid while dormant. Even then, in especially dry winter weather, sod can dry out to the point of damage.

Irrigating plants is, was and always will be a balancing act. Too much water is just as damaging as too little. Remember that with freshly laid sod, the idea is to encourage the roots to grow down into the soil underneath. To do this, there must be sufficient water in the underlying soil, but the surface should not be kept saturated, or the roots will remain shallow. A deep-rooted turf is always stronger than a shallow-rooted one, so pay attention during establishment and reduce the frequency of irrigation after the first few days and let the top of the soil dry out to encourage roots to seek water deeper in the soil.

Overwatering is also the most common mistake homeowners make in managing their lawns. Be sure to educate your clients on the right way to water turfgrass (hint: it is not by setting the timer to run for 15 minutes a day whether it needs it or not) and make sure they know how to turn the irrigation off when it is raining. Smart controllers are great, but a smart operator is better.

1. Neglect the soil

Soil testing is the cheapest insurance you can buy. Few things are as frustrating as having a truckload of sod die, only to find out afterward that you were trying to establish it in a soil with a pH of 4.7. It's also worth pointing out that preplant soil testing gives you a chance to incorporate any lime or fertilizer needed throughout the entire rootzone, something that is impossible once there is turf established. There are many soil labs available, but make sure to use one that handles soil from your area regularly. Methods for extracting nutrients vary according to soil type, and a lab in another part of the country may use techniques that are not well suited to your local soil. If in doubt, ask whether a given lab routinely analyzes soil from your location.

Compaction is the number one soil problem in many parts of the country. This is certainly true for most of the Southeast. Failing to deal with compaction issues before planting turf or, even worse, creating them while planting, can cause the unlucky souls who get to manage the grass untold headaches and lots of money.

Be as gentle as possible with the area to be planted. Keep equipment off it as much as is practical and whenever it is possible, replace topsoil that is lost during construction. We all know how difficult it is to grow turf on hard, compacted soil. Why then is sod slapped down on top of it so often? ■

Soil testing can reveal potential problems before a new planting fails, like this lawn where the pH was 7.8 and the zoysiagrass sod failed to root satisfactorily.

Sometimes there is just too much shade for good turfgrass growth. There is a place for turf, but this is not it.

Liquid Fire Ant Mound Drenches *Get 'Em Gone Fast!*

Blake Layton, Extension Entomology Specialist

Broadcast applications of granular baits are by far the best way to control fire ants. Baits are low cost, easy to apply, and effective. When used preventively, baits control most budding fire ant colonies before they grow large enough to cause problems or to even be noticed. This is why preventive, broadcast applications of granular baits should be the foundation of any fire ant control program for golf courses or other commercial landscapes.

The only problem with baits is that they do not give 100% control and they are slow-acting. It can take anywhere from two weeks to two months to see the full benefit of a fire ant bait treatment. No way can you wait this long for that mound that just popped up on the No. 7 tee box or that big mound by the sidewalk in front of the club house to die out due to a bait treatment. You have to get rid of these problem mounds as quickly as possible. This is where individual mound treatments are useful—to spot treat mounds your bait treatments miss. When used properly, mound treatments provide a way to deal with these kinds of problem fire ant mounds and get 'em gone fast.

There are two different types of fire ant mound treatments, dry mound treatments and liquid mound treatments. Dry mound treatments are usually formulated as a dry dust or powder and are applied by sprinkling the specified amount of dust over the top of the mound. Because they are convenient and easy to apply, dry mound treatments are favored for use in home lawns, but they may not be the best choice for treating the kinds of situations mentioned above. The problem is that some dry mound treatments are slow-acting and some, such as acephate, have a strong, persistent odor—"There must be some sort of dead animal out there around number 12 green." Also, dry mound treatments leave that obvious white dust on the top of the mound, at least until it is watered or rained in, and this is often undesirable in heavily used public landscapes. Some of the granular insecticide products used on golf courses are also labeled for use as fire ant mound treatments. Talstar GC Granular and DeltaGard GC Granular are two examples. These granular products can be a convenient and effective way to treat problem mounds, but they have to be watered in after they are applied.

Liquid mound treatments usually work faster than dry mound treatments, do not leave any visible residue, and have little odor. Pyrethroid insecticides in particular quickly kill any ant they contact. Apply a labeled pyrethroid as a liquid mound drench and use enough liquid to thoroughly soak the mound and you can eliminate a problem fire ant mound almost immediately. Well, the mound will still be there, but the fire ants will be dead.

Liquid mound treatments take time to mix and apply. First you have to dilute the insecticide in water according to label directions and then drench the mound with this insecticide mix. But if you need to kill a fire ant mound fast, it is worth the time and effort. The key to success with liquid mound drenches is to use enough liquid to thoroughly soak the mound. A gallon is usually enough for medium-sized mounds, but it takes a couple of gallons of liquid to properly drench a large mound. Start by applying about ¼ of the drench to an eight to twelve inch band around the outside of the mound. This drenches the underground tunnels through which fire ants enter and exit the mound. Then drench the mound with the remaining liquid. Fail to use enough liquid and you may not get complete control, and surviving ants will just move over a bit and build a new mound.

If you only have two or three problem mounds you can

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LIQUID FIRE ANT MOUND DRENCHES *continued from page 7*

Some pyrethroid insecticides commonly used on golf courses that are labeled for use as fire ant mound drenches.

Active Ingredient	Brand Name	Mixing Rate
bifenthrin	Talstar S	1 tsp. per gallon
deltamethrin	DeltaGard GC	1.5 fl. oz. per gallon
lambda-cyhalothrin	Scimitar GC	0.5 fl. oz. per 2.5 gallons

use a watering can to mix and apply the drench, but if you have a lot of mounds to treat you will want to mix your drench in bulk. Choose a suitable sprayer with say a 25 or 50 gallon tank and remove the nozzle and filter from the spray wand, so that it will deliver a gentle, solid stream of liquid. Using clean water, time how long it takes to apply one gallon of liquid. Then mix your drench liquid according to label directions, drive from mound to mound, and hold the nozzle open for the time required to apply the appropriate amount per mound. If you use this method, you will have to guard against the tendency to use "make this tank stretch" and not use enough drench per mound. Course managers who use large volumes of mound treatments will probably find it worthwhile to calculate and compare the "cost per gallon of drench" for the different treatment options.

Example from a trial with products for residential use:

The table below shows results from a trial we did a few years ago to test the effectiveness and speed of control for some of the fire ant mound treatments commonly used by homeowners. We treated eight mounds per treatment and checked them at 3, 7, and 14 days after treatment to see if they were still active. For golf course managers the take home message is that liquid drenches with permethrin killed mounds quickly. The dry acephate treatment also worked well, but there is that odor problem. Although permethrin is not labeled for use on golf courses, it is a pyrethroid insecticide and you can expect similar results from other pyrethroids applied as liquid mound drench treatments. Many of the insecticides used on commercial golf courses are pyrethroids and if you read the label, most of these products give instructions for how to use them as fire ant mound drenches. Some examples are given in the table above.

Efficacy of Fire Ant Mount Treatments: Choctaw, MS, 2009

Product Brand Name	Active Ingredient	Treatment Method	Percent Control		
			3 DAT	7 DAT	14 DAT
Ortho Fire Ant Killer	acephate	Dry	100%	100%	100%
Terro Fire Ant Killer	deltamethrin	Dry	0%	13%	13%
Sevin Concentrate Bug Killer	carbaryl	Drench	89%	89%	100%
Hi Yield Garden, Pet & Livestock Insect Control	permethrin	Drench	100%	100%	100%
Ferti-lome, Bore, Bagworm, Tent Caterpillar & Leafminer Spray	spinosad	Drench	0%	63%	89%
Untreated	—	—	0%	0%	13%

Top Ten

Chris Hartwiger and Pat O'Brien • Southeast Region USGA Green Section Agronomists

Often we are asked about the USGA Research Program and the results that have been produced. How does one summarize the 400 research projects that have been funded since 1983 at a cost of $31 million? This is a tall order and a task that Chris Hartwiger and Pat O'Brien, Southeast Region USGA Green Section agronomists, are not up to. Fortunately, Dr. Mike Kenna, Director of USGA Green Section Research, has prepared the "Top Ten List of USGA Research Accomplishments" over the past 25 years. We thank you for your support of the USGA over the years and hope you find this information useful to you. Please feel free to share it with others at your facility. The US Golf Association has conducted turfgrass and environmental research for more than 25 years. Since 1983, the USGA has sponsored more than 400 research projects at a cost of $31 million.

Top Ten List of Research Accomplishments Over the Past 25 Years

#10 USGA *TERO* – 'USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Online' or TERO is an electronic publication that has more than 200 articles that summarize the USGA-sponsored research projects across the United States, and, the information is available online, free to the public. The articles have a short summary at the beginning, and reference other popular trade and scientific publications.

#9 Turfgrass Biotechnology – The USGA has been a leader supporting universities in an effort to learn more about genetic engineering. The research effort will provide valuable tools and information for university and commercial turfgrass breeders.

#8 Integrated Turfgrass Management – These studies have provided information on the ability of turfgrasses to survive drought, heat, cold or salinity, as well as help introduce biological pest control.

#7 Wildlife Links – In cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the USGA supported more than 20 projects leading to a better understanding of how birds, fish, reptiles and mammals use golf courses and the surrounding habitats. Much of this work has led to important publications and books to help golf course superintendents interested in improving the wildlife habitat on their facilities.

#6 Turfgrass Breeding – Throughout the history of the Green Section, work with universities and the US Department of Agriculture has lead to improvements in our major turf species used on golf courses. More recently, an emphasis was placed on developing turfgrass cultivars with improved adaptation to cold temperatures, or periods of extreme heat and drought. Some examples include:

- **Creeping Bentgrass:** Crenshaw, Cato, Mariner, Century, Imperial, Backspin, Providence, and Pennlinks.
- **Bermudagrass:** Numex Sahara, Sonesta, Primavera, Princess, Yukon, Riviera, Patriot, Tifton 10, Tifton 94, and Tifeagle.
- **Buffalograss:** Legacy, Prestige, 609, 315, 378, Cody, Tatanka, and Bowie.
- **Annual Bluegrass:** Dw-184
- **Zoysiagrass:** Diamond, Cavalier, Crowne and Palisades.
- **Seashore Paspalum:** Seaisle 2000, Seaisle I, Seaisle Supreme, and Seaspray.

#5 Seashore Paspalum – Maybe a past release of bermudagrass, bentgrass or buffalograss could be selected; however, the fact National Geographic in *A Special Issue on Water* penned Seashore Paspalum, "A humble turfgrass (that) has won the golf trifecta, earning raves from duffers and greenkeepers as well as environmentalists." We agree with the article that Paspalum is not perfect; though it is a positive step in dealing with poor quality water high in salts.

#4 Putting Green Construction – Putting Green Construction research that provided new information on alternative methods of construction, soil testing procedures, effects of poor irrigation water, as well as testing a wide range of organic and inorganic amendments. The research effort indicated the need for more Construction Education by the USGA, and this program has been under the direction of Jim Moore for more than a dozen years.

#3 Turfgrass Information Center and TGIF – This website, hosted at the Turfgrass Information Center located in the Michigan State University Library, now has over 170,000 records, more than a million searches conducted annually, and 41% of the records are linked to the full text item on the internet. There are more than 60 university subscribers worldwide, and ten organizations have blanket-access agreements for their members.

#2 Pesticide and Nutrient Fate – The university research investigating pesticide and nutrient fate was the first extensive self-examination of golf's impact on the environment. What has the environmental research program told us? The research shows that under *most conditions,* the *small amounts* of pesticides and nutrients that *move* from golf turf

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TOP TEN *continued from page 9*

are found at *levels below* the health and safety standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Fate and Transport research has provided extremely valuable information and has resulted in several important publications. The USGA is still working cooperatively with universities and the US Department of Agriculture on nitrogen and phosphorous runoff, as well as the amounts of these nutrients that move through subsurface drain tiles.

#1 Water Conservation - The USGA led university research on determining the evapotranspiration rates of our major golf course turfgrasses, as well as developing deficit irrigation recommendations. USGA agronomists played a key role in the education of golf course members about the need to install better control systems, new irrigation designs with better uniformity, and, adopt the use of moisture-sensor technology. The USGA also lead the adoption of Wastewater Reuse for Golf Course Irrigation. More than 20% of golf courses now use some form of recycled water for irrigation. It will be an important source of water for golf courses in the years to come. ■

Preparing For and Managing Golf Course Projects

Neil Mayberry, Golf Course Superintendent • New Orleans Country Club

The sound of a project is always a charm to the ears of a superintendent. This allows a breakage of the monotonous daily routine that we often times get used to. Projects do require extra work and more hours, but improvements to the golf course are always good for our morale.

Projects always take place either to enhance playability or aesthetics. Today most projects, because of the economy, are taking place to fix a problem rather than being proactive. Whatever the situation is, you must first declare the size of the project and what are its benefits. Once the size of the project is determined, then the next most important aspect is to determine if it is more practicable to do it in-house or to hire a contractor for the project.

Remember, that the most important factor in determining if one should perform a project in-house is to understand that the cost savings must significantly outweigh the effects that will be put on the golf course due to reallocation of resources. Sometimes we as superintendents tend to bite off more than we can chew just by simply trying to impress our employers by saving money or because our ego may be a little too big. The following is a list of questions to ask yourself if you are thinking about doing a project in-house:

#1 – During what season can I perform this project?
#2 – How many hours will this project take?
#3 – What is the cost vs contracting the project?
#4 – What will I have to sacrifice on the golf course?
#5 – What if the project fails? Will I have additional time and money to correct the mistake? Do I want to take this risk?
#6 – What is the experience level of my staff?
#7 – Do I have the equipment or will I have to rent?
#8 – What is my plan if I lose employees?
#9 – How much faster could a contractor complete the project?
#10 – What would your employer prefer?

Before determining if a project should be done in-house or not, you have to first develop a scope of work. This is simply done by laying out exactly what you want. This will tell you a rough estimate of how much time, materials and equipment will be needed for the project. This is an important piece of the puzzle needed for either presenting to your employer or to a contractor. Creating a scope of work before beginning a project will help boost your confidence and help save money. If you are accustomed to using an architect, which I highly recommend, then seek help from them while creating your scope of work. Also, remember that if a structure of some sort is being constructed, then spend the extra money and hire an engineer. The cost of an engineer is usually only about 5 percent of the overall price.

If you have determined that doing the project in-house just isn't the best mode of action, then it is time to find a worthy contractor that is capable of doing the specific job. Some contractors are more experienced and less costly than others. Costs can vary from job to job just depending on the volume of work being performed. This is why I would not get accustomed to using just one contractor for every job. Do your company some justice, just by simply getting a competitive quote from at least three different contractors. If a contractor has always done a great job for you in the past and you would like to use them again, then that is okay, but make sure you are checking their prices.

There are many great contractors out there to use. The best advice that I can give you is to call around and talk to superintendents who have just completed projects to find out whom they use and recommend. In this economy it is a customer's market and contractors are hungry and willing to perform duties outside their parameters for less money. Make absolutely certain that the company that you are thinking about hiring has the proper insurance, contractor's license, and are bondable. Insurance is always a must, but depending on the size of the project, state laws and the amount of risk the owner is willing to take, contractor's license and bonds may not be needed. It is not always a bad idea to request proof of some financial stability from the company before making any decisions.

Demand that all bids are detailed and submitted with a contract. Usually, this ends up being an AIA document (standard document format). After receiving the contract, allow an attorney to review the language and insure that everything is worded to benefit both parties and without any surprises. This may be a resource that you may have at your club and be free of charge. Be aware, because the first contract that is submitted will probably be more beneficial to the contractor. With this being said, the contract could float back and forth several times before an agreement is determined. This is why a scope of work is very important in order to let the contractor know all the stipulations before they bid. Important items to include:

- Start date
- Substantial completion date and what items will this include
- Completion of punch list items to what extent
- Liquidation damages
- Retainage for work completed

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PREPARING AND MANAGING GOLF COURSE PROJECTS *continued from page 11*

- Dates of payment
- Make sure that change orders and payments must be approved by the architect
- Who is responsible for licenses, testing and permits
- Rain days and terms
- Make certain that the contractor is responsible for subcontractors
- Warranty and Indemnification (check to see what the state laws indicate)

Once contracts are signed and commencement begins, make sure that contractors stay within the guidelines. Always remain consistent with the plans and contract. But, if necessary, changes can be made in the field but needs to be documented and approved by all parties. If a mistake is found in any plans, then a new set should be resubmitted immediately.

Managing a project during construction should not be taken lightly. Make sure that contractors know where they are allowed and paint out haul roads to minimize damage. A manager should always be present while contractors are on site. It is amazing how fast a new guy on a bulldozer can cause havoc in an area he is not supposed to be. Ask questions and make sure things are progressing the way they should. Meet with the contractor daily and ask for his plan for that day and an insight on where he wants to be by the end of the week.You should have received a progression chart at the beginning of the project; this will allow you to see how things should progress. A good rule of thumb is that it is always better to be a week ahead of schedule than right on time. Lots of things seem to hinder the schedule at the end of the project. Schedule to have the architect and the engineer make regular site visits, but make sure they give you a budget in the beginning for these visits. Encourage that contractors take advantage of good weather and if they do not choose to, then make sure you document.

Every inch of the project should be documented and pictures should be placed into a portfolio. You will be surprised how many times this will become of use, especially when something goes wrong. Also, insure that all tests (such as concrete or compaction) are being conducted promptly and demand that you receive copies.

Projects should not be made difficult, but without the proper planning and management, things can go south rather quickly. Remember that in the end, you will be left with the product, quality is what will be remembered. Do not create more work for yourself; it's just not worth the headache. Put the time into the project and enjoy the benefits. ■

Preserving Your Course Rating

Lee Rainwater • Louisiana Golf Association

Let's start with a short description of course rating. The course rating measures the difficulty of a golf course for the scratch golfer, bogey rating measures the difficulty for the bogey golfer, and slope rating is computed from the difference between the scratch and bogey ratings. Before we get into the main topic, I would like to briefly explain the correlation between course rating and handicap indexes. It is important to remember that, when referring to handicaps, par is irrelevant. When we play golf and post a score, a differential is computed based on the course and slope rating. A handicap index is then calculated from the low ten differentials out of our most recent 20 scores. What I am getting at is this: accurate course and slope ratings are very important because they, along with our scores, determine our handicap indexes. A course and slope rating that is too high will produce a handicap index that is too low, and vice versa.

A golf course is rated on its effective playing length and its playing difficulty under normal playing conditions. Consistency is the most important concept. The placement of tees and holes is the most obvious factor that can distort effective playing length. It may seem minor to move tees 10 yards back or up on each hole, but if you do so, the actual increase or decrease in the course and slope rating would be 0.8 and 2. If you take one thing from this article, it is that the placement of tee markers on any given day should be representative of the effective playing length used when the course was rated. If you move the tees up 15 yards on one hole, make sure and add that 15 yards back to the course on one or more other holes.

Doglegs and forced lay-ups also have an impact on effective playing length. Any time you add an obstacle (large bunker or water) that forces a golfer to lay-up, the effective playing length increases. Conversely, you can reduce the effective playing length of a hole by removing a grouping of trees to allow golfers to go for a par-4 green in one shot. The last major component of effective playing length is roll. Softening or hardening fairways by using more or less water affects the amount of roll a player will get, thus increasing or decreasing the effective playing length of a golf course. As an example, if a course changes its water output so that the fairways change from firm to average, the course rating will go up by 0.5 and the slope rating by 1.

While not as strongly weighted as effective playing length, obstacle values are also used to determine a course and slope rating. If these obstacles are altered, your ratings may be slightly higher or lower than issued by your state golf association. Fairway widths on all par 4's and par 5's are recorded during a course rating. Thus, reducing your fairway width from 35 to 25 yards wide on all two and three shot holes will inflate your course and slope ratings. Raising or lowering mower blades to adjust your rough height has an impact on Recoverability and Rough, and can adjust the course/slope rating up to 0.7/5. OB and Extreme Rough can be misrepresented by changing the distance from out-of-bounds stakes to the center of your fairways. Strategically placed bunkers around landing zones or closely bordering greens will impact the Bunker obstacle values. The number of bunkers, their depth, and whether they must be carried to reach a target are all taken into consideration. Green Target, which measures the difficulty of hitting the green with the approach shot, could be reduced by watering your greens more than usual, thus changing them from "average firmness" to "unusually soft." Lastly, contour and speed of greens have an impact on Green Surface; adjusting the Stimpmeter reading can cause the course/slope rating to fluctuate by 0.2/1.

As indicated before, maintaining the difficulty of your course from when it was last rated is instrumental in maintaining the integrity of course rating and handicapping. Making minor changes to your golf course and maintenance procedures can result in major inaccuracies to your course and slope ratings.

The Louisiana Golf Association is licensed by the USGA to issue course and slope ratings to golf courses in Louisiana. The USGA has set out guidelines stating that golf courses should be rated at least every ten years, and new courses every three years for the first ten years of existence. In addition, a course must also be re-rated if significant changes have been made to the course.

Lee Rainwater can be contacted at (337) 265-3938 or lrainwater@lgagolf.org. ■

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Bulldog Turf Field Day and Turf Equipment Expo

AUGUST 23, 2011

Rodney Foil Plant Science Research Center

Highway 182 East • Starkville, Mississippi

The Mississippi State University Bulldog Turf Field Day and Turf Equipment Expo provides for display and discussion of the latest in turf equipment, products and turf management research.

Educational Program Schedule

7:00–9:00 am	Vendor arrival and set-up
8:00–8:45 am	Registration
8:45–9:00 am	Welcome
9:00–10:30 am	Field Plot Tours
10:30 am	Break
10:30–12:00 noon	Turf Equipment Expo
12:00–12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30–1:30 pm	Educational Workshop Concurrent Sessions*

***CHOOSE YOUR WORKSHOP**

- Weed Identification and Herbicide Symptomology
- Sprayer Calibration
- Turfgrass Disease Identification

Mail registration form below with payment to:
Wayne Philley
Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
Box 9555
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Name_____

Business_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Preferred Phone Number_____ Email Address_____

Pre-Registration Fee: $20.00 (includes lunch and T-shirt) [Note: T-shirt guaranteed with pre-registration only]

Registration Fee at Door: $25.00 T-shirt size: ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐ X-Large ☐ XX-Large ☐ XXX-Large

Deadline to Pre-Register: AUGUST 9, 2011

Method of Payment: ☐ Check (Make check payable to Mississippi State University)
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card Number_____ Expiration Date_____/_____

Signature_____

YARDDAWG CLASSIC

August 22, 2011
Old Waverly Golf Club
West Point, MS

ENTRY FORM

The Mississippi Turfgrass Association invites you to the ninth annual "YARD DAWG CLASSIC" on August 22, 2011. The shotgun start will tee off promptly at 10:00 a.m. A boxed lunch will be provided at the turn.

The field is limited to 80 players. Eighty-one and higher will be placed on a waiting list as received and accepted in that order for any open slots.

Prizes and amenities will be similar to past Classics, while creating a fund for research and development and the MTA Scholarship Fund. Complete the information below and return with your entry fee.

- **ENTRY FEE: $150** (Entries not accepted without fee, nor are they transferrable.)
- Student Entry Fee: $80

Methods of payment: ***Please note—there is a $3.00 processing fee if paying by credit card.***

- American Express, Visa or MasterCard
  (If paying by credit card, signed entry must be faxed to 662-325-2705 or mailed to Box 9555, Mississippi State, MS 39762.)

Credit Card	**Expiration Date**
Credit Card Number	
Signature	

- Check (make payable to **MTA/YARDDAWG CLASSIC)**
- **Return To: MTA, Box 9555, Mississippi State, MS 39762**

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: AUGUST 12, 2011

LAST NAME	
FIRST NAME	
CLUB/FIRM	
BOX/STREET	
CITY	
STATE	**ZIP CODE**
PHONE	
SHIRT (specify men's size)	
HANDICAP OR AVERAGE 18-HOLE SCORE	

News from GCSAA...
Help Save the H-2B Visa Program

Contact your Members of Congress Today!

The H-2B visa program has been under attack by the U.S. Department of Labor for the past six months. This program is used by many golf facilities to secure temporary, seasonal workers when American workers are unwilling or unavailable to do this work.

Many golf facilities will be unable to fill their staffing needs during their peak season without this program. Because during the peak season golf facilities generate the revenue needed to keep the facility running year round, it is important to golf facilities that they have access to H-2B visa workers. The year round American workers jobs depend on the temporary H-2B workers.

This past February, DOL issued new wage regulations for all H-2B employers. Under DOL's own calculations, these new wage rules will increase the hourly rate of H-2B workers by an average of $4.38/hour. Beginning January 1, 2012, golf facilities will likely have to pay far more for their H-2B workforce even though the market and economic realities may not warrant it.

In addition to this new wage requirement, DOL has also proposed new rules that will fundamentally change the way the H-2B program works. These new rules will require golf facilities to:

- advertise their seasonal jobs to more people, in more places and for a longer period of time
- hire American workers who apply for seasonal jobs up to three days prior to the arrival of their new H-2B workers
- pay the transportation and housing costs for American workers who are hired and do not live close to the golf course

The rules would reinstitute the time consuming labor certification application process and remove the current attestation process because of DOL's belief in "rampant abuse" by H-2B employers. These new regulations expand the definition of "full-time employee" from 30 hours to 35 and require golf courses to provide a guaranteed number of work hours and provide guaranteed pay regardless of the time actually worked by an H-2B worker during a 4 week period.

The proposed rules will place a tremendous burden on golf courses that utilize the H-2B visa program. The increased costs alone will make the program unaffordable for many golf facilities which will jeopardize their ability to generate the necessary revenue during the peak season.

GCSAA is actively working with the H-2B Workforce Coalition to change these rules, but DOL is not likely to budge. GCSAA has submitted comments on these rule changes and has helped members do the same. The association now needs to focus its time on a legislative response from leaders on Capitol Hill. With luck, we will convince them that these new regulations must be stopped. What will help us accomplish this goal the most is for those leaders to hear from you – their constituents.

If you currently use H-2B workers, if you have used H-2B workers in the past, or if you see that when the economic climate greatly improves you might need to employee H-2B workers, please have your elected officials tell the DOL to stop damaging the H-2B visa program. Enter your Zip Code in the Take Action Now box to take action on this important golf facilty issue! A template letter is available for your use.

Please do not hesitate to contact Chava McKeel, senior manager of information and public policy, at (800) 472-7878, ext. 3619 if you have any questions. ■

Trends in Compensation

Highlights from the 2011 Compensation and Benefits Report

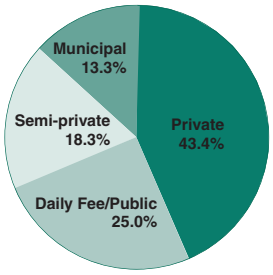
Every other year, GCSAA conducts a comprehensive study of the compensation, benefits and operations of its superintendent members. This helps fulfill a key expectation of an association, to maintain data about the profession being served. The report helps GCSAA learn demographic details about the profession. These can be shared with various constituencies, used to advocate on behalf of the profession and reveal trends in salaries across the country. They also identify the types of benefits superintendents are receiving or lacking.

A total of 4,554 superintendents participated in the 2011 Compensation and Benefits Survey, a response rate of 50.8%. The data presented in this report is based on trends observed through these surveys, which are conducted by third-party survey companies.

Facility Types

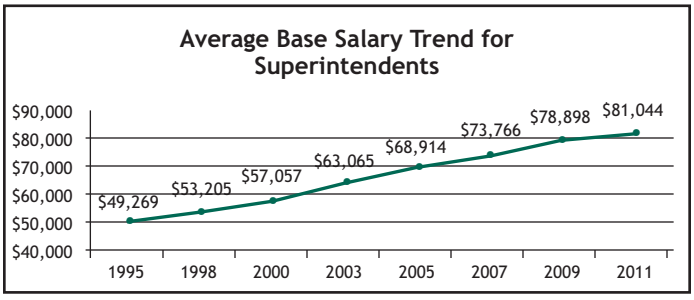
Superintendents who completed the survey were employed in a wide variety of situations – from working at nine-hole municipal courses with annual maintenance budgets of $100,000, to managing 45-hole private resorts with annual budgets of more than $2 million. More than 72% of all superintendents responding to the 2011 survey worked at 18-hole facilities, with the following breakdown of facility types:

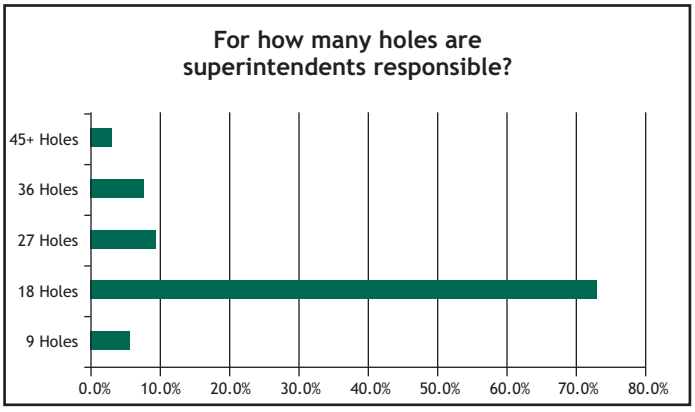
- Private facilities _ 43.4%
- Daily-fee courses – 25%
- Semi-private facilities – 18.3%
- Municipal facilities – 13.3%



Superintendent Salaries

In 2011, the average base salary for golf course superintendents rose to $81,044, a 2.7% increase over the base salary reported in 2009. This increase represents a 64.5% gain since 1995, or an increase of $31,775 in 16 years. In 2011, half of all superintendents earned $71,275 or more annually, 25% of all superintendents earned more than $95,000, and the top 10 percent earned $128,000 or more annually.





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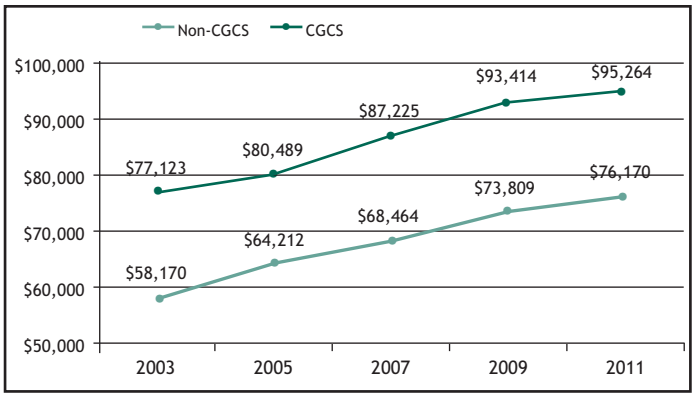
TRENDS IN COMPENSATION *continued from page 18*

Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) Salaries

In 2011, the average base salary for certified golf course superintendents rose to $95,264, a 1.98% increase over the base salary reported in 2009. This increase represents a 23.5% gain since 2003, or an increase of $18,141 in eight years.



Non-CGCS averages include Class A (excluding CGCS) and Class SM salaries.

Fringe Benefits

Employers offer a variety of fringe benefits to golf course superintendents:

Benefits Offered by Employers

GCSAA membership	96%
Chapter dues	94%
Medical insurance	86%
Travel to the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show	62%
Registration to the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show	68%
Seminar/tuition reimbursement	82%

More from the Report

The 2011 GCSAA Compensation and Benefits Report also contains base salary data searchable by:

- GCSAA class (A, SM, CGCS)
- State
- Metro area
- Chapter
- Facility demographics
- Facility type
- Annual maintenance budget

Additional data in the report includes:

- Additional fringe benefit information
- Assistant superintendent and equipment manager average base salaries
- Fringe benefits for assistant superintendents
- Maintenance crew position average wages

GCSAA members who did not participate in the survey may purchase online access to the results for $125, or online access and a printed version for $150. Non-members may purchase a printed copy for $525. To order, contact GCSAA at 800-472-7878.

SUPERINTENDENT PROFILES

Superintendent

The 2011 Compensation and Benefits Report states that member superintendents, on average:

- Are 45 years old
- Have spent 14.7 years as a superintendent
- Have held their current position for an average of 9.5 years
- Manage a crew of 21
- Feel secure in their positions – 60% rated their job security as high, indicating they think they will be in their current position as long as they perform well and choose to remain in it
- Plan to retire by age 64.4
- Seasonally, work an average of 55 hours in the spring, 60 hours in the summer, 51 hours in the fall, and 41 hours in the winter

Certified golf course superintendent (CGCS)

The 2011 Compensation and Benefits Report states that certified golf course superintendents, on average:

- Are 49 years old
- Have spent 20.2 years as a superintendent
- Have held their current position for an average of 12.1 years
- Manage a crew of 27
- Feel secure in their positions – 60% rated their job security as high, indicating they think they will be in their current position as long as they perform well and choose to remain in it
- Plan to retire by age 65
- Seasonally, work an average of 47 hours in the spring, 51 hours in the summer, 45 hours in the fall, and 38 hours in the winter ■

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