

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



As a new year begins, it is a good time to reflect back on what has been accomplished this past year and to consider what still needs to be done. Our industry is moving at a rapid clip. The growth in all areas of the institutional turf market has been astounding . . . and it doesn't look like the end is yet in sight. What a great opportunity we all have to make our contribution to further growth.

As I look around, I see even more golf courses either under construction or on the planning boards. It seems that the public cannot get its fill of golf. Experts say we need at least 4,000

more golf courses in this country by the year 2000 to keep up with demand. That means our colleges and universities will need to train roughly 1,000 superintendents *each year* for the next 11 years!

Another interesting fact is that the Japanese are buying golf courses in the United States at a rate that would shock the average golfer.

I believe we are going to see more and more golf courses in the United States owned by foreign interests. To be sure, a working golf club needs the skills of a professional superintendent. Furthermore, American golf course architects and superintendents have established the highest standards for golf courses in the world.

Another interesting fact is that developers in the Southwest, Arizona in particular, are building quite a few resorts. Florida is also on a very fast track in building new resorts and golf courses.

Developers have discovered the enormous value of a golf course to a resort. Even in relatively depressed areas, developers have found that condominiums and homes sell more quickly when they surround a golf course. The attraction of the golf and country club environment to our aging population is enormous.

It doesn't take a genius to realize that golf has a glowing, growing future.

I seem to get the feeling that more and more universities and colleges are paying closer attention to their campus grounds. As these schools compete for students, the appearance of the campus and the quality of recreational facilities play a role in helping students decide which university to attend, assuming all other things are equal.

Along the same line, athletic directors hold one of the most important public relations tools of colleges or universities in their hands—a successful sports program. At the center of such programs are top-notch stadiums. Stadiums are more than just part of the physical plant, they are the magnet for top student athletes and require special attention.

In the professional sports arena there have been quite a few moves this past year. I believe this is a sign of healthy and vibrant growth. Stadium managers are realizing that skilled turf managers can provide natural fields of Super Bowl quality with the right equipment and supplies.

Finally, parks and high schools are beginning to cooperate with each other in providing safer, better quality sports facilities. By combining resources and acquiring the expertise of a trained turf manager, both parks and schools can overcome some of their budget and personnel limitations. They also protect themselves against law suits resulting from injuries.

Overall, the future is bright and opportunity abounds. The personal contributions of thousands of recreation- and safety-minded individuals are helping the golf and sports turf industries approach their potential. With your contribution in 1989, golf and sports turf will continue to progress at an unprecedented rate.

Bruce Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

JANUARY

23-25 Midwest Regional Turf Conference, Adams Mark Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Jo Horn, Dept. of Agronomy, Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN 47907, (317) 494-4803.

FEBRUARY

1-2 Capital Region Turf and Ornamental School, Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. Contact: James Welshans, Dauphin County Extension Service, 1451 Peters Mt. Rd., Dauphin, PA 17018, (717) 921-8803.

21-23 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Radisson Hotel, Monroeville, PA. Contact Dr. Tom Watschke, Department of Agronomy, 405 Ag. Admin. Bldg., University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1613.

28 South Carolina Annual Grounds Maintenance Conference, Sheraton Columbia Northwest, Columbia, SC. Contact: Dr. Bob Mazur, Clemson University, Dept. of Horticulture, Clemson, SC 29631, (803) 656-3403.

MARCH

11-15 Canadian Turfgrass Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia. Contact: Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, 2000 Weston Rd., Suite 203, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9N 1X3, (416) 249-7304.

28 Turfgrass Equipment & Supplies Field Day, College of the Desert, Palm Desert, CA. Contact: Melvin Robey, College of the Desert, 43-500 Monterey Ave., Palm Desert, CA 92260, (619) 346-8041, Ext. 286.