

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

PACK YOUR BAG AND SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE



If you haven't made up your mind to attend at least one turf conference this winter, take a moment of your time and read this column. Weigh these comments against any excuses you may have for not going. I think you'll conclude that few things in the turf industry are as important as conferences and trade shows.

I can't say enough good things about national, state and local turf conferences. During the past 14 years of covering the turf and landscape market, I have written more than 300 articles about successful turfgrass managers. In every story, you will find that the individual's success was linked in some way to participation in state or national turf shows. That is pretty remarkable when you think about it.

Those who got involved in shows early in their careers avoided many of the pitfalls that can occur in the turf profession. Their curiosity and determination to find the answers they needed to everyday problems or challenges led them to conferences. That same drive enabled them to convince their superiors of the value of conferences, who in turn gave them time off and/or helped with travel expenses. The ideas they brought back from shows more than made up for the cost.

Turf conferences rank near the top when you consider the amount of value received for the time invested. The information exchanged in two or three days would take weeks to acquire any other way. University turf specialists deliver volumes of important information during conference seminars each year. Fellow turf managers relate their experiences with new problems and techniques to solve them. Manufacturers and distributors demonstrate their latest products and can also relate your needs to those of their other customers.

Best of all, you have the opportunity to pose your questions to a wide assortment of experts on the spot. You get answers that fit your special needs, ones that can be put to use as soon as you return. Some of the most valuable time you can spend at shows is in the hallway after educational sessions talking with the instructor or other turf managers.

Over the years I've been to 14 different state turf shows and all the national conferences. In each case, I've met turf managers who know how to get the most out of conferences. In a few short years, these same people are rewarded with greater responsibility and more power to make decisions. There obviously is a connection.

Whether you are just starting out, a student, or a turf manager in a new part of the country, you owe it to yourself to attend one or more conferences this winter. And, if you have reaped the rewards from previous shows, share your success with others by going back year after year. Pack your bag and share your knowledge.

Stuart F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

4-7

New Jersey Turfgrass Expo '89.

Resorts International Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: Dr. Henry Indyk, Crop Science Dept., P.O. Box 231, Cook College, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, (201) 932-9453.

4-7

Ohio Turfgrass Conference & Show,

The Ohio Center, Columbus, OH. Contact: Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43201, (614) 292-2601.

10-13

41st Annual Canadian Turfgrass Conference

and Show, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association, 2000 Weston Road, Suite 203, Weston, Ontario, Canada, M9N 1X3, (416) 249-7304.

11-13

Georgia Turfgrass Conference and Trade

Show, Hyatt Atlanta Airport, College Park, GA. Contact: East Georgia Extension Center, (912) 681-5189.

JANUARY

8-10

Maryland Turfgrass '90 Conference and Trade

Show, Baltimore Festival Hall, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Dr. Tom Turner, University of Maryland, (301) 454-3716.

19-21

Sports Turf Managers Association Conference

and Show, Wyndham Hotel Greenspoint, Houston, TX. Contact: STMA, P.O. Box 94857, Las Vegas, NV 89193, (702) 735-0000.

22-24

Midwest Regional Turf Conference, Adams

Mark Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Contact Jeff Lefton, Purdue University, Lilly Hall, W. Lafayette, IN 47907-7899, (317) 494-4772.