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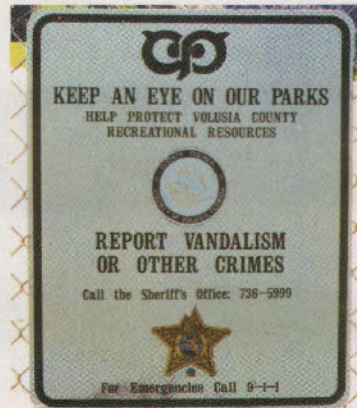
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FACILITY & OPERATIONS

Public awareness attack!

By Floyd Perry



At many of the parks, athletic facilities and Little League complexes I have visited, problems with basic, general tasks that go ignored by "the average Joe" maintenance worker, come into sight. It may be an empty aluminum can or potato chip bag not discarded in the nearest waste container or a pet on the loose and making a mess inside the playing field fence, without the owner's concern or a mention from an attendant.

Some parks and communities have uniformed personnel on property daily to enforce city ordinances and create a positive environment for all age groups and visitors. What about the public facilities that aren't so fortunate? How can they handle daytime problems and create a viable and safe play area without an extensive support staff?

Some administrators have taken concerns to the streets in the form of properly placed signage in an attempt to generate a positive image and solve some public nuisance concerns. The examples shown here of quality signage have been seen at parks and competitive facilities across the country. The key to non-verbal communication is to keep the message to the point, short and direct, and position it where everyone can view it while entering or moving about the property. Some park administrators claim that signage isn't effective, that kids and visitors will ultimately do what they want, but let's try to change that thought in the 21st century.

Good luck with your public awareness attack. If we, as progressive groundskeepers, could eliminate one hour every day of trash pick-up, more time could be devoted to improving turf and game field playing surfaces.

Floyd Perry, Jr., is president of Grounds Maintenance Services in Orlando. He received the STMA's Dick Ericson Award in January, which honors a sports turf manager who positively impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership. He can be reached at 407-903-1220. ■