

# From the Sidelines



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## Education pays off

**O**n page 22 of this issue is an article entitled “Value of hands-on education” written by Troy McQuillen, an assistant professor in the Golf Course Athletic Turfgrass Management program at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA. In it he describes how Kirkwood intertwines course work with practical in-the-field experience to produce graduates “who are ready to enter the workforce” as Professor McQuillen puts it.

McQuillen says that while education comes in many different forms, there is an increasing value being discovered through use of hands-on; his description of Kirkwood’s program is good reading for educators and students alike.

Though we’ve heard the phrase “value of education” enough times to have it go in one ear and out the other, like “eat your vegetables,” you can’t get around the fact that educating yourself most often leads to better, more interesting jobs and potential for increased salary.

I have a relative through marriage who would like to teach at a regional technical college near his home. This guy is bright; he’s a commercial pilot, runs another business from his home, and managed a successful garage/machine shop for many years. He’s more than qualified to pass along his knowledge and experience to another generation—but he never earned a degree beyond high school. And even though the college would like to hire a guy with his skills, by law they can’t because he doesn’t have the needed credential.

Here’s another illustration of how working on those credit hours might pay: During the STMA Conference awards night last January, Dr. Tony Koski of Colorado State received the Dr. William Daniel Founders Award, which represents excellence in turf education and research. While accepting his award, Dr. Koski pointed to numerous “Rams” in the audience whom he had as students, including STMA Past President Abby McNeal, CSFM, and STMA President-Elect Troy Smith, CSFM. Think there’s a link between great teacher, motivated student and successful careers? You betcha.

And access to classes has never been easier, with the caveat of course that furthering your education costs money. I won’t bore you with numbers but suffice to say, spending some cash for a degree, whether it’s a 1-year, 2-year, 4-year whatever, truly is an investment in your future that can pay off later.

## GILLEN IS NEW STA PRESIDENT

Paul Gillen, president of AerWay, recently was elected President of the Sports Turf Association. Paul is a long-time supporter of this magazine, the STMA, and related events and charities.

“This is an exciting time for the STA as we look to grow into the future. We are fortunate to have very knowledgeable and dedicated people serving on the STA board,” Paul said. “I look forward to working with them and learning from them as we work hard to fulfill the needs and mandates of our membership.”

# SportsTurf

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