

2013 Student Challenge winners spend wisely



► **THE NEW TEACHING FACILITY** at Horry Georgetown Technical College

HORRY GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The Golf and Sports Management program at Horry Georgetown Technical College has had an exciting year. To start, we had a group of students dedicate themselves to winning the student turf bowl held annually in Myrtle Beach. Following that success, it was the students' decision to pursue competing at the national STMA convention held in Daytona Beach. Our students had never competed in the STMA student challenge.

Our faculty, including Corey Russell who teaches at HGTC along with his primary responsibilities as Grounds Manager for the Myrtle Beach Pelicans, worked hard to expand our turf program in the sports turf arena. HGTC has long been a well-known golf course management program, so going to Daytona Beach became a litmus test for how far we have come as a sports turf program. Our team came out of the student challenge test cautiously optimistic. When the scores were posted and HGTC finished first it felt as if we had won an NCAA title! We will again compete at the local turf competitions in the hope we can return to the STMA convention in San Antonio. The entire HGTC team, faculty included, was amazed at the convention setup, professionalism, and trade show.

On the heels on returning to Conway, SC our students started making the transition to our brand new educational facility. The new classrooms and labs, including collaborative learning areas, are part of a campus-wide modernization program. The transition to the new facility has challenged and invigorated students and faculty alike.

Now that we have settled in, we looked at how we could best use the generous prize money to aid and inspire our students. We decided to purchase two different types of field painting machines. While the science of turfgrass is something we feel we teach well, the art of sports turf management is an evolving target. Part of that art is to prepare sports fields for these important game day functions that garner so much attention. By purchasing a "high end machine" as well as a model found in more "modest" facilities, we felt that no matter where our graduates go...they will be prepared.

At HGTC we have always tried to educate in the classroom and in the field. Being surrounded by golf courses and sports field complexes allows the students to put their classroom training to work in a job application of their choosing. A strength of our program has always been the excellent climate for year round turf experience. Most of our students work in the turfgrass industry while in school, allowing

them to learn in the classroom and visualize that knowledge at work. By allowing the students to operate these machines we believe the students will be better suited to assisting their employers while in school and upon graduation. People ask for our graduates every year because they say HGTC students are "shovel ready," meaning that HGTC grads show up and get to work without needing their hands held. The ability to operate these painting machines without "game day pressure" should only add to the students' confidence levels.

As HGTC graduates enter the workplace in Sports Turf, Parks and Recreation, and Ground Management, industry experience will be crucial to their success. The hands-on education that the STMA Student Challenge afforded our students will serve them well. By this I don't just mean the prize money. The opportunity for the students to network with industry professionals and observe specialized equipment at the trade show heightened the desire and dedication of each student that came with our team. All of us at Horry Georgetown Technical College are grateful to the STMA for striving to grow the next generation.-Ashley G. Wilkinson, professor, Golf and Sports Turf Management.



» CONFERENCE PROGRAM

» OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

» EXHIBITOR LIST

» STUDENT CHALLENGE

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

As the winning 4-year school at the 2013 STMA Student Challenge, the University of Maryland used the \$4,000 award from SAFE to enhance student instruction for the lab component of PLSC 402 (Sports Turf Management).

Currently the University of Maryland offers a two-year academic certificate and a baccalaureate program in Turfgrass Management. The two-year program added a Sports Turf Management option in 2009. The major emphasis of the award was to develop two additional laboratory activities that centered on assessing sports field quality and safety. Equipment such as the Field Scout TDR moisture meter, infrared ther-

The commitment of SAFE to promote safe, playable, and sustainable athletic fields by awarding such grants has enhanced our sports turf educational program...

▼ **STUDENTS GATHERING VARIOUS PIECES OF MEASURING EQUIPMENT** such as the Field Scout moisture meters to determine soil moisture content of the practice football field.



mometers, soil temperature probes, sand sieves, a Kestrel pocket weather station, and soil textural analysis equipment such as hydrometers and bouyoucos cylinders were purchased from the funds provided by SAFE. Also other equipment was purchased using the leverage of the SAFE award to acquire a Clegg Impact Soil

Tester, soil infiltration equipment, and soil probes.

The commitment of SAFE to promote safe, playable, and sustainable athletic fields by awarding such grants has enhanced our sports turf educational program at the University of Maryland and we are extremely thankful for their support. ■

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