

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



SPORTS TURF MANAGERS SPEND MORE THAN ONE BILLION DOLLARS

Even though sports turf managers' budgets are generally a fraction of golf course superintendents', they outnumber superintendents almost three to one. Altogether, they spend about as much each year on products and services as superintendents. Solid data on the size of the sports turf universe now enables us to project expenditures for the entire industry.

The sports turf industry is made up of four major parts, all of which manage high-use, recreational turf facilities. They include parks, public and private high schools, colleges and universities, and private or municipal sports complexes. Combined they total 42,000 facilities with turf management expenditures of \$1.2 billion.

They break down as follows:

Sports Complexes — 800 facilities spending \$50 million.

Includes major and minor league baseball, professional football, amateur sports facilities, polo, horse racing, etc.

Parks — 13,000 districts spending \$450 million.

Municipally owned and operated recreational facilities.

High Schools — 20,000 schools spending \$350 million.

19,000 public and 1,000 private high schools.

Colleges and Universities — 9,700 campuses spending \$350 million.

No one can dispute that considerably more people use sports turf facilities than golf courses. Ask any park superintendent how many games are played on his fields during an average weekend. You won't need to be convinced further. The concentration of play on our existing sports facilities is increasing while construction of new facilities has to exceed the 300-400 new golf courses built each year. If sports turf has the same rate of growth as golf (two percent), then more than 800 new parks, schools, colleges, stadiums, horse tracks, softball arenas, etc. must be built each year.

My purpose is not to bag on golf. It is to demand recognition for the importance of sports turf facilities in this country. The quality of golf courses in this country is unmatched because we focus so much attention on them. We need to focus equal attention on the quality of our parks, schools and other sports complexes. I can give you many reasons why sports turf facilities should be better than golf courses; our children play on them, the number of users is greater, they do more for fitness and health, and they are in our own neighborhoods. Now that the dollar value of sports turf management has been established, can we now concentrate on the personal importance of our fields, diamonds, pitches, courts and tracks?

Bruce F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

6-9 International Irrigation Exposition. Atlanta, GA. Contact: Irrigation Association, (703) 573-3551.

7-9 Kentucky Turfgrass Conference. Louisville, KY. Contact Dr. Dwight G. Barkley, (606) 622-2228.

8-11 Forty-Ninth Annual Oklahoma Turf Conference. Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Tonya Murray, (918) 251-4868.

8-11 New York Turf & Grounds Exposition. Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: (518) 783-1229.

13-17 Green Industry Expo (GIE). St. Louis, MO. Contact for GIE, Eleanor Ellison, (404) 973-2019.

13-19 Ninth Annual Pacific Southwest Maintenance Management School. UCLA Conference Center, Lake Arrowhead, CA. Fee is \$610 and includes instruction, course materials, reference notebook, all meals and housing for the full five-day program. For information, call (800) 796-NRPA.

28-30 North Central Turf Expo. St. Charles, IL. Contact: (312) 616-0800.

DECEMBER

30-1 Rocky Mountain Turf Conference. Colorado Convention Center, Denver, CO. Contact: (303) 688-3440.

5-7 Texas Turfgrass Association Conference and Show. Fort Worth, TX. Contact Shirley Duble, (409) 693-1656.

5-7 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Show. Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH. Contact (614) 261-6750.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, **sportsTURF** magazine, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.