



Our “Extreme” Fall Meeting & Trade Show!

Extreme is defined as “reaching a high or the highest degree.” Nailed it.

Held in November this year (change is good), the balance of subject matter, problem-solving opportunities, and core discussions at the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show addresses so many essential aspects of a turf professional, it will be beneficial to both superintendents and key staff. And our allied members. And your golf professional, who will not only earn credit from their association, but, will receive member registration rates. New to the profession? We’ve got you covered. A seasoned turf head? We’ve got you covered.

Review the agenda and see for yourself this is an exceptional opportunity for education, engagement and entertainment. Plan to attend all two and a half days, which will include twelve hours of education, a trade show to connect with the experts, and new this

Left to right: Karl Danneberger, Ph.D.; Kee Dunning, M.S., MEd, LCPC, LMFT; Patrick Finlen, CGCS; James Graham Prusa; Chas Schmid, Ph.D.; Stacy Stellflug, Ph.D., APRN, FNP-BC; and Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

year, enjoy the “19th Hole of the Fall Meeting,” a social event Wednesday end of day, sponsored by our “hole sponsors.”

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Chapter Room Block and the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room Phoenix, Arizona

Chapter preparations have been made for the 2024 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show in Phoenix, Arizona. We are ready for this exciting new location!

Let’s first discuss our chapter room block, which is now open. It will only be available for a few months — so it is important to act soon using the link sent via email blasts. We have 50 rooms reserved on the peak nights in our block for the Idaho GCSA, Inland Empire GCSA and Peaks & Prairies GCSA attendees. While our turnout will far exceed that, we limit our block request because not everyone is prepared to reserve early. For those who are ready, we have a great location about a 10-minute walk from the convention center, at the Hyatt Place Phoenix Downtown. The Hyatt Place is close to numerous restaurants and activities. As the hotel boasts, you are near “celebrated museums, major shopping, buzzed-about

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PPGCSA Upcoming Events:

PPGCSA Wyo. Scholarship/Education Golf Event - September 19, 2023

Fall Meeting & Trade Show - November 7-9, 2023, Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings, Mont.

Private Webcast, PPGCSA - January 2024 (TBA)

Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room - Phoenix, Ariz., January 31, 2024

PPGCSA “Almost” Spring Meeting - March 4-5, 2024, DoubleTree by Hilton (downtown), Billings, Mont.

“Peaks & Prairies GCSA is dedicated to furthering the education of our members for the betterment of golf and its environment.”

**August 2023
Volume 47
Number 3**



*“Peaks & Prairies Golf Course
Superintendents Association is
dedicated to furthering the education
of our members for the betterment of
golf and its environment.”*

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PEAKS & PRAIRIES GCSA OFFICE

Lori Russell, Executive Director
P.O. Box 5003, Missoula, MT 59806 ppgcsa.org
Phone: 406/273-0791 ppgcsa@ppgcsa.org

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President's Message

The Experience has Been Awesome

Ryan Blechta
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club

It has been a crazy summer in southwest Montana with record amounts of precipitation and cooler than average temperatures. I do hope we have a late fall this year before winter sets in.

It has been a very busy summer for me as we are in the middle of building a new par 3 golf course. We started this project last year and hope to finish this fall, allowing us to open for play next summer. With an already short growing season in Big Sky, this year hasn't been much help. We had a late start this year with all the precipitation we received in June.

I had the privilege to work alongside Tom Weiskopf on this project before he passed away last year from pancreatic cancer. Tom spent a lot of time on this project and was able to approve all the holes and greens before he passed. I spent numerous hours and days with him on this project and was honored to be a part of the project through to the end. Because the design of this 10-hole par 3 has similar design concepts from some of Tom's favorite par 3 holes around the world, we are naming it "Tom's Ten." We have holes like Pebble's #7, Riviera's #6, Augusta's #16 with a lake, and others.

The experience building a new golf course has been awesome. I have learned that priorities, punch lists, organization and handling stress are essential to keeping a project like this on track and within budget while still staying sane. I am a list person; I like to make lists of things that need to get done or people I need to connect with. Organization is another strength of mine and has helped me through this experience and life in general. Being organized seems to keep productivity up and also helps with keeping my budget in check. Last, is handling stress, and making sure you keep it as minimal as possible. Everyone has stress in their job or at home and being able to



find a way to relieve or handle stress is key in being successful. My stress reliever is being active, either by playing hockey in the winter months or getting out and playing golf in the summer months. For me, being active helps clear my mind and keeps my stress in check. With the summer winding down, I feel my stress levels also wind down. For us, once we blow out our irrigation and spray that last tank of snow mold protection, we tend to take a sigh of relief. For some, the shoulder season is our time to do something for ourselves and our freedom from stress and the golf course. I hope everyone can relax a little this fall and enjoy themselves before winter sets in. We all deserve a little relaxation!!

I wanted to take some time in my president's article to thank Lori Russell and all she does for our organization. My time on the board has really showed me how everything functions and how much time and dedication Lori puts in day in and day out. Without her, this organization wouldn't be as successful as it is today. Please, when you see Lori this fall thank her for all she does for us.

I hope to see everyone in Billings at our fall meeting and trade show November 7-9, 2023.

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Invest in Your Training

Cody Schulke

Yellowstone Country Club, Billings, Mont.

When I started working at Yellowstone Country Club in 2005, I was given an orientation packet. Inside the packet was basic information such as a work schedule, how to report an injury, when pay period ends, golfing privileges, etc. If you currently do not offer that type of information at your course, I would highly encourage you to spend some time in the offseason to look into it. The more information you can pass on to your employees about your operation the more successful they will be at your facility.

Our training extends beyond the basic work information. At YCC before a new employee is allowed to operate equipment they must read the specific training sheet, watch a video, observe a demonstration from the trainer, begin operating with trainer supervision, and follow up with the equipment technician on how to thoroughly clean the equipment. I realize this process does require some time when we are all short-handed and trying to get employees out on the course to get ahead of golfers. However, this will save you and the employee time and headaches if you can educate them how to do the job correctly

and answer any questions they may have at the time.

Our safety training is no different. A list of safety topics pertaining to the golf course and areas of concern was created in the offseason. These topics range from first aid, hearing and eye protection, how to properly lift heavy objects, what to do in the case of lightning, etc. Some of the topics are basic information but it is important to keep everyone informed about how you want them to perform at your facility. During the training session we encourage participation from the crew to give examples, for instance how to properly lift a heavy object. The sessions always spark up good conversation amongst the crew. As

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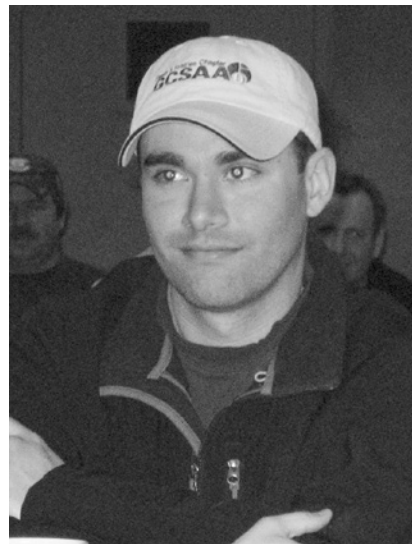
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a reward for being engaged, we offer gift cards to local places in Billings such as movie tickets, ice cream, restaurants, sporting goods, etc. We have found that 15 minutes on a Monday morning while the entire crew is there works best. We can cover multiple topics in one session.

In the offseason my assistants, Fred Skogen and Lee Nierstheimer, review and make revisions necessary to the training and safety program. It seems each year more details need to be added to the topics. Although it may sound funny, the most recent revision that was incorporated is showing the difference between clockwise and counterclockwise. A big change this year was going digital with all our training sheets, which allows the employees to scan a QR code that is posted on the employee bulletin board. This has reduced paper and made it easy for employees to refer to the training material at any time.

I hope you are all having a great season and just remember your crew will only be as good as your training. If you are interested in seeing the safety and training sheets we have developed over the years please give me a call or send me an email at c.schulke@yellowstonecc.com, (509) 432-3744.



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Effective Goose Management

Jeffrey Korff, Superintendent
Polson Bay Golf Course, Polson, Mont.

Bordering Flathead Lake, Polson Bay Golf Course is in the southern half of the Flathead Valley, which is an annual nesting region for many waterfowl and other majestic birds. Sandhill cranes, coots, mallards, cinnamon teal and redheads all frequent the course during various times of the year. These diverse species only add to the beautiful scenery here at Polson Bay while imposing no real negative effect on course conditions. Bald eagles, osprey, falcons and our resident pheasants are also a pleasure to witness as they maneuver around our grounds. But here resides a true king among birds, a defiant tyrant and noble adversary...the Canadian goose.

The realization of how detrimental Canadian geese can be on manicured turf that is designed to perform in some aspect of higher sport was learned when I was still in high school. At that time the only real concern was how dirty my soccer cleats were going to be and if I hit the ground, would I be lucky enough to find one of their well-placed surprises. I had never paid any attention to the physical damage they were doing to the turf

when it came to soccer, the ball being large enough that it wasn't really affected by the tufts of grass these biological verticuting units leave behind. Fast-forward to my efforts

as a new superintendent and the menace of the Canadian Goose is a top priority at our course.

The past three years have seen an abhorrent rise in the residential goose population, leading to many unnavigable fairways and putting greens that would only be acceptable at a carnival putt-putt. This stubborn tactical deviant from the north has created an opposing challenge to our loyal golfers and continues to

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Effective Goose Management continued from page 8

raise the blood pressure of this young superintendent, as nothing else could ignite my wrath quicker than getting a clean cut and a smooth roll on our number two and ten greens, only to return midday and witness the herd of winged heifers grazing their way across this pristine turf and leaving numerous waste products behind. Not only is their biological excrement physically altering the playability of the turf, the concentration of various elements and compounds leaves a discoloration and has the potential to cause a nutrient burn if not removed or washed through the soil profile. On top of all that, they enjoy eating holes in the greens to get to the sand below and refuse to exit the green even when golfers are putting. Diabolical.

We have always had to deal with a large overwintering presence of geese, but this growing season has been difficult in ridding them from our property. During the winter we rope off our putting greens with stakes and quarter-inch rope that is slacked between the stakes. Not only does this remind the neighborly human residents to not walk over our greens in the winter, but we have seen a pleasant decline in goose traffic over the putting greens as well. Our theory is that the geese feel trapped while inside the rope barrier and are reluctant to enter the roped off green as they won't be able to fly away easily in the presence of a predator. Or maybe they just hate ropes and metal stakes. Anyway, it works well and especially during the thaw when the turf is becoming exposed and available for the geese to eat. However, this solution causes quite an inconvenience to the golfers and to maintenance during the spring when the geese are still around.

So, I have had to explore other avenues during the growing season to deter these foul fowl from our property. Chasing them with a cart only lasts for an hour or less and my trusty hound, Marty, has eyes only for the presents they leave behind unfortunately. Most of the geese rival him in size anyway and he isn't exactly the most courageous beast. Our other dog on the course, Jinks, is an expert goose dog that is well-trained, but doesn't really have an interest in getting into the ponds once the geese flee and this is leading to a false sense of security for the geese. With our four ponds on the property and the lake nearby, if the geese can fly, they will...to another pond, creating an endless chase around the property. I began researching new effective

methods that don't include a permanent relocation below ground.

What I stumbled upon was a solution used by larger farms and airports primarily in Australia. Green lasers are utilized to impersonate a physical predator that deeply unsettles the geese and leads to flight and an internal mindset that the area is unsafe. Even when the geese have goslings, the parents frantically will herd their progeny away and seek safer waters. Coupled with 20 lb. test monofilament fishing line bordering our pond edge approximately six-eight inches above the water, a quiet peaceful method of disrupting these heathens has

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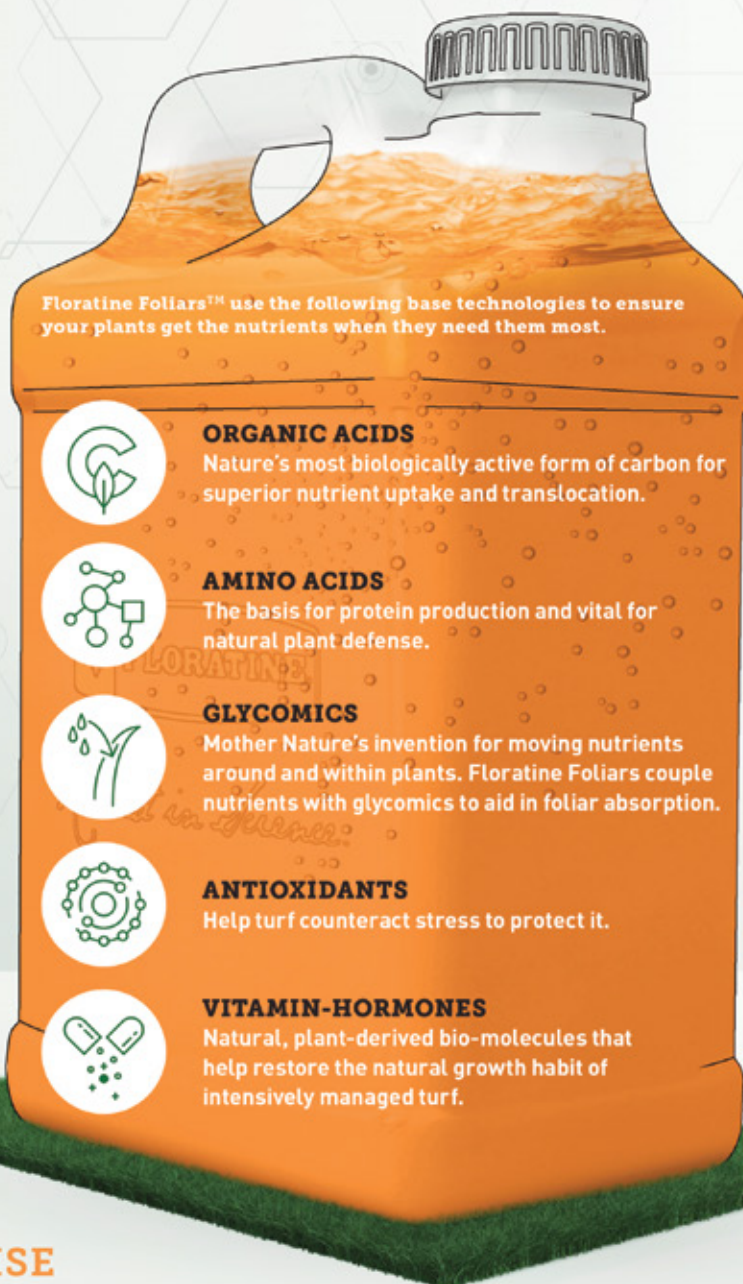




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Effective Goose Management

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revealed itself. The fishing line acts as a corral for the geese, acting upon the same theory of the ropes and stakes we use in winter and deterring the geese from passing underneath and walking on our pond-side greens and fairways. I left one edge of the pond that faces only trees and rough to give the geese an escape route with flightless goslings and began my early morning and evening electrical warfare.

I was justifiably skeptical when I began pricing the laser I wanted to use.

The industrial ones that the airports use are expensive, to say the least. I settled for an 80-dollar knockoff to test the effectiveness of this laser method. I was pleased with the instant results that occurred and amazed by this effortless method of scaring the geese. After harassing the young adult geese that were still on the verge of flight for about 30 minutes one evening, the entire group of around 40 geese departed out the back of the pond that had no fishing line and high-tailed it across the street and down to the lake. Unfortunately for one resident that was driving home, they had to

wait a couple of minutes as this procession of geese crossed the road at 10 p.m. The geese did not return to that specific pond for two weeks and didn't need much reminding why they left in the first place with another evening of laser therapy.

Given the time, effort, and price of this solution, I would say it was money well spent and seems to be working well. The geese that can fly now take off almost instantly and seem to not return for some time. Our pondside greens and fairways are clean and free from droppings and there was instant notice and appreciation from the daily golfers.



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Managing Two Leadership Roles

Matthew Fregly, Big Sky Resort, Big Sky, Mont.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Matt Fregly and I am the superintendent and grooming manager for Big Sky Resort.

My golf career has an interesting path. My first season on a course as a laborer was enjoyable, but I did not realize it could become anything more. When I believed my ski industry career had reached its end, I spoke to my old assistant about turf school and he encouraged me to pursue it. I was able to do an internship before my first year of school to see if I really wanted to pursue

it. I was just about to start my final semester at Rutgers and then Big Sky called to offer me the terrain park manager position. I decided to take the job, but insisted on finishing turf school. I was finishing school in New Jersey, while remotely running the terrain park crew in Montana. I flew back to Montana twice on long weekends to oversee our opening days. It was challenging times, but ultimately it worked out.

I have been working in the ski industry off and on for the past 18 years, with the last nine here in Big Sky. I started as a ski instructor the day I turned 16. When I went off to college, I did more competitions than work. Following college/grad school, I transitioned into building terrain parks in Pennsylvania. After the winter, I moved to Sun Valley, Idaho. I was working in a brewery and as a wilderness

guide, eventually moving to Salt Lake. My former boss from Pennsylvania invited me to come work for him at Big Sky for the terrain parks. I moved once again and worked my way up from laborer/fabricator to cat operator and eventually I took over as manager. After two years, I transitioned into running the entire grooming operation. The grooming department operates all night long with two separate shifts and I oversee a crew of 27 operators. I am able to meet with afternoon crew as they head out for the evening and then meet the morning crew as they are coming in off the mountain. We groom 600+ acres every night, which equates to over 70 different trails. Grooming has many similarities to golf, with the main one to make sure you are producing the best product possible.

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You Can Make a Difference

Eric Heywood, Equipment Manager
The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho
Idaho GCSA Grass Clippings, July 2023

While every position is extremely important in the golf grounds department, arguably, the two most important positions are the superintendent and the equipment manager. If this relationship is not firing on all

cylinders, every aspect of the crew will ultimately fail. The superintendent plans and makes the decision on a course of action, and it is up to the equipment manager and technicians to provide the necessary equipment to perform the work needed to keep the club within the standards of playability. Without one, the other is not effective. It is important for both to remember that in many cases it is impossible for one to do the other's job, so working together is imperative. We have probably all worked in a position where this relationship was far from good, or completely failed. Once this happens, jobs get harder, motivation starts lacking, tempers flare, attitudes affect other members of the crew, and people move on. There are numerous ways to strengthen this relationship between the technician, superintendent, and assistants that will keep conflict to a minimum and make the operation run smoother overall.

The first thing I want to address, that I have seen time and time again in my career, is the frustration of technicians caused by common agronomy practices. A great example is aerifying greens and top dressing. Yes, reels will get destroyed repeatedly throughout a season. It is our job to sharpen them and get them ready to go again as quickly as possible. The superintendent doesn't care to hear technicians complaining and no amount of complaining will keep them from top dressing greens. Another great example is equipment that is damaged during use. Everyone is human and makes mistakes. Our focus should be to get to work and make those repairs as quickly as possible. Leave the possible repercussions to the superintendent or an assistant. You need to be able to rely on the crew members to come to you when things get broken, and yelling at them is a surefire way to have them do the opposite. There is nothing more frustrating than a big mow day coming around and finding out two mowers aren't cutting right because someone didn't say something. Not only will this get you flustered, but you will have your superintendent breathing down your neck to get something figured out so that the golfers don't catch the early morning work being done. This makes it easy for frustrations on both sides to rise and for someone to get upset. So, my take.

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Jim Connolly- Distribution & International Sales
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Jim@planeturfusa.com

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Make a Difference from page 14

away for the equipment managers and technicians out there is not to get frustrated or adopt a bad attitude for having to fix things that get dull or broken. This is why we are here and such an important part of the team. Technicians are your go-to when things break or are not working properly. Technicians that are doing their jobs well will always be following the manufacturer's recommendations when it comes to preventative maintenance. Be careful how you approach your technicians in high-stress situations such as when a sprayer goes down with a full tank of chemical. For one, technicians understand the extreme importance of getting the sprayer up and going again. It is important to keep in mind we need time to diagnose the issue and see if it's fixable right now. Let your technician think and work through the issue, while understanding the importance of getting it back out to work. This goes for anything going on at the golf course at any given time. Technicians know you need it and will do our best to

get it back to you as quickly as possible.

Communication is key for any team to function properly. Without solid communication the superintendent doesn't know what standing the equipment is in, and the technician doesn't know what equipment to have ready for the tasks at hand. Simply having a few minutes a day to talk with each other can alleviate things being forgotten, or improve understanding of possible issues with certain pieces of equipment. If technicians participate in job board meetings, it is one way they can stay on top of what equipment might be needed for the next day, or in the near future. Another good option is a Google calendar that the superintendent or assistants can add tasks to for specific dates, which will allow the technicians to look weeks ahead at what is coming. If things get moved around, which they often will in this industry, the superintendent or the assistant can give technicians a head's up verbally, as well as move the task on the Google calendar.

Try your best not to waste each
continued page 18



Greg Baer

Irrigation Consultant

10027 N. Palisades Wy.
Boise, ID 83714
Ph. 208.859.1980
greg@baerdg.com

www.baerdg.com

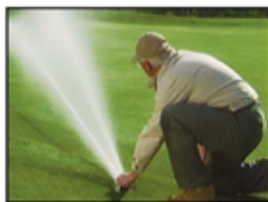


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Fall Meeting & Trade Show continued from page 1

“Turfgrass Seeding, Establishment, and Renovation”

“Basic Turfgrass Growth and How it Impacts Management Practices”

“The Use of PGR from a Historical Perspective”

Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University

“Instill a Culture of Excellence in Your Agronomy Team”

Patrick R. Finlen, CGCS, Executive Vice President, Denehy Club Thinking Partners

“Potassium Nutrition in Turfgrass and its Affects on Disease and Winter Injury”

“Backpack Sprayers 101: Unleash Their Full Potential”

Chas Schmid, Ph.D., Turfgrass Research Associate, Oregon State University

“Healthy Teams, Healthy Greens”

Kee Dunning, MS, MEd, LCPC, LMFT, and Dunning Counseling and Consulting, Inc.; Stacy Stellflug, Ph.D., APRN, FNP-BC, Montana State University College of Nursing

Having a healthy team is a critical component of fostering an environment of growth both for the team and for the golf course. Explore how the way you think influences the way you respond and communicate.

“A Medley of Best Practices for Longterm Success”

James Prusa, James Prusa Associates

With an extensive career in golf that has taken him around the world, Prusa welcomes the opportunity to share “critical information that I wish I had when I first started my career.”

Topics expected to be covered: turfgrass nutrient management and the real cost of fertilizers; irrigation management and the impacts on the quality of golf course play conditions; professional tour event championship preparation and management — lessons learned; training your staff to be professionals in hospitality service — peak performance; and an overview of the Mega Trends that impact us in the golf business here in the western USA.

“Biostimulants, What do We Know?”

Adam Thoms, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Commercial Turfgrass, Iowa State University

We will examine the origins of biostimulants and dive into the specifics of what makes up this broad class of products. Common biostimulants often contain plant hormones, bacteria, vitamins, amino and humic acids, sea kelp, and the list goes on. Examining how these products work will (continued page 18)

Make a Difference from page 16

other's time. Oftentimes as a technician I have gotten in the habit of suggesting another plan because a piece of equipment is down. Don't fall into this line of thinking as a technician. I used this as a way to get everyone off my back so I could properly diagnose the issue in a timely manner, but oftentimes found that it was an easy repair and had that piece of equipment back up and running in a short period of time. Mean-while, I had sent the other half of the team scrambling for another way to get the job done, just to turn around and say their equipment would be ready to go within an hour. Again, it is more important to explain you need a few minutes to diagnose the issue and you will let them know as soon as possible if it's an easy repair or not.

We are all going through life and a lot of the time life isn't easy. Something outside of work could be causing someone to have a bad attitude and if people are aware of these situations, they won't take it personally if they get a bad reaction from someone. Key employees should get together outside of work, or make time to go to lunch together, and talk about something other than work to try and reach each other on a personal level. Some may disagree with this, but in my experience I have

Room Block & Hospitality Room

continued from page 1

restaurants, and the light rail station for easy transport to venture out." With your stay you will enjoy a free breakfast. And on site is Adams Table Patio and Bar with shareable appetizers, bistro-style burgers, sandwiches, and salads. There is even a 24/7 Espresso Bar. The price is \$229 +tax. Parking is an additional charge. In case you are wondering, the hotel price range within the GCSAA block is \$189 - \$329, with light rail service required for the lower-range properties. The Hyatt Place is also about three blocks from the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room at State 48 Brewery, on January 31.

Both the Hyatt Place and State 48 Brewery are located within Phoenix's designated Entertainment District — filled with micro-breweries, bars and restau-

rants in historic buildings. Before the designation in 2015, businesses could not get liquor licenses if they were located near a church.

A little history for you. State 48 Brewery opened in 2018 and was the second State 48 location. There are now six breweries found in the state. As you probably have guessed already, State 48 Brewery refers to Arizona's place as the 48th state admitted to the Union. Our event location in downtown Phoenix has a scratch kitchen and a full bar and is considered one of State 48's largest locations. There is a second-level mezzanine and a two-level patio. Inside you will enjoy funky artwork and you can even see into the brewery from much of the seating. The success of this private event will be thanks to our supportive allied members, who come through for the region each year. It is not too early to contact Lori with your commitment.

found that having a personal relationship on some level will help each other be open about things outside of work that could affect performance.

These are just a few things to think about to strengthen the relationship between technicians, superintendents, and assistants. What works at our club might not work for yours, but it's worth finding what does. Happy employees make things run smoothly when they can get along and work together. Members and owners expect excellent results, so excellent relationships will get you to those results faster and more efficiently. Be a good human and work together, not against each other.

Fall Meeting from page 17

also be key as to why you might see a difference on your golf course, and why you may not in every case. Digging deeper, we will look into how to read the research that is presented as well as what is a valid set of results based on the scientific method and what is not. Discussions will also take place on how to run a trial on your golf course to test these products to see differences for yourself in your setting. Finally the presentation will cover some of the studies conducted at Iowa State and how some products have performed.



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Managing Two Leadership Roles continued from page 13

Since taking over both roles, I have been able to hire staff who enjoy working as groomers and on the course in the summers. Overseeing both areas has been an interesting time for me. I have super busy overlap seasons in the spring and fall, where I am constantly working on both areas. There are a few months in the winter and summer where I get to focus in on one area. I have learned to plan my seasons better, so I do not feel as overwhelmed when it comes time to start transitioning between the two.

It has been a challenging few years, taking on two new roles at nearly the same time. I am starting to get into a groove now, but more challenges are always on the horizon.



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