

## It is Going to Happen!

Our new website is just days away from going on line. We experienced unexpected delays, but the wait will come to an end. The website will keep you up to date with current events and information, and will once again house the job announcement in one place.

The next step will be to allow online registration and to include a membership roster. Our website will evolve to meet your needs!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

## Are You Comfy?

If you feel stable in your position, if you are ready to tackle anything Mother Nature throws at you, if you provide perfect playing conditions season after season, if you are the ideal employer and the ideal employee, and if you follow all state and federal regulations, congratulations! You are exceptional.

But if you are comfortable in recognizing there is always room for improvement, we encourage you to protect these Fall Meeting & Trade Show dates on your calendar - October 20 & 21, 2014. Attending will allow you to not only enjoy education important to your profession, it will allow you to network with your peers, gain product information and maintenance tips at our trade show, and enjoy great golf at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.

Education will be available for both Turf Management and Equipment Managers. We look forward to seeing you October 20 & 21, 2014, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.



## Our Allied Members are Outstanding

We are fortunate. Our allied members are consistent with their association and event participation, and their financial support. They are present to share valuable information, and, thanks to our allied partners, participation and membership fees increase at a slower rate.

It takes the involvement of every membership class to be successful with our mission, *"The Inland Empire GCSA is established to serve members, advance the profession and promote the enjoyment of golf through responsible golf course management practices."*

## 2014 Field Day!

Be there Tuesday, June 10, for the WSU Pullman Field Day! The event will be 9-12 p.m., followed by lunch at noon and an enjoyable round of golf at the beautiful Palouse Ridge. Don't miss the only formal gathering for the association over the summer. A little education... a little golf... benefit from taking the time.

## We are Listening

Share your opinions in an upcoming membership survey. The IEGCSA would like to know your thoughts as we plan for the future. The survey will be conducted on line and you will be prompted to visit the survey when it is available. Please take the time to complete the short, but valuable survey.

## Leaders Come Together

**"The wisest mind has something left to learn."**

*George Santayana*

Which is exactly why we offer education in a beneficial format that allows the opportunity to interact with your peers, while you are interacting with leading speakers in the industry.

The outstanding topics at the 2014 Spring Meeting held in -----  
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*Brian Woster (far right) participated in the GCSAA Chapter Leadership Symposium in Lawrence, Kansas*

***"The Inland Empire GCSA is established to serve members, advance the profession and promote the enjoyment of golf through responsible golf course management practices"***

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# My Path to Turf



**Mike Bednar,  
Assistant  
Superintendent**



I always find it interesting to look back at the path my life has taken to lead me to a career in golf course turf management. I was not one of those people who knew what they wanted to do right out of high school. My career in turf management didn't begin until I was 33 years old.

The first three years after I graduated from North Thurston High School in Lacey, Wash., I attended Fort Steilacoom Community College (now Pierce College) and Central Washington University. My goal at the time was to become a civil engineer.

In 1987, I moved to Pullman and enrolled at WSU to continue my education in engineering. During my first semester at WSU, I enrolled in Geology 102 and at the end of the semester changed my major to Geology. It was in one of my geology classes in 1988 that I met Annette. We married in 1991. I received my B.S. in Geology in 1992, and was accepted into graduate school at WSU. I was in graduate school for two years and spent the summers performing fieldwork near Hanford in the Tri-Cities. Studying the composition of various sand deposits throughout the basin, I was to determine if they were deposited by the Columbia River or the Snake River.

After graduate school, Annette and I decided that we did not want to leave Pullman and that we would eventually raise our family here. This was the first decision that started my life on the road to turfgrass management in the golf course industry. There were no opportunities for employment in Pullman in the field of geology so in 1993 I was hired by a Pullman landscape company. I

started out the

first month or two behind a push mower maintaining residential and commercial properties. By the end of the summer, I was supervising crews working on landscape construction, which included patios, retaining walls, water features, irrigation installation and repairs, and installing new landscapes for new construction. Except for the fact that I was laid off every winter, I really enjoyed this work. I'm the type of person who could spend the entirety of the winter months hunting and fishing, but I needed to find a career that provided a stable income. In 1996, I went to work for WSU and spent the next year maintaining the grounds around the student housing complexes.

I had known Steve Poole for several years. He was the superintendent for many years at the WSU Golf Course. He called one day to tell me that the golf course was hiring an assistant superintendent. I remember telling him, "There is no way I could get hired for that position because I have no experience with golf course maintenance." He eventually convinced me to apply for the position. I sat through several interviews with the interview board and was hired in the spring of 1997. Our staff consisted of the two of us with the occasional college student working part time in the summer. Steve insisted that I go back to school for a degree in Turf Management. Up until that point I had no

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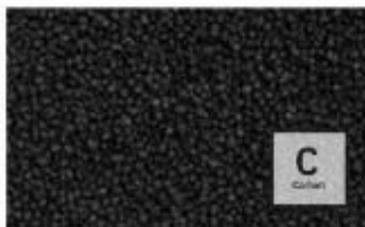


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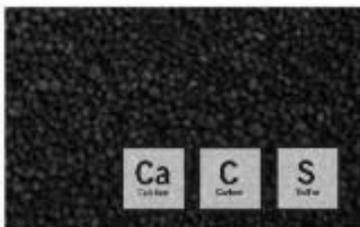
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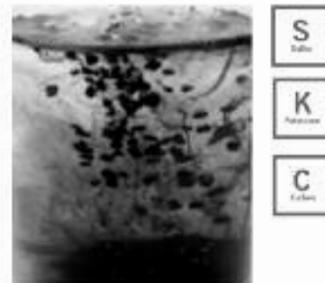
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idea there was actually a Turf Management degree. One of the benefits of being a University employee is that you can take college classes at a reduced tuition. At the time it cost me \$5 a credit. I started taking classes in the fall of 1997 and only needed 44 credits because of my previous B.S. in geology. I could only take up to six credits a semester, so I would enroll in one or sometimes two classes while working full-time at the golf course. In 2002 I received my B.S. in Crops and Soil Science – Turf Management. This was also the year that my son, Dane, was born.

The next couple of years were exciting and crazy as a new dad. During this time, there was increased talk on campus about building a new golf course. In 2004, I was on the committee to choose the architect to design the new golf course at WSU. The committee considered many great architects and finally selected John Harbottle III.

In the fall of 2005, right before the golf course was closing for the winter, the University informed Steve and I that we would not be reopening the old 9-hole golf course. Construction was going to begin in the spring of 2006 and our jobs would no longer exist. Steve had enough years with the University to retire, so he did. I did not know what the future held for me but I was still being employed by the University so I spent the winter performing maintenance on the equipment and grinding reels.

In January of 2006, the University realized that they would need to keep a practice area open for the upcoming P.E. golf classes. They asked me to maintain a small practice area and assist their construction managers overseeing construction. I will never forget the day that the bulldozers and excavators started earth work on the old driving range. It was sad and exciting to watch something you had taken care of for almost ten years being ripped up by heavy equipment. After the initial shock of seeing the place torn up, the rest of 2006 was very busy as I helped oversee rough shaping of the new golf course. In June my daughter Ryliaann was born. By the end of 2006, the rough shaping had been completed and the University had contracted with CourseCo Inc. for grow-in and operation of the golf course.

In May of 2007, CourseCo Inc. hired Todd Lupkes as



superintendent and I was offered the assistant superintendent position. 2007 was a blur as Todd and I spent seven days a week from daylight to dark overseeing construction and growing in golf holes as they were approved and turned over. Looking back, grow-in was one of the most challenging and rewarding things I have ever done. We spent 2008 growing in and preparing to open the new Palouse Ridge Golf Club in August 2008.

It is interesting to see how my position and responsibilities have progressed throughout the years on the same property. The property has been transformed from a nine-hole course into a championship 18-hole facility. When I started out on the old nine-hole course there were only two of us with the occasional summer employee. During grow-in I was managing a crew of 20 – 25 employees and today we are maintaining the golf course with 15 employees. Todd is presently holds the titles of both General Manager and Superintendent. That means that I have taken on a lot more of the responsibilities out on the golf course.

I still love living in Pullman and working at Palouse Ridge Golf Club. I am very fortunate to have spent the last 17 years on the same property with two completely different golf courses, experienced construction and grow-in, and continually being tested with new challenges. One of the other benefits of my career in Pullman is the students I get to work with, teach, and then watch as their careers progress throughout the industry. I look back at the decision to stay in Pullman as one of the best decisions I ever made.

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# Grass Notes

## Pete Grass, CGCS, GCSAA Secretary/Treasurer Hilands Golf Club, Billings, Mont.



Whether you like it or not, or I may go so far as to say, whether you even realize it or not, you are part of a really BIG thing, GOLF. The entire industry is a \$68.8 BILLION dollar economic engine in the United States. If you are reading this, you are a contributor to that figure.

As a superintendent or maintenance staff team member, you typically work managing your facilities greatest asset (in real dollars and player perception), the golf course(s) itself. As a Golf Professional, GM/Manager, F&B Manager, Chef or other employee at a golf facility, you are there as a result of there being a golf course(s) as the core reason for that “business” to exist. If you are an owner, city/county/parks council member, club director/committee member, you have direct influence over the dollars spent to operate your golf facility. If you are a golfer, you are the true “root” of the entire industry; without you, none of this would exist. You pay green fees, memberships, buy golf equipment, eat and drink at your facility, you spend \$\$, which in turn provides the capital for the facility to operate.

You may say, just like my non-golfer father-in-law, how could it really be \$68.8 billion? My answer to him and you is this: think about how much your individual facility spends. Add up the operating and capital budgets for the golf course,

clubhouse and any other areas that are part of your operations due to golf being involved. Include payroll, maintenance/pro shop/ F&B inventories and purchases through the year down to the least obvious expenditures such as utilities and property taxes. Add up the numbers from just our area and then think about the areas of the country that have thousands of courses and 12 month seasons. It is then easy to see how that number comes about.

In my mind, it does not matter if your facility creates \$1 or \$5 million as a result of being in existence, you are a part of the overall total. When the We Are Golf coalition goes to Washington DC in May each year for National Golf Day (GCSAA typically has the largest delegation), we are able to tell a great story. When you are able to say that our industry creates right around 1 million jobs, \$68.8 billion in economic impact and allows for \$3.9 billion to be raised for charitable contributions, that opens eyes and provides opportunities to have our issues heard.

The responsibility that comes along with being part of such a large industry is to help carry the load. There are several quotes that I believe summarize my thoughts about this. First off is Steve Mona’s, “The rising tide raises all boats,” then “The whole is only as strong as the weakest link,” “The heavier the load the more spokes it takes to support the wheel,” and “Don’t be part of the problem, be part of the solution.” We can all do a part, whether large or small, to help this industry of GOLF. From as little as just keeping current with your education and trends in the industry to volunteering at a local, state or national level to help the game of golf in some way, we can all make an impact.

In my opening statement, I mentioned that, whether you like it, or even realize it or not, you are part of a big thing. We should all be proud of our involvement and do everything we can to promote it. Share the word; we are an industry that is a major player in the local and national economy, provides recreation for millions and environmental benefits to our communities. Take pride in your work and what you are a part of.

### Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room!

Darcy Otto, Henry Wetzels, Doug McCullen



Steve Princinsky & Norm Wills

Joe Landis - Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire

## Wisest Minds continued from page 1

March were timely with the season and those in attendance are one step ahead in the game this upcoming season.

We thank our Event Sponsor, Pacific Golf & Turf, the Education Committee for another strong program, and Jason Habeck, CGCS, and the Lewiston Country Club for great golf. And no one works harder for the equipment managers than Darak Bigler, Circling Raven Golf Club.

It was a great meeting!



Charlie Jones and Bo Lacy



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## The First Green Foundation

**David Phipps**  
**GCSAA**  
**NW Field Staff**  
**From the GCSAA NW**  
**Regional Blog**



Of all the things that you did as a youngster in school, what do you remember the most? For me, it was the field trips. Whether it was the trip to the Nabisco factory in first grade or the trip to the “Oregon Outback” in 7th grade, each of those made an indelible mark in my mind. This is the mission of the First Green Foundation, to provide an outdoor learning experience for young children on a golf course that will be remembered for years to come.

Using the golf course as a laboratory, the First Green Foundation utilizes a STEM learning curriculum. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The First Green Foundation will help golf course superintendents connect with local teachers and provide their golf courses as outdoor laboratories. The USGA, in partnership with Chevron, just awarded the First Green Foundation a \$155,750 grant to expand the program into Southern California. Kimberly S. Erusha, Ph.D., managing director of the USGA Green Section, said in awarding the grant, “The goal of the Chevron-USGA partnership and our Eagles for Education funding is to make STEM more fun and engaging through the game of golf.

With this grant, the First Green Foundation will continue expansion into Oregon and Northern California as well as expanding further into Southern California. The First Green has expanded on its own to other parts of the country without the help of grants. Frank Tichenor, from Forest Hill Field Club in New Jersey, hosted his first field trip last year and said, “I have to say this was one of the best days I have ever spent on a golf course. I can’t wait to do it again.” The Intermountain GCSA in Utah is going all in, and is starting fundraising soon to purchase superintendent resource kits for its members.

If there has ever been a program targeted at advocacy for the game of golf, this program fits the bill. It teaches students the benefits that golf provides to the environment and community. This enables superintendents to promote the game by way of dispelling myths as well as growing the game. Giving the children an introduction to golf at an early age will no doubt pay dividends down the road as we need to add more golfers to the sport.

Please consider hosting your own field trip. If you have any questions I am always available to help. You can contact me at: [dphipps@gcsaa.org](mailto:dphipps@gcsaa.org) . You can also visit the First Green website at: [www.thefirstgreen.org](http://www.thefirstgreen.org)