



# The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

Volume 26 Issue 6

Founded ~ April 11, 1939

September 2019

## September Meeting

### Huntsville Golf Club

1334 Market Street  
Dallas, PA

#### Hosts:

Jeff Fry, General Manager  
Mark McCormick, Superintendent  
Casey Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent

### Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Registration/Continental Breakfast - 9:30AM

Golf - 10:30 AM Shotgun

Speaker - 3:00 PM

Cocktails/Hors d'oeuvres - Following Golf

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*There will be a CPGCSA Board of Directors Meeting  
at 8:30 AM.*



## Huntsville Golf Club

#### FOR LOVE OF THE GAME:

"Huntsville Golf Club is committed to golf. The game, with all its allure, mysteries and traditions, is the reason for our existence."

The 1980's were the heyday of golf in the United States, and northeastern Pennsylvania caught the fever. Golf courses were crowded, and clubs had long lists of people waiting to become members. It was in this environment that a businessman in Wilkes-Barre, Richard Maslow, decided to build a new local golf club.

Wanting his club to be a truly first class experience, he set out to hire the best. He chose the respected golf club consultant, Jim McLoughlin of the McLoughlin Group, to carry out a feasibility study to determine if the concept made financial sense. With a thumbs up result, in 1988 he approached the world renowned golf course architect, Rees Jones, to ask him to design a premiere golf course. Working with Rees, he began searching the countryside around Wilkes-Barre for a site worthy of a strong golf course that would meet his own lofty expectations for a high quality private club.

Dick Maslow did not walk this road alone. The Maslow Family Partnership formed a corporation named Maplemoor, Inc. with fellow investors Richard L. Pearsall and David C. Hall. In addition to these financial partners, he was assisted in legal matters by Attorney A. Richard Caputo, who was also given the assignment to draft a Club Constitution. Consulting Engineer George Evans, of Killam Associates, would oversee the project's surveys, approvals, and environmental evaluations. Paul Lumia was appointed to serve as the first Membership Director, and Tim Foran was hired as the first Golf Professional.

After four long years, aided by the assistance of realtor Barbara Metcalf of Lewith & Freeman, they settled on a site comprised of five different land parcels. Maplemoor, Inc. purchased a total of 334 acres from the Voitek and Heffernan families, Dr. Anthony Kuprionas, Richard "Butch" Hall, and Pennsylvania Gas & Water Company.

After mapping out a few unsatisfactory routings, Jones looked enviously at the property across the street. "I can build a very good golf course with what you've given me," he told Maslow. "But if you purchase the property across the road, I can build you a great golf course." After a few months of negotiations,

*....continued on page 2.....*

## September President's Message



Greetings,

This has to be the greatest time of the year. Turf recovery is happening, not sweating, football and I can go on and on. It's 56 degrees out right now and I am sitting in an RV at PSU eagerly anticipating the early season night game. Life is good. Oh and I am not stressed about the golf course. Because it's the greatest time of the year! I really hope that everyone is getting the opportunity to relax and spend a little down time with family and friends as well. Before you know it April will be here again.

Our September meeting at Huntsville is really lining up to be a good one. We have a great speaker on tap and Jeff Fry is working his magic to make it a great day. Let me put it this way....we will be well hydrated and we wont leave hungry. Please take a look at your schedules and do yourself a favor and get away for a day to join us on the 18th at Huntsville Golf Club.

We are still looking for board members, so if you or anyone you know is interested please reach out to me.

At our next board meeting we will be making our DSL selection for this year, nailing down the details for our last golf meeting and continuing winter educational meeting plans. If anyone has anything for the board please reach out to a board member or myself and let us know.

Until next month enjoy Fall and the greatest time of the year. Hope to see you at Huntsville.

Jeff Green  
President - CPGCSA

## Huntsville Golf Club ...continued from Page 1.....

Maplewood, Inc. purchased an additional 139 acres from the Conygham family, including a large barn, two small farmhouses, and an apple orchard. Jones now had a total of 473 acres with which to work. Scott Schukraft was hired as the Golf Course Superintendent, and a press conference was held on Thursday, July 25, 1991 to announce that Maplewood, Inc., doing business as Huntsville Golf Club, would begin construction and planned to open in late 1993.

Since opening in 1994, Huntsville Golf Club has quickly been recognized as one of the state's best golf courses, a real achievement considering Pennsylvania is home to some legendary courses. In December, 1995, Golf Digest named Huntsville Golf Club as the #2 Best New Private Course opened in the United States and Canada. In 2001-2002, it was ranked #5 in the state by Golf Digest behind Merion, Oakmont, Laurel Valley, and Aronomink. It has consistently been ranked in the Top 100 Modern Courses.

Huntsville Golf Club is unique in that, according to Rees Jones, it was built strictly as a golf club, with no consideration for real estate development or tourism trade. Two things set Huntsville apart: its natural beauty, and old-style design based on a risk-reward system. The site provides plenty of golf-friendly features such as wooded areas, rolling fields, a hardwood forest, and nearly 150 feet of elevation changes, which allowed Jones to create a fun, demanding layout that engages players from the first tee to the eighteenth green. His strategic layout attracts a membership of golfers of all levels who appreciate not only the flexibility of the course, but also the excellent practice facilities, professional staff, and the caddie program.

The distinctive, airy single-story clubhouse at Huntsville Golf Club was designed by Peter Bohlin of Bohlin, Cywinski, Jackson Architects of Wilkes-Barre. Peter is perhaps best known for his design of the glass cube Apple flagship store on New York City's Fifth Avenue, and for designing Bill Gate's home in Seattle. The modern style of the clubhouse contrasts with the property's more traditional surroundings, but it offers guests a welcoming, comfortable experience. In addition to golf, the Club offers a full schedule of dining and social events, as well as private parties, showers and weddings. The addition of a stone patio and seasonal event tent in 2012 greatly enhanced the Club's ability to host large social gatherings.

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## 8 essential budgeting principles for superintendents

Set the stage for successful budget requests and productive communication with your facility's financial decision-makers with these tried-and-true tactics.

GCM | October 2016 | Chris Carson

Throughout my career, I've often found myself frustrated by the divide between me and the people making the budget decisions at my club. In 30 years as superintendent at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, N.J., I've learned some guiding principles and techniques that help me better communicate the green department's story to sell the club's decision-makers on the course's financial needs. I've developed these ideas into a course I teach at the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School and as a seminar at the Golf Industry Show. What follows are a few of the most important guidelines I've gleaned over the years for effectively proposing budget requests, and they may prove useful to you in preparing your budget and presenting it to those in charge.



*Visual aids: Using charts and graphs to illustrate where your labor and other resources go will make the information clearer and more compelling to the eyes of those calling the financial shots. Photo by Chad McDermott/Shutterstock.com*

### 1. You are not talking to your peers

Unless you work for a management company with an experienced superintendent in a position above you, or you have a general manager who moved up from the golf course, your bosses most likely don't understand what golf course superintendents do or why they do it. Conveying your arguments in your bosses' context — not ours — is the first step toward getting to "Yes."

Start by establishing a shared understanding of how you want to present the golf course. Discuss with your bosses how greens should play or bunkers should be prepared, for example. This will open the flow of information between you, allowing you to get a sense of their desires and begin educating them on what's necessary to achieve those results.

An effective way to get everyone on the same page regarding members' and management's expectations and the needs of the golf course is to develop a course standards manual. The exercise of creating the manual — discussing your bosses' goals and your assessment of what's possible with current resources — will lead to more meaningful budget and planning deliberations. Putting together such a document will also give you the opportunity to explain some of the variables that can significantly affect course maintenance, such as weather, and the manual can be a resource for later budget conversations.

Similarly, many courses have a mission statement that defines their operation's primary objective. The mission statement of Pebble Beach Resorts puts forth a clear goal: "To exceed the expectations of every guest by providing a once-in-a-lifetime experience, every time." This directive guides those who manage the world-class facility, but it's also worthwhile out in the trenches. If the crew has in mind that the aim is to guarantee a memorable experience for every guest, they may carry out their tasks more thoroughly. You don't have to be a top-100 facility to have a mission statement; any course can find focus by clarifying its main goal in this manner.

### 2. Bring the problem to them

We are on our courses for thousands of hours every season, so any deficiencies are so embedded in our minds that we can forget that our decision-makers see the course through much different eyes. Photos and other means of "show and tell" are easy ways to relay information, particularly to those who view the course through the lens of a golfer, not a superintendent.

Your bosses have likely never looked below the surface of your greens, for example, and have no concept of what goes on there. Presenting a core sample from a green that's troubled by layers or too much thatch is a tangible way to alert them to such problems. To shed light on equipment concerns, share photos of deteriorating devices or crowded conditions in the maintenance facility, or bring them an actual corroded swing joint or clogged irrigation nozzle.

### 3. Bring them to the problem

If you want to upgrade your equipment or maintenance shop, perhaps the best way to gain support is to take your bosses on a tour of your current facilities. If they see the equipment you have now and can appreciate that you're getting the most out of their previous investments, they may be more inclined to approve your requests. Think of it this way: You could certainly try to describe how a greens mower works or the function of a \$40,000 spin grinder, but if your audience actually *sees* a mower on a lift and can comprehend the precision required to adjust this machine, they'll have a deeper awareness of what it takes to cut greens at a low height.

I've used this technique in other areas too. In 2008, we put in a new irrigation system, and members expected that the rough would improve immediately. That wasn't the case, however. We'd never had irrigation capabilities in these areas before, so we had a wretched mix of grass species that would die off from disease and stress. By taking the committee on a tour of the course, I was able to show them exactly where the problems were, where fungicide protection was having a positive effect, and where areas sodded with better turf species were withstanding summer stresses with no controls at all. I reinforced these points with photos. Since then, we've received more resources to improve our rough.

#### 4. The budget process is year-round

Dismiss the notion that the budget process is a once-a-year-only effort. Take every opportunity to keep your committee informed about issues as they arise, to look down the road for what you'll eventually need, and to lay the foundation for those requests. Asking for support for a new irrigation system out of the blue won't make sense, nor will it likely result in the outcome you're hoping for. If you've "prepared the ground" with years of updates on the problems you've faced, have done preparatory studies on needs and costs, and have in effect pre-sold your bosses on the idea, they won't be taken aback when you ultimately make your appeal. In short: Avoid surprises.

This holds true for the overall maintenance of the course as well. If you encounter a new disease or insect problem or are dealing with weather conditions so extreme you're forced to make an unexpected application or use unbudgeted labor, it's your responsibility to keep your boss in the loop. Don't let your chairman or manager go into a meeting with club ownership unprepared to answer why a budget item is off expectations. Anticipate such questions and keep your boss up to date by providing a monthly budget variance report. By addressing questions before your boss even has to ask them, you'll be seen as a pro who's on top of your game and who's looking out for your boss.

#### 5. Humanize your budget

Most superintendents pride themselves on keeping the maintenance crew as invisible as possible, and although this is an admirable goal, it also hurts us. Because we're out of sight, convincing a budget committee that our staff is important and that suitable salaries and pay increases are appropriate becomes more difficult.



*Bringing decision-makers onto the course to see turf matters for themselves — such as the difference between treated and untreated areas — will have a far greater impact. Photo courtesy of Chris Carson*



*Designed in 1911 by Donald Ross and improved during the "Golden Age" of golf course architecture by Willard Wilkinson, A.W. Tillinghast and Robert White, Echo Lake Country Club spans 141 acres and consists of bentgrass fairways and bent/Poa greens. GCSAA Class A superintendent Chris Carson has overseen maintenance of the course since 1986. Photo courtesy of Chris Carson*

Here at Echo Lake, half the rounds are played with caddies. These are typically high school or college students, and they're engaged with players for more than four hours. As independent contractors, the caddies are paid directly by the golfer for their efforts to make the game more enjoyable, and they are paid generously. I'm certain the reason for this generosity (which usually comes to three to five times the hourly rate of my staff) is that members feel a personal connection with and responsibility to these individuals, and are thus willing to compensate them well. Yet these same members hesitate if asked to adjust pay rates for grounds crew members. Even a small percentage raise can be seen as an extravagance.

Other club employees have similar relationships with members — connections that benefit them when budget discussions come around. When a server in the clubhouse ensures an order is correct, there is an understanding that the server is working hard. But if the maintenance crew does its job well and ahead of play, golfers may just assume the course was prepared by pixies in the middle of the night.

It's the superintendent's job, therefore, to give life to our staff — to make sure our team isn't viewed as just a payroll number, but as a living, breathing asset to the club. You can remind decision-makers that they have this dedicated crew working hard for them by highlighting your team's efforts, referencing each of them by name and years with the company, praising them by name when they've performed well, and perhaps including a photo and description of your team's accomplishments on the club bulletin board or in its newsletter. It's much more difficult for those passing judgment on the budget to cut a person and the work he or she does than it is to cut a percentage from a budget line that's presented as a lump sum..

.....continued on Page 6....



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## 8 Essential Budgeting Principles ....continued from Page 4....

### 6. Use comparables

When labor unions negotiate salaries and benefits, the process involves examining what others in similar positions earn. Such comparables are helpful in forming a basis for discussion and getting all parties on the same page. This strategy is valuable for us as well. If we can support a request for an assistant's salary with industry averages for that position, we lend credibility to our appeal.

You can gather this information from a variety of sources, including GCSAA's Compensation and Benefits Report. Local chapters frequently offer these figures, and you can also get specifics simply by asking other superintendents in your area. Knowledge of how many staff members local courses employ and how much they're paid will help you accurately talk about the labor market and back up your budget requests. Looking at cost-per-hole data of courses in your area (your accounting firm can provide this) and pay scales of local businesses may supply you with additional useful insight.

Knowing the average life span of maintenance equipment will give you a leg up when the time comes to replace or upgrade your fleet, and this is especially true if you have a solid record of obtaining full value from equipment purchased in the past. If you can say that, compared with the industry average, you've gotten 250 percent of the life expected from your 20-year-old sprayer, you exhibit that you've taken care of this investment, received full value from it, and will take the same care of a replacement.

If you want to upgrade your existing equipment to take advantage of new technology, you should once again express your point in a context your bosses can relate to. They may not know much about the differences between old and new aerification technology, but they will understand the difference between older televisions and high-definition televisions. Illustrating your request using something like TV or cell phones will convey the concept of the value of new technology in a way they can grasp and may very well support.

### 7. Present visually

Like many clubs, Echo Lake downsized its operation when the recession hit in 2008. Among the many changes were reductions in our operating expenses and manpower. The adjustments were appropriate and timely, and they helped the club weather the storm. After a year or two, however, as we climbed out of the hole, I found it tough to get my committee to restore our staff. There was a general misunderstanding among decision-makers about how many people were required to run the caliber of operation they wanted.

My breakthrough moment came when I developed several charts and graphs that revealed the difference in labor use between pre-recession 2008 and post-recession 2011. The visual aids displayed the variance between the two years on a week-by-week basis, and also showed where our manpower had been allocated. My committee was surprised to learn that we'd spent almost twice as much labor on our bunkers as on our greens, and this led to a valuable discussion about where our resources could be best directed. You may benefit in a similar way by visually presenting where your labor has been assigned and where additional crew members would help.

Another step forward occurred when, after years of rejection, the club approved my request to restore a second assistant position, and I have the club's golf professional to thank for it. At a managers' meeting, he'd asked me a simple question: "Have you considered taking a different approach by asking to replace the tasks that aren't being done well or thoroughly?"

I was taken aback by this comment, as it exposed the actual problem: My club didn't understand what my assistants did or how vital they were to our operation. Assistant superintendents at Echo Lake are hands-on employees, responsible for managing the spray and fertilizer programs, the irrigation system, and daily course setup, as well as supervising the staff. After I showed my bosses a monthly breakdown of my assistant's tasks and responsibilities, they quickly agreed there was a need for a hire, and the subsequent elevated quality of our work was visible to and appreciated by members.

### 8. Remember: You are selling

I try my best to ensure my budget document and the plan it contains are clear and straightforward. A common flaw I notice in students' work at Rutgers is the use of jargon in their budget plans. They may think tossing in Latin binomials and esoteric chemical names makes them appear professional, but I think people unfamiliar with our profession can get tripped up by these attempts, and we lose credibility. Instead of, "We plan to control outbreaks of *Rhizoctonia solani* with pyraclostrobin," you can simply say, "We



*Hue help: The addition of color can bring overhead plans and perspective drawings to life, clarifying them for those who may otherwise find such proposals difficult to visualize. Photo courtesy of Chris Carson*

plan to control brown patch disease with chemicals.” Attach a photo of the disease, and you’ve just made your point far easier to understand.

Another example: In working with drawings of course features in plan form, what seemed rudimentary to me always seemed confusing to my bosses. When I had plans for our new irrigation ponds colored in to designate fairways, rough and water, it boosted their understanding. Adding color to perspective drawings helped my committees visualize those proposals too. The extra steps were worth the effort, and they allowed me to live up to an important business maxim: Make it easy for your customer to buy your product.

*Chris Carson is the GCSAA Class A superintendent at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, N.J., where he has worked for 30 years. He teaches courses on budgeting and professional development at the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School. A 31-year member of GCSAA, Chris has served as president of both the GCSA of New Jersey and the New Jersey Turfgrass Association.*

Read more: <https://www.gcmonline.com/course/environment/news/8-essential-budgeting-principles-for-superintendents#ixzz5zYdUUFK>



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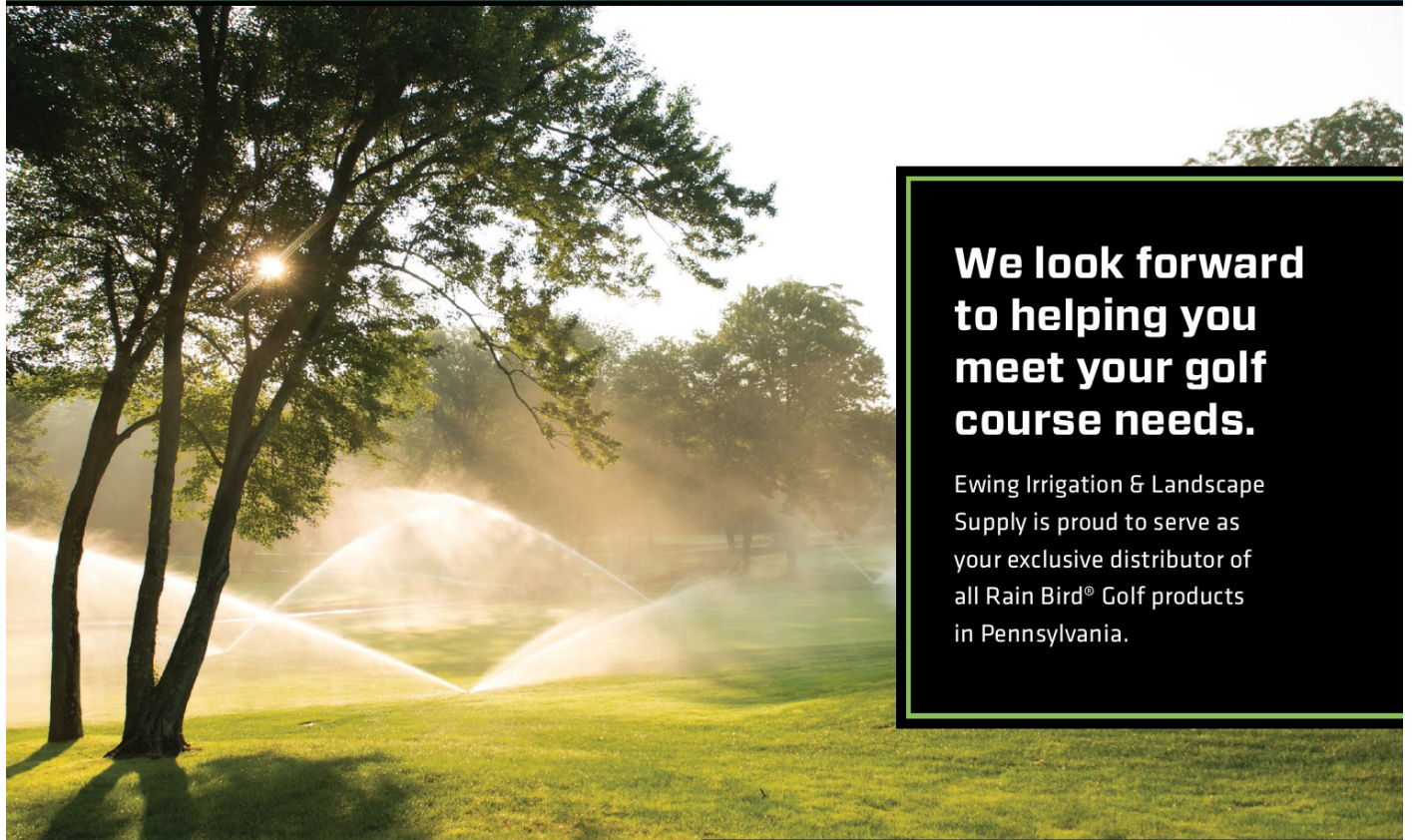


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## One Door Closes

September 6, 2019

By Dave Oatis, regional director, USGA Northeast Region

The “agronomic season” for 2019 is over even though there is plenty of golf yet to be played. Agronomic programs in the Northeast will now be shifting some of their focus to set the turf up for a successful season in 2020. Many courses have already performed their late summer or early fall cultivation work, and it is vitally important not to shortchange these important programs. For most golfers there is no good time to aerate, but cultivation is essential to produce healthy turf and topnotch playing conditions. 2019 brought tremendous agronomic challenges and the turf at many courses in the Northeast is showing the effects. Now is the season for healing and setting the turf up for next year.

Recently, anthracnose has been the most commonly observed malady. However, anthracnose can be your friend or foe depending on what grass species you’re promoting. For courses with plenty of bentgrass, anthracnose can be used as a biological control of *Poa annua*. For courses where *Poa annua* is the desired species, controlling the disease is imperative. Just realize that despite our extensive understanding of the disease, recent outbreaks are a reminder that even the best disease control programs are not always successful.



*Anthracnose infecting Poa annua in a predominantly bentgrass turf is free Poa control!*

It has been a rollercoaster of a season for golf course superintendents this year and also for many of us at the USGA. As my time with the Green Section comes to a close, I’d like to thank the hundreds of golf course superintendents, course officials and golf association officials that I’ve had the privilege to work with for the last 32 seasons. What I’ve learned from you would fill volumes, and

I thank you sincerely for your friendship and support. Most of all, thank you for sharing and trusting me with your problems, concerns, challenges and successes. We learn more from the mistakes and the challenges but sharing and celebrating the successes has given me tremendous satisfaction and kept me motivated. I wish I could pass on everything I’ve learned, but time will not permit. So, I’ll leave you with a couple of important thoughts:

- [Occam’s razor](#) pertains directly to turfgrass management! The science of golf course turfgrass management is complicated, and successful superintendents have a special blend of experience, knowledge, touch and feel. However, it is easy to overcomplicate things. Don’t fall into the trap of looking for a complicated solution when the simplest answer is more often the right one.
- The environments we grow turf in, both above and below ground, have more of an impact on turf performance than anything else. It is imperative to control what you can control. Focus efforts on improving the above- and below-ground growing environments and you will be more successful, guaranteed. Boring, but true!

Lastly, I’d like to thank my colleagues and the volunteers at the USGA, both past and present. I have appreciated your friendship and valued your support more than you’ll ever know. As this door in my life closes, I’m heading to the next phase with a smile, knowing that it’s been a great ride.

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/regional-updates/northeast-region/2019/one-door-closes.html>

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## The 4 T's For Improving Your Golf Course Without Spending a Dime

Tasked with doing more with less? A lower budget doesn't have to mean a lower-quality golf course. These no-cost strategies will help you rise to the challenge.

GCM | August 29, 2019 | Dan Tolson, CGCS

“Do more with less.” We've all heard the instruction. It's tossed around so regularly that it can seem like a fad. It often precedes notification from a board member that your budget has been cut, or a rant from a superintendent who is dealing with shrinking resources.

In a “do more with less” industry and when coping with factors outside one's control — such as Mother Nature and a fickle economy — golf course superintendents can still find success regardless of budget size. No matter whether your operating budget is six digits or seven, growing or shrinking, there are certain things you as a superintendent *can* control that are unrelated to finances. The following four “Ts” are tweaks that will allow you to do more with less and make huge improvements to your operation — free!

### 1. Tune your culture

Ever worked for a screamer? How about an “Eeyore” who is always convinced the glass is half-empty? No one likes working in a negative environment, but unfortunately, such managers still exist, and the attitudes that managers project are reflected in their staffs.

In the modern world, if we are going to successfully recruit staff in a highly competitive job market, we don't have much choice but to create a culture where employees enjoy coming to work and feel valued.

In the book “Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us,” author Daniel Pink dissects how three intrinsic motivators can do more to create an outstanding workforce than any external motivators such as salary or benefits. By offering autonomy (the ability to be self-directed), mastery (continual improvement) and purpose (working for a transcendent cause), superintendents can lead their staff members from being robots who are working only for a paycheck to being “think-for-themselves” partners who are engaged in pursuing the success of the operation.



*The sunrise lights up hole No. 16 at The Club at 3 Creek. The course was designed by Rees Jones and opened in 2005.*

It's not always easy to apply these three motivators to a golf course maintenance staff, as the problems we're usually trying to solve just aren't that complicated. Identifying your core values, crafting unique mission and vision statements, and holding your staff accountable to these will naturally guide them toward the three intrinsic motivators.

As you consider what you want your culture to be, start with core values. What are you passionate about? What is your automatic default that you can't compromise on, even if you wanted to? Your answers to these questions will point to who you are and what's most important to you — your core values. Distill those down into a few concise words or a statement to define your department.

As you *lead* and your crew follows, they will begin to share those same core values, and those values will define your culture. From there, you can establish a mission statement (why you are there) and a vision statement (where you are going). Workers will enjoy their work more if they know what they are there to do and why. Once you know what your vision is, you can begin to set tangible goals. Once goals have been set, turn your staff loose to accomplish them, and *boom!* You've created autonomy, mastery and purpose, *and* the resulting intrinsically motivated employees.

This topic is the subject of untold dozens of leadership books, and I have just skimmed the surface here. The most important thing to remember as you begin to tune your culture is that the single biggest improvement you can make to your operation is to become a better manager of people. Personally, I have a long way to go in this regard, but I've attempted to become a student of the subject. Find some books that move you, study them, and put their principles into practice.



*Golfers hit approach shots into the 14th green at The Club at 3 Creek, which is set against the dramatic backdrop of the Grand Tetons in Jackson, Wyo. Author Dan Tolson, CGCS, oversees the private 18-hole championship course, ranked by Golf Digest among the top 5 in the state. **Photos by Dan Tolson***

## 2. Teach your standards

Standards of performance make it possible to hold employees accountable and create a consistent product, and they streamline training. Having a golf course maintenance staff working without written and clear standards is like flying a plane with your eyes closed.

Standards set the bar to get everyone on the crew shooting for the same goal, and they are a clear communication tool for your golfers on what they can expect to find on the course. Most courses have some kind of written standard, usually within the pages of an employee handbook given to employees on their first day and then buried at the bottom of a locker, never to be seen again. So, how do you get your standards translated off the page and into actions by everyone on your staff, day in day and day out?



*A banner that hangs in the maintenance department's break room at The Club at 3 Creek communicates the department's core values and mission.*

Standards should be as short and concise as possible while still getting the point across. Here at The Club at 3 Creek, we have our standards in our manual, broken down by area, with a short bulleted list of expectations for each area and a photo of what we expect each area to look like every day. A picture speaks a thousand words, and you should incorporate such visuals into your daily training. Thanks to the pictures in our manual, a new employee can understand what our expectations are for every area of the golf course in less than an hour.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a novel. Don't overlook the power of the video recorder right in your pocket. Years ago, the instructional "Superintendent's Video Magazine" videos were available to help train course staff on the various facets of golf course maintenance. I remember the VHS tapes droning on in the break room, and how we used to have to pause the tapes to explain how our course was different from the Florida course in the video.

Nowadays, with the abundance of video editing apps, you can shoot a clip from your own golf course on your phone, turn it into a short video and have it posted to YouTube in 15 minutes without ever leaving your cart. The iMovie app is a good one that's easy to use and comes free with every iPhone.

Some people do learn by reading, but in my experience, very few. There is a reason for the explosive growth and success of "YouTube University." Most people learn by watching others. Videos communicate through language barriers, and they can also save you time by eliminating the need to demonstrate the same thing over and over to different people. If you have a chronic problem with some aspect of your training program, try making a video of someone doing it the right way and see whether that resolves the problem.

## 3. Track data

Goal setting and goal accomplishment are much more difficult if you aren't keeping track of data. Knowing data such as payroll numbers, chemical usage, mowing frequency, etc., will help you make educated and confident management decisions. I admit, I'm guilty of being a data-head. I have files full of records that I haven't looked at in years. But I save them, just in case someday I need to compile a report. Collecting data *is* important and, if done right, can greatly enhance your operation.

If you have a certain area you want to improve, start by gathering intelligence about that area. Maybe you think you need a new irrigation system. Do you know exactly how much you spent last year repairing breaks and hand watering? How many gallons of water did you use? Was that less than the year before, or more? What is the five-year trend of irrigation costs? Without clear and accurate answers to those questions, persuading your owner or board to drop \$2 million on an irrigation system would be very difficult. And maybe, when you have those answers, you'll realize you don't need a new irrigation system as much as you thought you did.

In the old days, tracking data like this was done with a pen and a yellow tablet. It took a meticulous mind to keep track of it all, file it and compile it into something usable. Thanks to modern technology, we can now automatically gather metrics on just about anything and then use apps and computer programs to translate that information into beautiful charts and graphs.

For the do-it-yourselfer, Google offers an abundance of tools. Using Google Forms, you can create an easy form for your crew to fill out (they all have a phone in their pocket, capable of anything) to track everything from greens moisture to bunker sand depth.



*A summer storm passes behind the ninth green at The Club at 3 Creek.*



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## The 4 T's For Improving Your Golf Course....continued from Page 12

At the end of the week, export the form to a spreadsheet and filter out the pertinent info. Best of all, it's free — all you have to do is create a Google account.

If you have a little cash to spend to track labor and other metrics, there are some great companies that offer online platforms for a small monthly fee. At my course, we use the [ASB taskTracker](#), and in my humble opinion, it's worth every penny. I'm not endorsing it over other products, but it's a perfect fit for us to beautifully merge a daily digital job board with labor tracking for every job on the golf course.

We now have five years of accurate data for every area on the course. Come fall budget time, my board will receive concrete numbers of payroll details from the prior three to five years, supporting the labor numbers I'm requesting. It makes budgeting much easier and gives credibility to requests for increases.

### 4. Take inventory

Every golf course is unique and has something to offer that no other course can, whether that's a beautiful stream flowing through the center, a compelling, historic past, the "best" greens in town, perfect bunker sand, environmental significance, or another attribute. If you want to make your course better, find a way to set it apart from the competition. Take an inventory of what makes it special, then leverage that difference for your benefit.

Lots of superintendents across the country do a wonderful job at this. Through social media and in their communities, they loudly tell the story of what makes them special.

When you think of golf in Northern California, what comes to mind? The seventh hole at Pebble Beach. When conversation shifts to wildlife on golf courses, Paul Carter's Eagle Cam at The Bear Trace at Harrison Bay in Tennessee usually comes up in the discussion.

Granted, those examples are outliers and not feasible at all golf courses, but when your golfers are sitting around the breakfast table talking about your canvas, what do you want them to talk about? Wouldn't you rather they focus on an asset or something positive than complain about the slow greens or bunker sand?

As the superintendent, you have the greatest influence to leverage your best assets. Take an inventory of what makes you distinct, and then take steps to maximize its impact. If the asset you want to leverage isn't quite where you want it to be, set some goals to make it better (see above).

Despite popular opinion and contrary to most of the grumblings heard at the bar on a Friday night, it doesn't take more money to improve your golf course. As a manager in charge of the most valuable asset at your facility, you have the power to create a positive culture with a clear mission. After you have everyone headed in the right direction, employ clear standards along with photos and videos to teach your staff what you expect of them. Tracking data will allow you to set and accomplish smart goals, and leveraging the assets that make your club special will help distinguish it from all the others.

Before you know it, golfers will be flocking to your course, business will be booming, and that growth in the budget you've always longed for will follow.

*Dan Tolson, CGCS, has been the superintendent at The Club at 3 Creek in Jackson, Wyo., since 2007. He is a 19-year member of GCSAA and a past president of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA.*

*Read more: <https://www.gconline.com/course/environment/news/improving-golf-course#ixzz5zj4FNFeH>*

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The family of member of Thom Mahute on the loss of his mother on September 13th.

<https://www.heintzelmanfuneralhome.com/obituary/barbara-mahute>

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## Huntsville Golf Club



Hole # 2

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**2019 Meeting Schedule**

**September 18<sup>th</sup>**  
Huntsville Golf Club

**October 21<sup>st</sup>**  
Moselem Springs Golf Club



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