

Grass Clippings

December 2025

2026 Idaho GCSA Spring Meeting & Trade Show

Education is our top priority, and we're thrilled to present a conference to address some of the diverse responsibilities handled at your facility. Join us for an always-energizing event that will help prepare you for 2026. We'll deliver valuable education, provide ample time for product and service discussions at our trade show, and offer networking opportunities. While our events aim to benefit key employees, this is especially a great opportunity to include your equipment manager. Topics will range from interseeding success to electrical troubleshooting for turf equipment to reestablishing greens after winter kill to comparing SLAN vs. MLSN—plus several more topics. Finally, we will wrap up the event with golf at RedHawk Golf Course in Nampa, hosted by Dan Lee and Tyler Mickels.



Online registration will open early January for the **February 23 & 24 event held at the Riverside Hotel, Boise, Idaho.** Our trade show fills each year and we encourage you to reserve your booth early!

Leah Brilman, Ph.D., Director of Product Management and Technical Services

"Interseeding Success: Improve your course with reduced or no closing"

"Breeding Turfgrass for Sustainability"

*Trent Manning, CTEM
Ansley and
Settindown Creek Golf Clubs*

"Tips and Tricks for Your Maintenance Facility"

"Electrical Troubleshooting for Turf Equipment"



Jeff Jensen, GCSAA Southwest Field Staff Representative

"Whiskey Is for Drinking, Water Is for Fighting: Water Scarcity and Policy Challenges in the Western United States."



Kevin W. Frank, Ph.D., Professor & Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Michigan State University



"Winterkill: Lessons Learned for Mitigating Damage, Reestablishing Greens, and Current Winter Turf Research Efforts."

"Comparing Soil Testing Philosophies: SLAN vs. MLSN"

Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room

Our six-chapter 2026 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room private event will be at the Tin Roof of Orlando, Wednesday, 6:30 - 9:30, February 4, 2026. This eclectic space offers indoor and outdoor options. Complimentary food and beverages will be offered thanks to the generosity of our allied partners. We are soliciting sponsors and thank all who are so supportive each year.

We are Ready for Your Auction Rounds

Our auction for rounds held in conjunction with the Boise Golf Show makes a huge impact on our annual budget. We depend on high course participation to be successful—and every submission helps. Rounds for four plus carts are preferred. Proceeds from this auction help fund our continuing education and research programs, and keep our user fees from increasing at a rapid rate, as association expenses continue to rise. Please get on board and take action now! Mail your certificates to: Travis Rose, Simplot Turf & Horticulture, 1805 S. Smeed Pkwy, Ste 101, Caldwell, Idaho 83605.



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Lori Russell, Executive Director
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Idaho GCSA

Lori Russell, Executive Director
P.O. Box 5003
Missoula, MT, 59806
(406) 273-0845
E-Mail: idahogcsa@idahogcsa.org
www.idahogcsa.org

Did you know the events shown on our website homepage
are only a portion of events listed?
Click on the events tab to see a larger list.

Welcome NEW Idaho GCSA Members!

Brady Anderson
Rivers Edge Golf Club at Burley
Box 1090
Burley, ID 83318
(208) 312-8778
bradyandsara12@gmail.com

Bryan Archbold
The River Club
6515 W State St
Boise, ID 83714
(208) 861-7970
bryanarchbold1@gmail.com

Kurt Blaisdell
Juniper Hills Country Club
2510 Woodhill Way
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 241-4499
racerx42@hotmail.com

Tamie Bremer
Bremer Solutions
PO Box 15245
Spokane Valley, WA 99215
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Info about Idaho GCSA website!

- * Do you have an address change? Changing the information on Your Profile in the Member's Area will automatically update the association's database. Use of proper capitalization and spelling is appreciated.
- * Do you have any classified items? Please be sure to complete the classified section in the Member's Area.
- * **Your username is always your email address. To set your password click on forgot password and follow the prompts.**
- * Be sure to check the job announcements on a regular basis found in the members' only section of the website, idahogcsa.org.

"The Idaho Golf Course Superintendents Association is dedicated to helping its members provide the best playing conditions in an environmentally friendly manner."

President's Message

Knowing That We Can't Do It All

**Paul Venable, President
Warm Springs Golf Course, Boise, Idaho**



I hope everyone had a good season and you are enjoying a good winter.

Lately I have thought a lot about what it takes to do the job that we do. Of course there are the physical

demands. There is also the knowledge we have gained, be it from formal education or from just years of experience. But also, I think that there is a particular mindset, a way of thinking that is part of our chosen profession.

For me, and I imagine for a lot of us, this mindset has a lot to do with control and focus. There is the need to micromanage and to be in control of every aspect of the course. Sometimes there is the sense that if we want something done right, we need to do it ourselves. For some, there is the feeling that our course represents us. To present the course and ourselves in the best way takes a great deal of focus.

While this mindset is sometimes useful, or even necessary, there will come times and reasons that we need to get out of it or

alter it temporarily. Those reasons may be positive, like taking time off to spend with family, or be on our own. They can be negative—like an illness or injury. Sometimes it is a major project that requires a great deal of our attention and draws our focus. Regardless of the reason, we need to be prepared to relinquish some control. We need to realize that we cannot be everywhere or do it all.

The greatest asset we have to allow this to happen is right in front of us. Our crew. Whether it is a capable group of workers, or skilled and dependable assistants, they can be there for us when we need them. If we train and prepare them properly, they will represent the course and us when we are not available to do so.

My message to you is to surround yourselves with good people. Provide them with the skills to succeed and the opportunity to do so. Appreciate your crew and trust that they can help to get you through.

I hope everyone has a good upcoming season and I look forward to seeing you at the spring meeting.


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This Used to be Hole 9

**Mike Rapp, Falcon Crest Golf Club
Kuna, Idaho**

The first bulldozer hit the property on March 30, 2021, starting to erase what once was our Robin Hood executive golf course. This was a tough day to watch a golf course you have taken care of for 14 years just get plowed under. In its place is a



Robin Hood—Day 1 construction

brand new par 3 course and 110 houses. It is a beautiful little par 3 community but always will be driving down the street in the sub and saying, “This used to be hole 9.”

The last 4 ½ years have been quite the experience:

- ▶ New par 3 course now named the Cadet (formally known as the Robin Hood).
- ▶ Three brand new holes on the Freedom course—five, six and seven. This was a total redesign and moved

Start of New Cadet



to accommodate roads.

- ▶ New tees on 14 and 18 Falcon Crest.
- ▶ New fairway and forward tee on 16. The existing pond on 16 was made quite a bit larger and deeper for irrigation purposes. This made it necessary to reshape the forward tee and the fairway on this hole. Three additional bunkers were also added.
- ▶ The 17th hole was just about entirely made new. The existing green was kept, and the hole was shortened from 450 yards to 265 yards to accommodate a new roadway. A new pond was added to make this short par 4 a little tougher by

17 New Pond



continued page 6



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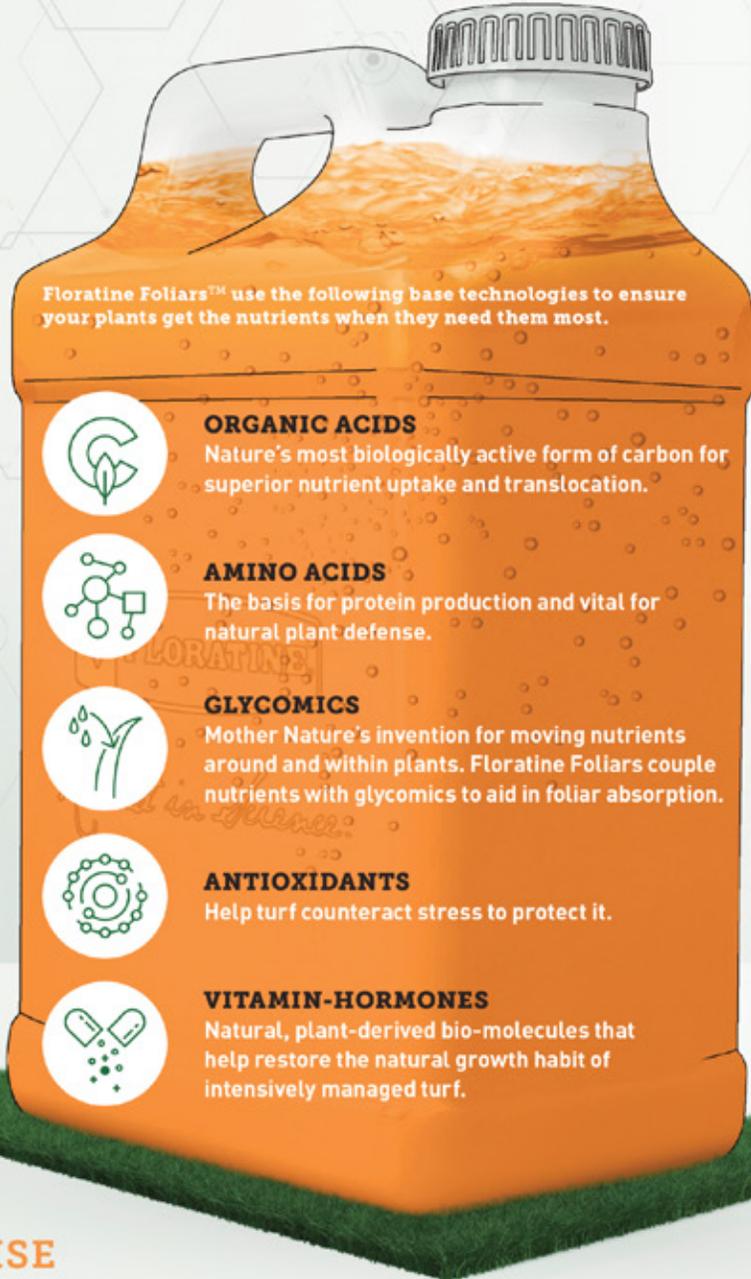
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stretch@floratinenw.com

Mike White
(425) 941-8083
mike@floratinenw.com

Forrest Goodling
(503) 849-9249
forrest@floratinenw.com

Troy Russell
(541) 297-1078
troy@floratinenw.com



Square Practice Greens

protecting the front of the green. Two new bunkers were also added at the green.

- ▲ The Freedom course and the back nine of Falcon Crest had new concrete paths added this last year. These replaced the old black cinder paths, which were awful.
- ▲ Our large practice green was replaced by two new practice greens. One 14,000 sq. ft. square practice green and also a 26,000 sq. ft. 18-hole putting course. Both of these greens will be a challenge since they both have many new square corners. They should be interesting to maintain.



Cadet Hole One

- ▲ New homeowners who really like mowers and golfers in their backyard at 6 a.m. Ha!

Looking down the road, it is going to be great when it is all finished. We will have a new golf shop and cart barn, a new fitness center and swimming pools, indoor and outdoor pickleball courts, new restaurant, new lockers rooms, and a new maintenance shop and equipment.

I look forward to the day that the major construction projects end and I can get back to maintaining the golf course as it is. I will probably still hear earth movers and dozers in my sleep.

Idaho GCSA is a Chapter Legacy Leader

GCSAA is celebrating 100 years! The Idaho GCSA board of directors has approved a contribution of \$5,000 to reach the Chapter Legacy Leader level of GCSAA's Colonel John Morley Centennial Campaign. This endowment has been created to fund new and innovative initiatives for the next 100 years.



New Members continued from page 2

D. J. Caldwell
IPEX/Harco
2070 Orchard Bloom Dr
Windsor, CO 80550
(970) 815.6070
DJ.Caldwell@IpexAmerica.com

John Delaney
McCall Golf Club
1001 Violet Way
McCall, ID 83638
(541) 659-7712
Johnddelaney1958@gmail.com

Cody Harmon
Albatross Golf Supply
3386 W Libby LN
Hayden, ID 83835
406-595-5977
Cody.Harmon@albatrossgmc.com

Dallas Jackson
The Club at Spurwing
1331 West Rush Road
Eagle, ID 83616
(208) 995-3136
djacksonoutside@yahoo.com

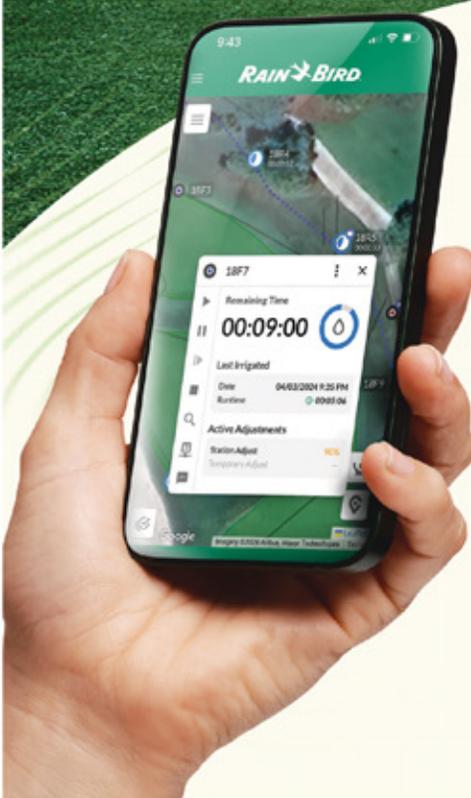
Mike Paul
Salmon Valley Golf Course
109 12th St
Salmon, ID 83467
(208) 940-0904
cur79@yahoo.com

Gregg Sorensen
CMF Global
27 E Hunters Hvn
Saratoga Springs, UT 84045
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Nick Crum

Irrigation Specialist
208-986-0277
ncrum@pacificgolfturf.com

Jason Aanestad

Director of Irrigation
208-477-3755
jaanestad@pacificgolfturf.com

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Opening Golf Courses to Winter Recreation Is a PR Win

DJ Woodruff

Purple Sage Golf Course, Evanston, Wyo.

Many golf courses sit dormant and unused through winter months. But some communities are using golf courses as snow-covered ski trails for cross-country skiing enthusiasts. It's not just about utilizing unused space; it's

also proving to be a smart public relations move.

For years, golf courses have faced criticism from non-golfers. Accusations range from environmental concerns, like excessive water use and pesticide runoff, to perceptions of exclusivity and poor use of land. Allowing winter access to these beautiful landscapes helps address those concerns.

Cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and even fat bikers are finding joy in exploring golf courses when the snow hits. These users often represent a demographic that might never set foot on a golf course during the regular season. By welcoming them during the off-season, golf course managers are building goodwill with the broader community.

This increased access helps reshape public perception.

Suddenly, a golf course is no longer a drain on the community but rather a part of the local winter recreation scene. That's a big win, particularly for publicly funded or municipally owned courses. Residents are more likely to support investments in land that has year-round uses.

The benefits extend beyond PR. This kind of seasonal dual-use supports local health and wellness initiatives by providing accessible spaces for winter exercise. It also encourages a connection to nature.

For golf courses, the transition doesn't require major investments. Grooming ski trails is low-cost once the initial investment is made. The environmental impact is minimal. Sensitive areas such as greens and tee boxes can be avoided with signage and basic guidelines.

In a time when public land use is increasingly scrutinized, and communities are hungry for inclusive, multi-season spaces, opening golf courses to cross-country skiing is more than just a nice gesture. It's an easy way to build community support and stay relevant year-round.

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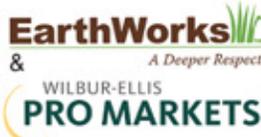
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The experience was beneficial thanks to so many people who supported the event and who participated! We appreciate all of you for making this conference happen.

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From Forest Fires to Fairways: My Journey in Golf Course Management

**Ernesto Gamez, Assistant Superintendent
Hillcrest Country Club, Boise, Idaho**

The path that led me to becoming an assistant golf course superintendent in Boise has been anything but typical. I was born in Mexico, where my roots are firmly planted, and I carry my culture and upbringing with me in everything I do. Like many who journey to the United States, I arrived with a desire to work hard, build a stable future and seek out opportunities that might not have existed for me otherwise.

Before I ever touched a fairway mower or learned the basics of turf grass science, my early work involved something very different: logging and helping fight forest fires with a helicopter company. When I started with the company, I was a “hooker” (that’s what the person who attached logs to the helicopters’ longline using chokers was called). This role required physical endurance and strict adherence to safety protocols. I also travelled across the United States following the same helicopter company to active fires. The trek might be a couple hundred miles, or I might end up driving from Oregon to Florida. Upon arrival to a job site, my main responsibility was helping with the maintenance and upkeep of the Sikorsky S-61 helicopter — checking the transmission oil, greasing the rotors, cleaning the retardant off the water tank. Working overnight was not unheard of if an

engine or transmission required maintenance; it was demanding and exhausting. But through that experience, I learned discipline, teamwork and the importance of staying calm under pressure. I also developed a deep respect for the power of nature — something that translates well into the world of golf course management. Those lessons have never left me, and they continue to shape the way I approach my role every day.

My introduction to the golf industry came when I started working at Crane Creek Country Club in Boise. At first, everything was new — the equipment, the process, the science behind healthy turf, and even the culture of golf itself. But something about it captured my interest right away. I found satisfaction in the combination of physical work, technical knowledge, and the daily challenge of maintaining beautiful playing surfaces.

After gaining valuable experience at Crane Creek, I eventually joined the team at Hillcrest Country Club, also in Boise, where



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I have now worked for over 12 years. During that time, I have had the chance to learn every aspect of golf course maintenance, from early morning setups to irrigation repairs and tournament preparation. This hands-on experience, along with the guidance of talented superintendents and coworkers, allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. And I'm proud that I was promoted to assistant golf course superintendent eight years ago, a role that I continue to approach with dedication and gratitude.

One of my favorite parts of working at Hillcrest is hosting the Albertson's Boise Open, a tournament that brings excitement, guests from all over, and a high level of professionalism to our golf course each year. Preparing for the tournament is challenging,

but it's also incredibly rewarding to see how the course shines under the spotlight and to be part of something that showcases the hard work of our entire team.

Beyond Hillcrest, I have had the privilege of volunteering at PGA Tour events at Torrey Pines and PGA West, which gave me the chance to learn from some of the best in the industry and experience golf course management on a world-class stage.

Looking back, I am proud of the path that has brought me from the forest of my past to the fairways I care for today. I'm grateful to be part of the Idaho golf community and excited to continue growing in a profession that I truly love.

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Exploring Autonomous Mowing at The Valley Club

Jason Sigmund, The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho



As The Valley Club continues to pursue innovative ways to elevate course conditions while balancing rising operational costs, autonomous mowing technology has emerged as a promising opportunity. Many clubs

in Idaho and across the country are beginning to integrate autonomous equipment into their maintenance programs, and early results—ranging from improved turf consistency to greater labor efficiency—have encouraged us to take a closer look.

One of the primary drivers behind this exploration is the increasing difficulty of finding reliable seasonal labor. Like many courses in the Mountain West, The Valley Club depends on a combination of local staff and H-2B visa workers to meet peak-season maintenance needs. As labor costs rise and the availability of workers becomes more unpredictable, autonomous mowing provides a way to stabilize daily mowing operations without compromising quality.

Our early trials with an autonomous mower around the practice green have also brought unexpected moments of learning and plenty of humor. The staff reactions alone have been entertaining. Some employees were eager to understand how the machine works, while others gave it the “evil eye,” unsure of what to make of it. It has taken time—and will continue to take time—to help everyone understand that the goal is not to replace jobs, but to strengthen the team by automating repetitive daily tasks.

The mower has occasionally created its own comedy as well. It gets stuck on curbs, tangles itself in the elk-fence rope, sprints back to its charging station when it decides it’s raining too hard, and sometimes refuses to mow when temperatures drop. It even had a run-in with a certain parked superintendent’s vehicle that was parked in its programmed path. But these quirks have helped the team learn, adapt, and ultimately become better operators of new technology. Mapping mowing routes, experimenting with patterns, and fine-tuning boundaries has also been one of the most enjoyable—and educational—parts of the process.

A pleasant surprise has been the level of interest and support from the membership. Many members have asked for demonstrations and have been enthusiastic about seeing the mower operate during the day. Even more encouraging, mowing the practice area every day has produced noticeably healthier turf, with reduced plant stress and more uniform growth—an agronomic benefit that aligns directly with our long-term goals.

With so many autonomous mowers entering the market with Toro, John Deere, Kress, FireFly, and Husqvarna improving each year, it will be exciting to see how the technology evolves. What feels experimental today may become standard practice in the near future.

Ultimately, our interest in autonomous mowing is not about replacing people—it’s about elevating the work we do, strengthening the team, and positioning The Valley Club for the future. As superintendents, we constantly balance expectations, budgets, and environmental pressures. Autonomous mowing represents a tool that can help us meet those challenges head-on, ensure consistent playing conditions, and continue delivering a high-quality golf experience for our members.

GCSAA BMP Tool Now Simpler to Use

GCSAA recently rolled out an enhanced BMP tool that’s simpler to use, has fewer steps to complete, and is more useful for facilities. The tool’s significant upgrades allow you to better tell your story, manage your risk, and receive personalized support from the experts at GCSAA.

Implementing BMPs is essential to the future of our profession to help document the science-based practices and responsible course management that benefit everyone in the community your golf course serves.

Watch for more information from GCSAA concerning the resources that will be available to help you complete your facility BMPs with the simpler-to-use tool.

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GCSAA Delegates Meeting 2025: A Landmark Year of Connection, Growth, and Centennial Celebration

The 2025 GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting, held October 27–29 in Lawrence, Kansas, marked one of the most forward-looking gatherings in recent association history. With the Centennial celebration fast approaching and major initiatives underway in government affairs, workforce development, and member engagement, this year's meeting centered on a powerful theme: connection + collaboration.

Idaho Chapter Delegate, Brandon Crim

Delegate Outcomes 2025

Over three days, delegates shared ideas, evaluated progress, and helped shape the strategic direction for GCSAA as it enters its next century of service. Yes, 100 years! That's older than most irrigation systems... but in much better condition.

A Strong Opening: Leadership Sets the Tone

GCSAA Director Paul L. Carter, CGCS, welcomed delegates with a message about strengthening relationships across chapters and fostering open dialogue. He highlighted the vital role first-time delegates play in bringing fresh perspectives to the national conversation.

President T.A. Barker, CGCS, followed with reflections on GCSAA's 100-year history. He emphasized unity, innovation, and gratitude — noting that the association's greatest achievements have always stemmed from collective effort and shared purpose. His message served as both a celebration of the past and an invitation to build the future together.

CEO Rhett Evans provided an encouraging update on organizational health. GCSAA reported \$21.7 million in revenue, \$8.3 million in reserves, and a membership base exceeding 20,500. Evans underscored GCSAA's philosophy of reinvesting in members, rather than accumulating excessive reserves, and used a mountain-climbing metaphor to remind delegates that reaching new heights requires teamwork.

Government Affairs: Trust, Transparency & BMP Adoption

Government affairs took center stage as staff outlined key policy issues affecting golf facilities, including equipment regulation, water management, and emerging pesticide requirements under the ESA.

A major focus was the continued push for facility-level Best Management Practice (BMP) adoption. GCSAA launched a new BMP adoption tool featuring progress tracking and printable certificates, with the goal of maximizing adoption by Spring 2026 — in time for upcoming EPA label changes.

Delegates were encouraged to:

- Promote BMP webinars
- Invite GA staff to chapter meetings
- Work toward full facility adoption across their regions

Centennial Celebration: Honoring 100 Years of GCSAA

The upcoming Centennial will be a year-long celebration culminating at the 2026 Conference and Trade Show. Highlights include:

- A large-scale Centennial exhibit
- Opening ceremony and reception
- Memorial Golf Tournament
- Health-in-Action 5K/2K
- Closing keynote at the new Georgia World Congress Center venue
- A special Centennial celebration at ICON Park
- A new statue honoring founder Col. John Morley

The Col. John Morley Centennial Campaign aims to raise \$1 million for endowment support, with over \$200,000 pledged so far. Donor recognition will include plaques, pavers, and displays at the new GCSAA headquarters. Chapters were encouraged to use the supplied Centennial toolkit and find creative ways to recognize the anniversary locally.

Rounds 4 Research Sets Records

One of the most successful programs highlighted was Rounds 4 Research, which raised a record \$753,000 in 2025 with 98% of rounds sold. The 2026 goal is even more ambitious: \$831,000 and 3,100 bidders. Actions to help achieve goals:

- Year-round promotion
- Leveraging local PGA and state golf associations
- Encouraging course managers to list donated rounds early and often

Career Pathways & Workforce Development: Meeting the Labor Challenge

GCSAA continues to expand its programs to strengthen the golf industry workforce:

- First Green has engaged more than 25,000 students since 2018.
- Partnerships with FFA provide exposure to more than one million youth.
- Operation Double Eagle is scaling, providing career opportunities for veterans.
- New training tools — including crew training videos, the Greenkeeper Certificate Program, and a forthcoming, Spray Technician Certificate — support career advancement at all levels.

Delegates emphasized local outreach, youth engagement, and utilizing these tools to grow and retain talent.

Membership Health & Retention: Strong Growth, Clear Priorities

GCSAA continues to show strong membership health, with dues representing just 26% of total revenue — far less than most

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Delegates Meeting

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associations. A dues increase approved last year with 91% member support has not negatively impacted retention.

Key membership goals discussed included:

- Appealing to younger professionals
- Communicating the clear value of GCSAA programs
- Improving access to training and certification
- Enhancing chapter-level onboarding

Delegates were urged to invite GCSAA field staff to local events and make use of communication tools such as slide decks and educational videos.

Breakout Sessions: Collaboration in Action

Delegates engaged in dynamic breakout discussions on:

- Creative Centennial celebrations
- Improving communication through QR codes, videos, and digital content
- Strategies to incentivize BMP adoption
- Strengthening partnerships with field staff
- Membership recruitment, youth engagement, and building a deeper bench of chapter leaders

Consensus emerged around increasing transparency, refining onboarding processes, and creating more structured opportunities for chapters to share ideas.

Town Hall: Questions, Ideas & Forward Momentum

The Town Hall session covered topics ranging from branding and dual Centennial logos to enhanced partnerships with USGA,

PGA, and CMAA. Delegates discussed:

- Growth in CGCS certification
- Shifting the compensation survey to a more strategic timeframe
- Career services evolution and increased employer engagement

The open Q&A format reinforced the culture of collaboration GCSAA hopes to expand in its next century.

Election Preview for 2026

Delegates received the official slate to be voted on at the annual meeting.

2026 Board of Director Officers:

President: Paul Carter (unopposed)
Vice President: Marc Weston (unopposed)
Secretary/Treasurer: Steven J. Hammon and
H. Scott Griffith

2026 Director Candidates:

Aaron Funkhauser	Renee Geyer
Ryan Kraushofer	Brandon Razo
Brian Roth	Matthew Rusch

With two two-year positions and one one-year position open, the election is expected to be an active one.

Closing Thoughts: Looking Ahead to the Next Century

In his closing message, President Carter thanked delegates for their participation and challenged them to carry forward the core values that shaped GCSAA's first 100 years: community, stewardship, service, and innovation.



Greg Baer

Irrigation Consultant

10027 N. Palisades Wy.
Boise, ID 83714
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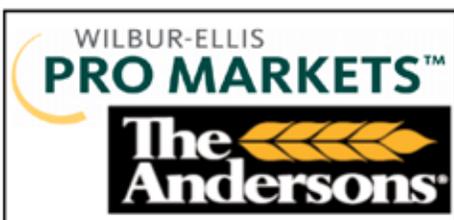
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