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TALKING TURF

NORTH CENTRAL TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2022

President's Message

By Cammi Campbell, Minot Park District

Greetings NCTGA members,

Spring came long enough for some golf courses to get opened in the Bismarck and Minot area for a couple weeks. Now we are under a historic spring blizzard dropping record breaking amounts of snow in western ND. Most towns are completely shut down until it stops. We really needed the moisture. Some areas are getting more snow in one day then we got in the last two years. As I write this, final snow totals aren't in. Minot is expected to get hit the hardest, with totals reaching up to 3 feet.

I am once again honored to be the NCTGA President for a 3rd year. It is rewarding to sit on the board, as President, and see the changes in our organization and the challenges we have overcome. This year's conference was slowed down a bit by a full-blown blizzard. It was some of the worst conditions I have driven in for some time. The blizzard caused a whole host of issues- no name badges or banners and some speakers had to fill in over zoom. Thursday all of our speakers were in person, we had a good turnout, and we finished the conference strong. I want to Thank everyone that battled the weather and the closed

roads to attend our conference. It shows the dedication of our members and that's why we are able to continue as an organization. It was great to be in person this year, seeing everyone and socializing. I think everyone had a great time and had many topics to catch up on. We had our annual meeting on Wednesday, and I want to welcome our 3 new board directors, Tyler Foster, Collin Cannon, and Jesse Lunde. They will serve a 3-year term and I'm excited to see what assistance they bring to the board. Coming off the board was Victor Heitkamp, Melissa Grafenauer, and Kyle Fick; they served on the NCTGA board for some years and we will greatly miss them. Vice President is Tim Fleegel. Treasurer is Lucas Palczewski. Secretary is Matt Schmid. I am looking forward to what the year has ahead for us.

I want to invite everyone to a Spring Event. Tyler Foster was very generous, and he arranged a great deal at Dakota Winds GC in Hankinson, ND...
Continued on page 3





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Anthracnose

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Snow Mold

*Dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold were the five most common diseases according to a national survey among golf course superintendents.

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President's Message continued

Continued from page 1

...This will be a great opportunity to get together and experience another great golf course in North Dakota. We will have a noon shotgun, 2 person teams. Play your own ball, record the lowest score for each hole. We will offer mulligans and skins, and some proximity prizes. We will have appetizers and the opportunity to socialize afterwards. We will have NCTGA clothing available at the registration table to purchase. The Dakota Magic Casino and Hotel is an option for those that are traveling a distance and want to spend the night.

Our 2022 Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, September 12, hosted by Bruce Ruppert at the Vardon Golf Club in Minot, ND. This will coincide with The Parks and Recrea-

tion conference which is September 13th-15th, also in Minot. We will have more details on this golf event in the summer newsletter.

Sincerely,
Cammi Campbell



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Join us for a fun-filled day of golf and networking opportunities. **NCTGA at Dakota Winds** is an opportunity for all NCTGA members to play golf at one of North Dakota's premier golf courses.

NCTGA board member, Tyler Foster, and his staff are excited to showcase their golf course to fellow NCTGA members. Dakota Winds is just an hour drive from both Fargo, ND and Fergus Falls, MN. Those driving longer distances can leave in the morning, arriving just prior to the noon shotgun start, or take advantage of the hotel on property the night before.

PRESENTS NCTGA at Dakota Winds

LOCATION:

Dakota Winds Golf Course

16849 102nd St. SE
Hankinson, ND 58041

DATE:

Monday, May 16th, 2022

GOLF FORMAT: Two Person Teamed Best Ball. Each player will play their own ball for the hole. The lowest score from an individual team member will be counted as the score for that hole.

COST: \$20/person for golf.

SCHEDULE:

11:00am Arrival at Dakota Winds
(Lunch on your own Dakota Winds Tavern)

12:00pm Shotgun start

5:00pm Golf awards & social

7:00pm Departure back home

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2022 Conference Report

A sincere **THANK YOU** to all NCTGA members who braved the blizzard to attend our 37th Annual Conference and Trade Show from February 22nd-24th, 2022 at the Holiday Inn in Fargo. Pre-registration for this year's conference included 96 NCTGA members, and 25 vendor companies with 42 individuals representing. Unfortunately, due to the blizzard that occurred prior to and during registration, and throughout the day on Tuesday, our total attendance was just more than half of what we were anticipating. Attendance improved throughout the conference, finishing very strong on the final day with a packed house for our in-person speakers.



The drive on 94W Tuesday morning

Educational sessions

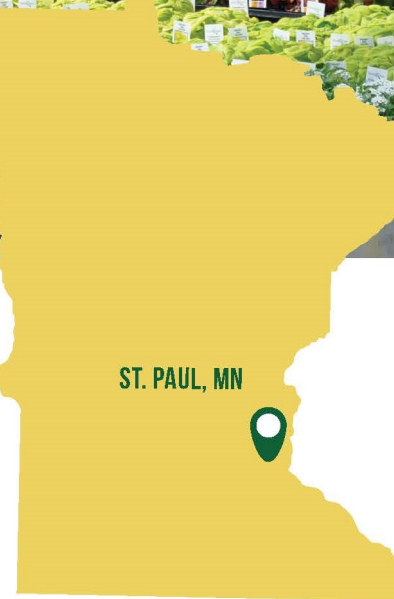
With over 13 hours of educational content throughout the three days, NCTGA members were educated on a wide range of topics. On Tuesday, Steve Randall provided a state of the golf industry, with a very positive message. The father-son duo of Cole and August Flick taught us the finer points of stretching a budget to provide high quality baseball fields. We also heard from University of Minnesota Extension Educator- Maggie Reiter, and the popular tag-team of Chauncy Schultz and Tommy Grafenauer on weather trends. The trade show and social followed.

On Wednesday, we opened the day with several vendor seminars, followed by trade show time. The NCTGA Annual Meeting was held from 11:30am-12:15pm; covering association financials, events, and voting on new board members. In the afternoon we held concurrent sessions from Eric Christiansen of EC Design, Dr. John Ball from SDSU, Marcus Campbell of the St. Paul Saints Baseball Club, and Esther McGinnis from NDSU Extension. Our social was held at 5pm, including silent auction and 50/50 raffle winners.

Thursday morning seminars were exceptional. We started the day with Jac Price from MTI Distributing discussing Tier 4 Engine Maintenance. Then Jodi Bruns of NDSU Extension discussed how to find our strengths as individuals. Our keynote speaker for the conference was retired Colonel Terry Branham on the topic of "Courage and Overcoming Obstacles in Your Life." Col Branham's story was truly an inspiration.

Silent Auction/Raffle

We had a very successful silent auction considering reduced attendance due to the blizzard. In total we generated \$1635 from vendor donated items. Thank you to all vendor members who supported this year's silent auction and to NCTGA members for buying the items. From the silent auction we donated \$1500 to Col Terry Branham and Tee it up for the Troops. This money will go towards building ramps for veterans confined to wheelchairs. With the 50/50 raffle we were able to raise \$575 and this money was donated directly to the Wee One Foundation. Additionally, the NCTGA board approved a \$500 donation to the Dassel-Cokato Baseball Club in lieu of an honorarium to Cole and Gus Flick for presenting at our conference.



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2022 Conference Report Continued...

Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the five 2021 scholarship recipients. In total, NCTGA funded \$2000 in Legacy scholarships and the North Dakota Golf Association (NDGA) funded a \$1000 turfgrass student scholarship. Thank you the NDGA for continuing to support turfgrass student scholarships, and thank you to all scholarship applicants.

NDGA Turfgrass Scholarship

Hallie Counts received the \$1,000 NDGA Scholarship. Hallie is a junior majoring in Sports and Urban Turfgrass Management at North Dakota State University. Originally from Dunseith, ND, Hallie currently works at both Osgood Golf Course as a groundskeeper and Hornbacher's as a florist.

Legacy Scholarships

In our second year of offering the \$500 Legacy Scholarship, we had four scholarship winners:

Jane Hetletved

(daughter of Dustin Hetletved, Valley Golf Association)

Keagan Neppl

(daughter of Alexis Peltier, The Tessman Company)

Mikayla Santjer

(daughter of Ross Santjer, Moccasin Creek GC)

Parker Wood

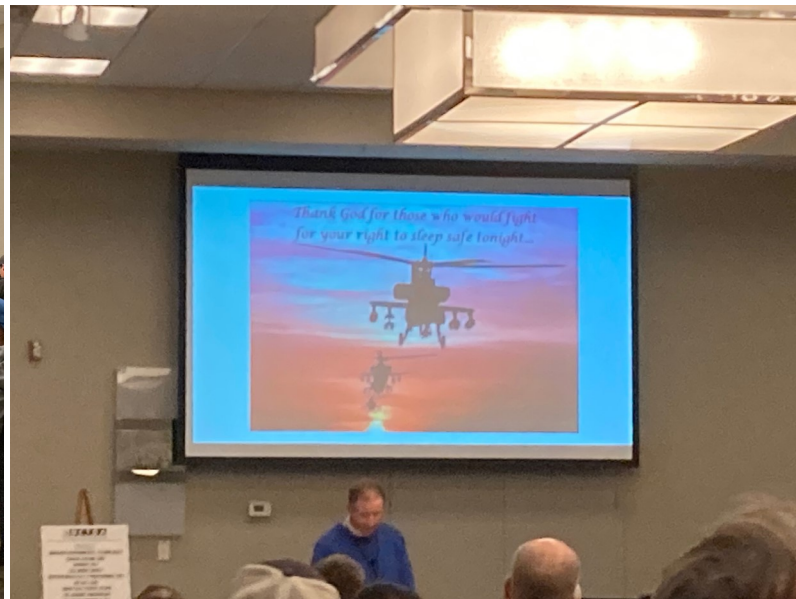
(son of David Wood, Oxbow CC)

Congratulations to the 2021 scholarship recipients!



**the \$1000 2021 NCTGA Turfgrass Scholarship was not awarded due to lack of qualified applicants and this money helped to fund the Legacy Scholarships*

Thank You 2022 Conference Attendees!



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Diamonds in the Rough

By Kyle Fick, Bully Pulpit Golf Course

I grew up the son of a hoarder. That might sound harsh, but it's true. We lived on a small hobby farm about 3 or 4 miles from a town of around 450 in population. The nearest communities of stature were 20 and 25 minutes away. When I went to college at the U of MN, Twin Cities Campus, I became aware at how accessible goods and services are too so many others out there. Throughout my career in the green industry, I've been fortunate enough to work in rural, or very rural, areas the entire time. I've had a fair number of interns and assistants that have come and gone, and they've come from all walks of life. The deeper I get into working with the next generation, and this is not a millennial criticizing piece, the more I see individuals coming from urban settings. The one constant that they leave with is an appreciation of the resourcefulness of the operation here at Bully Pulpit.

I think it goes back to the hoarding trend of my father. They say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and boy do I hate to admit that to be true. I always saw his tendencies as cluttered, and disorganized with a plethora of junked out pieces and parts here and there. Now that I've been in the golf course trade for going on 20 years, I've had to look back in the mirror and say "you are your father's son." While growing up, even through the disorganized shelves, boxes, and corners, my dad seemed to know and remember where everything was. As I near my newest season at Bully Pulpit I've become aware at how many times I've catalogued these same types of



junked out, and seemingly worthless items. And as the increases in inflation keep going, along with restricted availability, I'm realizing more and more the importance of that recognized hoarding, make that resourcefulness!

The reason I've agreed to share my thoughts is that we are entering unprecedented times of challenges in our industry. I've watched the increase in goods skyrocket in the past year. Living in the remote west of North Dakota, we don't have the luxury of running down town for this that and the next thing. What was once 1 or 2 day shipping is becoming longer, and the availability of the good might not be what I wanted either. So I've learned to adapt and hold onto certain things until I can think of a way to fix myself, with the help of...

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...others, or outsource to the proper teams to get it done.

My focus today is going to be on irrigation heads. We have a Rainbird system here at the BP, but I'm sure the prices of the Toro folks will ring true as well, and the same challenges arise. What I'm about to say is probably a poor reflection on my management style, but it's the reality.

- How many times have you gone out in the field to work on a stuck or improperly performing irrigation head?
- How many times do you attempt to fix it before you get pulled into something else and have to either delegate the issue to an irrigation tech or assistant (if you have one!)?
- How often do you become frustrated and realize you've wasted the same amount of time messing with that head vs if you'd have just dug it up and screwed a new one on?

We have some challenges with water quality out here in the arid region of the West. There are several impurities that cause some issues with our rotors, and casings in general. For whatever reason, some issues, I just can't fix in a timely fashion and have to realize it's easier to cut my losses, isolate a zone and twist a new head on the swing joint. I'd prefer to keep teaching and mentoring, but I'm sure I'm not alone when I say we've worked on heads, got them to perform, only to have issues a couple days later.

If you are pulled in multiple directions, you may not have the time to run back and forth to answer questions and teach new staffers every time there's an issue. So when that frustration and time restriction takes center stage, and you decide to dig up the head and twist a known working one on, what do you do with the old one?

- Do you have a testing station where you can then diagnose the issue without golfers

bombarding you?

- Do you have folks on your staff who are irrigation savants that can diagnose and fix issues rapidly?
- Do you ask a staffer to properly identify the rotor/head in a way that you know what its issues and problems are so when you have the time to try something together, later, there's a systematic approach to the diagnosis and repair?

I try for the last one. But the reality is, the kid I asked/delegated to make that distinction, probably just threw it in a corner and then left for school before you ever got to it. With all the flooding, and changeover in seasonal staff, I looked at our accumulation of "troubled heads" a few winters ago and thought: We have to do something about this! The money tied up in un-diagnosed...

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...problems was eating me up. I recalled an advertisement or flyer I got in the mail from a company called Sports Turf Irrigation out of Placentia, California. They basically advertised that they'll fix any head or rotor, Toro or Rainbird, for a fraction of the cost of a new purchase. I saw a recent flyer for the pre-season sale on Rainbird 900/950's and 700/752's, and it reinforced my decision to keep working with these guys.

I had to do a few things.

1. I had to send in a sample of enough heads to see what the cost was going to be. I started back in 2020 with a dozen heads. I made full assemblies out of 750's and 751's that had quit turning, and paired them with cases that were marked one way or the other as chronic weepers, stuck, etc. Same for some 950's. I sent them off. They went through them, at a cost of \$98 per unit average for repair. I compared that to a new out of the case assembly at around \$300 (at the time), or a rotor replacement which was probably the same cost.
2. I had to look at the time I, an assistant, and usually another spend on repairs 1 if not 2 times. The value of that per hour can easily exceed \$100 bucks. For me, in my operation, it's cheaper for me to put those troubled heads into a known location and send them off annually in the winter (reduced rates!) for repair. They'll fix what needs fixing. Usually new selector keys, pilot tubes, bottom valve are common. If something is unfixable, they'll let me know, and I can then make a decision.
3. I repeated this in 2021 with 9 assemblies at an average of \$80 per unit, and again this past year with 17 pieces that cost around \$132 each for repair. Out of new cartons, those same 17 assemblies would set you back around \$5600.

I believe I've saved our club a substantial amount of cash, and have also resourced troubled or damaged pieces back into the field. They do a few good things: Pay shipping to get repair heads to their factory (customer pays return), pressure test with water, and cleanup everything. They also have a few things for sale that could be of interest. One item I read about on Turfnet, and saw they carried was repair fitting called KwikRepair. Look them up. I've been begging one vendor to carry them. They are great. If things get tough to find, you can even purchase full, reconditioned assemblies. It might be you are simply trying to get by for a couple years till a renovation, and need a cost effective alternative to get by.

Maybe someday I'll have more time and will be able to ween myself off of Sports Turf's services, but for now I'll continue to do my business with them. Oh, and for anyone doing irrigation upgrades or new systems, they buy old rotors, assemblies, cases and I think even controllers. Instead of filling a landfill or dumpster, think about your hourly value, and what it costs to even work on a delinquent irrigation head!

(Editors note: Thank you to NCTGA member Kyle Fick for submitting this quality article for Talking Turf. If you would be interested in submitting an article for this quarterly newsletter, please reach out to an NCTGA board member, or Sam Bauer. We are always looking for articles from NCTGA members)



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Board Member Profile: Tyler Foster

Tyler Foster joined the NCTGA Board of Directors in 2022. This spring he will host the NCTGA at Dakota Winds Spring Golf Event on Monday, May 16th. Below, Tyler answers a few questions about his background.

Employer

Dakota Magic Casino- Dakota Winds Golf Course

Job Title

Head Golf Course Superintendent

Education

After High School in Milbank, SD I pursued a Bachelors of Fine Arts at The University of South Dakota. After 3.5 years I decided to make a change and focus my efforts on turfgrass management. I then moved to Sheridan, WY to attend Sheridan College for a horticulture/turfgrass management degree. While there, I interned at The Powder Horn Golf Community and when my internship was complete I took the spray technician position until I graduated with an AAS in Horticulture/Turfgrass Mgt.



Years of Service in Your Position

This season marks my 19th year in the golf industry. I started on the grounds crew at Pine Hills Golf Club in Milbank, SD in 2003 and have worked at a golf course every summer since. Through college, I spent two seasons under Jason Busch at The Powder Horn. When a position as the Assistant superintendent at Lee Park in Aberdeen, SD opened up, I worked under Charles Kornman for two seasons. After Lee Park, I moved to Ray, ND to take the Assistant superintendent position at The Links of North Dakota. A year later I was promoted to Golf Course Superintendent and held that position for 6 years. While there, the golf course went from #75 on Golfweek's Top Playable Courses to #35. Last March, my wife and I decided to make the move closer to our hometown so I accepted my current position as Golf Course Superintendent for Dakota Winds Golf Course at Dakota Magic Casino.

Favorite Part of the Turf Industry

Honestly, my favorite part of the job is seeing the progress the crew makes for the betterment of the property. Everything that is done on course can have a tangible and visual improvement. It is definitely a sense of pride when the course is looking the best it can with the circumstances that we've been given.

Favorite Tool in the Shop

I wouldn't necessarily call it a tool but my answer for this every time is my team. Nothing happens without them, plain and simple. I still am amazed everyday at how my team can solve problems at hand and learn.

When it comes to a physical "tool" I'm torn between the moisture meter and the sprayer.

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Board Member Profile: Tyler Foster

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Favorite Job to Perform in this Position

I love directing my team. I really enjoy checking items off the never-ending list of issues to address.

Any Projects or Big Events this Year

Yes. We have quite a few irons in the fire. At the moment we are in the preliminary irrigation design stages with Erik Christiansen at EC Design Group. This project will hopefully develop into a full replacement of our current irrigation system.

We also started a major drainage project last fall that will alleviate a problem area in a key design feature to one of our reversible holes. We will not be able to finish work on that area until the ground conditions will allow.

After having experienced a full season at a new facility, I have a long list of items that need to be addressed and my team and I are starting to plan more projects for the future.

There are quite a few events already scheduled on our calendar but we hope to get a few more booked for the year. Of course, we're honored to have the privilege to host the 2022 Spring Golf Outing for the NCTGA members.

Favorite Hobby

I love to hunt and spend time outdoors. But by far, my favorite hobby is ice fishing. I spend more time in my fish house than I do at my home in the winter months.



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Searching for a stress-less spring

By Gary Deters, U of MN

Spring usually means exciting times for anyone who likes outdoor activities involving turfgrass. As the days get longer and the snow recedes, the turfgrass underneath begins to reveal itself (Figure 1 and 2). For those whose jobs do not involve caring for turf areas, it might be surprising how very stressful spring is for a professional turfgrass manager. Dead turf on golf course greens can lead to closure of the course to reseed or the need to play on temporary greens, leading to reduced revenue and a loss of enjoyment to those who want to play the course. For this reason, a golf course superintendent always wants to begin the season with a healthy stand of turf. This can also be said for the turf manager of a park, sod farm, soccer field, baseball field, and any turf areas where there is an outdoor activity. It takes a lot of time, thought, and hard work to get back to “normal” standards, which is why there is a lot of anxiety about even the idea of dead turf.

During my time working on a golf course, first as assistant and then as a superintendent, we had dead turf on several occasions. In most cases it was dead *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) on the fairway (Figure 3) but there was one spring when



Figure 1. Low areas often create temporary ice ponds. The length of time the ice remains could lead to damage depending on species of turfgrass. Photo – Gary Deters.

three greens were affected. We needed to have three temporary greens to start the season while newly sown seed germinated and grew strong enough to withstand golfer traffic and summer heat stress. Although losing three greens to winter damage might sound awful (it is), over the last decade there have been several golf courses in the Twin Cities that have lost most of their greens and fairways to winter damage. In recent years, this...

Continued on page 18

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...challenge has caused some courses to temporarily close in order to regrass greens, tee boxes, and/or fairways with the newest cultivars of creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) to better withstand winter turf injury. There are a lot of important factors that go into selecting the right species of turfgrass for each golf course, but winter survival is at the top of the list. The Mother



Figure 2. National Turfgrass Evaluation Program creeping bentgrass greens trial winter photo with melted snow (top) versus summer (bottom). Photo – Gary Deters.

Nature element of turfgrass management is real and there will be some winters when no matter the preventative measures winter injury or death will take place. This is just another reason why there can be anxiety about spring and the snow melt while it is happening.

The University of Minnesota Turfgrass Science team recently received a large grant to study winter injury of turfgrasses. Success of the project

depends on help from professional turfgrass managers—we are appreciative of the many golf course superintendents who have given their time to help monitor winter conditions on their course. Some of these superintendents have also helped



Figure 3. Spotty turf damage on a golf course fairway. Photo – Gary Deters.

by hosting environmental sensing nodes on their course so that we can learn more about the factors that bring damage to turf surfaces. Past work funded by the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendent's Association laid the groundwork for this initiative. With the help of superintendents around the world, many of whom are now dealing with having to recover from winter damage on their courses, we hope to find solutions that allow golf course superintendents to enjoy spring as much as those who use the golf course.

(Editor's note: Reprinted via the University of Minnesota Turfgrass Science webpage: <https://turf.umn.edu/searching-stress-less-spring>)

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UMN Crookston is hosting a Golf & Turf and Horticulture Exploration Day for students to come to campus and experience a day in the life of a Golden Eagle!

We invite any interested students to come to campus on **Friday, April 22nd** for this event. Check-in starts at 12:30p.m. and will include tours of our greenhouse facilities, introductions to our Golf Turf & Horticulture faculty members, and experience hands-on learning labs. Get a glimpse of what being a Golf Turf & Horticulture student is like on our campus. If you know of anyone that might be interested, please share with them.

Registration for Golf & Turf and Horticulture Exploration Day is OPEN!

Space is limited so students should register early by clicking the link below.

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

For any questions about this event, reach out to:

Jane Strand
Admissions Counselor
Email: stran743@crk.umn.edu
Office Phone: 218-281-8583
Text: 218-275-6213



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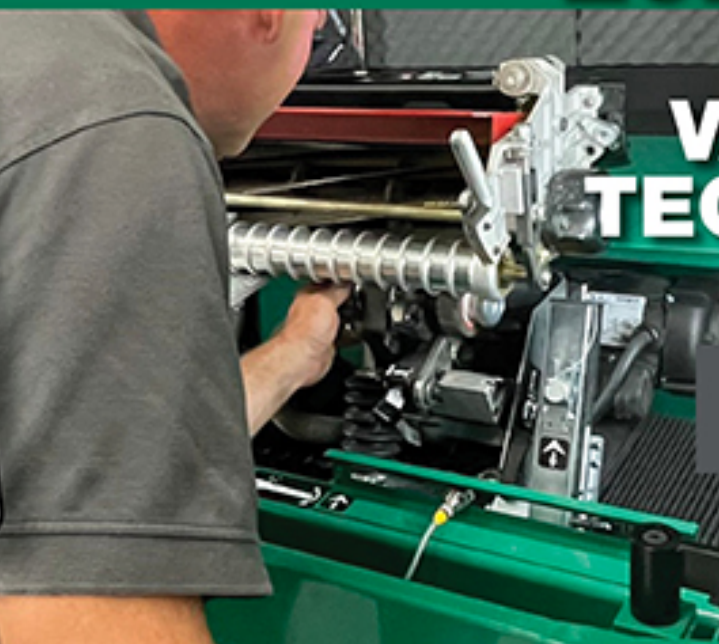


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Not only will the winner join you for a complimentary trip to the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show, they will also win \$2,500. YOUR chapter will have the opportunity to receive \$1,000 if the winner is from your chapter!

Don't wait! The nomination period ends on April 30.

SUBMIT NOMINATION TODAY!

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