

GCSAA Class A: Setting the Standard

There is a leading cellular phone company that features in its television commercials a large group of individuals eagerly following a customer everywhere he/she goes, seemingly ready to assist at a moments notice.

This gregarious group includes customer service representatives, computer operators, technicians and field staff. The customer has confidence that his/her needs are going to be met right away. The message is quite simple. High-quality service is ensured by the company's extensive network of resources.

A similar scenario is played out for golf facilities that employ a Class A member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Facility operators and golfers may not realize it, but behind their GCSAA Class A golf course superintendent are a standard of performance and a vast array of products and services that enable him/her to provide an enjoyable playing experience in a fiscally responsible manner.

From authoritative information, to affordable and accessible education, to an extensive network of peers and researchers, GCSAA is to golf facilities what the CPU is to computers – it is the component that drives success and provides solutions.

“What we have established is that to be a GCSAA Class A golf course superintendent, you must meet certain standards,” GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans said. “We have set Class A as the preferred membership class for GCSAA. It tells the employer and the golfer that GCSAA Class A members have made the commitment to engage in continuing education, volunteer service and environmental stewardship to advance their careers, their profession and their golf facilities.”

It was none other than Arnold Palmer, who said that GCSAA is “the single most important entity in golf today.” The son of a superintendent, Palmer has witnessed firsthand the advances made in golf course management and the role of the GCSAA golf course superintendent.

“We as golfers also owe our gratitude to these professionals who have pushed themselves to higher standards of education, training and performance that have resulted in making golf a more enjoyable game. Those who derive income, either as a competitor or as a businessman, are equally indebted to the superintendent for their contributions.”

It is those standards Palmer speaks of that separates GCSAA members from non-members. Membership standards for Class A are based on a combination of formal and continuing education, volunteer service and demonstration of environmental stewardship. Members who take the steps to achieve Class A status show that they are continually updating their skills and knowledge to meet the high demands of the golf course management profession.

The feedback from those who are involved in the ownership and management of golf facilities has been positive. The late Mark McCormack, CEO of the International Management Group noted the importance of golf course managers, saying “Operational efficiencies, the establishment of profit centers and agronomic conditioning are now taking a front seat, right

along the general purpose of a club. Having a superbly qualified superintendent is a critical requirement today, and his or her stature in the club hierarchy is rising accordingly.”

After all, when it comes to the facility’s most valuable asset, nothing should be left to chance.

