



Growing Green Since 1936

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President's Message

Kevin Kallas, Saddle Rock Golf Course



How did I get here? I ask myself this from time to time and as I sit down to write my first Presidents Message to the membership, I find myself thinking back yet again to the spring of 1994. My parents, either realizing my love for playing the game was growing and wanting to play all the time or maybe it was that I just turned 16 and needed a job to pay for gas to get to golf practice. Whichever reason it was, one afternoon my dad walked into my room and said he talked to a member at our church who worked at Springhill GC in Aurora and that they were going to need summer help, "you should look into it." Well, I did and here I am 30 years later, after soaking up and learning all I could from some great mentors and friends, a Superintendent and now the 2024 president of the RMGCSA. Never did I think I would be here, but I am!

My board time started as the Class C representative of the RMGCSA in 2017, the 2nd year the position on the board existed and served my one term. I fell in love immediately, learned a lot, met some great guys and realized the significance of the board. In March of 2018, I was hired into my first superintendent's job and as luck would have it, someone stepped off the board shortly after and I was contacted to fill his one year remaining term and I never looked back. A fun note, seems like if you were the Class C representative, you received a superintendent position shortly after your term ended. Has worked for 4 out of the last 7 so far if an assistant out there wants to get their name in for the 2025 run!

"Your Membership", that's the saying we want to get out there to all of you that pay the yearly dues. We as the board have been voted on by you to help the membership out. We are here to try and put together the best year of networking, educational opportunities, conference and golf that we can, but we can't be successful if you the membership don't use your voice to let us know your thoughts, ideas and concerns you might have. We are open to hearing any ideas or thoughts, good or bad, and you all have mine and the boards promise that anything brought to us will be discussed and looked at in detail. Please feel free to email me or any of the members any time or pull us aside at an event and give us your thoughts, we would love to hear them! (Tip, to make it simple, all our emails are to the right of this article if ever needed.)

I will end with this, many of us that are members get to enjoy our events and conference but leave our Assistants, Irrigation and Spray Techs or Equipment Managers back at our shops. Why? They are only missing out on what's out there, the networking, meeting someone new or learning something that could take them or your facility to the next level. I encourage you to not only sign yourself up but sign them up as well, not just to be a RMGCSA member but implore you to push or let them attend any and all opportunities we offer to let them grow. It certainly has helped me in my journey of getting here!

Happy Holidays to you all.

Let's Go!!!

KK

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Class C Ex Officio

Ethan Howard
Pole Creek Golf Course



Rocky Mountain Chapter

GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

2023 Annual Conference Recap

by Aaron Fankhouser, The Club At Rolling Hills

After countless hours of planning and discussion, our conference is complete for another year. The conference continues to be a highlight of the season for our members to network and learn from collegiate professors and other industry experts. A huge thank you to all 207 of our members that were able to attend. We trust that it was insightful to each of you and that you will pull from the education to improve yourselves and your operation.

A brief speaker recap is below, and we will provide the presentation information to the membership through the website and email

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2023 Annual Conference Recap

Continued

Monday November 13, 2023

- The education was jumpstarted by Dr. Jack Fry of Kansas State University with an impactful discussion on irrigation strategies and overall turf health. Watering intervals and the correlation between root depth and plant health was a major focus.
- Craig Kessler, Southern California Golf Association, followed Dr. Fry with a discussion surrounding his relationships with the different stakeholders impacting decision making within the California Department of Water Resources. Craig painted an interesting picture of the changing impacts surrounding water resources in California, something that we no doubt will continue to focus on as it pertains to Colorado Water Resources.
- Heather Houston, President, and Senior Ecologist of Birch Ecology, talked at length about the impact to wetlands on our properties. She articulated how her team would be an excellent resource for our membership when dealing with new construction and golf course renovations. There is so much involved with the wetlands permitting and how to handle those projects. Please reach out to Heather if you have any questions. [Birch Ecology-Heather Houston](#)
- Jennifer Cassell provided an in-depth look into the government and legislative landscape that is ongoing in Colorado. Jennifer continues to be a wonderful advocate for the RMGCSA and the Golf Coalition. Our membership dues support Jennifer in the Capital as she lobbies on our behalf. Thank you to Jennifer and the Government/Legislative Committee members for all you do on our behalf.
- Dr. Jim Baird, University of California, Riverside provided attendees with a look into multi-year research involving Plant Growth Regulators, Soil Surfactants, Nutrients, Bio stimulants, Fungicides, and pigments.
- John and Jodie Cunningham articulated the need for a people strategy in our industry. Every superintendent continues to deal with the impacts of the labor market and lack of staffing available. Later in the session, they explained how recruiting of employees never stops and now we must look beyond the conventional means of hiring if we want to be successful at our courses.
- Dr. Fry returned to the podium to provide insights into preparing our putting greens for summer heat stress.

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2023 Annual Conference Recap

Continued

Tuesday November 14, 2023

- Dr. Baird provided information to the membership regarding the use of PoaCure and Cumyluron Herbicides for Poa Annual control in our bentgrass greens. The timing and frequency of application varies for both products and Cumyluron is expected to be labeled for use sometime in 2025.
- One of our own, newly Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Kevin Malloy of TPC Colorado shared his experience with hosting the Korn Ferry Event at TPC the last two years. Kevin provided insights from build out, timing/preparation, volunteer contributions, and all other aspects involved during the process.
- Chris Johnson, City of Westminster, discussed the process of the two capital intensive projects of installation of the new irrigation systems at both Legacy Ridge and Walnut Creek. These projects take years to plan and execute and members should reach out to Chris, Tim Davis (Legacy Sup.), or Paul Sibley (Walnut Creek) if they are pursuing new systems and have questions about the process.
- John and Jodie Cunningham finished off the conference by providing members with tips for successful interviewing and selection of team members. They have provided the attendees with their tips, scripts, and impactful hiring questions : [Cunningham's Member Only Content](#)



Please save the date for next years conference:

November 17-19, 2024
Marriot Denver West
717 Denver West Blvd.
Golden, CO 80401

2023 Annual Conference Recap

Continued

Annual Business Meeting (11.13.2023)

·During the annual business meeting, the passing of the presidency took place with Kevin Kallas being named President of the RMGCSA for 2024. Jeff Wichman was presented with his gavel and was thanked for his service to the association.

·The Executive Board:

Kevin Kallas- President, Aaron Fankhauser-VP, Joe Kunze- Secretary/Treasurer

Social and Networking:

·The Annual Cornhole Championships of the world continue to be a hit for our membership and the Broncos somehow pulling out a win over the Bills made for a great evening.

A *huge* thank you to our speakers, our conference committee, our Board of Directors, our Executive Director, Gary Leeper, his team, and especially to our membership.

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2023 Annual Conference Recap

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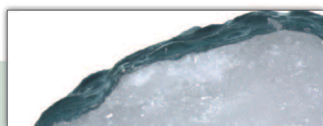
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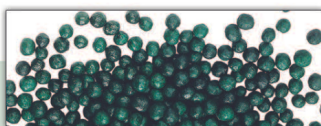
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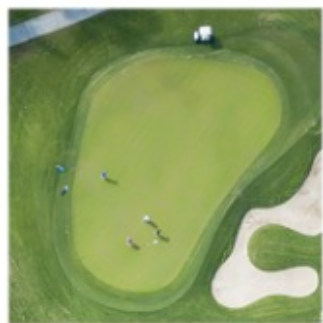
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#12 Guests just love this green



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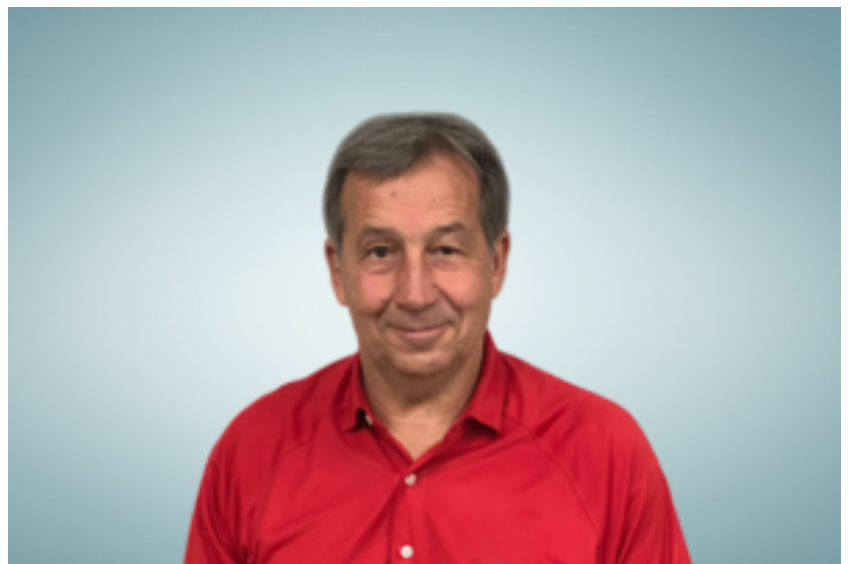
Distinguished Service Award



Dan Melchior

The RMGCSA Distinguished Service Award is designed to acknowledge the demonstrated outstanding contributions by RMGCSA members for the benefit of the association. This award is intended to encourage professional development and improve morale by honoring sustained contributions made by selected individuals.

**Nominated by Jim Johnson, LL Johnson
Distributing Company**



Professional Contribution:

Contributions made to professional field, level of participation, or professional activities, RMGCSA service outside area of direct job assignment; state, regional, or national recognition of work Dan Melchior is an active member and has been serving the RMGCSA for over 50 years. As a graduate of Colorado State University, he began his career in 1973 as the Parts Manager for the Barteldes Company (the then Toro Distributor/Dealer for Colorado) and soon began serving the industry as an outside salesman selling Toro golf/parks maintenance equipment in Colorado, Wyoming and the pan handle of Nebraska. In 1976, Dan made the transition to working for The L.L. Johnson Distributing Co. when Len Johnson purchased the Barteldes Company. Since then, Dan through his dedication and hard work has been promoted to Commercial Equipment Sales Manager, General Manager and now serves the company as the Vice-President of Sales, Service and Operations. Outside of his job responsibilities, Dan is also an active participant in the Colorado Parks & Recreation Association, The Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association, and the Sports Turf Managers Association. Dan has supported, sponsored and participated in each organization, along with the RMGCSA for various events, trade shows and fund raisers.

Distinguished Service Award

Continued

Rocky Mountain Chapter



GCSAA

Dan Melchior

Personal Contribution:

Human relations and communications which may consist of successful member contact (if such opportunities exist), successful employee relations (both with supervisors and those supervised), successful relations with other RMGCSA members.

Dan Melchior has managed, mentored, and befriended most all of the employees at The L.L. Johnson Distributing Co. He has taken an active role in many of the careers of sales and service personnel at the company by having them participate in many vendor & nonvendor events, educational seminars and individual certifications. He believes that a company should constantly invest in its people and their careers.

Dan has sponsored many of the RMGCSA members to participate in Toro's Professionals Club where Superintendents and Toro engineers participate in focus groups after being introduced to new products for their review.



Work Contribution

Exemplary job performance and accomplishments in area of responsibility including innovative and creative thinking and performance, decisive actions, willingness to show knowledge about the profession.

Dan Melchior has become a perennial member of a select group of Toro distributors to be on the Distributor Advisory Board. Most all other members of the D.A.B. are only asked to serve two years, but Dan has been a member since the inception of the board. Similar to the aforementioned Toro Pro Club for superintendents, Dan's participation in the D.A.B. makes sure that the voice of the customer is always heard from the Rocky Mountains.

Dan, his people and the company have been recognized by The Toro Company, receiving the following awards;

- Toro's Partners in Excellence "Best in Commercial 8 times."
- Toro's Partners in Excellence "Best in Irrigation 5 times."
- Toro's Partners in Excellence "Distributor of Excellence 4 times."
- Toro's Partners in Excellence Top Service Award 11 times.
- Toro's Partners in Excellence Master Salesman Blazers 8 times.

Our company, over the years has received many other awards and accolades from other manufacturers but the one award I know Dan cherishes the most is the award he receives from the many members of the RMGCSA. For years The Toro Company has contracted with an outside marketing firm to illicit scores from the golf course community in our territory to rate our performance in which we have received the Customer Satisfaction Index score of 9.0+. We were the first Toro distributor to achieve that high score and under Dan's leadership have repeated 9.0+ since.

Superintendent Spotlight

Chad Gilkison, The Club at Pradera



Describe Your Facility —The Club at Pradera is a private 18-hole Jim Engh designed facility that is said to combine traditional Irish features with some of the more modern aspects of golf. Built in 2004, The Club at Pradera is Jim Engh's home course and is a design where variety was clearly the goal. Engh is known for his punchbowl style greens, but Pradera features an equal balance between punchbowl, raised plateau, and ground level greens.

What's the biggest challenge you face at your facility? Maintaining a golf course that has a number of steep slopes, drastic elevation changes from hole to hole and the somewhat different climates that come with that. With the undulating landscape it can be difficult to maintain certain areas of the golf course and it takes some creative thinking both with day to day cultural practices and with irrigation

What's the most rewarding part of being a superintendent for you? For me, it is after we've formulated a plan, done the work as a team and completed the task/project successfully. I enjoy the thought process that goes into getting every day tasks accomplished as well as leading and mentoring the staff to get them done the way our membership is accustomed to. I have a great team here at Pradera. We strive to make the culture here a fun environment for our crew. We schedule events such as our 9 and Line, a 9-hole scramble and then a fishing tournament/BBQ during the year to help with crew camaraderie.

How many years have you worked in golf and how did you get started in the industry? I've been in the golf course maintenance industry for 15 years. I initially graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelors Degree in Business Management where I majored in finance. After graduating I worked in the finance and commercial banking sector for 7 years. When I lost my job in 2008 due to the market recession, I decided I wanted to work outdoors on a golf course. I called up a Superintendent friend of mine who I had met at KSU and was in the area to see about getting on his crew and the rest is history.

What do you do when you're not at work? Usually helping my wife shuttle kids around to various activities. I have a 12-year-old (Jack) and 9 year old (Knox) who keep us busy with their sports and social calendar. I coach my youngest's baseball team in the spring/summer as well as fall ball. Knox also excels at swimming and plays basketball and flag football for now. Jack plays on a competitive baseball team somewhat year-round and also plays tennis throughout the year when baseball is slow. They both enjoy playing golf as well when we have a chance to get out on the course. When we have free weekends in the winter, we enjoy skiing and hanging out with family and friends in the mountains.

What is your favorite hole at Pradera? The par 5 632-yard 16th. As mentioned above the 16th hole has an elevated back tee that sits over 275 feet above the fairway. From the tee you can see Pikes Peak, Mount Evans and Longs Peak. It's quite a view from up there. Once you reach the fairway, it has 6 pot bunkers scattered throughout the landing zones as you work your way downhill towards the green

Favorite restaurant? My family's favorite restaurant is Los Dos Potrillos. We are lucky enough to live within 5 minutes of one, so it's become a staple

Favorite sports team? Kansas State Wildcats. Growing up in western Kansas I grew up a fan and got to attend football and basketball games most weekends growing up. My dad grew up in Manhattan as well as graduated from KSU so I was brain washed early on. After high school I attended KSU for 4 years and then moved to Kansas City from there.

Assistant Spotlight



Grant Javernick, Saddle Rock Golf Course

Describe your Facility

Saddle Rock is SE Aurora's premiere Public Championship Golf Course. Its history includes hosting the Colorado Open from 1998 - 2001. The course is a links-style layout with 2 distinct nines. The front 9 is a brute on the legs with uphill walks on holes 1-5. Number 6 is a downhill par 5 where you can "tee it high and let it fly" and give your legs a break. Number 7 is another uphill hike all the way from tee to green. Just when you are catching your breath, you hit the two hardest holes on the course (9 & 10); gotta keep your wits about you here if you want to keep that good round going. The back 9 is a much easier walk but no picnic as far as navigating the course. Precision layups, long drives, long par 3s, three different creek crossings and severely undulating greens are between you and the 19th hole.

Saddle Rock is really coming into its own as SE Aurora continues to grow. Annual rounds are now consistently above 40,000. We have a large practice facility that abuts Arapahoe Road (some of the best marketing in the world is having traffic counts above 30,000 cars per day driving right by your facility). The restaurant has a loyal crowd who would support operations even if there wasn't a course here. In the summertime there is a great patio for food & bev, watching golfers on the practice facility, watching sunsets and live music entertainment.

How many years have you worked in golf and how did you get started in the industry?

I grew up in a ranching/farming community in southern Colorado. No one in my family really had time for golf. I was not introduced to golf until my early 20s after I moved to the Denver area. The first time I played, I was hooked. I got started in the business in 2006 when I bought a home on the #2 tee box of Meadow Hills Golf Course. I wanted to try my hand at a professional golfing career but needed a place to practice. I stopped by the maintenance facility and inquired about part-time work in exchange for use of their practice facility. It was a perfect fit at the time, and I was on my way. After 2 plus years of cutting cups in the morning, my full time job during the day, and then hitting the practice facility til dark, I was able to just barely become a scratch golfer. After another couple of years of constant frustration testing my game at professional levels, I accepted that a professional playing career was not the path for me. The maintenance side connected with me (most likely filling the missing void of growing up farming), so when I decided to give up on a playing career, I had more time to learn and do more at the course. Now beginning my 20th year in maintenance, I am grateful for the experiences and the people I have come in contact with.

What's the most rewarding part of being an assistant for you?

No question, the most rewarding part is the people relationships I have built in this role. Each year the crew encompasses a new, diverse group of personalities. I take great pride in finding the common thread with each one of them to help promote their success.

What do you like about your team at your facility?

The panoramic views of the front range make Saddle Rock unique. Standing on number 3 green you WILL NOT find a better view in all Aurora. From here on most days, you have an unobstructed view from Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs to Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. It is truly breathtaking.

Without incriminating yourself, what's the stupidest thing you've done on the job?

My first year here at The Rock was in the role of irrigation tech (with respect to irrigation my only job qualification was..... I was a very hard worker). During the spring fire up of the system, I had to repair a broken head located about 3 feet away from the valve box that turned on the lateral. It was a cool overcast morning (probably 40 degrees and breezy). I was completely focused on the task at hand of unscrewing the head from the swing joint. I couldn't figure out why it was so hard to unscrew??? When it broke free and the water began to geyser out at least 30' high, almost taking my head off, I figured out the important step I had forgotten. The worst part was having to kneel directly under the cascading fountain of freezing water and try to reach down and get the valve key on the valve to shut the water off. Definitely a wet-behind-the-ears experience.

What do you do when you're not at work?

Golf, Spend time with my amazing wife and our 2 pups, connection with friends & family, exercise, podcasts, golf, more golf

Favorite movie?

Open Range (Robert Duvall & Kevin Costner).

Shorts or Pants?

Sweatpants over shorts (I'm definitely a layer's guy).



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Count on it!

National Delegate Recap

Steve Randall- 10/26/23

85 delegates representing 87 chapters meet in person at GCSAA Headquarters and the Hilton Kansas City Airport

Delegates from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) met in-person during a two-day event at GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., as well as the KCI Airport Hilton Hotel October 24-25, 2024.

The meeting brings leaders together from GCSAA's 95 chapters to discuss initiatives, provide insight on moving the association forward, and to begin discussions on electing board members and officers at the February 2024 annual meeting.

First-day highlights included updates and information from CEO Rhet Evans on "Relentless Focus." Delegates were asked to encourage participation and engagement in the industry from their staff and colleagues, while GCSAA continues to recognize the accomplishments of members.

A government affairs update was provided, informing attendees of potential legislative and regulatory advances that will impact the golf industry. Delegates also received information on the Rounds4Research program, and the 2024 GCSAA Golf Championships and Conference and Trade Show to be held in Phoenix.

On day two, delegates met at Headquarters in Lawrence. Discussion included various department leader updates, including information on the need for facility Best Management Practices. Facility BMP's are essential to showcase how golf course superintendents are environmental stewards.

Recently, GCSAA implemented a new program and service, focusing on the First Green Program and Workforce Development. Updates highlighted how these programs are introducing students and individuals to the game of golf. Labor continues to be a challenge and this area addresses those concerns.

GCSAA has also formed a Centennial Committee. The association will turn 100-years old in 2026. Plans and activities to engage all members for the event were presented.

Delegates also participated in breakout sessions. The breakouts allowed attendees to provide feedback and information on GCSAA's current dues adjustment process using the Consumer Price Index, assisting with facility BMP implementation, ways to increase rounds/bidders for Rounds4Research, career development certificates, and Centennial plans.

Candidate breakout sessions concluded activities. The delegates were awarded ample time to interact and ask questions of the candidates. Those running for the GCSAA Board in 2024 are:

- For President – Jeff L. White, CGCS
- For Vice President – T.A. Barker, CGCS
- For Secretary/Treasurer – Paul L. Carter, CGCS; Doug Dykstra, CGCS
- For Director (electing two) – Greg Jones, CGCS, MG; Ryan Kraushofer, CGCS, Christopher Reverie, Marc Weston, CGCS

There are two open director positions for two-year terms. The terms of Dykstra and Weston are expiring. If Dykstra is not elected to the Secretary/Treasurer position, he will need to run from the floor for an open director position to remain on the board. If Carter becomes Secretary/Treasurer a third person will need to be elected for the one remaining year on his term.

Kevin P. Breen, CGCS, will serve on the board for one year as immediate past president. Mark F. Jordan, CGCS, retires from the board after being immediate past president in 2023. GCSAA's Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, February 1, 2024 from 8-10 a.m. at the Phoenix Convention Center.

Director's Corner



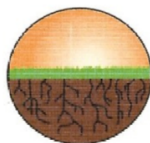
By Joe Kunze, CGCS, City of Arvada

Members of the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association have been hosts to a number of prestigious amateur and professional golf tournaments. This last year, The United States Golf Association Amateur Championship was held at Cherry Hills Country Club. The Ascendant is an annual Korn Ferry Tour event that was once again held at TPC Colorado. These events are witnessed by thousands both in attendance and watching through television and other forms of media. An incredible opportunity is available to everyone who works in our industry to volunteer our skills at these properties when these events are held. There is a lot to observe and learn from when volunteering at an event. Seeing what tools they use, how they are organized and how they communicate are just a few examples of what can be learned from when helping at another property or operation. There are so many moving parts involved with these events; everything from TV cameras to porta-lets to concessions to traffic control to noise control to everything else on top of managing the golf course conditions. Even with all the extra duties and responsibilities added from holding an event, the agronomic conditions are always still at the best possible levels and the course is performing at its highest potential. Volunteers are also paramount in reaching this potential with the amount of detailing work such as rough fluffing or divot filling that is included into the daily course preparations.

Not many courses and properties have the opportunity to host tournaments like these, so it's important to get your team members involved at these events. It can be a nice change to the normal routine by being at a different course and can be a great change of scenery for them. They will probably be able to teach the superintendent something after they come back about how to do a task better or have a higher expectation in their own work than before. For our teammates who are deciding on the path to take moving forward in their careers, being exposed to the work of an event or tournament may be very appealing in deciding where to work next. Volunteer work like this can open doors for future events or positions at courses that hold events regularly. Other benefits for volunteering at a tournament are free attendance, free food, merchandise and other tournament swag. Another great opportunity associated with volunteering at these events are the people that you meet. You have the opportunity to work side by side with other superintendents, professors, vendors and others in the turf management industry. Being part of a team composed of your peers that meets and exceeds the goals and expectations of the tournament directors every day is very fun and very gratifying. This upcoming season, Colorado will be host to the annual Korn Ferry Tour Event at TPC Colorado and also the PGA Tour BMW Championship will be held at Castle Pines Golf Club. In 2025, a USGA Championship will once again return to Colorado at the Broadmoor with the U.S. Senior Open. I encourage everyone to reach out to the superintendents for information on who to contact or how to get yourself and other team members signed up. Following courses on various social media platforms can also be a great way to be informed about how to sign up for volunteering opportunities at each course. Hosting these tournaments takes a great deal of time, organization and work. The amount of work that needs to be done for these tournaments to be successful is tremendous, and it's our duty to help a little when the opportunity arises and the benefits from doing so are great.

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Affiliate Corner

Mike Melka, Simplot



What is your current affiliate company and your position? How long have you been in this position?

I recently accepted a new role as a Territory Manager with Simplot and have been in the role for 3 weeks.

Where are you based out of and what territory do you cover?

I am based out of Denver, and I cover all of Colorado and into New Mexico

What are the responsibilities of your company to our industry, and how is your company involved with RMGCSA?

In my short time with the company, my responsibility is to build long lasting relationships with turf managers of all kinds and be a resource in any way they see fit for their properties.

Did you go to college? If so, where and what major did you graduate with?

I graduated from Arizona State University in 2015 with a bachelor's in business management. I also graduated from the 2-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program at Penn State in 2018.

How and when did you begin working in the golf industry and what do you like most about it?

I started working in the golf industry as a caddie at age 12 in the Chicago area and moved over to my first grounds crew at age 19. The best part about the industry is the people I have met and the camaraderie I have had over the years.

Tell us a little about your family, and what hobbies or activities you participate in when you are not at work?

My whole family lives in the Chicago area. My parents, 2 sisters, 2 brothers-in-laws and 7 nieces and nephews all live in Wheaton, IL. I have one sister that lives in Chicago near Wrigley Field as well. I love to play golf, basketball and flag football in my free time.

What are the biggest changes you have seen in the profession since you began your career?

The biggest change I have seen in my career is the change in the labor force and how it is becoming increasingly difficult to get employees in general.

Do you regularly attend RMGCSA meetings or events, if so, why are they important?

Being so new, my first RMGCSA meeting will be the Annual Conference.

You know a lot of people in our industry. What are they saying are the biggest obstacles to overcome for them to be successful?

The biggest obstacles other people say for them to be successful is the growing challenge of attaining a solid labor force.

You get to see many facilities and properties. What is an interesting new or innovative practice you have seen?

I can speak for my time in Arizona on the golf course but the most innovative practice I have seen was during overseed. Many courses in the Phoenix area contract a truck to come out and overseed their course. Obviously, he doesn't do the small, tight areas that will always need to be done by hand, but he can zip through the big areas on the course in a matter of hours and is way more efficient than a Lely.



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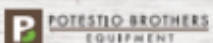
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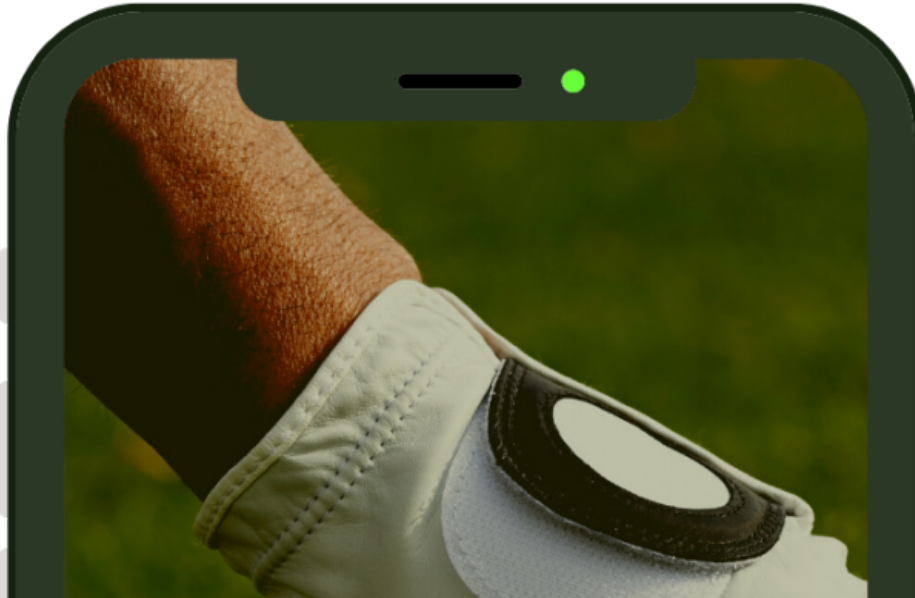
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Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association will start sending out notifications via text messages. Not only will you get updates instantly, but you will be able to request more information on the events that interest you and even register directly from your phone.

Ready to Sign Up?

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