

**Tight money and course maintenance**

October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The DOW closed down 678.91 and ended the day at 8,579.19

Over the last 6 weeks through seminars and on site visits I have personally visited with over 200 golf courses in three countries [Mexico, Canada & the US], In the US I have been to Virginia, Nevada, California, Missouri, Kansas and Texas. I have visited with not only golf course superintendents but with numerous Greens Committees, General Managers and Boards of Directors. Everyone is concerned with how to keep their course in top condition with limited funds to work with and the fear that over the next year or two they may have even less funds to work with. This will be my third recession in regards to tight monies and golf course maintenance.

The question most often asked is: **Can we eliminate an aerification in the spring or fall to allow for tournaments to bring in some additional funds?**

My answer is always the same. **What do your physical properties say you can do?**

No individual or group of individuals can predict what the weather will be over the next 6 to 8 months and therefore without the science of physical properties to look to for an answer we are gambling our most valuable asset [Our Greens].

Golf courses that make the decision to risk the health of their greens are risking the clubs future. I have sat in on meetings where the common theme was "let's do what we have been doing and stick to our existing plan" so that when this recession is over we will be in a very favorable position to acquire new members and or customers and retain as many of our present members or customers as possible. This line of thought has produced long term gains for these courses without exception.

Unfortunately I have also been present when the theme of thought was "let's cut everywhere" and the course will survive. When the economy has turned around and people are spending again, those courses that have let their greens deteriorate have in some cases never recovered and years later are spending what monies they have available trying to regain the members and customers who have gone to the courses that are in better shape. I mention greens as the top priority because it is the condition of our greens that our course is measured by.

It is a very difficult time for all of us trying to manage our finances both in our personal life and our professional life. There are no easy answers. For most people their home is their most valuable asset and for golf courses the greens are our most valuable asset.

