



The Guelph Turfgrass Institute is Moving to a New Home on the U of G Campus



Background

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute (GTI) was officially established by the Senate of the University of Guelph in 1987. An agreement between the Ontario Government, the University and the private sector, through the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation, allowed the GTI to become a reality – the original sod-turning ceremony was in November of 1991 to begin construction of the G.M. Frost Research and Information Centre. The current Frost building, a GTI focal point,

is named in honour of Mac and Beth Frost, who provided a very significant founding donation for the project.

The mandate of the GTI is to conduct research, provide education, and ultimately provide information on turfgrass production and management to members of the Canadian turfgrass industry. The GTI is supported by the University, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the turfgrass industry.

The GTI is recognized as a world-class hub for turfgrass education, research, extension and professional development. It is home to the annual Turf Manager's Short Course (TMSC), and is used for many Associate Diploma in Turfgrass Management (ADTM) activities and functions. The GTI is also home to three professional associations – The Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation (OTRF), The Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association (OGSA) and Sports Turf Canada (STC). Our association partners have forged a long standing and important relationship with the GTI which will be maintained moving forwards.

Why is the GTI moving?

The Province owns the land the current GTI is built on and with the lease expiring in 2018 they have identified that land for real estate development. The City of Guelph has also re-zoned the land for development. The province is supporting moving the GTI and establishing a new GTI.

Where the GTI moving to and proposed site plan description

The proposed development for the new GTI is located on University of Guelph lands at the North-West corner of the Arboretum property, and is adjacent to the Cutten Fields Golf Club. In addition, some land will also be developed at the Elora research station for larger scale GTI projects. The proposed site plan image accompanying this news article details an existing bedrock aquifer field facility, a new G.M. Frost Centre, two storm water retention ponds, turfgrass research plots and greens, trial gardens, an irrigation pond and parking areas. The site plan (in image above) is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact John Watson at watson01@uoguelph.ca or 519-824-4120, Ext. 54032.

Who will pay for the move?

The Ontario Government has committed substantive funds for the project and is following a matching model it has used for other recent University of Guelph infrastructure projects where there is a requirement for 20% matching funds for the project. A fundraising committee has been created and a campaign to raise the 20% matching funds (in cash and in-kind) has commenced.

Why are we fundraising again?

Close to thirty years ago, turfgrass industry leaders raised funds to establish the existing GTI. Since that time, the GTI has helped to establish the University of Guelph as a globally recognized turfgrass research centre. The requirement to move the GTI is an opportunity to re-vision the infrastructure requirements and to build a GTI 2.0. As we move forward with the new GTI the intention is to build a research, teaching and outreach facility that will continue to allow the University of Guelph to be a globally recognized centre for turfgrass research and expertise. Through the fundraising efforts we are reaching out to industry partners including: Sports Turf Canada, Landscape Ontario, Nursery Sod Growers Association, Golf Association of Ontario, Ontario Golf Superintendents Association and the National Golf Course Owners Association. The original capital raised by the industry has been taken into account in the provincial funding. The current fundraising effort will allow GTI 2.0 to evolve to the next level of excellence.

Will The OTRF, OGSA and STC be included?

In addition to modern research and teaching facilities, the new GTI will include excellent work and meeting space for our key partners including those currently at the existing Frost Centre.

When will the new GTI be ready?

The proposed site plans have been developed with input from turfgrass researchers and industry partners. The plan for site development and research plot construction will commence in 2016 and building construction is scheduled to start in 2017. The plan is to have GTI 2.0 fully completed for 2018.

What will the new facility be called?

In recognition of the Frost family founding donation, the new facility will also bear the G.M. Frost Centre name. However, a full range of other naming opportunities will be available and details of these will be presented during our fundraising campaign.

How can we help?

We welcome any donors or fundraising ideas that you may have. Our fundraising contacts are:

- Doug Hubble, Fundraising Chair - Telephone: 519-546-0903
- Rene Van Acker, Associate Dean External, OAC - Telephone: 519-824-4120 x53533 - E-Mail: vanacker@uoguelph.ca

For general inquiries and to stay up to date on our fundraising campaign, project progress and GTI news:

Please contact John Watson, GTI Communications Assistant - Telephone: 519-824-4120 x54032 - E-Mail: watson01@uoguelph.ca

- Check our website regularly www.guelphurfgrass.ca
- Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/GuelphTurf
- Follow us on Twitter www.Twitter.com/GuelphTurf

This article was developed cohesively by the GTI Fundraising Committee

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