

WHICH NEW PING IRON FITS YOUR GAME

Superintendents Keep Close Eye On Economy

January 27, 2010 by [Ian Hutchinson](#)

2

tweets

retweet

Ken Cousineau admits he'd like to say things are picking up, but he just isn't sure about the economy, which is such an important factor in the day-to-day lives of members within his association.

"I don't think I'd be inconsistent by saying that the economic situation is still a key issue within the industry," said the executive director of the [Canadian Golf Superintendents Association](#).

"I wish I could be really confident and say, 'Yeah, I think we're out of the woods and we'll be on the way once the season starts.'

"I think that there's still many unknowns in terms of, particularly, unemployment and just not knowing how that's going to settle just makes it really difficult to know, both from an industry standpoint and very specifically from a golf course management/maintenance standpoint, just what's going to happen," he added.

It's that uncertainty that affects CGSA members going forward into 2010, based on the size of expenditure that goes into golf course maintenance.

"Since course management and course maintenance is one of the biggest cost factors in a golf course operation, it may be the area that has to shoulder a little more of the responsibility," said Cousineau.

As a result, superintendents often find themselves in the awkward position of having to maintain conditions while reducing costs, not an easy challenge.

"A lot of that has been done over the past few years and you get to the point where additional reductions in expenditures are going to start to affect course conditions. You can only continue to make those cuts for so long before that happens," he said.

The flip side of that is if the economy does improve, more funds may be made available as budgets return to normal.

"If the unemployment situation starts to pick up, that usually would bode well for the industry in terms of the number of people playing, number of rounds they're playing and maybe, the type of expenditures (golf courses) are making," said Cousineau.

"Then, we start to look back at where did we cut expenditures that we really need to reinstate?"

"No doubt, there will be areas where expenditures were cut where the decision will be to not reinstate those," he said, adding there is a positive side too.

"I think there will be areas that, as the economy recovers or continues to recover, that courses will have to look at it and say we really need to go back and rethink that particular expenditure cut

because, over the long term or the short term, it's going to have an impact on our course conditions," said Cousineau.

While he admits to being somewhat cautious, it doesn't mean he's being negative. One sign that Cousineau has noticed about a recovering economy is an increased number of vendors and new vendors exhibiting at the upcoming Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, Feb. 26-March 2 in Toronto.

The economy aside, Cousineau is also keeping an eye on the weather and not just the summer conditions that draw golfers out. In some parts of the country, there have been sporadic freeze-thaw periods this winter and little or no snow cover, which can lead to golf course damage.

"Those things are always a bit of a worry, but there's not a lot we can do about it until the spring and we see what happens in terms of damage," he said.

Cousineau adds that British Columbia and New Brunswick are currently in the process of pesticide legislation consultation.

"We're cautiously optimistic that golf has been able to convey its message effectively in terms of its environmental value and the fact that **golf courses practice good management techniques and are actually a positive for the environment.**" he said.

Cousineau says that the economic impact study unveiled by the National Allied Golf Association last year will be a helpful tool in underscoring that point, not to mention its message that golf also contributes in terms of the economy as well as the environment.

"I think it will contribute in a positive way. I think that being able to demonstrate to politicians at any level that golf is not just a game, that it's a business that contributes in a very real way to the Canadian economy, is going to help the cause," he said, turning back to the economy.

"It helped us identify things like the number of acres of green space that are preserved because of golf. It helped us to identify the number of acres that are available for wildlife habitat and other types of environmentally-friendly areas," he said in reference to wetlands and other areas.

"We're excited about the idea that NAGA is starting to work from the standpoint of taking on some initiatives that, maybe in the past, were the responsibility of one organization or, in some cases, overlooked."



About Ian Hutchinson

Ian Hutchinson is a veteran Canadian golf writer, whose history in the game includes an extensive background with Canadian golf trade publications. A golf columnist with Sun Media, Hutch is also a regular contributor to publications and websites in Canada and the United States.

Filed Under: [HUTCH'S BLOG](#) Tagged: [Canadian Golf Superintendents Association](#)

Related Posts:

- [Have You Had An Attitude Adjustment?](#)
- [Raise, Reduce or Remain With '09 Rates?](#)
- [Will Canada Remain A Top Golfing Nation?](#)
- [Nike GM Settles Into Tough U.S. Market](#)
- [No Quick Fix Ahead for B.C. Blazes](#)

