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For immediate release

## Reinforcing and Redeveloping the CGSA

It's an exciting time for the CGSA! We have heard you. We learned a lot from the insights gathered over the summer. Approximately 400 individual stakeholders from golf facilities, related companies, and collegial associations participated in the process. The insights provide a sound foundation for making decisions to **reinforce** what the CGSA is noted for and for **redeveloping** areas that need work.

These insights were the foundation of a two-day planning session prior to the CGSA Fall Field Day in Jasper. The session was facilitated by Dr. Don Barclay and involved all CGSA Board Members.

We want to share where we are at by outlining some of the *key findings* and how these are guiding *tentative decisions* to move the association forward. The data gathered provided the following insights and directions.

### CGSA as the National Body

CGSA was commended for its *national* advocacy work; for assisting provinces with their advocacy efforts; for providing educational opportunities and networking at the national level; and for recently improving its communication strategy.

This led to decisions to **reinforce** what CGSA does well and what is valued by a number of stakeholders; the core of the CGSA value proposition.

- National advocacy – includes policy development, NAGA activity
- Environmental leadership – data, best practices, advocacy
- National networking – conferences, events, collaborative approaches
- National profiling of superintendent profession
- International representation of the profession

### Superintendent Needs and Challenges

From superintendents/assistant superintendents/equipment technicians the key challenges expressed included: *people* (recruiting, hiring, retaining, motivating, coaching, performance review and health and safety); *budgets and budgeting* (reduced operating and significant limits on equipment and capital project budgets, reduced professional development and association related expenditures, including dues); *environmental issues*; *regulations* and related paperwork; *managing customer expectations*; *managing communications and conflict* (with staff, management, customers, boards and committees); and *recognition and respect* for the profession.

As a result, the input identifies that CGSA should focus on real, best of class education in both *technical* and *management* areas delivered in innovative ways at an affordable cost. This could include webinars, group chats, and regional education opportunities in conjunction with provincial associations.

The review of education also raised the issue of the effectiveness of the CGSA accreditation process. The outcome of that consideration was a decision to review accreditation to see if it can be made more accessible through the delivery of blocks of educational opportunities that can build towards accreditation.

### **Value for Money Paid**

This area covers a number of issues. The first is ensuring that value is received by superintendents for the fees they are being asked to pay. This can only be remedied by revisiting what CGSA does for superintendents against the challenges they face. Second, value must be perceived relative to fees being asked by provincial associations and the GCSAA. Third, value must be perceived by club owners and managers since they are challenging why superintendents should join multiple associations and travel distances to conferences and trade shows.

Attracting new members and retaining current members will require lower fees, perhaps a different fee structure, a real value proposition that attracts clubs as well as superintendents, closer relationships with provincial associations to perhaps blend fees.

CGSA should develop a strategy for superintendents to communicate with club owners and managers on the value of the association.

Work is going on in this area, but the financial implications of decisions in this area need to be worked through.

### **Relationships with Provincial Associations**

The insights gathered strongly suggested that the time for competing with provincial associations is over. Building a strong industry requires cooperation in many areas. This was reinforced during a half-day session with provincial associations in Jasper.

Outcomes of this discussion focused on future provincial/national relationships based on a model of cooperation and complementarity. This could include rationalization of services; CGSA focusing on national issues and not engaging in services being delivered provincially; supporting provincial initiatives, not duplicating them; serving as an umbrella; combining fees, where appropriate; combining administration where it creates efficiencies.

Relationships with provincial organizations will require individual approaches that meet the needs of the province – each province is different and will require a different approach.

### **CGSA Conferences**

National conferences were viewed as effective ways to network nationally and to be exposed to excellent educational opportunities. On the other hand, they were perceived as expensive and time consuming given their location in major cities and the costs of travel out of one's region. Timing was also questioned given the number of provincial and GCSAA conference options.

CGSA conferences will be reviewed and developed in a way so as to not compete with provincial associations. Co-branded regional/national conferences will be considered. Shorter, more educational intensive conferences are also being considered.

### **Trade Shows and CGSA Relationships with Industry**

Trade shows were viewed as declining in importance as a way of increasing sales. They were still viewed as important in building relationships with customers, but other options are available. Some industry members felt “compelled” to support trade shows, even though they saw better ways to spend funds.

The CGSA will evaluate the role and timing of trade shows going forward.

Industry was supportive of the national role of the CGSA but wanted to have more options for supporting the CGSA and didn’t want to be forced to participate in certain ways that might not fit their strategies. The CGSA will work with industry partners one-on-one to develop “bundles” that work with their go-to-market strategies as has been done already with, e.g., Bayer.

### **CGSA’s Financial Model**

It is clearly recognized that the CGSA financial model needs an overhaul. This has not been ignored as the CGSA has engaged in a number of actions over the past several years to address its financial model and reduce or eliminate annual losses. Its head office operation has been reduced to less than half its former size resulting in a similar reduction in costs. Staff complement currently sits at about 56% of what it was in 2008. Our current reserves sit at approximately \$400,000 and the 2015 outlook is to have a small, fiscal year-end surplus.

The directions outlined above will have financial implications and the Board is committed to finalizing decisions that make sense financially.

### **Moving Forward**

The CGSA Board of Directors is continuing to analyze the input received and to work with Dr. Barclay to identify opportunities to establish a solid association with a national brand. Tentative decisions need to be turned into action-oriented decisions over the next three to twelve months. These decisions will reflect the needs of members and prospective members. They will result in a sound financial model for the future success of the CGSA. Stay tuned.