Dear Carolinas GCSA member,

I think back to late February and early March when the COVID-19 pandemic started making headlines in the U.S. We were constantly bombarded with information that was somewhere between accurate and not accurate. I personally continued thinking that if everyone ‘Sheltered in Place’ for two weeks, this all would pass. Two more weeks, we kept telling ourselves it would all be over. The thought of any major disruption to our business wasn’t even a consideration at that point. Well, fast forward six months to the present day and we all know how that turned out.

At first, there was a solid month where we fought the good fight to keep golf open. While we weren’t hosting meetings and golf events like a normal year, we were front and center, using a network that took many years to build, working on behalf of you, to keep golf open as well as suggesting ways it could be done safely. We worked with our allied associations, our members, members of the House and Senate as well as our government relations specialists. This victory was one that we can all be proud of. I think back to one of my early experiences on this board, nine years ago, and Brian Powell, CGCS making legislative relations a priority. This emphasis continued with Doug Lowe, CGCS, Bill Kennedy, CGCS and so on. It was a team effort and something we can all be proud of. Remember that it’s your association that heads up this effort and our allied associations follow our lead, by offering financial support.

As summer progressed, it became clear that holding our annual Conference and Show might not be a good idea. Member health and safety was the priority, but besides that, many educators and vendors were under strict ‘no travel’ policies imposed by their employers. Finally, we didn’t want to put the association at risk if we were ordered to cancel the show a week out and then be financially tied to a number of contracts. It could have been a major blow to the association. However, not doing anything wasn’t an option. So, soon you’re about to hear a major announcement of a new version of our conference. Education points and pesticide credits will be available. I can’t tell you how proud I am of this program and our board for their relentless pursuit of making this a first-class event. Keep in mind, we are planning to return to Myrtle Beach in 2021 for the grandest conference of them all!

Best Regards,
Brian J. Stiehler, CGCS, MG, President