

2021 Special Awards Candidate Bio Form

Email address *

iziska@americanodunesgolfclub.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ian Ziska, PGA

Facility Employed at: *

American Dunes Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2002

Award Nominated for: *

Merchandiser of the Year - Public

Briefly describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award: *

Operating a retail shop at a golf course that is not open and under construction during a summer-long pandemic has made for a few unique challenges for success. As I began my role as the Head Golf Professional at American Dunes Golf Club, the retail operation started quite conservatively in the summer of 2019. With the focus on construction and planning, limited marketing, and little awareness about our project and mission, several factors were unknown related to our retail success. Fast forward to 2020, where word of mouth, the media, and increased marketing and promotion began to get the ball rolling. Sadly, the momentum stopped as we moved into a pandemic and Statewide shut down.

Like many PGA Professionals, our team worked from home preparing and planning through a pandemic. On May 1, 2020, Shop.AmericanDunesGolfClub.com was launched and provided a needed avenue for supporters and shoppers interested in American Dunes gear. Using our social media outlets and launching a new website, we promoted and showcased what we would later define as "The Most Patriotic Gear in Golf."

As the course construction continued, and with few in-person shoppers visiting, the online store became an invaluable tool to allow our retail operation to succeed. Our online store features several products and accessories available in the shop, as inventory is shared. We rely heavily on Social Media to advertise, boost sales, and increase our reach to shoppers all over the world. We have successfully adapted to the online communication lifestyle through social media engines and created a significant buzz with the media, national supporters, and active and retired members of our armed services.

From January to March of 2020, retail sales totaled \$10,269 with a 13% margin. With the online store and an active industry during the 2020 season, we project total sales to exceed \$225,000 by the end of the calendar year, with a 36% margin. Total sales in 2019 were \$59,590, with a 28% margin.

The Shop at American Dunes offers the most Patriotic Brands in the industry, featuring multiple logos, colors, and styles, to strengthen our efforts to support the Folds of Honor Foundation. Shopping with us is far more than just shopping. Proudly, 100% of American Dunes annual profit will be given to the Folds of Honor Foundation. The funds will assist in the noble mission of providing educational scholarships to spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled service members.

As we approach our inaugural season in 2021, we are incredibly excited about our future retail sales. The popularity of the items available, featuring our two American Icons, the Patriot Bear and Patriot Jet, offers a complete merchandising mix, with unique products, essential that drive us for success. Our annual buying plan includes stocking vendors that are supporters of the Folds of Honor, made in the USA brands, and a diverse group of products with golf-specific offerings, lifestyle pieces, and other items that feature Americana and our club colors.

Our mission is to focus on selling quality inventory that creates buzz, turns fast, has "in your face" Americana, and is sought out by our national supporters, Club guests, and our military service members. I continue to use creative ideas and implement proper training for our team members, ensuring the best customer service that provides the highest level of satisfaction. Retailing is time-consuming, mostly when done right. It is challenging and competitive, and I feel a retail operation can be successful, merely by paying attention to a consumer's preferences, being creative, and adapting to selling conditions.

I am thankful to have been previously recognized by my peers for this special award, and I'm honored to have another opportunity to share, hoping to help fellow PGA Professionals in the area of retail. I will continue to use creative methods to add value, satisfy our supporters, and know when they purchase gear from American Dunes, they are directly supporting the Folds of Honor and sharing the mission with others, as they proudly wear the Patriotic Icons representing American Dunes.

Thank you for the opportunity to share. I am humbled and grateful for the nomination for this very special award.

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