

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Gil Landry Jr.

As editor Matt Trulio so aptly noted in the April issue of *sportsTURF*, "Recognition is vital, both for the individuals honored and the profession itself."



The sports turf industry is lacking recognition. Because turf areas may be part of a total recreational facility, our industry is not well-defined or easily quantified. One way to help resolve this is to answer questions we do not know right now, questions such as:

- How many sports fields exist in America?
- How many dollars are spent developing and maintaining sports turfs?
- How many people are employed directly or indirectly in the industry?
- How many people are served by the industry?

Once we have these answers, we need to get them to the right people

through media relations, direct-mail, advertising, seminars and so on.

## There Are Estimates of Our Size

In a 1992 issue of *Turfgrass Monograph*, Dr. Jim Watson of the Toro Company estimates that sports turf surfaces cover more than 1,125,000 acres of land in the United States. He also says more than 2.2 million youngsters play little league baseball and more than one million play in other baseball and softball leagues. More than 22 million adults play softball in 173,000 leagues and several million play soccer. With football, Watson estimates more than 1.5 million players. That's a total of 25.7 million players! Then there are millions more that use sports turf facilities for non-organized recreational sports activities.

A survey of our 1992 conference attendees found their average annual budget to be more than \$1.2 million. Of the attendees, 37.5 percent represent school and park districts; 37.5 percent represented colleges and universities; and 18.8 percent represented profes-

sional facilities. Obviously, our conference attendees represent significant operational facilities.

## First Things First

In order to keep our industry in the public eye, there are some steps we need to take:

- Do research. We need to define and identify the value of the sports turf industry as well as answer the above questions.
- Analyze our results. What is this information telling us? How can we use it to our benefit?
- Develop a plan. Once we have all the information, we can develop a plan to implement it.

Step one is already underway — the need to quantify and define the sports turf industry is one of the objectives of STMA. We have already begun working with Bruce Shank of our official publication, *sportsTURF*, to develop and conduct a survey. Such a survey is obviously going to take time and money. But we feel it is a commitment we cannot afford to ignore.

## Chapter News

**Midwest Chapter, STMA:** On June 30, the Midwest Chapter, STMA, in cooperation with Wheaton College, is sponsoring the National Midwest Regional Sports Turf Institute. Attendees are invited to the pre-meeting "Meet the Board" evening social from 7 to 9 p.m., June 29, at the Holiday Inn, Carol Stream. Take this opportunity to meet the National STMA board members and the Midwest Regional Sports Turf Managers.

Registration opens at 7:30 a.m. on June 30 at Wheaton College campus, Wheaton, IL. The institute begins with an 8:30 a.m. welcome of activities presented by John Anderson. Morning sessions include: "Getting to Know Soils," presented by James A. Fizell, president, James A. Fizell & Associates; "Drainage Dynamics,"

presented by Matt Heiss, sports field specialist, Turf Services Inc.; "Irrigation: Possibilities for the '90s," presented by Jeff Wiegel, sales and design, Chicago Turf & Irrigation; "Getting to Know Turfgrass," presented by Tom Voight, extension specialist, University of Illinois; "Planning Out Your Calendar," presented by Eugene Mayer, training manager, The Scotts Company; and "Grounds Management Teamwork," presented by the Naperville North High School grounds team: Athletic Director Neil McCauley, Facilities Manager Mark Cloutier and Groundsman John Filipiak.

After a lunch break, the Infield Rodeo begins. New for 1993, the Infield Rodeo is a two-person team competition on infield dragging and line marking to determine who's the best in the Midwest. Competition will include dragging of

the skinned infield area and line marking of one baseline. Dragging equipment and line marking equipment will be provided. Competition per team will be limited to 10 minutes. Judging will be based on team speed in dragging the skinned obstacle infield and straightness of chalking a baseline with no string.

Keynote Speaker, Dr. William Daniels, professor emeritus, Purdue University, wraps up the institute with a presentation from 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

For further information on the institute or to enter the Infield Rodeo competition, contact: John Anderson (708) 717-0855, Jesse Felix (708) 293-0770 or STMA Headquarters at (312) 644-6610. For information on the chapter or other chapter activities call: the Chapter Hotline (708) 439-4727.