

Hot Time in Minnesota



Dick Ericson, whose career began in 1948 as assistant groundskeeper for the Saints, throws out the first ball after receiving his STMA Honorary Life Membership at a Saints game. Photos courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

Over 50 members and guests of the Minnesota Chapter boarded a bus at Midway Stadium in St. Paul on the hot 16th day of July for the 3rd Annual Workshop on Wheels. The first stop was McMurray Park, where four vendors were set up to demonstrate various pieces of aerification equipment. Attenders could observe options in action to help determine what might work in their own situations.

The next stop was the Indoor Sports Training Center at Rice & Arlington Sports Dome, a facility with 100,000 square feet of artificial turf under a dome. Although the original plan was for the dome to be up only from late fall until early spring, it was still up during the tour, and there is speculation it will remain up. The tour was conducted by VP of Inside Sports Steve Winfield (yes, Dave's brother). The facility is used year round for both slow and fast pitch softball, Little League baseball, and soccer. There was an excellent interchange of information between Winfield and members who have artificial surfaces. It was another example of how both attenders and hosts of an STMA event can benefit. The complex is owned by the city and managed by private enterprise. It opened the end of February and has experienced extensive use.

The third stop was the City of Plymouth Athletic Facility, a joint venture between Life Time Fitness, the

City of Plymouth and the Wyzata School District. The \$22 million facility exemplifies what can be accomplished when various entities work together. All reports indicate this is a win-win-win situation. The facility includes indoor and outdoor pools, weight rooms, basketball courts, rock climbing, exercise rooms, locker rooms, hockey and skating rinks, health and beauty rooms, and much more. Many STMA members manage more than athletic turf, and this stop focused on some of the things that concern them.

The next stop included an informative tour of the Turfco Manufacturing plant, where the visitors saw raw materials arriving through one door, finished goods leaving another, and all the steps in between. Several quality checks were pointed out, and it was fascinating to observe the modern robotics used in some of the manufacturing steps. Turfco also provided a picnic lunch on their turfed test area.

The National Sports Center in Blaine, Minn., was the fifth stop. This state-owned facility, with 55 fields, is reportedly the largest soccer complex in the world. There is no turf professional on staff: all work is contracted with outside sources. Agronomist Mike Kelly from the Glenn Rehbein Co. pointed out several of the experimental technologies the complex incorporates. Part of the area was seeded five weeks

before the tour and was under an inch of water two days before. Those in attendance observed some excellent playing conditions along with some areas that showed the stress.

An inner-city soccer field was the next stop. Corporate and private donations headed by Honeywell and one of its retired executives made this outstanding field possible. Washed sod was laid ten days before the stop. The Minnesota Chapter of STMA has committed to helping maintain the field with volunteers from the area. A trio of youngsters from a nearby apartment were already watching over "their field" and wanted to make sure the crowd didn't hurt it.

Bethel College's athletic fields were the seventh stop. The main field was used for football last fall after washed sod was installed in July. Many questions about the field's care were answered.

The bus buzzed with discussion between stops. Topics included irrigation, striping, fertilization and mowing practices.

The last stop of the day included a relaxing tailgate party at Midway Stadium and the St. Paul Saints evening game. Besides seeing an excellent playing field and watching a baseball game, the full house got to witness STMA's first president, Dick Ericson, receive his Honorary Life Member cer-

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tificate and card from STMA President Mike Schiller. Ericson was originally to be honored at the STMA banquet in Colorado Springs, but a rare absence due to his wife's hospitalization prevented that. She is now fine and was able to witness the presentation along with all the MSTMA members and



Agronomist Mike Kelly of the Glenn Rehbein Co. discusses the experimental technologies incorporated into the 55-field complex at the National Sports Center in Blaine, Minn.

Saints fans. Ericson was honored as a founding member of STMA and for his long-term, continuing support. He also was invited by the Saints to throw out the first ball for the game.

As is typical when STMA members get together, the information exchange was great. There were many comments on how worthwhile the day was and how important it is for everyone to share experiences to provide safer and more aesthetically pleasing playing fields.

STMA Chapter News

MAFMO Welcomed: The Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization (MAFMO Chapter STMA) has completed all requirements for affiliation and was officially recognized as an affiliated chapter by the STMA board at the July 11-12 board meeting.

The MAFMO Chapter STMA will hold its Fall Field Day from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on September 25 at MacGruder High School in Rockville, Md. This workshop will be a "Turf Ace in Turf" demonstration featuring aeration, top-dressing, overseeding, fertilizing, rolling and field marking. Vendors will

also demonstrate and display their products.

For more information, contact the Hotline: (410) 290-5652.

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Chapter of STMA has set its combination Vendor Expo and Meeting for September 18 at Jeffco Stadium. This replaces the spring event that was canceled due to an April snow.

Just a few of the features of this event will include a presentation on the history of Jefferson County stadiums, a presentation on the STMA Certification program by Certification Committee member Ross Kurcab, a tour of Jeffco Stadium, and product demonstrations.

For more information, call the 24-Hour CSTMA Chapter Hotline/FAX: (303) 438-9645.

Iowa Chapter: The Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association will hold a Baseball/Football Workshop from 9 a.m. to noon on October 9 at Waldorf College in Forest City. Sessions will include general care of the baseball mound and home plate and general care of the football field.



Minnesota Chapter members and guests observe options in action as vendors demonstrate equipment.

For more information, contact Lori Westrum at The Turf Office: (515) 232-8222 (phone) or (515) 232-8228 (fax).

Florida Chapter #1: The Florida #1 Chapter will meet in Ft. Lauderdale on October 21. The meeting will focus on aerifying and top-dressing.

For more information, contact John Mascaro: (954) 938-7477.

KAFMO: Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization is now planning KAFMO Chapter STMA's Fall Field Day. More details will be announced soon.

For more information, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club: (610) 375-8469, extension 212.

Midwest Chapter: The Midwest Chapter of STMA will hold its annual meeting on December 2 in conjunction with the North Central Turfgrass Exposition at Pheasant Run Resort and Conference Center in St. Charles, Ill. The annual meeting will wrap up that day's special sports-turf track of educational sessions. The full NCTG Exposition is December 1-3.

For information, call The Chapter Hotline: (847) 439-4727.

Southern California Chapter: Plans for an October meeting are in the works. Details will be announced soon.

For more information, contact Chris Bunnell: (619) 432-2421.

Minnesota Chapter: As part of the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation, the Minnesota Chapter of STMA will take part in the MTGF 4th Annual Conference and Trade Show, which will be held December 10-12 at Minneapolis Convention Center. For more on this event, contact Scott Turtinen: (612) 473-8169.

For information on the Minnesota Chapter, contact Connie Rudolph: (612) 646-1679.

STMA Chapters on the Grow

Northern California: A budding chapter is taking shape in northern California. The steering committee includes Sal Genito, UC Davis; Steve Abella, Delta Blue Grass; Sandy Jacobson, UC Davis; Bob Milano Jr., UC Berkeley; James Moore, B & B Concrete; Dave Patterson, Sierra Pacific Supply; Greg Roberts, Placer Union High; Tim Smith, Brown Sand; and Dennis Suit, San Jose State. News about the official "Grand Opening" and Charter Commercial Memberships will be announced soon.

For information, contact any of the committee members or the UC Davis Grounds Office: (916) 752-5035.

Great Plains: The Great Plains STMA has its Fall Workshop in the planning stage. Details will be announced soon.

For information, contact Mark Schimming, City of Wichita: (316) 337-9123. □