

# New Chapter Holds First Workshop

President Joe Zelinko welcomed 34 members and guests to the Great Lakes Chapter's "A Day at the Ballpark" workshop July 10. Members of STMA's 12th chapter got acquainted over coffee and donuts at Canal Park in downtown Akron, OH. The beautiful new facility is in its second year as home field of the Akron Aeros, the AA affiliate of the Cleveland Indians.

Attendees embarked on a tour of the 9,279-seat, \$32-million stadium, which ranks seventh in attendance in Minor League Baseball. Its features include club-level suites, a state of the art press box, a full-service restaurant off right field, and a picnic/kids-fun area.

The indoor batting cages under the stands seemed to garner the most interest. They were designed to provide a place for team practice in inclement weather, but have proven to be very effective in cutting down on field wear. They are also heavily used by area high schools.

Director of Field Maintenance and

STMA Member Rick Izzo and his staff graciously took the group onto the field for hands-on demonstrations of game-day field preparation. He also provided details on the construction of the \$1-million field.

The turf features a 12-inch base with six varieties of bluegrass. The 12 irrigation zones have a total of 89 heads. The 100,000-sq.ft. outfield is mowed two to three times a day.

Currently, height of cut is set at 1-1/8 inches, but Izzo changes it three times a year. He starts the season at 1-1/4 inches and ends at 1-3/4 inches. He maintains the infield at 1-3/8 inches.

Izzo keeps his bullpen sod farm exactly the same as the playing field, but he mows it slightly higher. He aerates the field to a depth of six inches five times a year. He fertilizes every 10 to 20 days with Nature Safe and Roots 1, 2, 3 Pre-mix.

Izzo emphasized the importance of a strong organization that helps those in sports turf management get to know each



other. He has developed a core group of peers that maintain regular contact to discuss common problems and learn from each other. A strong national and local STMA will help expand his circle of contacts, and it will provide additional support to those starting out in the industry.

After lunch, STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty spoke to the group about STMA's past, present, and future. He answered questions and presented an STMA Chapter Gavel to Great Lakes Chapter President Joe Zelinko, recognizing the new chapter as an official affiliate of STMA.

Trusty discussed the many benefits of affiliation. He closed his comments by remarking, "It is really great to see a pro take time on a game day to share all that Rick Izzo shared with all of you today."

Aimcor's Sam Stimmel talked about various aspects of field preparation, and discussed how each enhances performance. Ron Martin, president of Mar-Co Clay Products, followed with a presentation on the use of various clay products.

David Frey, president of Field Specialties, past STMA president, and former director of field maintenance for Cleveland Stadium, addressed a variety of topics. He said that the quality of playing surfaces in today's sports is better than ever, but there is still a lot to be learned. He said that we all need to share ideas, and STMA is helping a lot.

Rick Weigand, turf specialist with Medalist America Turfgrass Seed, gave the final presentation of the meeting. He stressed the importance of informed seed selection, and provided tips on how to make the proper choice.

Most attendees stayed for the Akron Aeros game against the Harrisburg Senators. The sell-out crowd was treated to the team's annual Fireworks Extravaganza after the game.

## Chapter news

**Iowa Chapter:** ISTMA will participate in Iowa Turf Institute's benefit golf tournament September 14 at Glen Oaks Country Club in West Des Moines.

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

**Minnesota Chapter:** The Minnesota Sports Turf Managers Association is planning a fall workshop September 16 at St. Cloud.

For information, contact Connie Rudolph: (612) 646-1679.

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