

Special *Memo* to All

Sports Turf Managers

by Steve Guise

You don't need to face the world alone. There are many others within this industry who understand the commitment you make and the challenges you face.

Whether you're a one-person crew or coordinator of an extensive staff, there's someone out there who's actively involved in a program very similar to your own.

History

In 1981, industry leaders formed the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) to improve sports turf by sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas. In our mission statement, we pledge "to be the leader in the sports turf industry, to enhance, promote, and improve professionalism through excellence in communication, training, research, education, and services."

In STMA's infancy, several key leaders helped direct the organization: Harry "Pops" Gill, Dr. William Daniel, Dick Ericson, and George Toma.

In 1997, STMA established Founders Awards to recognize key industry leaders in specific categories. The awards are now individually named to honor these four founders.

Networking

STMA provides valuable resources. Human sounding boards hear your problems and add their knowledge and experience to yours to develop sound, workable, and cost-effective solutions.

University professors, researchers, and extension personnel in the association have formulated action plans for solving problems like yours. Many of these dedicated individuals have been major advisors on field construction, renovation, and maintenance over a broad spectrum of conditions. They

may have encountered the very situation you are confronting now.

STMA has a strong commercial contingent as well: architects, contractors, manufacturers, researchers, and suppliers who specialize in various aspects of design, construction, renovation, and maintenance of athletic fields. These individuals have been in the trenches developing, testing, and fine-tuning products and services to make fields better.

Chapters

The Board of Directors began recognizing chapters in 1990. Chapters

Northern California, Great Lakes, Iowa, KAFMO (Keystone/Pennsylvania area), MAFMO (Mid-Atlantic area), Michigan, Mid-South, Midwest, and Minnesota.

Additional chapters are at various stages of organizational development across the U.S. If you're looking for a chapter in your area, please contact STMA Headquarters.

National

The National STMA assists affiliated chapters with many services: legal review of bylaws and documents, insurance coverage for officers and directors and chapter events, chapter membership invoicing and collection as requested, promotion of chapter membership, and coordination of inter-chapter information exchange.

Funding provided by chapter sponsors continues to assist developing chapters. They will provide a Chapter Officers Training and Exchange Session at the annual conference for the first time in 1999.

To encourage professionalism at all levels, the National STMA has an independent Field of the Year program for football, soccer, and softball fields. The association joins with Beam Clay and *sportsTURF* in a Diamond of the Year program for baseball.

Education

STMA provides members a variety of educational opportunities. Membership benefits include: a monthly subscription to *sportsTURF*, a bi-monthly newsletter, a membership roster and resource guide, and an annual compendium of articles written by and for sports turf managers.

STMA's annual Conference and Exhibition continues to expand edu-



Chapter President Tim Moore addresses a MAFMO Chapter meeting at the Ravens' stadium in Baltimore.

Courtesy: STMA

form the local link for networking. They offer one-day or half-day meetings that often include on-field demonstrations and hands-on training.

Chapters develop special sports turf specific educational programs for state and regional green industry conferences. They organize and execute community service projects and donate materials, labor, and expertise for field renovations.

STMA has 12 affiliated chapters: Florida #1 (the first official chapter), Colorado, Southern California,

cational offerings each year. January 12-16, 2000 we'll be meeting in St. Louis, MO.

The schedule always offers plenty of choices of industry-specific seminars and interactive round-table discussions. Optional Seminar on Wheels tours provide an opportunity to see key sites and exchange field maintenance ideas and techniques.

STMA also offers financial support to promote higher education in the industry. In 1997, the association expanded its scholarship program, offering a scholarship for students of two-year colleges or technical schools, undergraduates in four-year colleges or universities, and graduate students.

In 1998, the number of scholarship awards doubled. Another scholarship is now given in the undergraduate four-year school category. Two more scholarships funded by Toro have been established in the name of Dr. Jim Watson for students in four-year or graduate programs.

All scholarship recipients receive full registration for the January con-



The STMA Board tours the Texas Rangers' field in Arlington, a possible future conference site.

Courtesy: STMA

ference and up to \$500 toward travel and lodging.

Into the new millennium

STMA and sports turf management have made great strides since 1981. We're gaining recognition from facility owners, athletic directors, field user groups, athletes, the public, and the media.

We're gaining respect for the unique combination of education and experience required to keep fields safe and playable. We're earning respect for our dedication and commitment, what George Toma calls the "and then some" factor.

As an association, we've started to fulfill our potential. It's going to be a fantastic journey, but STMA needs you if we're going to reach our full potential. All of us working together are better and stronger than any one of us working alone. □

Steve Guise is president of the Sports Turf Managers Association and director of business development for Marina Landscape, Inc., Anaheim, CA.

To contact STMA Headquarters, call: (800) 323-3875, e-mail: SportsTMgr@aol.com, or visit the association's web page: www.aip.com/STMA.

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