

# STMA 2000— Looking Forward

By Rich Moffitt

As we enter the New Year, the future looks bright for the STMA. We have a solid financial base, an active, growing membership, and many strong programs in place. We're now able to build on that solid foundation. While there will be challenges, STMA has proven it has the attributes of a great team: the ability to tackle challenges and come out the winner.

## Strategic Planning

With organizations, as with individuals, it's tough to get anywhere if you don't know where you want to go. A key part of my vision for STMA's future is the development of a comprehensive long-term strategic plan. By developing a strategic plan we will be

able to provide more and better services and educational opportunities to the sports turf manager. As part of the STMA Strategic Planning Steering Committee, I'm pleased to report this process is moving forward. The goals as outlined by the Steering Committee are as follows:

- Clarify our mission statement.
- Clarify our vision.
- Establish a strategic plan to focus on those objectives.
- Build a stronger team.
- Set goals, standards and values that move us forward toward achieving our mission.
- Establish ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes to maintain the forward motion.

The STMA's current Mission Statement states: "To be the leader in the sports turf industry, to enhance, promote, and improve professionalism through excellence in communication, training, research, education, and services." Within the strategic plan, this statement will be defined in specific terms with three- to five-year goals established for achieving the objectives in communication, training, research, education, and services.

During the Category Sessions at STMA's 11th Annual Conference in St. Louis, attendees will be asked to provide input on what they see for STMA and the industry in the future and what services and benefits they want. The results of these discussions will be incorporated into the strategic planning sessions.

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As insiders in this industry, your ideas and opinions are important. Please contact STMA Headquarters (800-323-3875) or any board member with issues you believe should be addressed within the strategic planning sessions.

### **Continued Financial Strength**

Implementation of the strategic plan, continuation of existing services, and expanded services all take money. STMA will continue to exercise fiscal responsibility and maintain our financial strength as we move forward to achieve our objectives.

### **Continued Membership Growth**

STMA has grown at a rapid pace during the last several years. Membership on September 30, 1999, (the official close of the 1999 membership year) was 1,579. That compares to 711 in 1996. While this is an excellent growth rate, our numbers represent just eight to 10 percent of our potential. Our strategic planning must consider long-term projections

with future membership reaching or exceeding the 15,000 to 20,000 mark.

As STMA becomes larger, we gain more recognition within the green industry for who we are, what we do, and the impact we make on sports fields at all levels of play. Our product and service needs specific to field construction, renovation, and maintenance become better defined, better recognized, and ultimately, better served.

More members provide a greater networking base for that extremely important one to one interaction that was a key to the formation of STMA.

### **More Educational Opportunities**

Expanded educational opportunities will be an increasingly important factor as technological advances and field performance expectations both increase.

Self-improvement, long demonstrated by sports turf managers, will be enhanced by the Certification Program and its requirements for continuing education to retain certifica-

tion status.

Our network of affiliated Chapters will continue to grow and to offer even more education and training sessions on the regional and local levels. With the continuation of the Chapter Officers Training Sessions (COTS) in conjunction with STMA annual Conferences will come greater coordination of services for the Chapters and better communication and exchange between the Chapters.

In addition, the STMA Education Committee will turn ideas to reality in such areas of resource sharing as a speakers bureau. Multiple offerings at the STMA Annual Conference will continue to address the expressed wants and needs of the membership.

### **Funding and Research**

Looking forward, the STMA Board has approved the formation of a Steering Committee to do the research and set the guidelines for the formation of Sports Turf Foundation. Sports field specific research will be a huge issue in the future and funding will be needed to support it.

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## Scholarships - Internships

STMA will provide greater encouragement and assistance for those entering the field. STMA's current scholarship program is attracting extremely well-qualified applicants who already are making a positive impact on the industry. More funding will be needed to support expanded scholarship programs both for those whose education focuses on the profession of sports turf

management and for those whose education centers on the teaching and research segments of the industry. We want to establish more scholarship opportunities and at higher levels of funding.

Also on the horizon are more and better internship programs. Our future will include a coordinated network of internship opportunities to allow a dedicated student to acquire

hands-on experience on warm and cool season turf on multiple types of sports fields and on the infields of baseball and softball fields.

This two pronged package will benefit not only the students, but also potential employers and the industry as a whole.

## Marketing

The future will include an aggressive program to elevate awareness of the profession: both within the green industry and to the general public. Much of this is a continuation of the educational process already in action. STMA will continue to spread the message of the complexity of the task facing the sports turf manager, the role of the field in the game, the knowledge and experience level required for superior field maintenance, the reality of weather-related challenges, the multiple management skills required to coordinate between field owners, field user groups, athletes, coaches, spectators, and the general public.

As a by-product of the elevated awareness, and the continued forward strides taking place within the industry, will come increased compensation for sports turf managers.

*Rich Moffitt is Director of Grounds & Materials Management for Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO, and President-Elect of the STMA.*



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