

STMA 2001—Looking Forward

by Steve Trusty

This is an exciting time for sports turf managers and for the profession of sports turf management. Participation in sports is beginning at an ever-younger age and continuing into adulthood, often to the senior citizen level. The growing interest and enthusiasm for soccer is creating the demand for more field time and for more fields. Rapidly advancing technology is reflected in the design and construction of new stadiums all across the world.

It's also a demanding time for sports turf managers, a time that calls for enhancing one's own knowledge and skills to meet the multiple challenges of new technology, increased field use demands and field quality expectations. As the profession moves forward to reach new heights in the new millennium, the Sports Turf Managers Association also is moving forward with the

implementation of a Strategic Plan to serve its members and the industry as a whole.

This is reflected in the new STMA Mission Statement recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee and ratified by the STMA Board of Directors in June of 2000. The Mission Statement calls for STMA: "To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports turf industry and enhancing members' competence and the acknowledgement of their professionalism."

This is a clear statement not just of what we are, but also of what we



are becoming and what we will achieve. It's a powerful tool to give a united sense of direction and focus to our organization.

The words were carefully chosen for the messages they represent.

The phrase "strengthening the sports turf industry" focuses on the process of making it stronger in areas of knowledge, performance and leadership. The phrase "enhancing members' competence" focuses on the quality of being competent, well qualified, capable and fit to accomplish the requirements of the position. The word acknowledgement in the phrase "the acknowledgement of their professionalism" focuses on developing broader recognition of the fact that sports turf managers are professionals whose professionalism is to be recognized and affirmed.

This leads into STMA's updated Positioning Statement, also adopted at the STMA June Board Meeting. The Positioning Statement defines what STMA desires to create for all of its stakeholders, in the long-term: "Providing the best sports surfaces for all levels of play."

Obviously, this is a long-term plan

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that will need to be continually reviewed, updated and fine-tuned.

The following priorities—expressed as Master Strategies—have been identified for implementation in the short-term. These Master Strategies and Implementation Guidelines are, in the judgment of the Strategic Planning Committee and the STMA Board, critical to STMA's future success in serving its members and representing their interests.

Develop Performance Measurements

This is part of an ongoing Master Strategy that has been moving forward within the Association since its formation and which has become increasingly structured with its growth over the last five years. It has resulted in a strong and growing organization with a sound financial base. The current finance committee, chaired by STMA Treasurer Bob Campbell, developed a more detailed and far-reaching set of financial guidelines, which were adopted by the STMA Board at its September meeting.

The Board, various committees and STMA Headquarters will work together to develop checks and balance systems for the strategic plan implementation. This will include development of formal statements of policy for the Board, Committees, Executive Director and STMA Staff.

Define and Promote Image

STMA will work with its membership, industry leaders, university personnel, administrator groups and others to identify and define an accurate positive image of the sports turf manager and the sports turf management profession. The input received from all these groups will be studied, categorized and summarized to define the image the STMA should project for the profession.

STMA will continue to promote the Certified Sports Field Manager program, the acceptance of the CSFM program among sports turf managers and recognition of the Certification among targeted audiences including athletic directors, parks and recreation and municipality directors, stadium managers, MLB, NFL and other key industry representatives.


STMA will develop a comprehensive marketing plan to achieve recognition of the image of the profession and the professional with clearly defined 1-year, 5-year, and 10-year goals.

Develop Education and Research Agenda

STMA's educational focus will seek to identify and prioritize the

educational and resource needs of its membership, students and the industry, identify solutions to industry challenges and enact programs to address these areas. STMA also will seek to identify and prioritize the educational needs of the general public pertaining to athletic fields and address those educational needs.

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Enhance Information and Member Services

STMA will develop and implement a systematic process to evaluate current and develop new Association programs and services in response to member, former member and potential member input. Among the areas of anticipated action are undertaking to provide and promote expanded networking opportunities for members to communicate and share knowledge and build professional relationships both within the US and internationally.

Strengthen and Enhance Chapters

STMA will work to strengthen the capacity of current affiliated Chapters and potential new Chapters to deliver education programs, information services and networking opportunities to members and other targeted audiences.

The Chapter Officers Training Session (COTS), held in conjunction with the STMA Annual Conference, has proved beneficial in this area. An additional area of assistance could be development of a series of procedures to facilitate Chapter interaction to help continue year-round the idea and information exchange that takes place at COTS.

Gathering Input

A major part of the entire implementation process involves seeking the input of the STMA membership on key issues of the industry, the profession and the Association.

An important survey will be undertaken in February of 2001 to do so. But please don't be limited to that. Your input is welcome anytime. Please feel free to contact me, any of the STMA officers or board members or any staff member at STMA Headquarters with your questions, comments and concerns. By working together, we'll move forward to meet the challenges of the new millennium and accomplish our long-term goal of providing the best sports surfaces for all levels of play.

Steve Trusty is Executive Director of the Sports Turf Managers Association.