

# STMA 2003 Conference

# Big as the Heart of Texas

**W**OW! That's the report on the STMA 14th Annual Conference & Exhibition in San Antonio this past January. The turnout was great. Preliminary review of attendees' comments indicates that this again was the best STMA Conference ever. Attendees' comments on the evaluations turned in on-site included: "The conference was incredible." "Great Conference; great speakers!" "Excellent program, the best ever for STMA!" "Excellent educational sessions!" "Extremely informative and well presented." "Very useful, down-to-earth ideas."

Many attendees commented that there were so many great talks that they couldn't make it to all of them. What a great problem to have: too much good and useful information!

Kudos to the North and South Texas Chapter members who extended such wonderful, warm hospitality that attendees continue to rave about it.

The tours were terrific. These optional activities give the participants a chance to visit other facilities and get the low down on the maintenance programs and unique challenges directly from the sports turf managers who deal with them. It's an up-close look at the layout of the stadium or ballpark or practice fields and the field conditions while hearing the details of what happens when and why. There's an opportunity to ask questions about field use schedules, types of turf, products used. Those on the Sunday tour not only saw some great fields but also had the opportunity to see Turfgrass America's sod farm and harvesting operations, which was a real treat.

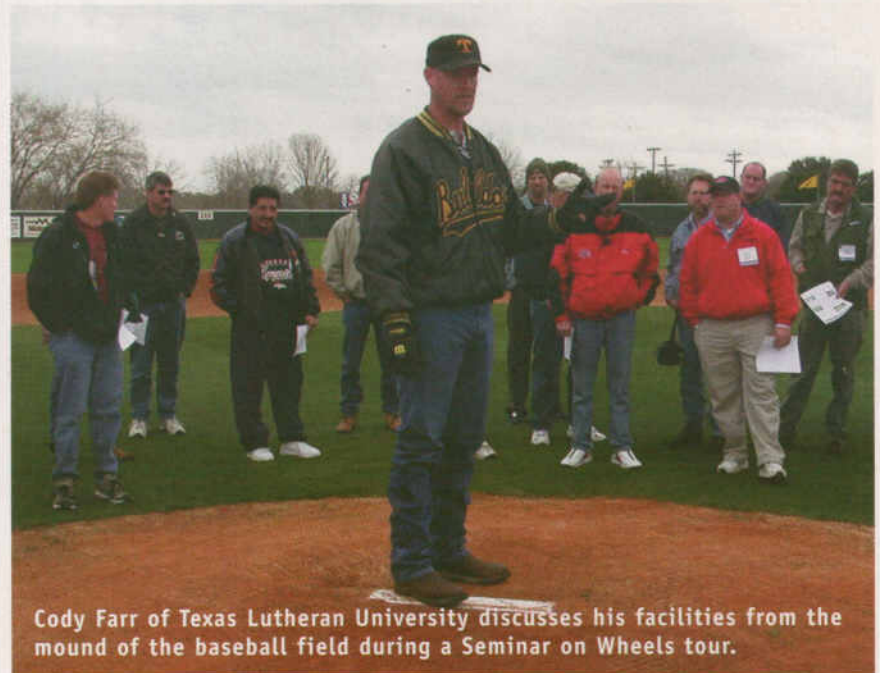
The MLB Seminar was super. Sports turf managers from the Detroit Tigers, Seattle Mariners, Los Angeles Dodgers, Boston Red Sox, and Pittsburgh Pirates were set up at various stations around Nelson W. Wolff Municipal Stadium demonstrating their baseball field maintenance techniques. The attendees broke into groups to rotate through all the stations so everyone had the opportunity to take part in interactive discussion with all the presenters.

The Textron-sponsored SAFE golf tournament was a great fundraiser for the Foundation and the golfers had a wonderful time tackling the challenges of The Quarry.

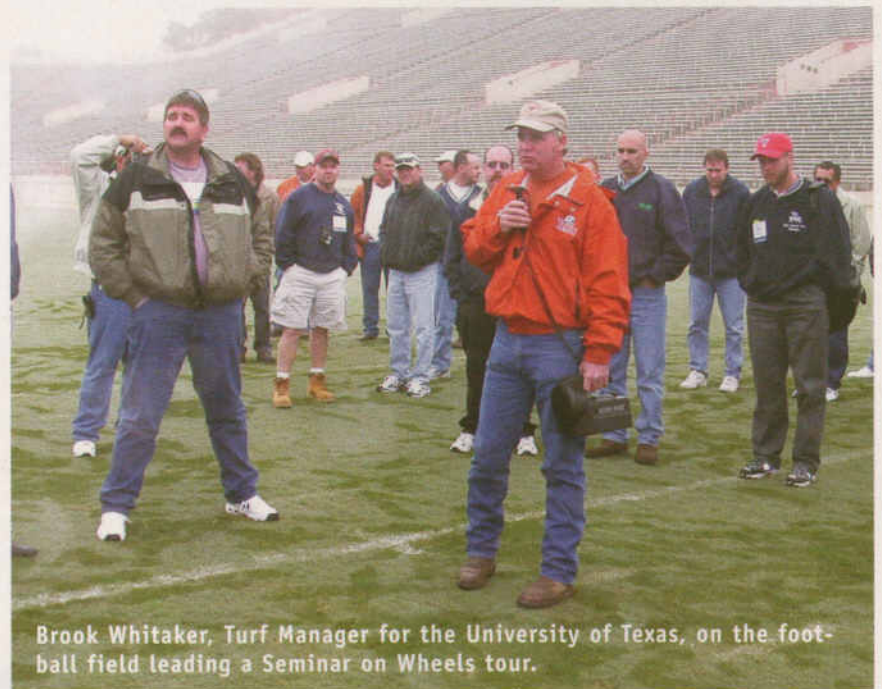
The Trade Show had a record number of Exhibitors and Exhibitor personnel. From the many conversations with Exhibitors on the Trade Show floor the comments were nearly unanimous with reports of "excellent traffic" and "very worthwhile show." From the attendee standpoint, there's no better place for sports turf managers to see and hear about the newest, best and most effective products and techniques.

The opportunity to talk with other sports turf managers is often the highlight of the Conference. Many attendees have noted they really appreciate the Jam Sessions that kick off that networking experience. These interactive gatherings bring together the sports turf managers most likely to have similar responsibilities at similar facilities at the very beginning of the Conference, all just before the Welcome Reception. That gives attendees the chance to make connections in the Jam Session and throughout the week.

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Cody Farr of Texas Lutheran University discusses his facilities from the mound of the baseball field during a Seminar on Wheels tour.



Brook Whitaker, Turf Manager for the University of Texas, on the football field leading a Seminar on Wheels tour.