

Reaching goals through strategic planning

Although the traditional spring board meeting is held during April, your STMA Board met in late February in Kansas City. We wanted to meet soon after the January Conference to spearhead our commitment to strategic planning.

Strategic planning is a means to advance organizations. Strategic planning is described as a "disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an association is, what it does, and why it does it." Strategic planning is a blueprint for the future of this association and is vital to the success and growth of STMA.

With the robust goals STMA has set, spending time discussing the association's strategic direction can help us to achieve these goals. Examples of topics discussed include: overall expansion of the conference including a site selection strategy, membership growth, industry influences, certification goals, chapter development, and management.

Your board is also dedicated to implementing a strong committee system. STMA relies on committees to help guide and execute work. For the association to make the most effective use of its volunteers, it is important that we specifically define the purpose of each committee and the work that is expected of the committee this year. In addition, to strengthen our network of volunteers, it is important to extend our reach to more of our membership.

A strong committee system brings great perspective and insight to the board and staff. They also enhance the association's effectiveness by researching issues thoroughly and then making recommendations to the board for action. All of your board members serve as committee chairs or as a board liaison to a non-board member committee chair to help facilitate communication.

Before this board meeting, committee chairs were asked to submit to Kim Heck, CEO, a completed worksheet that outlined their committee members, purpose of the committee, and specific goals they want to accomplish in 2005. As a part of our strategic planning discussions, committee priorities were revisited to be sure they align with the goals, objectives, and strategies of the strategic plan.

An addition to this year's committee system is the Synthetic/Natural Turfgrass Task Force, which was created as a direct result of membership requests and discussion. The board agreed to create the Task Force to gather and disseminate factual information and provide education for those evaluating the potential use of synthetic turf or natural turf. A goal of the Task Force is to create a "white paper" that will aid in decision-making.

I look forward to sharing our strategic plan with the STMA Membership and reporting back our progress relative to the plan and committee work throughout 2005.



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