

# Take advantage of networking year-round

**The recent** Sports Turf Managers Association's 16th Annual Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix provided educational opportunities to enhance one's professional career. There was another conference-related opportunity that also enhances one's profession: networking. The annual conference provided an excellent opportunity to connect with other sports turf professionals to share and discuss the latest issues and trends in our industry. Equally important, it was an opportunity for members to socialize, to share their knowledge and expertise, and to openly discuss what they've learned through their failures as well as their successes.

But don't stop with the conference; continue to network year-round. Many sports turf managers know that by developing a network of colleagues they gain a valuable asset that can make a difference, especially during difficult and challenging times. Networking may offer resources towards understanding a new area of responsibility or experience that you may not have. As we saw at the Annual Conference, many sports turf managers are now facing issues of synthetic turf vs. natural turf, and now more than ever, need to be able to network to gain an understanding of all the facts to make educated and professional decisions.

Networking is also an opportunity for you to share with others your knowledge base and professional and/or life experiences. I believe that by sharing your knowledge and experiences, you will realize even greater opportunities. In my opinion, the networking that takes place within this association is our greatest asset.

However, poor networking can be potentially devastating. Remember to treat networking as a professional exchange. Networking is not about you selling yourself, lecturing about all the wonderful things you know, or sponging off of others for your benefit only. Instead, be tactfully generous in sharing your talents, experiences, and ideas.

I have the honor of networking with a team of individuals on the STMA Board and Headquarters staff, all of them motivated by the desire to serve the members of this association. Throughout this past year I used my involvement with STMA as a networking resource, and also learned much from my fellow Board Members. They include Bob Campbell, CSFM, University of Tennessee; Mike Andresen, CSFM, Iowa State University; Vickie Wallace, Tee and Green Sod, Inc.; Murray Cook, SPORTSturf Services/Brickman Group, Ltd.; Abby McNeal, CSFM, Invesco Field at Mile High; Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, Sylvania Recreation Corporation; Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, University of Virginia; George C. Trivett, CSFM, Granite Falls Middle School; Lance Tibbetts, CSFM, Town of Windham; Tra DuBois, World Class Athletic Surfaces, Inc.; and Dave Minner, Ph.D., Iowa State University. I look forward to information sharing with our new board member Darian Daily from Paul Brown Stadium and our staff, Kim Heck, CEO, Erica Spurling, and Leah Craig.

Each opportunity for networking is an opportunity for career advancement and is a vital aspect for job searches. Networking can be fun, enrich your life, enhance your career, and possibly build relationships that can last a lifetime.



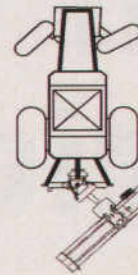
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