

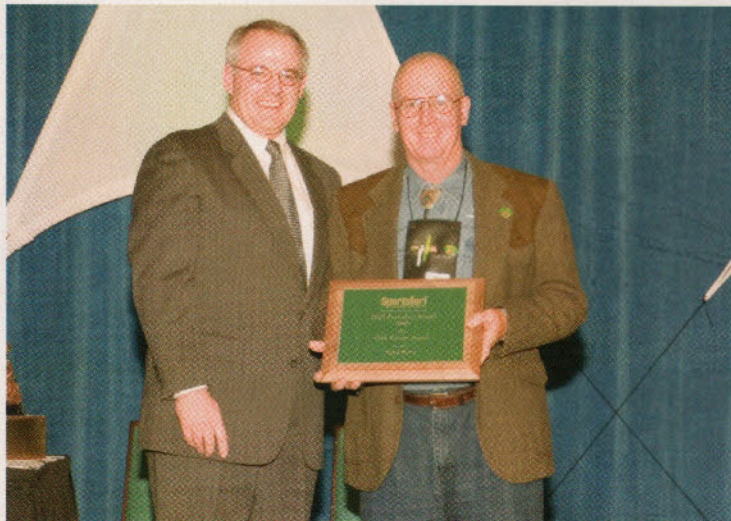
Different ways to skin a cat

By Floyd Perry

At the recent 2006 STMA conference in Orlando, much of the parlor and hallway conversation revolved around communication between groundskeeper and coach, groundskeeper and supervisor and in general, the specific duties surrounding our responsibilities on the job.

Whether we as professional groundskeepers, possess a CPR card for safety and liability or advance our job skills through a pest control class for extra CEU's, much of the general population identify our profession primarily as mowers of turf. That needs to change!

One method I believe progressive groundskeepers can use to demonstrate their individual skills on their property, is to create visual interest. As I visit various parks, recreation centers or school campuses, I'm very impressed with the types of suggestive and helpful signage used. I honestly believe to change the typical "guy on the street" attitude towards facility maintenance personnel, our profession needs to create positive images of our facilities that can elevate our professional image.



STMA President Mike Trigg, CSFM, presents the Dick Ericson Award to Floyd Perry at January's banquet in Floyd's hometown, Orlando, FL.



One groundskeeper in Grain Valley High School in Missouri enlisted the help of four interested fathers and created a football playing surface for their 2000 homecoming comparable to an NFL playoff field prepared for television viewing. Their high school has only 520 students, but you would never know that from seeing their facilities.

The men and women in our groundskeeping industry are some of the most creative, innovative, and industrious folks on the payroll; all they need is some quality support and encouragement. At times, an "atta boy," "thank you," or "nice job" goes a long way.

Communication is a two-way street. Take your before and after photos, create your reference documentation, and more important, create awareness of your work ethic by presenting a quality image on your property so your efforts will be recognized even when you are off the clock.

Floyd Perry, Jr., is president of Grounds Maintenance Services in Orlando. He received the STMA's Dick Ericson Award in January, which honors a sports turf manager who positively impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership. He can be reached at 407-903-1220. ■