

President's Message

Certification Today

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TMA Headquarters reported last month that there are now 65 Certified Sports Field Managers. In 2005, nine new members were certified. In addition, at the Annual Conference members had two opportunities to test and seven out of eight people who took the exam passed.

Certification in the field of sports turf is important for the same reason it has been important in other fields. It raises the bar of excellence for everyone involved. Certification signifies that an individual has been found competent in the knowledge of sports field maintenance, and recertification monitors an individual's progress in acquiring continuing education. We demand standards of professionals from a number of other occupations. Why should we demand anything less of sports turf managers? In addition, certification is an increasingly important process for our association's growth and identity.

The Certification Committee under co-chairs Lance Tibbetts, CSFM and Dale Getz, CSFM, was successful in 2005, with a goal to grow the number of certified members. In the STMA Strategic Plan, a goal of 75 CSFMs by mid-2006 has been set. The committee also consistently monitors the program and recommends enhancements to ensure that the program is the top achievement for sports turf managers.

The mechanics of becoming certified are straightforward. The STMA firmly believes that a combination of education and experience are necessary to be the best possible athletic field manager. However, it also recognizes that in a profession as diverse as the sports turf industry, experience should play a major role. To successfully gain certification, sports turf managers must meet certain education and/or experience requirements. It is possible to be certified without having any formal education beyond high school if you have enough years of experience. You cannot, however, become certified by virtue of education alone. For more information on how to qualify for STMA'S Certification Program, contact Headquarters or visit the website at www.sportsturfmanager.org.

Priorities this year for the Certification Committee include reengineering the information process for those interested in pursuing certification, and developing a plan to promote to employers the importance of certification. It is these employers that can ultimately strongly influence the demand for certified members in their workplaces.

The decision to seek certification says more about an individual than a willingness to study for a test. It is symbolic of the commitment to the profession. It also speaks volumes about your desire for advancement, the hunger for new knowledge, and the pride in adding those letters to your title.

In the end, choosing to commit oneself to the certification process likely will not bring you fame or fortune. But if you believe in investing in your future, I cannot think of a richer professional experience.

Mike Trigg

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