SoCal STMA renovates field named for a legend

By Mike Tarantino

At first the project seemed to be overwhelming, and more than the members of the SoCal Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) probably wanted to take on. But when we considered it further and finally realized what kind of support it might receive from individuals and businesses, it became "definitely doable."

Rick Covert, STMA secretary and Facilities Supervisor/Landscape at Miramar College, and Ron Lardizibal, Athletic Director at San Diego's Herbert Hoover High, talked during a walk-through at Petco Park. They agreed they wanted to continue the recent STMA tradition of volunteering each year to renovate a public field.

Lardizibal mentioned that the varsity field at the school was certainly a candidate for a local project. The field is called the Ted Williams Field, named in honor of the baseball legend, who while still enrolled at Hoover High, made his professional baseball debut in the minor leagues with the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League.

That this was the school where Williams played baseball when he was a youngster was certainly part of the allure of taking on this project.

Padres' Director of Field and Landscape Maintenance Luke Yoder, an STMA member, and his assistant, John Turnour, echoed that sentiment. "I can't think of a better opportunity to give back to the community than at Hoover High and a field named after a true legend," Yoder said.

When we looked at the field in January it was clear that it was going to be a challenge. In no uncertain terms, we knew there was much work to be done.

Lack of funds meant the field had not been maintained properly. It wasn't because of lack of interest or knowledge, just money. Budget priorities at municipal and other public organizations are forced to shift from year to year because of a similarly shifting economy.

Ron Hostick, an STMA board member and Lead Groundskeeper for San Diego State University, said that some preliminary irrigation and skin work was done Wednesday and Thursday before the weekend event.

The businesses that are credited for participating in the event are AA Equipment, Barkshire Laser Leveling, Best Professional Products, Green One Industries, Horizon, Hunter Irrigation, Profile Products, Pro's Choice, Target Specialty Products, Turf First and West Coast Turf. About $75,000 in products and services were donated!

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STMA partnerships benefit you

You walk by your athletic director's office, and he waves to you to step inside. In his hand is Interscholastic Athletic Administration magazine. He says, "I just read about STMA's partnership with the NIAAA. I didn't realize that your association is my association's education partner."

In fact, STMA has been the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) education partner since 2005. That partnership grew from a desire to open educational and informational channels about safety and sports field management challenges facing...