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There are people who take the heart out of you, and there are people who put it back."

This quote by Elizabeth David captures the feelings I have coming off the just completed national conference in San Antonio.

The STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition is absolutely the highlight of my year, and this conference was no different. Even with the challenges of the worst ice storm in San Antonio history, I definitely came away with my heart repaired after a tough year in the trenches.

It's very humbling to know so many individuals donate time and talents to ensure this event is first class in every way! Thanks start with our CEO, Kim Heck, our terrific team at headquarters, and our conference partners, M&E, led by David Rosenberg and his team in Newport, RI. Together, their work is vital to ensuring the conference is successful to our level of satisfaction and in helping create the remarkable weeklong energy! Their unselfishness and calmness allows us to enjoy the short time we have together, to enrich our professional growth, and to get excited for another year of the sports turf management grind.

The member volunteers that played a role in developing the conference, its content and energy, hit a home run this year. A sincere thank you goes to our commercial members. I truly feel, and have been told so many times, our trade show is "different" in that we truly value our vendor partners and stand arm-in-arm with them in the mission of producing safer athletic fields. Their role is very important to each of us personally and also to the health of our association. The trade show is part of our education; our education sessions are part of their enrichment. Please always remember that some of our best friends work inside trade show booths during that one week in January.

Most of all, thanks go to you, the attendee, who goes to great effort to ensure we have a show worth being passionate about. We filled hotels, restaurants, pubs, and meeting rooms. Our show is growing! Networking with new friends, old friends, and colleagues are at an all-time high and it's exciting! We oftentimes complain that co-workers don't understand the world in which we live. This week is our time to realize we work in a profession with people in the same business because of a "calling." We are in sports turf management because we know the important impact we have on youth and adult athletes.

If you attended the conference please let HQ know what you think and what we might do to make your experience even better. If you weren't able to attend this year, please posture yourself to make next year's show in Phoenix available to you. Some of the very best people in this world are in our profession. Some will teach you things; some will show you things. All will listen, and all will help to heal your soul. Thanks to everyone for making our show that special!

Mike Andresen