The 18th annual Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference and Exhibition brought 1,548 total attendees to San Antonio in January. Despite an ice storm that literally shut down the city, including highways, government offices, malls, and the airport, STMA experienced a gain of more than 3% in total attendance over the 2006 conference in Orlando. This was despite on-site registrations being down by more than 200 due to the weather. STMA was forced to cancel a golf tournament and one of two off-site seminars due to the storm. The conference wrapped up a yearlong celebration of the association's 25th anniversary.

Integral to the conference was the 88,000 sq. foot exhibition that showcased the sports turf industry’s products, services and equipment. More than 162 companies displayed the newest innovations in turf-related products. Fifty-eight educational sessions and workshops, a dozen roundtable discussions, a 4-hour chapter officer’s training session, and an offsite seminar hosted by MLB/NFL/MLS turf managers were packed into the 4-day conference.

The conference events were enhanced by the support of: Barenbrug USA; Bare Spot Solutions; Beacon Athletics; Covermaster; Cygnet Turf & Equipment; Diamond Pro; Ewing Irrigation; Floratine Products Group; Hunter Industries; Jacobsen; Kubota; Midwest Rake; Newsom Seed; Pro’s Choice; Sod Solutions, Inc.; TLI Sports; Tencate; The Toro Company; Turface Athletics; University of Georgia; West Coast Turf; and World Class Athletic Surfaces.

Founders Awards presented

The STMA Awards banquet culminated in the awarding of the Founders Awards, STMA’s most prestigious honors. Mike McDonald, CSFM, Turf Manager at the University of Minnesota, received the Dick Ericson award, which is given to a sports turf manager who positively impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership.

Dr. James McAfee, Extension Turfgrass Specialist at Texas A&M, received the Dr. William H. Daniel Award, which acknowledges significant contributions to the sports turf industry through research, teaching and extension outreach.

The George Toma Golden Rake Award, which acknowledges an individual’s strong work ethic and job performance, was presented to two people, Todd Jeannonne, Sports Turf Manager at Louisiana State University, and Jeff Kershaw, Director of Maintenance for the West Baton Rouge Parrish School, for their efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The Harry C. Gill Memorial Award was presented to former STMA board member Boyd R. Montgomery, CSFM of The Toro Company. The Gill Award recognizes an individual for their hard work in the sports turf industry and acknowledges their dedication and service to the STMA.

Travel Travails Contest

Anyone have a hassle getting to San Antonio for the STMA Conference in January? We thought so! Here’s a chance to turn that painful memory into something useful. STMA is sponsoring a “Travel Travails Contest” with the winner receiving a free and full registration to next year’s STMA Conference in Phoenix. The STMA Conference Committee will select the attendee who endured the most arduous journey.

If you think your travel nightmare to San Antonio is worthy of consideration, please send your story in 200 words or less to STMA HQ by March 31. You can fax (800-366-0391) or email (STMAinfo@sportsturfmanager.org) your entry.

Make your misery work for you!

Fields of the Year, MiLB awards

Eleven STMA Field of the Year winners were also honored during the annual awards banquet. The sports turf managers whose fields won were judged to have exceptional playability and aesthetic playing surfaces, employ innovative solutions, use budget dollars effectively, and develop and implement a comprehensive, agronomically sound maintenance program. The winners include:

Baseball: (Professional) Blair County Ballpark, Altoona, PA
(Schools/Parks) Gaebelein Field, Norcross, GA
Football: (Professional) Marie P. DeBartolo Sports Centre, Santa Clara, CA
(Collegiate) Greentree Practice Facility, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
(Schools/Parks) Raider Stadium at Atlee High School, Mechanicsville, VA
Soccer: (Collegiate) Jeffrey Field, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
(Schools/Parks) Greene Field, Noble and Greenough School, Dedham, MA
Softball: (Collegiate) Cyrill Softball Stadium, University of South Carolina-Upstate, Spartanburg, SC
(Schools/Parks) Mizuno Field, Eastside Center, East Peoria, IL
Complex: (Professional) Surprise Recreation Campus, Surprise, AZ
SAFE scholarships winners recognized

Ten outstanding students were recognized for winning scholarships. The SAFE Scholarship Program is funded through the generous support of The TORO Foundation, Jacobsen, the SAFE Live and Silent Auctions on the Trade Show floor, the raffle held throughout the conference, and the miscellaneous donations received from individuals and companies during the year.

Graduate: Adam Thomas, University of Tennessee, the $2,000 Dr. James Watson Scholarship, and Thomas Serenits, Penn State, $1,000.

Four-year: Will Jellicorse, University of Tennessee, Dr. James Watson Scholarship, $2,000; Amy French, Michigan State University, $1,250; Anne Buckingham, SUNY-Delhi, $1,000; Jared Knode, Michigan State, $1,000; and Tyler Mittlesteadt, University of Tennessee, $1,000.

Two-year: Ed Schmachtenberger, Mt. San Antonio College, Fred Grau Scholarship, $1,250; Chris Romo, Mt. San Antonio, $1,000; and Brian Sayers, Michigan State, $1,000.

SAFE auctions raise $6K

The Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE), the charitable arm of STMA, raised $6,019 for scholarship, research, and education during the conference. That total does not include any donations of entry fees from the cancelled SAFE/Jacobson Golf Tournament, for which Jacobsen will match 50% of those monies, potentially $27,000. Funds were generated from the live and silent auctions held on the trade show floor and the raffle.

Students compete in 3rd Collegiate Challenge

Students were able to take advantage of many activities specifically geared to them including the Third Annual Student Collegiate Challenge presented in partnership with the SAFE Foundation and Platinum Sponsor Hunter Industries. Through the generosity of SAFE and Hunter, the Student Challenge was expanded this year to provide the winning two-year team and the winning four-year team each with a $4,000 grant to fund a practical learning lab at their university. Ninety-one students comprising 26 teams from various colleges and universities participated in a written exam on athletic turf and sports field management topics and identified plants, insects, diseases and weeds, as well as a written case study. Twenty-two teams competed in the event in 2006.

The winning team from the 4-year program was The University of Tennessee, Team 24: Lucas Freshour, Will Jellicorse, Tyler Mittlesteadt, and Stuart Morris excelled in the matching, multiple choice and identification sections of the test. Iowa State, Team 7 came in second and Penn State, Team 19 came in third.

In the 2-year program, Mount San Antonio College, Team 14 took top honors, with teammates Julio Carbajal, Mike Reed, Ed Schmachtenberger, and David Wolfsbauer all pulling their weight. Second place went to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

The two First Place teams also received the Challenge Cup trophy and individual medals. Second and third place winners received plaques and medals.

Tournament cancelled but not spirit

By Patrick Allen

The scheduled SAFE/Jacobson Golf Tournament at The Quarry Golf Club in San Antonio, was cancelled due to an unprecedented winter storm, which brought frozen rain and ice to the city for the first time in more than 20 years. The golf course closed, in addition to highways, the airport and even shopping malls, sideling a full field of 144 golfers, the largest number ever for a SAFE/Jacobson Golf Tournament, now in its seventh year.

However, there is some good news for the SAFE Foundation: Jacobsen has pledged to match 50% of all entry fees that are donated to SAFE, meaning that if all 144 golfers donate their fees, a total of $27,000 could be raised for the foundation. Refunds will also be issued to those making a written request to STMA headquarters. Additionally, Jacobsen donated all of the prizes designated for the golf tournament to the SAFE Live and Silent Auction.

Sixteen TaylorMade drivers and rescue clubs netted more than $2,000 for SAFE.

So, without hitting a shot, sinking a putt, losing a ball, or posting a score, the members of STMA and Jacobsen have once again made the SAFE/Jacobson Golf Tournament a tremendous success. Now if Phoenix only had a golf course we could play at next year!

www.sportsturfmanager.org
STMA installs four chapters

STMA presented four new affiliated chapters with gavels during the Chapter Officers Training Session (COTS) that was held during the STMA 18th Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Antonio in January.

Dave Reis with the Intermountain Chapter of STMA, Brock Phipps with the Ozarks Chapter, Mark Lucas with the Northern California STMA, and John Mascaro with the North Florida Chapter were welcomed to the STMA Chapter network, bringing the total number of affiliated chapters to 30.

To become a chapter, at least 25 members must join that chapter; it must be registered with that state’s secretary of state, articles of incorporation and bylaws must be developed, elections held, and financial and operational obligations met.

To honor Dr. Kurtz, the family has established the “Dr. Kent W. Kurtz Scholarship Endowment,” which will fund scholarships for students pursuing a degree in the field of turfgrass management. Tax-deductible donations can be given by check, payable to the “Cal Poly Pomona Foundation,” and sent to Ms. Michelle Moyer, DOD, College of Agriculture, Cal Poly Pomona, 3801 W. Temple Ave., Pomona, Ca 91768. Please note in that this is a contribution to the “Dr. Kent W. Kurtz Scholarship.” Donations can also be made online at “GiveToCalPolyPomona.com.”

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director was a long-time supporter of STMA and was its Historian. He received two Founders Awards from STMA: the Harry C. Gill Memorial Award, STMA’s most prestigious award, in 1986, and the Dr. William H. Daniel Award in 1996. He also authored “Doc’s Dugout” for the STMA newsletter and was a turf educator for more than 30 years.

STMA worked with his children to obtain his professional papers and materials. The STMA Historical Committee is developing a Dr. Kent Kurtz Collection, which will showcase the profession and the history of the association.


Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization - MAFMO Chapter STMA): www.ccstma.org.


Florida #1 Chapter: 954/782-2748.


Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: 770/928-1580.


Illinois Chapter (formerly Midwest Chapter) STMA: 847/263-7603.

Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: 801/422-5467.


Minnesota Chapter STMA: www.mstma.org.


Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: 402/441-4425.

North Florida STMA Chapter: 850/580-4026.

Northern California STMA: 916/366-8350.

Ozarks STMA: 417/862-6974.


Southern California Chapter: 858/679-2526.

South Carolina Chapter of STMA: www.scstma.org.

Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: 866/897-8621.


FORMING CHAPTERS:

Nevada STMA Chapter: 702/433-3113.