

## President's Message

# Serious professionalism

**W**ith all due respect to the numerous turf conferences around the county, including our just completed and awesome conference in San Antonio, I have a passion for attending management seminars. In our jobs we need to be experts on playing fields and competition sites, but our success may be even more dependent on communication and our people management skills. Not many people understand what we really do nor do they understand the "why or how" parts of our profession. It is common perception that sports turf managers are very busy, hard working and committed to our tasks.

On one hand we like the portrayal of that gruff, dedicated individual, but it's time we focus on the team element and the softer skills at which so many successful sports turf managers excel. One small example of how we're all getting the message is just by remembering the casual dress codes from conferences years ago. It's rare now to not see members dressed in business casual attire when 10 years ago a ball cap and tee shirt were much more common.

I trust that when we work at our facilities we're also selling that same professional appearance to our co-workers. If we want to be welcomed to the administrative board and meeting rooms it's our responsibility to be seen as compatible with that environment. When an administrator comes to our shop dressed in a white shirt and tie it's obvious that person isn't going to be taken seriously as "one of us." When I show up in his office in muddy shoes, tee shirt and baseball hat, he's going to identify that I don't fit in that environment.

STMA has worked hard and will be working even harder to align with your administrator's national associations. We'll work hard to sell your skills, your dedication and your professionalism. STMA can carry the message on this level better than you or I can individually. Even more important than any message STMA can carry is the message you and I carry to our workplace every day. If I want to be taken seriously as part of the management team at my facility it's my responsibility to be identified as part of that team. We're blessed that our bosses and the public already see us as exceptionally hard working and dedicated. If that part of the equation was broken it would be nearly impossible to sell any other image. I'm not saying we don't do a good job already, but as our association works hard to sell a positive image and professionalism on our behalf, each of us needs to work equally hard each day on those softer skills to ensure the message resonates properly.

We're not considered professionals simply due to our agronomic skills. We're judged by someone every minute of the day. If we want to be recognised as professionals, it's our challenge to live as professionals.



**MIKE ANDRESEN**  
CSFM

mandrese@  
iastate.edu

### M2MEDIA360

#### PRESIDENT/CEO

Marion Minor

#### VP OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Gerald Winkel

#### VP OF CIRCULATION AND

#### COLLATERAL SALES

Joanne Juda-Prainito

#### PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Mary Jo Tomei

#### DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964

cnaughton@m2media360.com

#### Reader Service Services

#### DIRECTOR OF READER SERVICE

Joanne Juda-Prainito

Readerservice@m2media360.com

#### SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Phone 847-763-9565 Fax 847-763-9569

#### REPRINTS

Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964

cnaughton@m2media360.com

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35 Greenbriar

Aurora, OH 44202

330-562-2512; 330-562-3512 (fax)

pgarris@m2media360.com

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GA, LA, NC, NM, NV, OK, SC,  
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#### Deanna Morgan

2095 Exeter Road, #80-336

Germantown, TN 38138

901-759-1241; 901-624-0333 (fax)

dmorgan@m2media360.com

AK, CO, HI, IA, ID, IL, KS, MN, MO,  
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1326 N. Illinois Ave.

Arlington Heights, IL 60004

847-259-2835; 847-259-2836 (fax)

cmurphy88@comcast.net

#### Classified Advertising Sales

#### Debbie Sutphin

815-267-7690; 815-267-7691 fax

dsutphin@m2media360.com

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