

Certification: examining members' reservations

Since its inception in 2000, STMA's certification program has continued to grow in prominence and recognition by the membership and the profession. Currently 88 members are certified. As STMA continues to encourage members to "take the test," we also have become aware of certain stumbling blocks that may hold back some members. Those hindrances, gathered from the certification survey conducted in the fall of 2007, can be grouped into six categories:

- Value to me in my career is uncertain (40%)
- Employer does not request it (32%)
- Study/exam prep time is limited (31%)
- Not knowledgeable about the program & process (24%)
- Too costly (15%)
- Potential to fail the exam (14%)

This month we'll tackle the top two reasons noted above and provide some insights from certified members on how becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) provides value to them.

Boyd Montgomery, CSFM

"Certification raises the level of expertise and lends creditability to turf managers. This helps with conversations with your boards, management, and the public on many aspects of turf management. If we want our profession to become a high-paying, respectable profession, then we need to commit ourselves to becoming the professionals that command this level of respect. If you think about other occupations, many have levels of certification, which to you as a consumer brings a small piece of mind. For whatever reason you are engaging them, you have confidence that the person has obtained a level of expertise."

Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM

"When I was challenged with becoming certified, I was the sports field manager at the University of Virginia. The educational setting at a university, (even in an athletic department), and my willingness to stretch my proficiencies, was a natural marriage. The University supported me 100%, both in time and in funding to fulfill this desire. I was rewarded with a 10% base pay increase shortly after the passing results came back from STMA.

"Certification, in my opinion, does not necessarily make you a more knowledgeable field manager than those who have not taken the test. However, it does signify to yourself and to your peers that you are not afraid of a challenge, and that you have taken steps toward a greater appreciation of the needed proficiencies critical to effectively managing sports turf."

Dale Getz, CSFM

"By studying for the exam I was able to fill gaps in my knowledge base. This knowledge base provided me with confidence to decisively move forward in my career. As a professional, being certified showed my employer that I was committed to my job and had the background to deal with every situation with confidence."

Richard Calarco, CSFM

"I truly believe in the sports field certification program. Over my 30+ years of experience, I have too often seen many facilities with totally unacceptable conditions due to poor management and lack of trained personnel. It is to this end that I feel the certified program truly begins to provide professional accountability to the turf management industry."

Don Savard, CSFM

"I have always believed that the public deserves the best and most qualified professionals to take care of them, whether the professional is doctor, lawyer, mechanic, or green industry professional. I realized that if I wanted to make a difference and be the very best that I could be, it was time to do something about my own lack of professional credentials.

"Since attaining my CSFM, I have confidence in my abilities but more importantly, I have a greater self knowledge of what I do not know. I have had the opportunity to help other people in my profession one-on-one, through articles I have written and presentations that I have made both locally and nationally. I am at the top of my game, and I am still growing. I know that the credential, hard work, professionalism, knowledge and skills that I gained to reach the level of CSFM will open doors for the next and *better* opportunity."

Eric Fasbender, CSFM

"When I first became a member of the STMA in 2001, I knew that getting my certification was going to be an important step in my career. I had a vague idea that getting certified might lead me to get that dream job or help justify making more money, but the real reason I wanted my CSFM became clear when I attended my first STMA conference. I saw the other members who were certified and realized it was about being recognized as a professional in this industry." ■

For more information on the CSFM program, contact Leah Craig at lcraig@STMA.org or 800-323-3875.

Governance changes on the horizon

As President Andresen, CSFM, reported during the Annual Meeting in January, several governance changes will be brought to the membership for a vote early this fall. There are

three major proposed changes:

Combine the Board Secretary and Treasurer positions into one position, Secretary/Treasurer. Once elected, the member in this position will be on track for President Elect and President. This will clarify the ascension process and reduce the number of Board Officers to five.

Expand the Board by two At-Large Director positions. Along with combining Secretary and Treasurer into one position, this will be a net gain of one Board member, bringing the total number of Board members to 13. Twelve Board members will be eligible to vote—the Immediate Past President remains a non-voting member of the Board. The two new Director positions can represent any category of membership except Commercial. One of the new Director positions will be placed on the ballot with a minimum of two candidates running for that position, and will be voted on like the current Director candidates. This Director position will also have a 2-year term. The other new Director position will be appointed by the President to a 1-year term. This Director will typically be the candidate who loses the Secretary/Treasurer election.

Shorten the Officers' terms to 1 year vs. the current 2-year terms, with the exception of the Commercial Vice President, who will continue to serve 2 years. This will reduce the maximum time spent on the board from 14 years to 8 years.

The Bylaws Committee is working on aligning the Bylaws with these changes and the Governance Task Group is working on Standard Operating Procedures that will clearly define how these processes will work and the appropriate actions if unique situations arise, such as if the President Elect and the President have to leave the Board during their terms.

Look for continued information about these changes throughout the spring and summer in this magazine and in the STMA Online newsletter.

to interact with the professionals about their Major League Baseball (MLB) teams and particular sports field venues," he said.

Covermaster, Toro, and Turface Athletics, along with 48 MLB groundskeepers representing 25 teams, donated time, resources, and materials to utterly transform the high school field. In one day, these pros rebuilt the pitcher's mound, bullpen and batter's boxes; mowed and edged the turf; dragged the infield; and incorporated field conditioner into the playing surfaces.

Grant Trenbeath, head groundskeeper of the Arizona Diamondbacks, helped connect the MLB groundskeepers with Paradise Valley. "We were happy to renovate a sports field in the Phoenix area," said Trenbeath. "Besides helping the community, it allowed us time for camaraderie and to catch up with one another. We sweated elbow-to-elbow, working hard to get a lot done in a single day with a dedicated group."

"This has become somewhat of a tradition at the Sports Turf Managers Conference," said Joe Betulius, vice president of sales for Profile Products. "The STMA is a great organization and we are proud to be affiliated with such a talented group of individuals." Profile Products donated 10 tons of soil conditioning products and mound and batter's box clays to the effort.

"Seeing the transformation from beginning to end was truly amazing; we came quite a long way," said Dale Getz, national sales manager for Toro's sports fields and grounds business. "Toro is proud to sponsor this important event. Throughout the day, the professionals were happy to share field maintenance tips that can be used to keep the field in tip-top shape."

Toro provided the use of a Groundsmaster rotary mower, utility vehicles, a Dingo compact utility loader, line painter, and an Infield Pro. Covermaster donated sports surface covers.

STMA members and sponsors renovate field in AZ

As it has done for the past 3 years, STMA and several corporate sponsors "gave back" to the community in which the association held its Annual Conference in January, in this case the baseball field at Paradise Valley High School near Phoenix.

Roy Muller, teacher and coach at Paradise Valley, was very pleased with the renovation. "The renovation made the sports field look great and also safer for the kids. But it was really good for the students to see the professionals volunteer their time and energy for a community project. It was also fun for the students



Extreme Makeover: Home Edition features Pioneer Athletics

STMA Commercial member Pioneer Athletics helped on a project featured on the February 17 episode of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

This is the third project Pioneer has worked on for the two-time Emmy-winning television show. This time the crew helped the Hughes family from Louisville, KY with a blind and disabled son who has overcome challenges to become a musician and inspiring leader as part of the University of Louisville band. The field crew at the university helped renovate the practice field the band practices on. Pioneer supplied the paint and stencils for all the logos.



For previous episodes, Pioneer had worked in Alaska, where they installed a football field in the backyard of the lucky family. Another season, the Cleveland-based company worked at Minot's Knights of Columbus Field in North Dakota.

Guard groundwater

Attention all turf managers: the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program is now open. Groundwater Guardian Green Sites are places with a lot of turf that

implement groundwater and surface water-friendly practices as part of their regular site maintenance.

To earn the exclusive Groundwater Guardian Green Site designation, site managers complete a simple application that documents their site's groundwater-friendly practices related to water, pesticide and fertilizer use, pollution prevention, and environmental stewardship. The application is available for download online at www.groundwater.org/gg/greensites.html.

In 2007, the program's pilot year, the following sites were recognized as Groundwater Guardian Green Sites:

Arbor Links Golf Course – Nebraska City, Nebraska
Bayside Golf Course – Brule, Nebraska
Eastern Nebraska 4H Center – Gretna, Nebraska
Firethorn Golf Club – Lincoln, Nebraska
Heritage Hills Golf Course – McCook, Nebraska
Hickory Hills Golf Club – Grove City, Ohio
Players Club at Deer Creek – Omaha, Nebraska

Other currently participating sites include:

Chalco Hills Recreation Area – Omaha, Nebraska
Gifford Farm Educational Center – Bellevue, Nebraska
Haymarket Park – Lincoln, Nebraska (2007 Field of the Year winner)
Millard Public School District Campuses – Omaha, Nebraska

Potential sites are encouraged to get involved in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program by downloading the 2008 application at www.groundwater.org/gg/greensites.html, e-mailing guardian@groundwater.org, or calling 1-800-858-4844.

The Green Site program grew out of a project to revitalize and grow The Groundwater Foundation's Groundwater

Guardian program, which recognizes communities of all types implementing groundwater education and protection activities on the local level. In 2007, 140 Communities in 34 states and one Canadian province were recognized as Groundwater Guardians. The Groundwater Guardian Green Site program is supported by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 7 Pollution Prevention Program, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The Groundwater Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska with a mission to educate and motivate the public to care about and for groundwater. Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has offered various educational programming for youth and adults. To learn more, visit www.groundwater.org.