

# Continuous improvement

I have a few final reflections from the STMA National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix. The tone of the conference was very positive and energetic. I heard less complaining about jobs and sense that more people understand the value that they provide to their employer. This is a great approach to professionalism and this attitude will serve each of us well in the continuing drive for respect and recognition. The grumpy old groundskeeper persona doesn't work anymore. Fewer ball caps and blue jeans, more polo shirts and jackets sent the message that our attendees are serious professionals who came to advance our careers and the profession.

We've always had a willingness to work hard for what we want. In a world driven by instant gratification, sports turf managers understand that our profession values substance, patience, and opportunity. I've heard the generalities about the younger generation lacking in initiative and strong work ethic. The young people I met at our conference were extremely respectful to the profession and to those of us in it. The student contact at our conference is gratifying, and we're very fortunate to have a rich student membership.

Look back 20 years, and consider how sports turf managers were perceived. Very few, and normally only those at the professional level, were held in high esteem. Expectations were low and people were satisfied, as a general rule, with less than great fields. Our four Founders identified the problem and started us on a mission to change public perception of our jobs and our professionalism. Through the years this profession has gained much ground, and we're committed to raising the bar higher. Our very insightful leaders worked with few resources except a passion to push on and achieve a dream. STMA is continuing that same course, and we're dedicated to ensuring that this younger generation of sports turf managers has benefits that we didn't. If we don't follow through, we let down those who've come before us as well as those who follow.

My day job is fun, challenging, and rewarding. The same can be said for serving on STMA's Board of Directors. Working on behalf of the membership is an honor I take very seriously. It's gratifying to know each of us is making a difference where we work and within STMA. We've been given the opportunity to build upon a very special heritage. It's important at all levels to keep selling our professional image. Thank you for making STMA what it is today, and thank you for pushing it toward a vision of success that we'll be even more proud of in the future.

Spring is here or just around the corner. Good luck with the events and responsibilities you'll confront and manage successfully. Remember, you have a membership directory full of friends who are just a phone call away. If you know anyone who isn't a member of STMA, please tell them about us, and ask them to join. Make 2008 a special year!



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