STMA goes global

THE STMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION REGISTRATION is in full swing. Have you made plans to attend? The brochure should be on your desks and break room tables, or you can access it online. Please review the educationally rich program. In the brochure and online, you will find useful tools to provide to your employer to help justify attending the conference. It is a must-attend event for sports turf managers, and the “take-away” value to attendees is without equal. The conference registration fees and the hotel rates increase after December 15 so don’t wait to sign up. Register now.

STMA has taken a huge step forward in international outreach in the past several months. At the summer board meeting, the Chapter Relations Committee recommended to the board that we approve implementing an International Affiliate Organization status. This status is an adaptation of an STMA chapter that will allow an organization in another country to operate in the spirit of an STMA chapter, but without the legal complexities of affiliating with STMA. I am pleased to announce our inaugural International Affiliate Organization, the Sports Turf Association, headquartered in Guelph, ON, Canada. The STA is similar to STMA including a parallel mission: “The STA is dedicated to the promotion of better, safer sports turf through innovation, education and professional programs.” We also believe that a group in Israel will come on board very soon as our second International Affiliate Organization.

Our next efforts took place in October with CEO Kim Heck's attending and presenting at the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) 75th anniversary celebration and sports turf conference in London. Two weeks later, I attended and presented at the International Turf Seminar presented by the Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology (CUGE) in Singapore. While in Singapore, I was able to recognize and install STMA's first international affiliated chapter, the Singapore Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association. I also made connections for further collaboration with other sports turf associations, including two in Australia. These efforts support a very important objective in our Strategic Plan: To develop relationships internationally that will benefit the STMA membership. Kim and I found that there is common interest from these groups to cooperate and share information, research, and educational resources. There is also much interest in STMA's certification program internationally. We have much to share and also much to learn from these groups. We have invited them to attend our annual conference, and I hope that you will have the chance to welcome their representatives and share your insights and management practices with them.

The New Year is just around the corner, and economic issues still surround us. STMA is committed to providing relevant and robust educational programs with strong value to all our members. For 2010, we will continue to strive to enhance our programs and services and promote the importance of you, the sports turf manager, to fans, athletes, and employers.

Happy New Year!