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## One on one with Jesse Driver, CSFM

JESSE DRIVER, CSFM is president of Mid-Atlantic Turf, Inc. and a long-time STMA member. He builds, renovates and provides maintenance services only for athletic fields and is based in Hebron, MD. We exchanged emails recently:

*How is the rocky economy affecting your business?*

While some have said they think everyone is shell-shocked at the entire economic situation with furloughs, decreases in budgets, etc., we have thus far been fortunate to have contracts, on-going projects and long standing work. The price of fuel and fertilizer is greatly impacting us; when contracts are signed and there is no provision for price increases, it eats into everyone's budget.

*Is your company involved in building synthetic turf fields?*

No.

*Is liability, in terms of player injuries, a concern for field builders? How do field builders limit their liability?*

Safe and playable fields have been our major focus throughout over a decade in business. We have turned down work because of our concern that the work wanted by the customer would not result in what we felt would be a "safe and playable" field. If potential issues arise during the course of building the field, they should be immediately brought to the attention of the turf manager and owner's representative in writing.

*What is the ideal role of a professional turf manager in the field construction process?*

The professional turf manager should be involved in every stage of the field construction process. His or her job is greatly impacted by how well the field plays and functions after the field is completed. We always work to function as a team.

We tell our customers, "If you don't look good, we don't look good." Many of our customers are professional turf managers and need little help, if any, with routine maintenance. We demonstrate field maintenance techniques we have found useful if needed or requested. When field questions arise, we ask pros for how they have handled the issue at their site and their advice as well as university professors across the country. That's what is good about [STMA]. Everyone working together as a team can result in a much better product for the players.

*What do you think the athletic field construction market will look like in 10 years?*

There will be an increased need for more fields particularly at the park and recreation and middle and high school levels. I believe we will see a turn back to more natural turf fields as turf cultivar research continues to improve. Look how far we have come in the past 10 years including improved drainage systems, heated underground fields, etc.

We may see reel mowers mowing patterns that can be controlled by computers and GPS systems. Riding will be optional.

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