

Abby McNeal
CSFM

Abby.McNeal@is.mines.edu



M2MEDIA360

PRESIDENT/CEO

Marion Minor

VP OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Gerald Winkel

VP OF CIRCULATION AND COLLATERAL SALES

Joanne Juda-Prainito

PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Mary Jo Tomei

DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

Cheryl Naughton 678-292-6054
cnaughton@m2media360.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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

REPRINTS

Cheryl Naughton 678-292-6054
cnaughton@m2media360.com

Regional Account Representatives:

East

J.F. Purcell

135 E. 55th St., 5th FL
New York, NY 10022 • Ph: 917-421-9059
jpurcell@m2media360.com

Midwest

Joy Garipey

16267 W. 14 Mile Rd., Ste 202
Beverly Hills, MI 48025 • Ph: 248-530-0300, ext. 1401
jgaripey@m2media360.com

West

Bruce Loria

626 Wilshire Blvd., Ste 500
Los Angeles, CA 90017 • Ph: 213-596-7226
gbloria@m2media360.com

Classified Sales/Marketplace:

Eastern U.S. & Canada

Glenn Belton

Phone: 213-596-7212
Fax: 213-624-0997
gbelton@m2media360.com

Classified Sales / Marketplace:

Western U.S. & Canada

Nadine Fischetti

Phone: 213-624-0900, ext. 1255
Fax: 213-624-0997
nfischetti@m2media360.com

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Plan now to attend Conference in Orlando

WE ALL HAVE BEEN FACED WITH DOING MORE WITH LESS and stretching our resources to their limits and beyond. I know that we have had to make choices about how to spend our ever tightening budgets, but one area that should never be stretched is continuing education.

Our industry is a science and as we all know, science is always changing. The best way to stay on top of the rapid industry changes is to attend the STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition. At the conference, you will have the opportunity to learn from top professionals, educators, and other attendees. The time is now to start planning your continuing education for the "off season." Continuing education is a term that is used to describe an opportunity to learn new skills and acquire knowledge to broaden one's current education status. The STMA Conference is the perfect opportunity for continuing education for the Sports Turf Manager.

The STMA Conference Education Committee has just started to formulate the 2010 educational program, which will be held at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando on January 13-16, 2010. In this issue (page 46) and online at www.stma.org, you will find useful information to assist you when discussing your attendance at the conference with your employer. A simple registration form in a PDF is already available on STMA's website, if you have any unused 2008-2009 training dollars in your budget.

The value of attending the conference goes beyond the classroom educational sessions. It can be found in the numerous networking opportunities created for you to get advice and best management practices from other members. There are also facility tours, viewing the latest in equipment technology, and the less tangible, but exceedingly important enhancement of your professional image. Attending a national program's continuing education positions you as a professional. Be sure to share the ideas you collected during the conference with your employer and your staff. All of the conference offerings combine to provide an amazing value that is hard to find elsewhere.

Another approach to consider is to add on a vacation for you and your family at the beginning or end of the conference. Hotel rates are a low \$141 a night, so an extra night (or two) to enjoy the discounted passes to the many theme parks as a reward for you and your family makes the entire package complete.

Headquarters is always available to assist you with any questions you may have regarding the conference. So start the discussions today with your employer and your family, and begin making the plans to attend the annual STMA Conference and Exhibition. See you in Disney in 2010!