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STMA strives to increase membership value

THE ECONOMY has been the topic throughout the country for several months. It is hard to find a place where it hasn't affected how we do our jobs or impacted our personal lives. The STMA is closely watching how economic factors influence our membership and the association. We know that budgets are under a microscope, and during these tight economic times educational opportunities and association memberships are the first to be cut.

The STMA Board of Directors, staff and committees are focused on providing an increase in membership value through affordable education and membership opportunities. We have added lots of technical content to our members-only area of the website, and information to our public side. Easily accessible, these resources provide management techniques to help you do your jobs better. Our online courses are very low cost and provide a great learning tool for your staff. Look for more sessions online this spring.

The STMA Annual Conference has been the one place that brings together timely and relevant education, networking and new industry technology. Your Board realizes that not everyone is able to travel to the annual conference, and we have put in motion several new opportunities. First, we have placed the session handouts and presentations from the 2009 conference online for your use. Next, we have developed regional conferences that will take place this summer in the Midwest and Northeast. These will provide an affordable, national conference experience that is easily accessible without air travel. We are also working on a conference model for 2010 that will provide value-priced education and allow you an affordable opportunity to bring your family to experience Disney in Orlando.

Committees are now set and have started their work. Now more than ever, they are a critical cog in the STMA's wheelhouse, and they truly are the work horses of the association. The economy is squeezing all of us, but the willingness of our members to share their time and talents has been significant. STMA has had an outpouring of volunteer support for committee service. Thank you to all members who are actively participating in committee work! The focus for committee work this year is to provide value and education to the members of the organization. Look for updates on the great work that committees are doing throughout the year.

The STMA has reached another milestone; we now have 100 Certified Sports Field Managers (CSFM). It is an amazing achievement for all the certified members as well as for the association. The certification program has helped STMA and its members have a very visible means to be recognized as leaders in the industry. Certification confirms that these individuals have committed themselves to a high standard of continuing education and management practices. I would encourage all members to pursue certification. In addition to the personal and professional validation that you will receive, you are helping to elevate STMA and the entire industry to a status that will earn more respect from fans, athletes and our employers.

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