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President's Message

Chris Calcaterra,
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Help users understand your work

As you look around, you can see evidence of fall sports everywhere. The year-around work of our members in planning and preparing for this season may not be evident to the coaches, fans and players, but I believe that there is general recognition that fields have been cared for and made ready for play.

Is it necessary that these user groups know our exact management programs for these fields? Probably not. It is critical, however, that we all take a leadership role in helping our constituents to understand how we manage the fields to protect players from unsafe conditions and our efforts to be good environmental stewards. I encourage you to keep these two elements of your work at the forefront of your communications. Most of us are not wired to promote ourselves. However, we must proactively remind our employers and our users of the value they receive by having a professional sports turf manager oversee their athletic facilities.

Another group that I know is not into self-promotion is our headquarters staff. I want to recognize their work on our behalf, and congratulate them and our entire association on our 6th anniversary of bringing the management of STMA in-house. Many good things have resulted from this move, which was at the direction of visionary past board members. Making fundamental changes can be difficult and intimidating unless the right person is steering the bus, the right people are sitting in the right seats, and a clear map is directing them to where they need to go. All were in place in 2004; all are still working together today to guide STMA to even greater success.

Your Board of Directors recently met for its summer board meeting. One item on our radar screen is our headquarters facility. We currently lease space in a charming, renovated building (oldest seed house west of the Mississippi) at a cost per square foot that is very affordable. Your Board has started to define the benchmarks that could drive the need to seek other space, i.e. membership size and program growth. Your Board is in agreement that STMA has not reached these targets, but I want to assure you that we are doing our due diligence and planning for the association's future.

We are also developing a plan to bring our conference in-house. Our contract with Marketing and Events ends after the 2012 conference, and we are evaluating the pros and cons of in-house versus contract management. The decision hinges on what is in the best interest of the STMA membership. We'll be making our decision over the next 12 months. The 2011 Conference and Exhibition brochure should be in your inbox. I hope that you agree that the program is excellent, Austin is inexpensive, and travel costs are reasonable. I thank the many volunteers who worked on the conference education, tours, exhibition and other conference events. This is the premier learning experience for sports turf managers for 2011. Make plans now to attend.