

Regional Conference in Knoxville, TN—details

THE 2011 REGIONAL CONFERENCE, June 15-16 in Knoxville, TN hosted by STMA with the support of several chapters, including the Tennessee Valley (host), Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia Chapters, is a must attend educational event for anyone who deals with athletic turf regularly. While focusing on Sports Turf Managers, STMA encourages attendance by members, crew, coaches, parks and recreation professionals, athletic directors, school business officials, and others, and will be providing education for all levels of sports turf experience.

The more than 10 hours of education is highlighted by nationally recognized sports turf authorities. Dr.'s John Sorochan, Jim Brosnan, Tom Samples, Grady Miller and Mike Goatley will be lending their expertise to presentations and/or panel discussions on natural turfgrass, pest control, turf covers, field painting, and managing bermudagrass. There will also be behind the scenes tours of the University of Tennessee's football, baseball, softball and soccer facilities, as well as a tour of the University's new Center for Athletic Field Safety. There will be an exhibition held at the Center for Athletic Field Safety as well. Other education will be provided by local professional sports turf managers, builders, and architects with significant sports field experience.

Registration will include all education, entrance to the exhibition, most meals, and as a special treat, attendees will get a night at the ballpark, watching the Tennessee Smokies take on the Chattanooga Lookouts in exciting minor league baseball action. Registration costs for the event are \$95 for a member of STMA National or one of the participating chapters and \$125 for a non-member.

Online registration will be available for STMA National members, and STMA will also be negotiating reduced rates at Knoxville area hotels, so keep checking www.STMA.org and your email inbox for the most up to date information regarding the event.

Put June 15-16 on your schedule and start talking to your employer about making sure that you are able to attend this incredible educational opportunity. If you have any questions, please contact STMA at 800.323.3875 or STMAInfo@STMA.org.

Is your company interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at this event? Please contact Patrick Allen, STMA Manager of Sales and Marketing at 800.323.3875 or pallen@stma.org.



➤ **SCOTT MACVICAR** of the University of Washington demonstrated how to paint a logo at last year's STMA Regional Conference in Seattle.

Ask a CSFM

Michael DiDonato, CSFM,
grounds coordinator, Windham
High School, Gorham, ME

Benefits of certification verified

Editor's note: This is another installment on how becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) can benefit turf managers professionally as well as improve their facilities



How did you prepare for the CSFM Exam?

DiDonato: I took the University of Georgia course exam a couple of years ago and reviewed that book to prepare myself for the exam. I found it to be a very useful tool in preparing myself for the test. I also talked to a few people who have taken care of sand based athletic fields to learn more about what goes into preparing a field from the construction of the field to maintaining the field throughout the growing season. I also took the practice tests on the STMA website and tried to base some of my studying off the questions asked in the practice exams.

How did you approach your employer to support your certification, both financially and in the time needed to prepare for the exam?

DiDonato: I was fortunate that my employer is very supportive continuing education courses. The time needed to prepare for the exam was during the winter months. I had a lot more time to study when the fields were not in use and snow covered.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

DiDonato: I decided to pursue certification as a new challenge for myself. Not only was the certification exam a new challenge, but it was also a way to possibly further my career in the future.

How has certification helped your career?

DiDonato: Right now, certification has not yet helped my career, but I am hoping it will in the future when I have the opportunity to move onto a higher level of sports. I will say that having this certification has shown to others and me that I am willing to do what it takes to keep on educating myself in this field to in turn provide the safest, most playable and esthetically pleasing athletic fields I can. ■