

Southeast Regional Conference draws good crowd

NEARLY 200 PEOPLE attended the 2011 STMA Southeast Regional Conference in Knoxville, TN June 15-16. The event kicked off with tours of the softball and soccer complex at the University of Tennessee, followed by a 3-hour outdoor trade show on site at the University's new Center for Athletic Field Safety (CAFS), where attendees got up close and personal with products of 31 exhibitors, including some equipment test drives.

After lunch the skies darkened and STMA staffers Patrick Allen and Kristen Althouse hustled the crowd inside a building at the Center for that day's educational workshops. The Tennessee Valley, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Chapters sent members and attendees came from as far away as Delaware and south Florida.

Dr. John Sorochoan, associate professor of turfgrass science at Tennessee and Director

of the CAFS, and doctoral student Adam Thoms introduced attendees to the Center, which includes 60 30 x 15-foot "mini-football" plots that include every type of synthetic field in use today as well as natural turf species on native soil, sand build-up and sand-cap bases. Sorochoan said they will be testing in field conditions, looking not only at traffic issues but also injuries, specifically studying the interactions between turf and cleats (and other shoe types), and also will be monitoring environmental conditions under the surfaces. The Center officially opened July 13.

Dr. Sorochoan was joined by Drs. Tom Samples, Mike Goatley, Jim Brosnan, Grady Miller, and Brandon Horvath of the University turf program, and Eric Fasbender, CSFM and Jesse Driver, CSFM, to discuss topics ranging from field painting, athletic covers, new bermudagrasses and pest management, to the new Center for Athletic Field Safety (CAFS) at the

University of Tennessee. A group outing to watch the Tennessee Smokies take on the Chattanooga Lookouts was rained out that night, so attendees spent a night on their own in Knoxville.

Thursday attendees chose either a baseball and football track; each hosted at the University's respective facility for the sport. These 2-hour sessions were followed up by "walk-the-field" tours of 102,455-seat Neyland Stadium and Lindsey Nelson Stadium, where the Volunteer baseball team takes the diamond in SEC play. The locker rooms, workout facilities and recruiting centers' for both facilities were included in the tours.

According to the STMA post-conference survey, attendees came for the networking, education topics and speakers, and the exhibition. One hundred percent of the respondents reported that they benefited professionally from attending, and 89% rated the event above-average or excellent. One attendee commented, "This was an excellent conference! I have spoken highly about it to many people since returning home. Thanks to the University of Tennessee for hosting this event, and especially for opening up their facilities to us so we could view them and learn from them."

Next year's summer regional event will be hosted by the Ohio Chapter. Keep an eye on the STMA website and future eNews for more information on what is sure to be another great educational opportunity in 2012. ■



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STMA program deadlines approaching

SEVERAL STMA PROGRAMS, including Innovative Awards, Field of the Year Awards, SAFE Scholarship and Founders Awards, have application deadlines this fall.

The deadline for STMA Commercial Members to apply for the STMA Innovative Awards is October 1. To submit for this award, the product, service, or equipment being submitted must have been introduced for sale after the close of the 2011 STMA Conference & Exhibition but before the close of next year's STMA show in Long Beach. Submissions should "Substantially enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sports Turf Manager and/or make the playing surfaces safer and/or more playable for athletes."

The STMA Field of the Year program deadline is October 15. All materials must be submitted electronically by this date. Be sure

to read the application carefully, as the entire process is now done electronically. The process requires that applicants fill out no less than four STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI) worksheets to apply for Field of the Year. The STMA PCI is available online.

SAFE Scholarship applications are due October 15. All materials must be submitted in one packet and faxed applications will not be accepted.

STMA Founders Award nominations are due October 15. These are STMA's most prestigious awards and are presented in honor of the founders of STMA: Dr. William Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma and Harry Gill. More information is available online.

For applications, nomination forms, to get the STMA PCI or for more information, please log on to www.STMA.org. ■

Electronic version of STMA PCI now available

STMA HAS RECENTLY completed an electronic version of the STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI). The PCI is a very useful tool for you to evaluate the current conditions of your athletic fields at a given point in time. Keeping a log of your scores can provide you with the documentation you need to justify new resources or reallocate current resources to new areas. Log on to www.STMA.org for more information on the STMA PCI and how it can help you in your daily job. ■