

STMA streamlines the Field of the Year Awards process

SUBMITTING AN ENTRY to the Field of the Year Awards program is now electronic. Applicants are required to fill out the writable application form, which is located at www.STMA.org under the Professionalism Tab/Awards, and submit it electronically. Photos are also required to be created in a PowerPoint. The PowerPoint can be submitted through our online drop box or applicants can send a CD or jump drive to STMA headquarters. These materials must be received at STMA headquarters no later than October 15.

Now is the perfect time to begin preparing your STMA Field of the Year Application. The program requires photos from throughout the year and completion of the STMA PCI four times, so it is important to begin working on those items.

The Awards Committee implemented the change to an electronic process to allow for remote judging of applications, to provide a fair process for all applicants regardless of the budget spent on the packaging of the submittal, and to focus on the field management practices.

By applying for the STMA Field of

the Year Awards, members gain recognition from their employers and community. Community athletic facilities are a point of local pride, and by applying for this program, and showcasing your expertise in the process, you can draw media attention and gain respect throughout the community for the hard work you, your crew and volunteers undertake making your field look and play its best.

Each Field of the Year Award winner is presented with a special plaque at the STMA Awards Banquet, held each year at the STMA Conference and Exhibition. This year, the Awards Banquet will be the evening of Friday, January 13, 2012 in Long Beach, CA. In addition to the plaque, each STMA Field of the Year winner will receive free conference registration, three nights of lodging at the conference hotel, STMA signature apparel, and a feature article in the official publication of STMA, *SportsTurf Magazine*. These awards are generously supported by STMA's official awards sponsors Carolina Green Corp., Covermaster, Inc., Hunter Industries and World Class Athletic Surfaces. ■

Winners reflect on FOY Award

"We are all working with very different levels of understanding, budgets and expectations for the facilities that we all maintain. Often, much of what we do in sports turf management is missed by those who depend on what we do. They don't usually recognize the time and effort put into field maintenance, they just like it when everything looks beautiful. I have found that the people who have the best idea of what we do day in and out, is another fellow Sports Turf Manager. They are the only ones who actually understand the trials and tribulations of the job. So, when the opportunity came about to have my fields and programs reviewed by my peers in the Field of the Year Award program, I took the challenge to find out where my programs stood according to the people who know the industry. There has been no greater honor for me to have had our fields and maintenance programs reviewed by my peers. This has been a great shot in the arm for me both personally and professionally. When anyone enters one of our award winning fields they are greeted by signs letting them know that these fields are award winning fields and that they are maintained by a professional staff."

John Netwal, CGCS, North Scott Community Schools, Eldridge, IA, Winner of 2010 Football Field of the Year - Schools and Parks category

"There is a science to what we do, and winning this award helps showcase it. I sit back and think about all the challenges that the crew and I went through, and realize it was noticed by others. Winning the award has put the Athletic Field department on the map. We are not just people that mow grass."

John Watt, CSFM, North Kansas City Schools, Kansas City, MO, Winner of 2010 Softball Field of the Year - Schools and Parks category

"Winning a Field of the Year Award has been beneficial for several areas. Personally, it has provided self-gratification, a significant achievement to add to my résumé, and has made many people aware of the STMA for the first time. The university is able to promote another achievement, and especially uses it in recruiting athletes and potential students, enticing them with the opportunity to play on an award winning field. The award benefits my employer in sales, when trying to gain additional accounts and maintain others due for renewal, showing the expertise that they are able to provide. When I entered our facility for a field of the year award, I was honestly doing it more for a sense of personal achievement and fulfillment. At that time, I never imagined how much the university or my employer would benefit from it as well."

—Kari Allen, CSFM, Sodexo/Benedictine University, New Lenox, IL, Winner of the 2010 Baseball Field of the Year and Softball Field of the Year - College & University category. ■

