

# STMA Regional Conference heads to Volunteer country

**THE 2011 STMA REGIONAL CONFERENCE** will be hosted by The University of Tennessee-Knoxville, June 15-16, 2011. University of Tennessee professors Dr. Jim Brosnan and Dr. John Sorochan, with the 2011 Regional Conference Steering Committee, are putting together a rich program that encompasses both sports turf research updates, tours of the varsity athletics facilities and a tour of the new state-of-the-art UT Center for Safer Athletic Fields. The Tennessee Valley (host), Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia Chapters will be participating, and will be sending mem-

bers from all over the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

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. Education will be provided by local professional sports turf managers, academics, builders and architects, all with significant sports field experience. According to Pam Sherratt, STMA Director-Academic, "You will not find a better sports turf specific educational experience out-

side of the STMA Conference and Exposition held every January."

As a special treat, after touring Smokies Park, attendees will get a night at the ballpark and watch the Tennessee Smokies, the Double-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs, take on the Chattanooga Lookouts.

Registration and Exhibition costs for the 2-day event are still being determined, and online registration will be available for STMA members, so keep checking your inbox and at [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org) for the most up to date information regarding the event.

## Five educational resources now available en Espanol

**STMA HAS THREE OF ITS MOST POPULAR** educational bulletins and two DVDs translated into Spanish. The educational bulletins now in Spanish include *Strategies for Managing Heavily Used Fields*, *Football/Soccer Field Safety and Maintenance Checklist* and *Field Management During a Drought*. These are accessible from the STMA home page of its website, [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org). Also on the homepage is a link to *Baseball Field Management in Spanish*, funded by Baseball's Tomorrow Fund, an initiative of Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association.

Two STMA DVDs have also been translated into Spanish and the viewer can select to watch them in Spanish or in English. *Baseball Mound Reconstruction: A Professional Approach* with a bonus track, *Home Plate Maintenance*, and its companion DVD, *Baseball Infield Maintenance* are available for a special purchase price of \$25 for the set from STMA.

For more information contact STMA headquarters at 1-800-323-3875; to order DVDs, see the form on the association website, [www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org) and fax or mail it to STMA.

## Future Regional Conference Locations

**STMA HAS ALREADY** secured locations for the 2012-2014 Regional Conferences. In the summer of 2012, the Association comes back to the Midwest in Columbus, OH; the 2013 event travels west to Provo, UT; and the Baltimore, MD area will be the site of the 2014 STMA Regional Conference. This allows those who may not be able to make it the national conference each year to take advantage of the national level education put on by fellow members at these yearly events. The actual dates of these events will be announced in 2011.

## Companies announce winners of STMA Conference incentive programs

**PIONEER ATHLETICS** and Smithco each conducted separate incentive programs during the STMA 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibition; what they have in common is that STMA and its members benefit.

Pioneer Athletics conducted a drawing for five 2011 STMA memberships (or 2012 if the winners had already renewed their memberships). The five who will receive Pioneer-paid STMA memberships are: Rick Covert, San Diego Community College; John Barta, Billings Mustangs; Sam Jones, University of Delaware; Patrick Jonas, St. Andrew's Parish Parks & Playground (SC); and Peter Thibeault, Noble & Greenough School (MA).

Smithco held a drawing for an STMA member's trip to the 2012 Conference in Long Beach next January and the winner was Paige Cruse, athletic foreman for the City of Franklin, TN.

### SAFE, Turface Athletics again sent lucky winner to Conference

**AGAIN THIS YEAR**, STMA presented the Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant, presented by Turface Athletics. This year's winner of the \$1,000 grant, named in honor of the late brother of STMA member Dave Mellor, was Kevin Fernandez from White Bear Lake ISD #624 in White Bear Lake, MN.

# New Jersey sports turf managers oppose pesticide ban proposal

**THE SPORTS FIELD MANAGERS OF NEW JERSEY** (SFMANJ) is officially opposing the proposed New Jersey Senate Bill 2610, dubbed the “Safe Playing Fields Act,” calling it “reckless and ill advised.” In a news release, SFMANJ said “The goal of this Bill is to ban the use of most lawn care pesticides at certain child care centers, schools and recreational fields. As sports field managers, we would like to point out how this Bill will cause presently safe sports fields to eventually become unplayable and treacherous.”

The news release continues:

“Unlike a home lawn where the aesthetic is prized, the goal of sports field management is to provide a safe and playable surface. Dense turfgrass provides dependable traction for young athletes’ feet. Strong healthy turfgrass roots won’t blow out when a player stops fast or changes direction in an instant. Soccer balls roll best on a smooth, uniform turfgrass surface, baseballs take fewer bad hops, and kids don’t get hurt. Games are better.

“Sports fields are subjected to considerable amounts of use, abuse and overuse throughout the year. Man-made and natural environmental stresses can cause sports field quality and health to diminish. Drought and other weather extremes, as well as cyclical insect and plant disease pressures weaken even the best sports fields. When a stand of turfgrass established on a sports field begins to thin out, as sports fields are highly prone to, weeds move-in and the sports field begins to go into a state of decline. These problems often occur during the height of the playing season when the field is most needed.

“For example, invasive, summer annual weeds such as crabgrass, goosegrass, and prostrate knotweed are very problematic on intensely used sports fields. Left uncontrolled, the lifecycle of these weeds results in a persistent condition of bare soil during spring and fall, when many sports fields are in full use. Bare soil during wet field conditions constitutes dangerous footing and dry, bare soil is an extremely hard surface. Lawn care pesticides are tools that can be used to manage the encroachment of these weeds and thereby promote a more uniform turfgrass surface—in lieu of the hazardous conditions associated with bare soil.

“White grubs are another detrimental pest to sports fields and severe damage to turfgrass can result in unsafe playing conditions and costly renovation and repair procedures. Turfgrass damage, resulting from both white grub feeding on roots and the activity of raccoons and skunks foraging for the white grubs, can completely destroy a sports field, rendering the surface unsafe and unplayable. A properly timed pesticide application, best applied in the summer when most school fields are not in use, can provide effective, preventative control of these potentially devastating white grub pests.

“Another name for lawn care pesticides is ‘plant healthcare products’. As good stewards of the environment, we need to be able to responsibly use all of the tools available to us to prevent and treat turfgrass problems in a conscientious manner. Low-impact pesticides, while useful in some situations, are not as effective as non-low-impact pesticides when there is a need to control severe weed, insect and disease outbreaks on sports fields. Not all sports field sites are the same. Pest populations fluctuate. Soil conditions and types are different. Field usage varies. Non-low-impact pesticides are generally effective across varying sport field conditions.

“Many sports fields do not have access to irrigation and some low-impact pesticides, particularly nematodes for white grub control, require irrigation to be effective. Certain lawn care pesticides, timed according with irrigation, can be used to quickly respond to pest problems to keep a field safe and open for play—as opposed to forcing field closure and performing costly repair and renovation measures. Having the option of using US EPA-registered products in accordance with their labels allows us, in part, to achieve our goal of keeping sports fields safe and playable.

“New Jersey has a stringent School Integrated Pest Management (IPM) law. In order to use lawn care pesticides on the grounds of a K-12 school campus, one must adhere to many regulations in the NJ School IPM Law. These regulations include (but are not limited to):

- Appoint a school IPM coordinator, develop an IPM policy, and adopt a plan.

- Use low-impact pesticides.
- Attain a NJ DEP Pesticide License in Category 13 to apply non-low-impact pesticides in a school environment.
- Provide annual notification of the School’s IPM policy and 72 hour notice and posting prior to and after a non-low-impact pesticide application to parents and guardians, students and staff, using mail, email, telephone and signage.
- Enforce a 7 hour minimum re-entry period even if the label does not specifically state reentry time.
- Keep detailed records of pesticide applications and manage Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), respond to inquiries, and provide information to parents, guardians, students and staff about IPM.

“The application of a lawn care pesticide takes a considerable amount of forethought, logistics and preparation. In addition, to rigorous planning, lawn care pesticides require monetary resources to purchase and human resources to apply. As sports field managers, we have to provide cost benefit information to our business administrators in order to receive the funding to purchase the materials. If we don’t protect the field from natural or manmade damage, we risk having to spend considerable taxpayer money to replace or repair a sports field damaged by pests. Currently, many New Jersey Schools and municipalities are cutting expenses by eliminating positions and programs. A carefully planned lawn care pesticide application, in full compliance with US EPA registered pesticide label recommendations and NJ School IPM policies, can provide maximum cost benefits by solving a turf health problem quickly and effectively rather than a costly field replacement later and a substantial loss of field space for use by children and parents.

“In the end, our endeavor is to create the safest playing conditions for all of New Jersey’s sports field users.

“We respectfully request that passage of S.2610 be delayed pending the introduction and discussion of additional facts.

“We invite the opportunity to discuss our position with Members of the New Jersey State Senate and Assembly as well as others concerned with the impact of this legislation.”