The winners also must agree to display the innovation during the trade show.

When asked “What is innovative?” the Innovative Awards Task Group that developed the program came up with a list of how they would describe it. According to the Chair, Dale Getz, CSFM, CSE, “These qualities are descriptive, but the intent is to not limit an entry to just this listed.”

- Are creative
- Are cutting edge
- Have never been seen
- Make the task easier or more productive
- Improve quality
- Improve efficiency
- Protect the environment
- Save time and resources

Getz credits his task group, which includes Rene Asprion, James Graff, Chad Price, CSFM, Matt Tobin, Steve Trusty, and Vickie Wallace, with developing a program that has dual benefits. “Those companies that are presented with the Innovative Award receive excellent recognition and bragging rights, and STMA also benefits by being the award presenter and by being the venue where the innovation was introduced.”

The 2011 award winners are SportsEdge USA for RPR, regenerating perennial ryegrass, and Bush Sports Turf for the Field Rover robot.

Mt. San Antonio College reinvesting Student Challenge winnings

A VICTORY couldn’t have come at a better time for the turf program at Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA. At the start of the spring 2011 semester the team broke ground for their new Agriculture Science building, just months after the team of Wade Andereck, Patrick Escalera, Chaz Perea and Tom Skelton, led by professor Brian Scott, won top honors in STMA’s Student Challenge’s Two-Year competition.

In previous years the school has used Student Challenge prize money to acquire a dethatcher, an aerator, and a triplex mower for student to gain hands on experience. This year the Mt SAC Turf Team will come full circle and use the winning funds to populate new plots with turf and other playing surfaces. The majority of the plots will consist of several turf varieties including hybrid bermuda, paspalum, fescue, and fescue and ryegrass blends. In these plots students will have the opportunity to test and study variables with a new fertilizer injector, soil blend bases, irrigation methods, and cultural practices.

The turf students also will be installing plots consisting of an infield playing surface, a mound, and warning track material. Here students will have the opportunity to study and practice the techniques involved in managing the soil profile, compaction issues, and moisture relationships on real playing surfaces. Finally, the tamp, rake, drag mat, and hose will take their rightful place as an integral component of the SportsTurf program.

On behalf of all the Turf and Horticulture students at Mt SAC, we would like to express our gratitude to the STMA for allowing us to compete in the Student Challenge and making us feel like part of the team. - Chaz Perea