

# President's Message

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## Looking forward to Long Beach

**A**S REGIONALLY COLDER WEATHER BEGINS TO SETTLE IN, I am reminded that winter is coming upon us quickly. By January, the conference in Long Beach will be a welcome change of temperature and scenery! Long Beach has so much to offer to our attendees. Besides the weather and the beautiful, very long beach, the city is full of culture, great venues and entertainment. We detail what you can expect to see and do outside of the conference in Long Beach, see page 30.

I hope that you have spent some time reviewing the excellent program that Conference Education Chair Pam Sherratt, Tour Chair Jeff Salmond, CSFM, and Exhibition Co-chairs Rene Aspiron and Chad Price, CSFM, CFB and their committees have put together for you. STMA exists to provide education, and the STMA conference is the most comprehensive educational program held for sports turf management in the United States. The conference education tracks allow attendees to choose the topics that will benefit them the most. An important component of the educational program is the trade show. On the show floor, you will see the latest technology, meet with suppliers and have the opportunity to compare the benefits of these products and services. You also will not want to miss the Top 10+ Turf Monitoring Tools educational session being presented twice during the trade show.

Throughout the conference you will have the opportunity to participate in another educational activity that is less formal, but of critical importance. It is networking with your peers. Take advantage of the time before and after the formal learning sessions to meet others and find out how they are solving their problems. Their real world strategies complement the classroom presentations and can spark ideas for you to take back and apply at your facility. Each year, STMA has greater attendance from international professionals. Networking with these attendees will bring another excellent perspective to your management practices. As our international membership grows, we will continue to expand our education program to include international speakers and relevant topics. Please help to make our international attendees feel welcome!

STMA is fortunate to have an active and engaged student membership. A majority of these bright, young people compete in our Student Challenge. This is a highly regarded competition, and the two winning teams take home \$4,000 each to create a learning lab at their schools. This year, we have adjusted the student program so that they can be a part of the annual meeting. These are our future leaders, so please introduce yourself, share your advice and be a resource for them.

Coming to your mailbox late this month is the STMA annual election ballot. It will also contain an amendment to the Bylaws that creates a Retired category of membership. Please take the time to cast your vote. You can vote electronically, too. Just be certain that you follow the directions on the ballot.

I wish you and your families a wonderful Thanksgiving together.