

President's Message

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Make your plans for Long Beach conference

I HOPE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO LONG BEACH IN JANUARY! We are excited to be back on the West Coast. The Long Beach Convention Center is very accessible from the Hyatt and the Westin; and we are right on the water and right in the heart of the city. Long Beach works so well for the conference, exhibition, after hours fun, and as a great departure spot for a vacation with your family, pre- or post-conference.

As perfect as Long Beach is as a location, our conference education surpasses that, hands down. By now you should have received the conference brochure, and seen the extensive education program. There are more than 70 educational sessions in a variety of formats and 57 speakers packed into 3 days. This includes Turfgrass 101, presented in Spanish. We introduced this session in 2009 when our conference was in San José, and we are committed to continuing to reach out to those in the profession who are Spanish-speaking.

Our online registration is live now, so go to www.STMA.org to register. STMA also accepts purchase orders and can work out a payment plan, if you need to pay in installments. Just contact headquarters.

The SAFE Foundation, our charity, is funding an important grant for our students, the Gary Vanden Berg Internship Grant. Gary is well-known throughout the industry and Major League Baseball for his excellent internship programs. He is a mentor to many, and the SAFE Foundation has established this \$1,000 grant to honor Gary's commitment to helping young people get a great start in this profession. SAFE will award the first grant retroactively at the 2012 conference in Long Beach, to a student who interned this summer. The grant will help to reimburse the student for expenses incurred while interning and provide a subsidy to wages. If you had a student intern this summer, even if that student graduated in May, please encourage him or her to apply. Information can be found at www.STMA.org.

Our committees have been very busy. In particular, the Bylaws Committee has completed its task of developing language for a new Retired category of membership. Although retirement may seem far in the future for many of you, this category is being established so that STMA can keep its experienced members engaged. You will have the opportunity to vote on this addition to the Bylaws. You can review the Bylaws language and SOP in this issue and cast your vote with your election ballot, which will be mailed to you in November.

As our fall season gets busier, it is important to take the time to thank those around us for the jobs that they do. I want to extend a very sincere "thank you" to an important segment of our membership, our commercial members. Our commercial companies support STMA through membership, advertising, exhibiting, and STMA program sponsorships. Their support helps STMA enhance our programs and services so that you have a better experience.

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