TWO YEARS AGO, STMA introduced a new awards program for commercial members: the STMA Award for Commercial Innovation. Three exhibitors were presented with the award in its first year and earlier this year, G2 TurfTools, Inc., received the Innovative Award in Long Beach.

You should start thinking about what products, services, and/or equipment your company can enter. Although the entry form just takes minutes to fill out electronically, the judging panel seeks links to videos, photos, marketing brochures, or other promotional material to help them understand the innovation.

The purpose of the award is to recognize those exhibiting commercial companies that are introducing products, equipment or services that improve the profession—either by enhancing the effectiveness of the sports turf manager or making playing surfaces safer and more playable for athletes.

In addition to being innovative, as described above, and an exhibitor at the 2013 STMA conference, the product, service or equipment being submitted must be introduced for sale between the close of the STMA show in January of this year through the close of the upcoming Daytona Beach show. The winners also must agree to display the product submitted during the 2013 trade show.

When creating the program, the original task group asked, “What is innovative?” and then came up with a list of words describing a winning product, piece of equipment or service. Since then, these terms have been refined through judging the past 2 years’ worth of entries. What has been found is that winning products, services or pieces of equipment:

- 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.

According to the Chair, Dale Getz, CSFM, CSE, “These qualities are descriptive, but this list is by no means comprehensive.” Getz credits the original 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 STMA Awards Committee judges the entries and will announce the 2013 winners at the annual trade show with an all-hall announcement and booth signage. Winners of the award may use the special STMA logo when promoting the winning innovation for as long as they wish. In addition, STMA will promote the winners through press releases, magazine coverage, and during the STMA Awards Banquet.

The application is due October 1 and is available on the STMA website. For more information or to enter your companies’ innovation, log on to www.STMA.org.