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President's Message

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Make a difference in the New Year

As the calendar turned into 2014 many of us have already dealt with heavy snow and single digit temperatures. In fact, 49 out of the 50 states have recorded some amount of snowfall. These weather patterns will definitely have an effect on our athletic fields as we prepare for the spring season. In Lexington, MA our challenge is not only to have the athletic fields ready in early spring, but also the Battle Green where Patriot's Day is celebrated.

Some of us have already begun the spring season and are making a difference by providing safe, playable fields for college softball and baseball. These sports turf managers are using new techniques or tried and true practices to ensure the games go on and the athletes can enjoy and compete without worry. Some of these sports turf managers learned their new ideas or confirmed their current maintenance practices by attending the 2014 STMA Conference in San Antonio. They took advantage of the opportunity to learn from and share ideas with the great selection of speakers, great topics, great networking opportunities and a chance to visit with many commercial members. There were a large number of attendees with a full trade show floor and the site was outstanding. Attending the STMA Conference is a great way to begin the New Year and a great way to recharge and prepare for the upcoming season.

Many of us will face challenges in 2014 by dealing with reduced budgets, reduced staff, new regulations and additional use. That said, this is a resilient group of professionals. We will find a way to do things differently to still provide safe, playable fields. We will find a way to continue to be the recognized leader in the sports turf industry.

Take advantage of the opportunity to form partnerships and promote what you do, implement new maintenance practices and share equipment and knowledge. Challenge yourself this year to do one thing that will help you to make a difference for your athletic fields and for your user groups. Whether school, park and rec or pro, we can all improve upon what we do so that we enhance the experiences of those who use our facilities. Add a maintenance practice that promotes better grass growth, use a new chalk machine to put down a cleaner crisper line, rake a field that you have not been able to before or begin an overseeding program to keep up your turf density. One of the best things about this profession is that a school district sports turf manager and a pro stadium sports turf manager can talk the same language and learn from each other.

Another way to make a difference is to become involved in STMA. This is your association. You can share your ideas or take in someone else's idea. We are in the process of putting together committees for 2014. These dedicated volunteers will be working on ways to help you do your job. Your 2014 Board of Directors is also committed to making a difference for members. I would like to thank outgoing Board members Rene Asprion, Troy Smith, CSFM and Debbie Kneeshaw for their dedication in strengthening the profession. I would also like to welcome the new Board members Brad Jakubowski, Sarah Martin, CSFM and Doug Schattinger who together with the remaining Board and incredible staff will keep focused on the Strategic Plan and work diligently to enhance your member experience. This association sets itself apart from others by keeping a positive outlook and moving in a forward direction.

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CSFM program nearly eclipses record

In 2013, the STMA Certified Sports Field Managers (CSFM) Program added 19 members to its rolls. This is the second highest number of members certified in one year. In 2010, there were 22 members who attained this designation, which is the highest in the program's history. The CSFM program began in 2000, and it currently has 169 certified members.

The program was established to validate the experience and qualifications of a sports turf manager. Those seeking certification must attain 40 points before being able to take the exam. Points are gained through a combination of formal education and work experience. The four-part exam covers agronomics, sports specific management, pest management and administration. Those testing may elect to take the test at the annual STMA conference or at a location and time convenient to them by using a proctor. Continuing education and service to the industry are also required to maintain the CSFM designation.

Consider adding value to your employer and to your personal marketability by becoming certified. CSFMs also are paid more. On average, a CSFM makes \$7,500 annually more than a non-certified member.

To find out more about the certification program and what it can do for you, go to www.STMA.org, and click on Certification under the Professionalism Tab.

Congratulations to the Class of 2013!

- Weston Appelfeller, CSFM**, Columbus Crew
- James Bergdoll, CSFM**, City of Elizabethtown
- Jeff Bosworth, CSFM**, Drake University
- Noel Brusius, CSFM**, Waukegan Park District
- Jason Demink, CSFM**, University of Michigan Athletic Department
- Michael Flowers, CSFM**, Championship Turf Services
- James Gish, CSFM**, Brigham Young University
- Shane Hohlbein, CSFM**, Precision Turf LLC
- Chris Hohnstrater, CSFM**, The Principia School
- Michael Hrivnak, CSFM**, Town of Cary
- David Iannicello, CSFM**, Sodexo Campus Services at Hobart & William Smith College
- Shane Johnson, CSFM**, City of Clinton Parks & Rec
- Ryan McCaughey, CSFM**, The Pennsylvania State University
- Kevin Mercer, CSFM**, Vassar College
- Allen Reed, CSFM**, FC Dallas
- Kyle Slaton, CSFM**, Georgia State University
- Robert Standing, CSFM**, Carolina Green Corp.
- Brett Tanner, CSFM**, DePauw University
- Scott Thompson, CSFM**, Duke University

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I will leave you with this story about a group of people who made a difference. I am fortunate to work in Lexington, where more than 200 years ago an unlikely collection of farmers, shopkeepers and tradesmen decided to make a difference and take a stand. Little did they know that it would lead to independence and a new country. Although what we do is not on the same scale, we do make a difference in the lives of the people using our facilities. By providing well-maintained, safe, aesthetically pleasing athletic fields we show our commitment for the betterment of others.

Let's work together to make a difference in the sports turf industry and make 2014 a great year. ■

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