

# President's Message

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## Freedom to make choices

**A**s July begins our thoughts turn to July 4th and American independence. That independence brought freedom and with it the ability to make choices that affect our daily lives. That freedom brought a challenge for us to be able to make choices that improve upon what we do. Think about the little choices we make each morning that make or break our day: whether to take the highway or the back roads ... to stop at Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks ... to seed or sod ... to irrigate or not, and so on. We are charged with providing safe, playable fields for all, or providing research, or providing tools to help get the job done. Our choices affect how we provide services, how we interact with our coworkers, supervisors and customers, and how we keep positive.

Some of us made the choice to be in this profession. Others had it thrust upon them. It is up to those of us who chose the profession to make the choice of helping newcomers. We have the freedom to be welcoming, reassuring, and approachable, and share our knowledge. We have standards to uphold, and we must choose to operate in an above-the-board ethical manner in all that we do. We share a common goal, and it is by exercising our freedom to communicate that we can improve the industry.

Our academic members need to choose to listen to practitioner concerns, choose to pursue

research to improve maintenance practices, and choose the share their knowledge. Our commercial members need to choose to pursue product advances that allow for more efficient and effective ways to get the job done. Our supervisors and decision-makers need to choose to support what we do and provide us the labor, tools and resources to do it. Our users need to choose to follow our field-use guidelines so the fields remain viable and safe for season-long use. Let us also include our seasonal workers and interns. We can choose to view them as valuable members of our team and teach them so they may learn and not view them just as someone to make our jobs easier.

As an STMA member you have the freedom to nominate people for the Board of Directors and the freedom to vote. Think about who can better the organization and by extension the profession. Now is the time to consider board service or urge a peer to do so.

We must be professionals in all that we do. We must earn respect and be willing to give it. We must be leaders and lead by example. We must be adaptive and receptive to new ideas. We must be good stewards. We also must be passionate and realistic.

Our choices, even small ones, will shape the future of the industry. Let's work together to choose a positive future and advance a profession that being involved in makes all of us proud. ■