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New Mission, Vision guide STMA into the future

During the STMA Summer Board meeting a full day and a half day was dedicated to strategic planning. Facilitators from Leading Associations helped the Board look to the future and create five strategic goals. As part of the process, the Board spent time evaluating its mission to be certain it answers the question, “Why does STMA exist”? Consensus is that our mission has been functioning more as a vision for STMA. Thus, the Board created a new mission for STMA and officially established a vision, which it has not previously had.

These new guideposts for STMA are:

Mission: STMA advances professionalism in sports field management and safety through education, awareness programs, and industry development.

Vision: To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports field industry and enhancing members’ competence and acknowledgment of their profession.

Although the strategic plan has not yet been finalized, there was agreement around five strategic areas: communication and brand awareness; the value of commercial members to the association; establishing our members as environmental stewards; the importance of

natural grass athletic fields to outdoor sports; and providing members with relevant and timely continuing education. Once the objectives for each goal are set, which will include metrics for success, STMA’s Committees will be heavily engaged to brainstorm tactics on how to best reach these objectives.

The planning process included an exercise on defining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the association and also an assessment on the success of the current strategic plan. STMA has made significant progress on its current strategic plan, which is scheduled to be completed by December 31. Highlights from that plan will be shared in **SportsTurf** at the end of the year, and the new plan will be rolled out in January during the conference and in the magazine.

The primary facilitator, Sam Albrecht, CAE, gave high praise to the board for their dedication. He wrote in his summary report, “This is a well-functioning group with the best interests of the membership and the industry at the top of their lists. The passion and commitment in the room was as good as I’ve seen in any organization.” -By Shant S. Thomas, STMA Sales & Marketing Manager & STMA Staff. ■

STMA’s public relations and marketing engagement efforts see tangible results

Beginning in the Fall of 2013, STMA engaged a multipronged public relations and marketing effort to more comprehensively tell key audiences, including sports turf managers’ employers, the general public, and those in sports media, about the benefit of the profession and necessity of having a sports turf manager on staff. This effort took an initial two-pronged approach: one, hire a public relations firm with sports and general media contacts to get the word out about STMA and sports turf managers; and two, produce and air a PBS special entitled “Spotlight On: The Field.” Both of these efforts were detailed by STMA CEO Kim Heck in San Antonio at STMA’s Annual Meeting and Lunch last January.

Buffalo Communications: telling STMA’s story

STMA hired Virginia-based Buffalo Communications (BC) in November 2013 to spearhead an aggressive media relations effort on behalf of the association. Buffalo is a division of Billy Casper Golf, owner-operator of more than 130 golf properties nationwide, and has offices in New York, Phoenix, Boston, Minneapolis and Pinehurst, NC, according to its website.

The ultimate goals of engaging a firm such as a BC are varied but interconnected. The driving impetus and goal behind everything, how-

ever, is the increase in profile of the sports turf manager and profession as a whole. Some strategies to achieve this include:

- Telling “human stories” of STMA members and the extraordinary jobs they do. This makes field management something the layperson can more easily relate to. Buffalo Communications reaches out to sports turf managers across the country and helps facilitate connecting these individuals with members of the media in their area.

- Identifying technology and trends in field management to underscore the specialized, expert nature of the sports turf management profession. This effort also stresses why having a sports turf manager/Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) on staff is critical.



Glenn Gray

PR specialist Glenn Gray is STMA’s day-to-day contact and works closely with headquarters staff to identify and promote STMA members and trends.

For example, Gray is currently working with Marcela Munoz and Roberto Gurgel in Brazil to extend the media lifecycle of natural grass storylines (all 12 World Cup stadiums). He recently reached out to Sporting KC to secure quotes from Matt Besler and Graham