

# Strengthening the sports turf industry

## Take advantage of shared expertise to produce your best fields

**T**he mission statement of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is, "To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports turf industry and enhancing members' competence and acknowledgement of their professionalism."

The statement echoes the belief of STMA's founders that athletic fields could be better through the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of ideas. Leaders such as the late Harry "Pops" Gill (Milwaukee County Stadium), the late Dr. William Daniel (Purdue University), Dick Ericson (Minneapolis Metrodome) and George Toma (NFL, Kansas City Royals and Chiefs) helped see that concept to fruition with the birth of the STMA in 1981.

Today, sports turf managers represent a nearly \$2 billion industry. Sports turf managers oversee more than 4.05 million acres at more than 35,000 facilities throughout the country.

STMA members work to combine the science of growing turfgrasses and the art of maintaining both natural and artificial athletic field materials to produce safe and aesthetically pleasing playing surfaces.

STMA represents all segments of the sports turf industry with individuals involved in the management of school district, university, municipal/parks and recreational facilities as well as the facilities used by professional athletes.

Membership also includes full-time students; those involved in research, extension or teaching; landscape contractors; and commercial affiliates.

Sports played on member facilities include baseball, bocce, cricket, field hockey, football, lacrosse, lawn tennis, polo, racing, rugby, soccer, and softball.

### Building on a solid foundation

According to Mike Andresen, athletic turf manager at Iowa State University, mem-

ber of the STMA Board of Directors, and Membership Committee Chair, the organization provides and develops education and networking opportunities that help sports turf professionals enhance their competence.

"Each member I know strives to become a better professional each day at work and we are now starting to really build on the strong foundation that our veteran members have established," said Andresen. "The marketing of the association is ready to go into full force, and its intent is to let the world know that sports field areas need to be managed by a professional sports turf manager."

According to Andresen, the new STMA website is exciting and will evolve into the most important daily resource for sports turf professionals. "The new mentoring program, which is slated to be unveiled at the January conference in Las Vegas, will help ensure new members get off on the right foot, receive the special attention sometimes needed to feel welcome, and get the best bang for their buck. The new chapter offerings are helping chapters become stronger by giving them the ability to offer more to their hometown members. Marketing is placing emphasis on educating administrators, owners, and coaches to the unique qualities required to be successful in our profession. Educationally, STMA is exploring many opportunities to expand the technical offerings that members can take advantage of."

"It has been a busy STMA office for many years, as growth has been impressive," said Andresen. "The Y2K member survey assisted in the development of a precise and aggressive strategic plan. We are heading into exciting times for STMA, and becoming a member now will ensure that the dream our founders had in 1981 will be a realization that we all can take advantage of in 2002."

## STMA member benefits

**S**TMA Membership Roster & Resource Manual: This could be one of the most important books in your library. Included in your Roster is contact information for your peers as well as all of STMA's commercial members, giving you a direct link to all your product and service needs.

**SPORTSTURF Magazine:** STMA's official publication, which is dedicated to providing articles and information to make your job easier.

**Sports Turf Manager Newsletter:** A "members only" publication, the newsletter provides the opportunity to "get the word out" regarding your issues and views.

**STMA Job Hotline:** Members can call, fax or e-mail job listings to headquarters that will be recorded onto the hotline. Members can call the job hotline (712-366-1145) at any time to check listed openings.

**STMA Web Site:** The Web site ([www.sportsturfmanager.com](http://www.sportsturfmanager.com)) offers information on all aspects of the industry and the STMA. New features will include books and mer-

chandise, an "Ask the Experts" section, links to research and Chapter sites, direct contact to board members, and several new features in the "Members Only" section.

**STMA Annual Conference & Exhibition:** The 2002 conference will be held Jan. 16-20, with educational sessions at the Riviera Hotel & Casino and the exhibition at the Cashman Center in Las Vegas. The 2003 conference will be held Jan. 15-19 at the Hyatt Regency on the Riverwalk and the San Antonio Convention Center.

**SAFE Foundation:** This Foundation was formed, "To support sports field specific research, educational programs and environmental concerns to promote user safety." The Foundation also serves as the administering body for the scholarship programs. The SAFE Foundation board voted to award \$15,000 in scholarships and expenses for 2001.

### Award programs:

Awards are given each year for the following: STMA Baseball Field of the Year, STMA Softball Field of the

Year, STMA Football Field of the Year and STMA Soccer Field of the Year.

The STMA Founders Awards given annually include The Dick Ericson Award, The George Toma Golden Rake Award, The Dr. William H. Daniel Award, and the Harry C. Gill Memorial Award.

Then there's the Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) Program. STMA implemented the CSFM Program in 1999 to establish credentials signifying a specific level of expertise; open up career opportunities, and promote the sports turf manager and the profession; provide recognition for the performance of those responsible for managing all sports fields; create better salary opportunities; stimulate and motivate improved performance; and increase opportunities for education and training.

