

President's Message

Never seen THAT...

We all have little things that bug us, things that may be magnified by summer's heat or fall's activities already pressing down. I'm not sure of the dynamic, but about this time each year a little frustration seems to manifest itself. Right now if I hear someone utter, "This is the first time I've ever seen that," I'm going to scream.

Immediately following this football season, we're starting a construction project in the stadium. Increased electrical capacity is required, and in preparation we've had to directionally bore electric service from an adjoining street to the stadium. To accomplish this, lines had to go beneath our football practice complex. To avoid a fiber optic line and ensure no damage would be done to the integrity of the sand based-field area, the crews bored the lines a safe (or so we thought) 17 feet below surface level.

As Murphy's Law will attest, mysteriously during the process a section of our field above the work area developed an 18-inch dome. Pressure 17 feet down caused us to have a 50-foot diameter "pitcher's mound" on one end of the practice field! For two weeks I have heard variations of "I've never seen that happen," and I'm ready to explode.

Iowa State University has a renowned engineering department, and as luck would have it, they are researching the impacts of directional boring on soils. The engineers have been respectful of our emotions, but it's obvious that our misery has them giddy. The integrity of the field components is intact, but with just a few weeks before the start of fall practice, the field is unplayable. The novelty of the problem has passed, and somehow in the nick of time, we'll find resolution.

Ours is a small representation of the pressures we all face going into the fall season. We'll stare down challenges and find solutions. If people could only realize what it takes to survive and be successful in this profession, we'd all be held in higher regard and be better paid.

Now is the perfect time to get motivated to take advantage of STMA's Awards, specifically the Field of the Year Program. The process to enter your fields is simple but formal. A component of the entry is a series of photos. As baseball and softball seasons wind down and football and soccer gear up, you've still got time to get the photos you need to submit with your entry.

The Program is not a beauty contest! The judges focus on what you and your crew have produced with the resources and constraints you've been given. Just developing an award's application is a gratifying experience. Being considered for an award is an honor. If you're fortunate to be an award winner, the exposure and respect that follows is tremendous!

Your peers at the STMA Conference Award's Banquet will applaud your leadership, and the folks back home will recognize their fortune that you're on their team. The whole experience might leave you saying, "That's like nothing I've ever seen before."



MIKE ANDRESEN
CSFM

mandrese@
iastate.edu

Mike Andresen

M2MEDIA360
PRESIDENT/CEO
Marion Minor
VP OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS
Gerald Winkel
VP OF CIRCULATION AND
COLLATERAL SALES
Joanne Juda-Prainito
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Mary Jo Tomei
DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES
Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964
cnaughton@m2media360.com

Reader Service Services
DIRECTOR OF READER SERVICE
Joanne Juda-Prainito
Readerservice@m2media360.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Phone 847-763-9565 Fax 847-763-9569

REPRINTS
Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964
cnaughton@m2media360.com

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Paul Garris
35 Greenbriar
Aurora, OH 44202
330-562-2512; 330-562-3512 (fax)
pgarris@m2media360.com

AL, AR, AZ, CA, FL,
GA, LA, NC, NM, NV, OK, SC,
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Deanna Morgan
2095 Exeter Road, #80-336
Germantown, TN 38138
901-759-1241; 901-624-0333 (fax)
dmorgan@m2media360.com

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cmmurphy88@comcast.net

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