

STMA Conference attendance up 20%

The 19th annual Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference and Exhibition broke several records for attendance, bringing more than 1,800 total participants to Phoenix January 15-19, a gain of nearly 20% in total attendance from last year's conference.

STMA's Seminar-on-Wheels program also experienced tremendous growth. Typically drawing 75 attendees per tour, this year saw 111 and 356 participants, respectively, for Tuesday's and Wednesday's tours. The first tour stopped at two stadiums, a soccer complex, a thoroughbred horse racing complex and a turf sod farm. In addition to a multi-use sports complex and a baseball park, the second tour visited Chase Field that has a unique retractable roof, and the University of Phoenix Stadium, which was the game field for this year's memorable Super Bowl.

Integral to the conference was the 100,000 sq. ft. exhibition that showcased the sports turf industry's products, services and equipment. More than 165 companies displayed the newest innovations in turf-related products. New on the trade show floor this year was the building of a regulation-size pitcher's mound. Led by minor league head groundskeeper Chris Ralston with Lake Elsinore Storm Baseball, the mound-building provided a unique learning experience for attendees.

Sixty-eight educational sessions and workshops, roundtable discussions, and a hands-on training session hosted by MLB/NFL/MLS turf managers were packed into the 4-day conference. The conference events were enhanced by the support of Barenbrug; Beacon Athletics; Covermaster; Cygnet Turf & Equipment; Diamond Pro; Ewing Irrigation; Hunter Industries; Jacobsen, A Textron Company; Kubota; Midwest Rake; Pro's Choice; The Toro Company; Turface Athletics; West Coast Turf; and World Class Athletic Surfaces.

STMA highest honors presented

The STMA Awards banquet culminated in the awarding of the Founders Awards, STMA's most prestigious honors. Donald Fowler, retired Penn State Cooperative Extension agent, received the Dick Ericson award, which is given to a sports turf manager who positively



Donald Fowler

impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership. Fowler has made a tremendous impact in his home state of Pennsylvania retiring after 30 years in extension. He was instrumental in organizing the STMA-affiliated chapter, KAFMO, and since 1996, he has been the lead organizer of the group of volunteers who work the Little League World Series.



Dr. Mike Goatley

Dr. Mike Goatley, turfgrass specialist at Virginia Tech, received the Dr. William H. Daniel Award, which acknowledges significant contributions to the sports turf industry through research, teaching and extension outreach. Goatley has been working in sports field research for many years. He's an educator, a prominent author, and the go-to resource for warm season turfgrass questions.



Tony Diaz

The George Toma Golden Rake Award, which acknowledges an individual's strong work ethic and job performance, was pre-



Bob Curry

sented to Tony Diaz with Waukegan Parks Department in Waukegan, IL. Diaz was cited as going above and beyond the expected to insure his fields are safe and playable, often working late to get fields affected by rain ready for play that evening. That perseverance is loved by the baseball teams who use his fields because there are virtually no rainouts.

The Harry C. Gill Memorial Award was presented to former STMA board member Bob Curry of Covermaster. The Gill Award recognizes an individual for their hard work in the sports turf industry and acknowledges their dedication and service to the STMA. Curry has been a long time supporter and promoter of STMA and the sports turf profession within the U.S. and internationally. In STMA's lean years, he paid for board members expenses to board meetings to help out the cash-strapped organization and played an integral role in the STMA headquarters transition from outside management to its own staff, devoting much of his personal time to making the transition seamless.

Country's best turf managers

Nine STMA Field of the Year winners were also honored during the annual awards banquet. The sports turf managers whose fields won were judged to have exceptional playability and aesthetic playing surfaces, employ innovative solutions, use budget dollars effectively, and develop and implement a comprehensive, agronomically sound maintenance program. The winners include:

Field of the Year	Level	Category	Location
Mary Rountree Evans Field	Schools and Parks	Baseball	Baraboo, WI
Tomball High School Softball Field	Schools and Parks	Softball	Tomball, TX
Pleasant Run Soccer Fields	Schools and Parks	Soccer	Colleyville, TX
Centurion Field - Christian Academy of Louisville	Schools and Parks	Football	Louisville, KY
Hawks Field at Haymarket Park	College and University	Baseball	Lincoln, NE
George Mason University	College and University	Softball	Fairfax, VA
Carroll College	College and University	Soccer	Helena, MT
Kilkenny Fields - University of Oregon	College and University	Football	Eugene, OR
Isotopes Park	Professional	Baseball	Albuquerque, NM

Four Minor League Baseball (MiLB) Sports Turf Managers were honored for the quality of their fields during the awards banquet. STMA is a co-sponsor with the MiLB for the Sports Turf Manager of the Year Awards. Sixteen leagues selected a winner and from those winners, STMA awarded the Sports Turf Manager of the Year to

- Short Season/Rookie – Joe Hill,

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- Spokane Indians
- Class A – Chris Ball, Myrtle Beach Pelicans
- Class AA – Eric Blanton, New Hampshire Fisher Cats
- Class AAA – Jake Tyler, Toledo Mud Hens (back-to-back winner)

2008 Board of Directors

The 2008 STMA Board of Directors was presented at the association's annual meeting, Jan. 17, in Phoenix. The Nominating Committee presented the slate of candidates to the membership in November. Voting members cast ballots in December and the new 12-person Board of Directors officially takes office during the Annual Meeting. Serving in 2008 are:

President—Mike Andresen, CSFM, Iowa State University (2nd year of a 2-yr. term)

Immediate Past President—Mike Trigg, CSFM, Waukegan Park District (2nd year of a 2-yr. term)

President Elect—Abby McNeal, CSFM, Colorado School of Mines. (McNeal had resigned this position in January due to her employment status, which changed before March 1, so President Andresen appointed her to the position.)

Vice President Commercial—Dale Getz, CSFM, CSE, the Toro Company

Secretary—Chris Calcaterra, M.Ed., CSFM, CPRP, City of Peoria Sports Complex

Treasurer—Troy Smith, CSFM, Denver Broncos Football Club

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Schools K-12—Jody Gill, Blue Valley School District

Academic—Mike Goatley, Jr., Ph.D., Virginia Tech University, CSES Dept.

Parks & Recreation—David Pinsonneault,

CSFM, CPRP, Town of Lexington

Commercial Members—Chad Price, CSFM, Carolina Green Corporation

For individual biographies on the 2008 STMA Board of Directors, go to the STMA web site, www.STMA.org.

Students compete in 4th Collegiate Challenge

Students were able to take advantage of many activities specifically geared to them including two forums and the Fourth Annual Student Collegiate Challenge presented in partnership with the SAFE Foundation and Platinum Sponsor Hunter Industries. Through the generosity of SAFE, the Student Challenge provides the winning two-year team and the winning four-year team each with a \$4,000 grant to fund a practical

learning lab at their college or university. Ninety-nine students comprising thirty teams from various colleges and universities participated in a multiple choice exam on athletic turf and sports field management topics and identified plants, insects, diseases and weeds, as well as a written case study. Twenty-six teams competed in the event in 2007. Hunter Industries' continued sponsorship picks up the tab for all Student Challenge competitors STMA Conference registration.

The winning team from the 4-year competition was The Pennsylvania State University Team 008, whose members were Matt Naedel, Tanner Del Valle, Mark Peasley, and Matt Elmore. Iowa State University Team 010 came in second and Iowa State Team 003 came in third.

In the 2-year program, The Pennsylvania State University Team 104 took top honors, with teammates Josh Dubbs, Blaise Restifo, Robert Finnegan, and Andre Aymar. Second place went to Michigan State University Team 103 and third place was taken home by Mt. San Antonio College Team 101.

The two first place teams also received the Student Challenge Cup and individual medals. Second and Third place winners received certificates and medals.

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charitable arm of STMA, raised more than \$25,000 for scholarship, research and education during the conference. Eight outstanding students were recognized for winning scholarships

during the Awards Banquet. The SAFE Scholarship Program is funded through the generous support of The TORO Foundation, Jacobsen, a Textron Company, the SAFE Live and Silent Auctions, and Raffles and the miscellaneous donations received from individuals and companies throughout the year.

- Graduate—Nick McKenna, Virginia Tech: Dr. James Watson Graduate Scholarship, \$2,500
- Four-year—Sara Camuso, Penn State: Dr. James Watson Undergraduate Scholarship, \$2,500
- Christopher Webb, Virginia Tech: SAFE Undergraduate Scholarship, \$1,500
- Evan Buckley, Purdue University: SAFE Undergraduate Scholarship, \$1,000
- Brent Goodwin, University of Kentucky: SAFE Undergraduate Scholarship, \$1,000
- Robert Ralston, Kansas State University: SAFE Undergraduate Scholarship, \$1,000
- Two-year—Marshall Brice, Michigan State University: Fred Grau Memorial Scholarship, \$2,000
- Russell Bray, Michigan State: SAFE Two Year Scholarship, \$1,000 ■

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