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**Sports Turf Managers Association Conference Experiences Record Number of States,
Countries Represented**

Four-day Event in San Diego Featured 600-Plus Exhibitors

(**LAWRENCE, Kan.**) – [Sports Turf Managers Association](http://SportsTurfManagersAssociation.com) (STMA) – the professional organization for 2,600 men and women who manage sports fields worldwide – recently hosted its 27th annual Conference & Exhibition in San Diego, Calif. with over 600 exhibitors and 1,200 attendees from a record 13 countries, including Australia, China, Italy, Peru and Scotland, and 48 states.

The four-day event was highlighted by the “Seminar on Wheels Tour” at various professional, collegiate and youth sports complexes in the San Diego region. In addition, attendees took part in more than 60 educational sessions, visited sports turf exhibits and networked with environmental science leaders.

“As the leading sports turf management industry event in the world, we once again offered cutting-edge content and networking opportunities for attendees and exhibitors,” says Jeff Salmond, Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), newly-elected STMA President and Director of Athletic Field Management for the University of Oklahoma. “The wide variety of educational sessions provide our members with tools, ideas and best practices to implement at their organization or athletic facility.”

SAFE, the association’s charitable foundation, raised more than \$27,000 during the Conference through its Jan. 19 golf tournament, “Night of Bowling” and silent and live auctions throughout the week. Proceeds benefit educational programs, scholarships and grants with the goal of enriching communities through safe, sustainable sports and recreation fields for all athletes.

Timothy Gay, Ph.D., a Physics and Astronomy professor at the University of Nebraska, provided a keynote address on Jan. 21 to the STMA membership. He discussed the intricacies of sports turf impacts and the role it plays in the current debate regarding concussions.

STMA held its Awards Banquet on Jan. 22 to recognize "Field of the Year" winners. It also bestowed Founders Awards to four members, commemorating significant contributions to the profession. Recipients included:

- Dick Ericson Award: Michael Buras, CSFM, Longwood Cricket Club
- George Toma Award: Ben Polimer, Town of Weston
- William H. Daniel Award: Mary Owen, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Harry C. Gill Award: Dr. Michael Goatley, Virginia Tech

This year, the "Student Challenge Cup" had participation from 32 teams, culminating in more than 120 scholars from across the country. These students represented both two and four-year colleges from 20 states. The Cup featured a proctored exam on Jan. 21.

New additions to the Conference included: "Fun Run/Walk" led by chair Tom Nielsen of the Louisville Bats; "International and First Timer's Reception" on January 20; and a free customized Conference app to help attendees build schedules, rate sessions and download speaker presentations.

Since 1989, STMA has hosted its annual convention at major cities across the U.S. including Denver, Colo. in 2015. Next year's event will be held in Orlando, Fla. Jan. 24-27, 2017. Additional future sites include Fort Worth, Texas (2018) and Phoenix, Ariz. (2019).

For more info on STMA: www.stma.org, www.twitter.com/fieldexperts, 800.323.3875.

About STMA

STMA is the not-for-profit, professional association for men and women who manage sports fields worldwide. Since 1981, the association and its 34 local chapters have been providing education, information and sharing practical knowledge in the art and science of sports field management. Its more than 2,600 members oversee sports fields and facilities at schools, colleges and universities, parks and recreational facilities, and professional sports stadiums.

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