

Plans for Certification Program Initiated

Your Certification Committee spent a full day on March 16th, hashing out a lot of details on the whys and wherefores of developing a certification program for STMA. While much work remains, they came up with a number of ideas that they would like input on from the STMA membership. None of the following ideas have been set in stone, they have not even been presented to the Board. They are certainly a good starting point for discussion. All STMA members are encouraged to carefully read the following information and provide their thoughtful, constructive comments to Headquarters. All comments received will be shared with the committee and given careful consideration.

The first part of the discussion covered the purpose and benefits of a certification program.

The purposes could include: to raise professionalism in the industry; to establish credentials that signify a specific level of expertise, that will open up career opportunities and promote the sports turf manager and the profession; to provide recognition for professionals, for the performance of those responsible for managing all sports fields; to create better salary opportunities; to stimulate and motivate improved performance and increase professionalism; to increase opportunities for education and training.

After considering numerous possibilities the committee felt that the best title for those certified through the program would be -- **Certified Sports Turf Manager (CSTM)**

In order to apply for the designation CSTM, an individual would have to obtain a certain number of points. These points would be earned through a combination of education and experience. A consensus was reached to recommend the following program:

EDUCATION

Minimum education -- high school diploma or the equivalent No points

Turf Certificate Program 2 points

Two-Year College Program

Non-Turf 2 points

Turf or Related Plant Science 8 points

Four-Year College Program

Non-Turf 8 points

Turf or Related Plant Science 16 points

Advanced Degree

Turf or Related Plant Science 24 points

EXPERIENCE

Points earned per year (2000 hours = 1 year)

Sports Turf Experience 1 point per year

Supervisory Turf Experience

(Assistant, foreman or lead position) 3 points per year

Sports Turf Manager

(Top Position) 6 points per year

It is suggested that a total of 40 Points would be required to qualify for application

A written resume would be submitted as part of the application process and the application and resume evaluated to determine if the individual is qualified to apply for certification.

If all qualifications for application are met, the individuals would then take a multiple choice test that would be set up in sections. Each section would have to be passed in order to become certified. A passing grade would be 80%. If a section of the test does not receive a passing grade, only that part of the test would have to be retaken -- if accomplished within a set period of time (could be 1 year or 2 years). If a person continued to fail that portion or go beyond the time limit, they have to start all over.

Suggested Sections for testing include:

Agronomics

- basic soils
- basic horticultural calculations
- turfgrass establishment
- turfgrass selection
- water management
- turfgrass cultural practices
- fertilization

Pest Management

- Weeds, Insects, Diseases

Administration

- Budgeting
- Communication
- Supervision
- Safety/Compliance/First Aid

Sports Specific Field Management

- Baseball/softball
- Football
- Soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and others
- Field layouts
- Markings
- Design

STMA history and the certification process

When a person successfully passes all sections of the test they would be visited by an a CSTM panel for an evaluation of performance. This would be an on-site visit by at least two people to look at fields, shops, records, etc. This would

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take into account budget and labor limitations so that making the most of resources is a consideration. Upon passing the pre-determined criteria the individual would receive the designation **Certified Sports Turf Manager (CSTM)**.

An educational manual and a list of resource materials and aids would be developed to help individuals prepare themselves for better sports turf management and certification.

A budget needs to be developed before costs can be determined, but the plan would be to charge for application, testing and for re-certification. Charges would be high enough to cover the cost -- but affordable. STMA members would receive a break on the costs.

It is suggested that Re-certification would be on a 5 year cycle. The requirements haven't been thoroughly thought out yet, but would include a certain number of CEUs that would have to be attained over the specified period. CEUs could be given for educational sessions attended, including those at the STMA Annual Conference, and qualified sessions of state and regional turfgrass conferences. Credit would also be given for such things as Association activities, community involvement on a volunteer basis for sports fields, being a speaker on an accredited program, serving as STMA national or chapter officer or committee chair.

The requirements for re-certification would be announced as a part of the overall program.

A certification board of review will be needed to address any questions on decisions rendered.

Those individuals attaining the designation of **CSTM** would receive a plaque or certificate to hang in the office, national and local news releases, and certification patches, etc. **CSTMs** also would be honored at the January conference each year.

There also would need to be a process for de-certification -- and for review of that decision.

The STMA code of ethics will need to be resurrected.

The next STMA board meeting will be July 11th and 12th. The committee plans to have some definite recommendations at that time for board approval. It is further planned that the overall program will be formally introduced at next year's conference in Orlando.

All members are encouraged to give the above information serious consideration. STMA wants a program that will signify a measurable level of professionalism, but at the same time not be so restrictive that very few people can attain the designation **CSTM** or be willing or able to apply.

To assure that your thoughts receive consideration by all committee members, please put your thoughts in writing and send them by mail, fax or e-mail to STMA Headquarters by May 15th to assure time for consideration. Headquarters will then copy the replies and send them to all committee members. If you would like to visit with individual committee members to help you develop your thoughts, feel free to talk with them whenever you have the opportunity.

Committee members are:

Dr. Henry Indyk, Chair, Turfcon; **Dale Getz**, University of Notre Dame; **Floyd Perry**, Grounds Maintenance Services; **Dr. A. J. Powell**, University of Kentucky; **Dr. David Minner**, Iowa State University; **Mary Owen**, University of Massachusetts; **Ross Kurcab**, Denver Broncos Football Club; **Bob Patt**, Thurman Munson Memorial Stadium; **Dr. Tony Koski**, Colorado State University; **Mike Varner**, Michigan Battle Cats and **Chip Toma**, NFL.

They are going to be working very hard to develop the best program possible. Please help them help STMA by providing your thoughtful comments at your earliest convenience.

STM



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