
Headquarters Update

by Steve Trusty, Executive Director

As I write this column I am pleased to report that Conference Registrations have been coming in at a pace well ahead of last year. It looks like we are going to have a full house of exhibitors for our Trade Show. Interest in the tours and golf have been good. Have you made your arrangements to be in Mesa in January? By the time you read this, the early pay deadline (December 1) has probably passed, but it is not too late to register at the slightly higher rate and become a part of another record breaking conference.

There have been a few questions about the Category I meeting on Wednesday. 1) "I am interested in some of those topics, can I attend?" 2) "I'd like to sell my products to the folks that maintain the fields used by professional teams, can I meet with them during their meeting?" 3) "Are other Conference events or my dues subsidizing this session?" 4) "Why do Category I members have a special session?" These are all good questions. We'll answer the last one first. Each STMA membership category has a representative on the Board. In previous years, the Category I members have gotten together for a breakfast during Conference week to discuss common problems. As an outgrowth of last January's breakfast, a committee of Category I members surveyed the head grounds people at the NFL and MLB teams. The survey results indicated that both STMA members and those individuals not presently holding membership wanted a time that they could get together, learn from each other and hear from some speakers that would address some of their specific needs. The committee came to the board with a proposal to hold a special session prior to the start of the STMA Annual Conference. The session will be self supporting. If attendance is good enough, it could even provide some additional income to STMA. The proposal requested that this session be open only to Category I members and to those eligible for Category I membership. It is hoped that this meeting will attract some individuals that for one reason or another have not previously felt the need to join STMA. It is felt that they then can see that they should get involved after spending a day with members that have the same types of concerns as they do.

It is further hoped that some of these folks will register for the entire conference. In either case it can be a win - win situation for STMA and the attendees. I hate to seem negative, but the answer to the first 3 questions is NO.

Now to be more positive, your Board encourages any STMA membership category constituency to get involved in conference planning. Offer suggestions as to what you would like to see and hear. I think it would be great for STMA, as it continues to expand, to offer special days or tracks for all sorts of special interests and needs. Let headquarters and your Board know what you'd like and we'll do what we can to accommodate those needs.

Another special session will be held prior to this year's conference. Chapter officers have been invited to a Chapter Officers Training and Exchange Session. This event is designed to help Chapter Officers serve their Chapters more efficiently and effectively. I was a member of another association for 27 years that had a super annual 3 day weekend school for chapter officers. I learned a terrific amount of information from those schools over the years and decided we would try, in a small way, to utilize some of the ideas from SPEBSQSA (the Barbershop Quartet Society) to help STMA Chapter Officers. This is just one more service that STMA can provide to our Chapters through the funding of our Chapter Sponsors: John Deere, Novartis, Alpine Services, Hunter Industries, and The Scotts Company. Stronger Chapters will help support a stronger STMA. If the officers of your chapter have not made plans to attend, you might want to encourage them to do so. If you have shied away from serving as a chapter officer in the past because you weren't sure what needed to be done, I hope that this Chapter Officers Session can become an annual event and even more meaningful to allow you to get involved.

our Headquarters staff is here to serve you and the STMA Board of Directors. Let us know what we can do to serve you even better.

All of us at Headquarters hope that you and yours have a most joyful holiday season.

