

# UPDATE

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# Sports Field

## Managers Association of New Jersey



Spring 2021  
Vol. 21, No. 1

P.O. Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070 • 856-514-3179 • www.sfmanj.org • e-mail: mail@sfmanj.org

# SFMANJ

# Spring Field Day

April 7, 2021

# Tuckahoe Turf Farms

See Inside For:

Spring Field Day

2020 Field of the Year

Rewind: 2008 STMA Conference

Spotlight on our Advertisers:

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# Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 169 new & renewed members for 2021. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey has mailed invoices for 2020 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please register on our website, [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org). Contact us at 856.514.3179 with any questions. Checks can be mailed to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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Kathy Bauer	St Augustine Prep School
Gustavo Baxes	Colts Neck Twp.
Joseph Bello	Geese Chasers
James Betts	Tuckahoe Turf Farms, Inc.
Louis Bosco	Turf Equipment and Supply Co
Micheal Brennan	County of Union
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Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and networking with those in the sports turf industry.

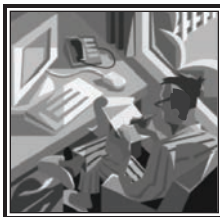
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### National Organization

Sports Turf Managers Association  
[www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org)

# ATTENTION MEMBERS!



## SFMANJ Update is looking for authors.

Please feel free to send Brad Park, Editor, SFMANJ Update ([bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu](mailto:bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu)) and/or Debbie Savard, SFMANJ Executive Secretary ([mail@sfmanj.org](mailto:mail@sfmanj.org)) an article regarding your fields, your experiences, your problems and your surprises.

SFMANJ Update can accommodate articles of differing lengths and welcomes pictures. The SFMANJ Membership will benefit from reading your story.

Feel free to call today:  
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## New Website [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

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For information regarding this newsletter, contact:  
 SFMANJ at (856) 514-3179 or Brad Park at (848) 932-6327  
 Editor: Brad Park, Rutgers University, Email: [bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu](mailto:bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu)  
 Layout and Design: Debra Savard, Email: [mail@sfmanj.org](mailto:mail@sfmanj.org)

SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

# SFMANJ SPRING FIELD DAY 2021

**April 7, 2021**

Hosted by

## TUCKAHOE TURF FARMS

Tuckahoe Turf Farms, 401 N. Myrtle St, Hammonton, NJ 08037

This Field Day will be an outdoor event and is being planned in accordance with Covid-19 directives developed by the State of New Jersey and other entities; thus attendance is currently capped at **50 SFMANJ Members**.

Please **PRE-REGISTER** at [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org) (No Walk-Up Registrations) **No Charge for SFMANJ Members**

### Schedule - Two tour groups; 25 attendees per group

8:30 - 9:00 **Check-In**

9:00 - 11:00 **Auto Tour of Tuckahoe Turf Farms** (Group A; 25 people) (Group B; 25 people);

(Attendees will use their own vehicles to move between tour stops)

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11:00 -12:00 **Credit Education:**

**Spring weed control strategies in New Jersey;** Dr. Matt Elmore, Rutgers University; 30 minutes;  
*Group A followed by Group B*

**New Jersey compliant turf fertilization strategies;** Dr. James Murphy, Rutgers University; 30 minutes;  
*Group B followed by Group A*

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# SFMANJ *Field of the Year 2020*

By Scott Bills, CSFM

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received four applications for its 2020 Field of the Year. The list of entrants included three baseball fields and one soccer field. The baseball field entries were from a high school and two counties. The soccer field entry was from a private soccer club.

The SFMANJ Board of Directors found all the applicants deserving but settled on The Players Development Academy and their entry from facilities manager, Jeff Olszyk, for Field 11 as the 2020 SFMANJ Field of the Year. The Players Development Academy Soccer Club provides a year-round soccer training program that develops players to their greatest potential, focusing on top-quality instruction and exposure to the highest levels of competition. The club has boys and girls teams in age groups from Under 11 through Under 19. The teams compete in premier leagues throughout the northeast and mid-Atlantic states and participate in highly competitive tournaments nationwide. It is the goal of PDA to offer these players optimal opportunities to gain recognition that will enable them to achieve continued success as athletes on



Players Development Academy Soccer Field 11

the country's top collegiate teams, United States national teams, and/or professional soccer teams.

Players Development Academy is a year-round 'soccer only' training facility with 20 natural grass, native soil (sandy loam) surfaces. Four lighted fields and 3 all-weather synthetic fields create an environment through which players in the academy can reach their full playing potential. The club currently has 51 teams with ages ranging from 8 years old to 19 years old that train year-round at the facility. The facility hosts 7 regional tournaments (3 spring, 2 summer and 2 fall) with the largest bringing in over 200 teams for two college showcase tournaments where high school aged players are scouted and/or recruited for universities throughout the nation.

The Field of the Year submission was for Field #11. The field is located at the Morningside Farm

Complex. The land where the field is located was acquired by PDA in 2010 and was originally a sod farm. To create soccer fields, PDA had 25-30 acres laser graded. Field #11 is part of a twelve-field

*Continued on page 14*

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# Sports Turf Managers Association Conference & Exhibition **REWIND!**

**A look back at past STMA conferences through the eyes of a New Jersey Sports Turf Manager**  
**STMA 2008: An SFMANJ member reports on his experience**

*By Kevin Shipman*

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the March/April 2008 issue of SFMANJ Update newsletter*

I have just returned to the cold northeast from sunny and mild Phoenix, Arizona (I personally like the cold as a nice break from the hot humid weather in the summer). I was attending the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Annual Conference and Trade Show. This annual conference is the highlight of the Association's year and recognizes its accomplishments as well as the accomplishments of its membership in the previous year. The annual business meeting is held over a lunch and introduces us (the membership) to the Association's new Officers and the new business that STMA is looking to handle in the upcoming year. They provide a financial report on the organization so we can stay abreast of how our membership dues are being spent and how we are aided by being members.

During the STMA conference, there are a multitude of speakers and educational sessions you may attend. The topics range from how to prepare a budget, to managing turf with multiple events, to weed control, to synthetic turf. There are also two days of a trade show that allows the equipment side of the industry to show-off their latest tractors, mowers, seeders, aerators, irrigation, and other supplies. On Friday night, the annual awards banquet lets us see the work of some of the best sports turf managers in the previous year. STMA hands-out awards for the best fields in the high school, college, and professional levels. They also honor some of the best sports turf managers in the industry with awards named in honor of legendary sports turf managers.

I work at a Grade 7 through 12 school with about 55 acres of sports fields and 15 acres of common areas around the schools. I have worked in a school setting for the past 7 years and find it very rewarding to do a good job and see that your efforts are noticed. In the school setting everything you perform outside is noticed. If the grass dies, the school administrators and coaches come to see why. If the grass is green, growing well, and the fields are kept-up, the coaches always seem to enjoy the games a little more. The

administrators take notice of how the school grounds look and take pride in knowing their school looks good to the tax-paying public. I am even told by non-coaching teachers that the school grounds look nice; that makes me proud of the work that my staff and myself do.

The conference is always educationally rewarding as there are many sessions that are available. This year I focused on attending a few sessions that could provide me with knowledge in areas where I felt it was needed. The first one I attended related to irrigation scheduling. This is one area where I think a lot of people need education. You can not just set a program on your controller and let it run. I learned to always check my soil moisture levels and air temperature and humidity for a specific region. I also spoke with Don Savard of Salesianum High School in Wilmington, DE. He wrote a very good article a few months back about doing an irrigation audit; I am planning on doing one myself this spring with his help and expertise.

The second session I was looking forward to attending was how to manage a synthetic field. This is such a hot topic now in schools; I wanted to get all the research that I could just in case this ever comes up at my school. All of our fields are natural turfgrass and they are continually getting better. Synthetics are what everyone is talking about these days and I have learned that the more educated you are about these fields, the better you can prepare when the school board wants to install one. You can talk with the board about what you have learned and hopefully with your knowledge you can all work toward achieving a great field.

The last session that I was really looking forward to attending was one focused on managing turf without pesticides. This is probably the biggest topic currently being discussed within schools and many other most segments of the green industry. Many ideas

*Continued on page 15*

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**with any questions, concerns  
or comments**

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Storr Tractor Company



## Committed to the Sports Fields and Grounds Market

*Editor's Note: Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) offers its Commercial Members the opportunity to submit promotional content to SFMANJ Update newsletter as an additional commercial membership benefit.*

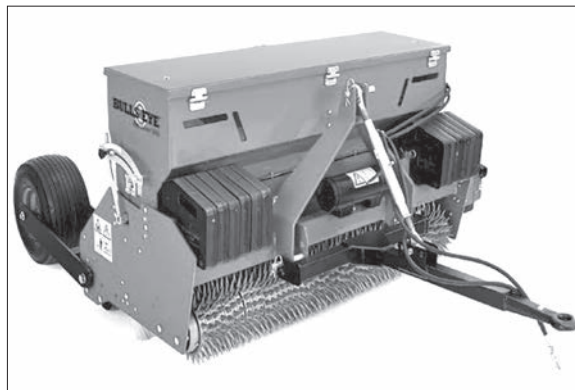
Storr Tractor Company was formed in 1944 primarily as a tractor sales and service facility. In 1966, husband and wife team of Mary Lou and Paul Des Champs, acquired the Toro brand and by 1984 they earned the highest Toro award, Distributor of Excellence. During this time, they expanded and operated their current facilities out of Branchburg, NJ and Ronkonkoma, NY, on Long Island. After the passing of Paul in 1990, Mary Lou continued the legacy by creating



a culture of pride and loyalty that transcended the community, her employees, and the turf industry. In December of 2018, after the passing of Mary Lou, The Toro Company acquired Storr Tractor with the intention to own and operate the company through a transition period with the goal of finding an appropriate partner to purchase the

company. That goal was accomplished in November 2020 with Storr Tractor Company being purchased by Kevin Monaco and Lance Ernst, owners of the neighboring Toro distributor to the south, Turf Equipment and Supply Company. However, the legacy created in 1944 will continue with the same great products, services, and support from the same great team of people who are still committed to superior customer service.

The strong culture similarities between Storr Tractor Company and Turf Equipment and Supply Company allows for a natural fit for this purchase. Both organizations have a legacy of providing turf industry products and the highest level of customer service. In order to minimize disruption to you, our valued customer, the plan for now is to maintain the Storr Tractor brand and operate as two separate companies. In addition, we will continue to serve you from the same two facilities you already know, in Branchburg, NJ and Ronkonkoma, NY. The commitment and dedication to customer care is the foundation of Storr Tractor, Turf Equipment and Supply, and The Toro Company. These things will remain unchanged for you as the mission for Kevin and Lance and their teams is to exceed your expectations by providing relevant solutions and superior customer service.



Storr Tractor Company is an award-winning distributor that proudly represents the industry's leading equipment and irrigation brands including Toro, Ventrac, Case Tractors, First Products, Otterbine, Bernhard, Flowtronex, and many more. Storr Tractor continues to provide new solutions such as the Bullseye Equipment brand which helps field managers, including synthetic managers, solve their maintenance challenges. By partnering with brands like The Toro Company, Storr Tractor is an extension of a global leader in turf equipment and

irrigation that has been helping customers maintain sports venues, golf courses, schools and universities, public green spaces and commercial landscaping to the highest standards for over a century.

The experience of the members at Storr Tractor Company is unmatched throughout the industry. We have been dedicated for over 75 years to provide world class service from a factory-trained, industry certified, and experienced staff. We aim to be your partner for the life of our products and beyond by solving your problems and training your staff to be the best they can be. Storr Tractor Company has one mission: To always exceed our customers' expectations by providing relevant solutions and superior customer service. To achieve that goal, we rely on the combination of a focused and highly experienced employee group backed by global influencers like Toro that ultimately lead to loyal and satisfied customers. From state-of-the-art products to experienced mobile service and after-sales support, we have all the resources to help our customer partners succeed.

Storr Tractor Company looks to continue the legacy that began in 1944 by building and maintaining strong relationships that are built on trust and integrity. The foundation of our company is to be the most trusted and preferred turf care distributor with the best team of people and the most loyal customers. We look forward to serving our customers for many years to come.

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# How can we be better?

*Editor's Note: Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) offers its Commercial Members the opportunity to submit promotional content to SFMANJ Update newsletter as an additional commercial membership benefit.*



When we began the new year in 2020 who knew the challenges we would face and still are. To those of you who have faced hardship, sickness and even death in your lives I am truly sorry for your loss and pray for everyone to come out of the pandemic with God's grace.

This pandemic has forced us to rededicate ourselves mentally, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and socially in our personal lives and in our businesses. HELENA is committed to providing the tools to help you be a successful business and in turn a valuable benefit to your community.

Many of you are sitting at your desk looking out the window at the snow falling thinking, "How can we be better? How can we be more efficient? Do I do things the way I've always done or do I put systems in place to better deal with adversity?" It's probably easier to do things the way you've always done. But is it better?

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*Helena Chemical Company, Swedesboro, NJ is a SFMANJ Commercial Member; Tim Gerzabek (p) 609.221.9240; and Nick Adams (p) 770.365.8360*

## SFMANJ Spring Field Day at Tuckahoe Turf Farms

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**PHOTO  
RE-CAP**

# Tuckahoe Turf Farms

Pictures from our visit  
October 2020

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# SFMANJ Field of the Year 2020

complex that is primarily used for tournaments and weekend matches. It is a native soil (sandy loam) field consisting of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and tall fescue. The grass is cut at two inches utilizing both a Toro 4700 rotary mower and a Jacobson 4675 reel mower when a lower, healthier cut is desired.



Somerset County Parks Commission Mountain View Park, Field 4

Jeff explained that the key to keeping this field playing and aesthetically looking the best is the proper execution of an annual maintenance program. The grounds crew does everything with the goal of keeping an eye on the big picture of making sure they get all of the various cultural practices of the maintenance plan executed in the right way and in a timely fashion. That includes practicing the 1/3 rule and cutting the grass 2-3 times per week (sometimes daily), irrigating consistently with water reels based on measuring the soil moisture with a TDR and completing all of the other scheduled treatments as laid out in the annual plan. Jeff states that the program is their road map and dictates their approach to caring for the field. All of the maintenance activities are scheduled around the tournaments and between the busy weekends when league matches are played. The natural grass fields, including Field #11, are used from the spring season starting in early April through July 4th, and then from the 3rd week in August to the 1st week of December.

Jeff noted that the biggest challenge he and his crew face is the 'Natural Grass vs. Synthetic Turf' mindset. He indicated that teams request to make the natural grass fields play like the synthetic turf that teams train on during the week. This often stretches the crew to its limits. Jeff stated, "As sports field managers know, this is impossible." He went on to explain that the older teams in the PDA are often seeking to win a national championship in the ECNL (Elite Club National League), the US Club National Tournament or the pre-MLS league and the natural grass needs to play like the synthetic turf. Jeff's approach to accomplish the task of an 'as close as possible' natural grass surface involves maintaining the height of cut (HOC) below 2 inches, sand topdressing applied annually, and the crew often waters the grass prior to a match. Additionally, the crew closely monitors soil moisture with a Field Scout TDR 350. Jeff feels that by keeping the soil moisture measurement (Volumetric Water Content) between 20-25%, and the HOC at 1.5-2", the natural grass plays similar to the synthetic turf. This is very important because 90% of the team training takes place on the synthetic turf, so the natural grass fields need to play as close to the synthetic turf as possible. The fields are irrigated with water reels, which is time consuming and is always a challenge in getting the adequate amounts

of water to the grass and keep the soil moisture content in proper limits. Jeff also noted that keeping the HOC less than 2-inches requires lots of time and effort and there are weeks when cutting the grass with the reel mower is being done every day, which is necessary to keep the grass as healthy as possible. The fertilizer programs include both granular and liquid applications, that include herbicide and fungicides when needed. Core aeration is performed twice a year with a Toro ProCore 1298 and solid tine aeration is performed as much as possible. The fields are not rolled because the weight of the solid tine machine helps level the fields.

To care for twenty FIFA-quality natural grass fields and three synthetic turf fields, Jeff does not have a crew of 8-10 people or more. His crew of three, include himself, Nathan Knedlar and Shane Dunn. What they are able to accomplish is nothing short of sensational.

Continued on page 14

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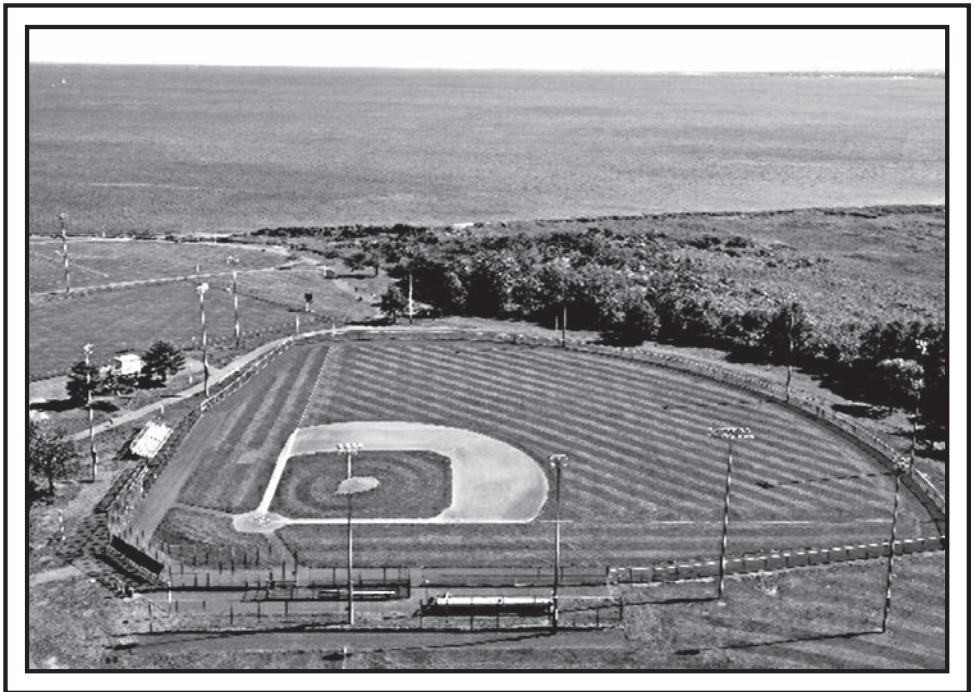
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# SFMANJ Field of the Year 2020

Jeff is a self-taught sport field manager who is the epitome of hard work and determination. Jeff and his crew embody the values that our industry was built on. Congratulations Jeff, Nathan, and Shane!

The three runners-up in 2020 are not new to the Field of the Year program. The Somerset County Parks Commission and Dave Kuczynski, Senior Athletic Field Specialist, has won the award previously for Torpey Field. Field #4 at Mountain View Park, 141 Mountain View Road, Hillsborough, NJ is part of a seven-field complex that includes six grass fields and one synthetic field. The site was purchased by Somerset County in 2009 and was originally the GSA Belle Mead Depot that served as a supply facility for World War II. The park foreman, Rick DeLeon and his crew 3 full time workers manage the facility. Some of the challenges left after construction included quick connect couplers that were not located on the fields and required over 100' of hose to water the infields. Eventually, quick connect couplers were installed on the fields and helped with more efficient pre-game prep and watering stress areas in the grass during the summer heat. Also, the



Middlesex County Raritan Bay Waterfront Park, Baseball #3

infield mix that was installed with the construction was sandy/rocky and the turf really needed attention, with many bare areas and annual

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Continued from page 3

# New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2021

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 Steven Delellis  
 Barry Draycott  
 Lance Ernst  
 Keith Ferrugia  
 Diane Flannery  
 Matthew Geary  
 Kenneth Gentile  
 Tim Gerzabek  
 Kj Griepentrog  
 Shawn Grietzer  
 Kyle Grover  
 Tom Hennessy  
 Doug Higgins  
 Ronald Holt  
 Frank Jacheo  
 Jeff Johnson  
 Rob Johnson  
 Scott Johnson  
 Harold Jones  
 Dave Junkerman  
 Rich Kalish  
 David Karl  
 Richard Kerr  
 Scott Klein  
 Peter Kusion  
 Frank Lasasso  
 Barry Levitt  
 Joe Lovallo  
 Kevin Malone  
 Michael Massi  
 Cris Matos  
 Mark McNamara  
 Brian Meola  
 Gregory Moore  
 Michael Morvay  
 Brian Myers  
 Dick Neufeld  
 L. John Neyhart  
 Matthew Olivi  
 Kenneth Ortiz  
 Zach Owen  
 Paul Parascondolo  
 Brian Pardoe  
 Bradley Park  
 Sam Pepe  
 Tom Pepe  
 Matthew Pinkerton  
 Ted Platz  
 Terry Prem

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 Tech Terra Environmental  
 Turf Equipment & Supply Co, Inc.  
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 Twp of Burlington Parks and Rec  
 Hopatcong BOE  
 Executive Turf Products  
 Helena Agri Enterprises LLC  
 Jersey Seed  
 The College of New Jersey  
 Cherry Hill BOE  
 Colts Neck Twp  
 Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply  
 Palmyra BOE  
 SiteOne Landscape Supple  
 Gill St Bernard's School  
 Fisher & Son Co., Inc.  
 Retired  
 Palmyra BOE  
 Delsea Regional School District  
 Farmside Landscape & Design, Inc.  
 Borough of Fair Haven  
 Evesham Twp.  
 Rancocas Valley Reg. H.S.  
 Ocean County Utilities  
 Hammonton Board of Ed  
 Levitt's LLC  
 Voorhees Twp.  
 The Landtek Group Inc.  
 Palmyra BOE  
 Hammonton Public Schools  
 Point Pleasant Beach BOE  
 Washington Township  
 US Pitchcare  
 Lakewood Blueclaws  
 TLC Landscape Co.  
 Plant Food Company  
 Freehold Township Parks and Rec.  
 Dunellen School District  
 City of Perth Amboy  
 Fisher & Son Company  
 Old Tappan Golf Course  
 Turf Equipment & Supply  
 Rutgers University  
 Central Regional School District  
 Plant Food Company  
 Byram  
 Plant Food Company  
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## Sports Turf Managers Association Conference & Exhibition REWIND!

were brought-up on ways to control all kinds of pests with new and innovative ways without resorting to pesticides. In my state of New Jersey, the use of pesticides in turf - whether it is an application intended for crabgrass control or vegetation control along fence lines - is becoming harder and harder, so new ways need to be examined. This should be the one session everyone at the conference attends. There are more and more pesticide regulations and we all need to do our part in limiting the use of pesticides when we can.

The Kindergarten through 12th Grade (K-12) membership segment of STMA should ideally have the most members and should be the biggest group attending at the annual conference. Most of these individuals have the least amount of training and knowledge. I was included in this group until I started attending the annual conference. We have the most to gain by attending. The education sessions can teach a new sports turf manager many things that professional and collegiate managers already know; however, individuals just starting in the industry may not have a high degree of knowledge. Conference attendance could be a great jumping point to much better fields and improved professional abilities. I am hoping that this message can be passed-on to many K-12 districts that are not currently members of STMA; hopefully they will become members. We can all learn from one another and by attending this conference, or any conference, we can help improve the safety and playability of sports fields.

*Kevin Shipman was Sports Turf Manager at a New Jersey K-12 Board of Education at the time of his authorship of this article.*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SFMANJ Spring Field Day

April 7, 2021  
Tuckahoe Turf Farms  
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856-514-3179  
www.sfmanj.org



# R

## Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Days Golf & Fine Turf

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# R



## NJ Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference

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[www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

# New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2021

Continued from page 15

Daniel Purner  
Michael Rasile  
Gerard Redmond  
Ross Reed  
Andrew Remm  
Charles Rogers  
Phillipe Roux  
Michael Ryan  
Salvatore Salsa  
David Schell  
Jeff Schofield  
Andy Schuckers  
Blair Spencer  
Charles Steel  
Brian Stevens  
John Sulinski  
Jim Sweeney  
Mark Tindall  
Craig Tolley  
Jay Trstensky  
George Van Haasteren  
Rich Vancamp  
Kyle Vanhaasteren  
Rich Watson  
Ian Williamson  
Bill Wisbeski

Somerset Patriots  
Raritan Township  
Metuchen School District  
Borough of Fair Haven  
North Brunswick Twp.  
Plainsboro Township  
Lakewood Twp.  
The Landtek Group, Inc.  
City of New Brunswick  
BASF Professional Products  
Cherry Hill BOE  
Paramus Golf Course  
Twp. of Burlington-Rec Dept  
Lindenwold Board of Education  
Twp. of Burlington-Rec Dept  
The Landtek Group, Inc.  
Princeton Day School  
Cinnaminson Board of Ed  
County College of Morris  
Delaware Township  
Dwight-Englewood School  
The Lawrenceville School  
Paramus Golf Course  
Laurel Equipment  
Township of Lawrence - DPW  
South Hunterdon Regional High School

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# SFMANJ Field of the Year 2020

and perennial weeds. In 2017 the crew tackled the turf problems by aerating, overseeding with a 50% Kentucky bluegrass/50% perennial ryegrass mix, and executing a comprehensive turf maintenance program. The crew has made other improvements such as cutting-out predictable wear areas, continuously maintaining the clay in the pitcher's mounds and keeping clay out of the grass lips. The 2020 budget for Field #4 at Mountain View Park was \$7,185.00, not including labor. Congratulations Rick and your crew for a job well done!

Middlesex County and Larry Mayerowitz, General Supervisor, submitted the baseball field at Raritan Bay Waterfront Park. The football field at this park was the 2013 Field of the Year winner. From March until November, the baseball field at Raritan Bay Waterfront Park is used 7 days a week by different youth and men's leagues. The annual budget for the field is approximately \$2,500.00 and includes grass seed, fertilizer, infield mix, warning track mix and chalk for lining the base paths. Total labor-hours to maintain the field by park employees costs approximately \$15,000. Grass maintenance starts in early spring when crabgrass control and fertilizer are applied in late March/early April. A combined broadleaf weed control and fertilizer is applied at the end of May. At the start of fall the field is overseeded. The field is aerated every fall.

the maintenance program on a year-to-year basis. Congratulations Larry and your staff!

The final entrant, The Ray Cipperly Memorial Baseball Field at Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools, 112 Rues Lane, East Brunswick, NJ was submitted by Keith Fisher and is a 'landmark' sports field in New Jersey. The field is named after Ray Cipperly, past baseball coach and athletic director who put his heart, soul, blood, sweat and tears into building the field, that should be the standard for all high school baseball fields. Ray's work did not go unnoticed. Due to his efforts, Ray became a consulting groundskeeper for the Trenton Thunder and eventually full-time groundskeeper for the Somerset Patriots. (Yes, he still was a full-time athletic director). Ray was sought after by many major league groundskeepers for his knowledge and experience. Unfortunately, we lost Ray several years ago. The impression he made on the industry is still felt.

When Keith Fisher became the grounds foreman for MCVTS, it was apparent the field would be in good hands. Keith has a storied background in baseball and sports field management, having worked for the New York Yankees, Lakewood Blueclaws, Atlantic City Surf and Toms River BOE. Keith is also an instructor for the Rutgers Continuing Education half-day course, 'Baseball and Softball Infield Skin Selection and Management.'

The Ray Cipperly Baseball Fields was built to major league specifications and required someone of Keith's skills and abilities to ensure it continued to honor Ray's legacy. Without high school baseball, the field needed to be ready for weekend adult leagues. Typical maintenance operations included nail boarding daily, mowing the turf every other day, re-packing the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes as needed, aerating, over-seeding, topdressing and scheduled fertilizations.

For his hard work maintaining this iconic field, Keith won the national Field of the Year award from the STMA (Sports Turf Managers Association) in the Baseball Field category for 2020. Congratulations to Keith and his staff!

The SFMANJ Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications for the 2021 Field of the Year are due by the end of September

2021 and are awarded at the NJ Green Expo in Atlantic City, NJ in early December. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to all education sessions, the two-day trade show, dinner, and one night's lodging at the Borgata.

If you have any further questions regarding the program, please feel free to contact the SFMANJ office at 856-514-3179.

*Scott Bills, CSFM is Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM); Secretary, SFMANJ Board of Directors; and Public Relations Committee Chairman*



*The Ray Cipperly Memorial Baseball Field at Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools*

During the course of the year when the field is in use, the field is inspected daily for general maintenance. This includes spot spraying for weeds or insects. Also, the field is dragged whenever there is a scheduled league game or permit for the field. The park staff repairs the mound with clay before and after each game. Worn out areas in front of the mound are re-sodded throughout the year, as needed. The infield is also laser graded to ensure the infield is level. The field is irrigated, as needed. To improve the field, year to year, soil samples are taken and sent to Rutgers University for testing. The soil test results inform the staff on potential nutrient deficiencies and overall health issues. The results are used to design



# Laser Grading?

by Howard R. Viersma, The Viersma Companies

Editor's Note: Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) offers its Commercial Members the opportunity to submit promotional content to SFMANJ Update newsletter as an additional commercial membership benefit.

The positive surface drainage of both the turf and skinned infields of baseball/softball fields is imperative for player safety and playability. Laser grading of infields is an integral part of maintaining and re-establishing this surface drainage. Believe it or not, I have had prospective clients ask me if their infield needed to be tilled so the puddles would disappear quicker, you should know the answer to this question. As infields blow, wash and are groomed into the

should be utilized to establish proposed grades and elevations. By field surveying an infield with a laser, proposed slope and elevations that match the surrounding turf, beyond any built-up lips, and any fixed elevations can be established. Using these proposed finished grade elevations, the amount of supplemental or excess infield mix can be estimated. The proposed elevations should also be used to excavate and grade any built-up lip removal and re-sodding areas.

The final grading of skinned infield and even the topsoil for any resodding should be performed by laser-controlled equipment. We have found that utilizing an 8-foot wide dual-mast box grader and an ABI Force with laser controls yields



grass, an infield tune-up and some supplemental infield mix will be required to maintain positive surface drainage. Inevitably, the built-up lips around the edges of skinned infields will warrant an infield renovation, excavating out the built-up lip and returning the infield to typical dimensions with new sod. Whether it is a simple infield tune-up or a full-fledged renovation, a laser (dual-slope or cone)



The Viersma Companies, Allamuchy, NJ, is a Commercial Member, Sports Field Managers Association of NJ; Howard Viersma (p) 908.852.0552

**The SFMANJ  
Spring Field Day 2021**  
will be a Covid-19 compliant outdoor event.  
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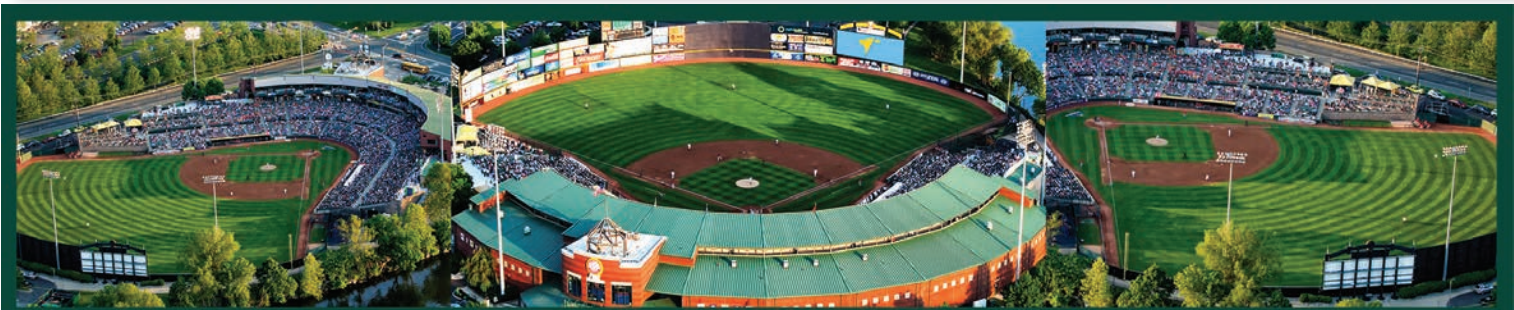
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