

November 27, 2023

Good Day CFSTMA Board members,

As the upcoming SFMA National Conference is being held locally this year and will be covering a broad range of topics, I know taking the time to attend this educational conference has a ton of benefits. However, let's be real though, attending any conference cost money, and sometimes out of our own pockets, so I would like the Board to consider my essay for one of the prizes being offered.

Obviously, the number one reason to attend a conference is to learn. But beyond choosing specific sessions that will benefit me and my employer, it gives me a chance to hear incredible speakers who are doing amazing things. Keynote speakers are often chosen for the professionalism in our field and getting a chance to listen to their processes and practices in person would supply a whole new level of energy, and to be able to bring some of this energy back to work environment, I can only say WOW.

As Sports Turf Managers, day in and day out we are exhausted by the grind of the everyday happenings on our own fields, along with what is happening at our site(s). We get in a routine and are often bogged down by the stress that builds up over time! When we start to feel the weight of our jobs bearing down on our shoulders we need to take the time to remember why we love doing what we do.

Heading to this national conference would provide the opportunity to meet with other sports field managers who probably feel the same way. I would be able to attend sessions that I find most interesting and maybe improve on some old techniques, or bring back fresh ideas to try something brand new.

When I first started attending "Green Industries" educational conferences I went to soak up as much information as I could. Now as a seasoned "Green Industries" professional (in this case a sports field manager), I still like to attend a conference to pick up any nuggets I can to enhance my professionalism in the turf industry. A long with reflecting on my own success and failures with peers which is one of the most valuable experiences one can gain from attending this conference or any other conference. The more we can talk with our peers about what's working and what's not the more we can refine our own core values and practices.

Is there anything more useful than being introduced to new technology which is changing the world of turf? Whether it's one session that provides a deep dive into Avoiding Herbicide Mishaps, Parks and Recreation: Situations Encountered in a Municipal setting, or Athletic Field Soils and How to Manage Them; I am bound to learn something valuable to either make my life easier at work or provide guidance to other sports field managers. Even as I take time to explore the newest gadgets, explore familiar materials in a new way, or even brainstorm how I can integrate new technology into our tried and true methods. Taking the time to get outside of my comfort zone to problem solve, along with trying new techniques can give me and my team a boost when we start feeling a bit stale.

As we are well aware trends are constantly shifting in the turf field industry such as new process, produces, and technology changes. This conference is a great place for me to gather the research, resources, or to meet those already working hard at changing our profession. Even if I don't agree with the all the philosophy in a session, attending targeted sessions can help me make a more educated decisions in my career.

As Albert Einstein once said " Insanity: is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting the same results", I can honestly say that is one thing I pride myself on, is how I have never being afraid of trying some new idea that I have learned at an educational conference.

I always go to a conference with the mindset that I am going to put some new idea into place upon my return back to work, this is how I would apply what I learn at the conference to my current position.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this essay for one of the available prizes,

Dale B. Crofts CFMS

Dale5369@gmail.com

407 341 1560