**Why should I become a member of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association?**

by Peter Bemis, Chapter Manager for the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association, 3-2018

First and foremost: to increase the quality of your sports fields for the enhanced safety and playability of those fields for the benefits of all the athletes and users of those fields. High quality turfgrass enhances the safety aspect for all users, and we all want our children and family to be safe.

Second: is to promote a higher level of professionalism. It doesn’t matter if a member is with a larger organization or an independent contractor. Being a member of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association carries a degree of respectability when presenting your ideas and plans for increasing the quality of your sports fields. Working with other professionals to achieve common goals will be rewarding for the facility and the staff.

Third: education to increase knowledge of the profession. These are a few topics that sports turf managers are expected to be not just familiar, but knowledgeable; soil testing and analysis of the test results, herbicide selection and application, fertilizer selection and application, aerification, soil amendments, baseball and softball infield blends, warning track composition, large format and zero turn lawn mowers, athletic field paint selection and application, snow mold preventatives, insect identification and treatment, topdressing equipment, current trends, new products and new equipment on the market, labor saving devises, and safety practices for both staff and athletes.

Fourth: networking with other professionals. Every have a challenge that was new to you and didn’t know where to turn? Networking with other professionals provides great resources for people who have “been there, done that”. Practical and applied experiences only gained through years of experience in the professional can not be duplicated or obtained in any other way. Networking provides accessibility to decades of practical and applied knowledge and experiences.

Fifth: networking with sales industry representatives. These people have extensive knowledge and experience that is available for a phone call. In addition to their personal knowledge and professional training they have many contacts in the profession who can provide support. Additionally, they receive yearly training on all the new products and new equipment that can be valuable to your endeavors. Another valuable point is that by knowing more sales industry representatives creates more options for bidding and purchasing to know where to go to obtain the best products and the best prices. Maximizing your funding is always important to all levels of management.

Sixth: training on current topics and practices. Learning how to complete a task at a professional level will go a long way in developing the best quality sports fields possible. Do you know the correct procedure to build a pitcher’s mound? Do you know the best procedure and best products to use in creating the home plate area batter’s boxes? Are you aware that as a member of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association in one year you will receive three issues of our publication, Talk Turf?

Seventh: sustainability and environment protection and enhancements. Are you familiar with the best irrigation products on the market that will allow the placement of water where it is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount, it is needed, with the best water saving devices? Are you familiar with the terms such as “active ingredient”, “SRSCU”, “WSU”, “LD/50 levels”, “organic-synthetic blends”? Are you aware of how to determine the least toxic products on the market for the safety of the applicator and the athletes? These are the type of topics that are presented at our seminars and publications.

Eighth: publications and on-line resources. This resource is ever evolving and ever growing. Where does one find the most relevant publications and the best on-line resources? This type of information is available as part of your membership in the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association.

Ninth: grants for training and education. The Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association, as a chapter of the national Sports Turf Managers Association provides scholarship to both students and professionals. Have you ever wanted to attend the national conference but did not have the funding support? There are scholarships available to attend this event through the national offices and through the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association.

Tenth: become a mentor for another member. Giving back to the professional is one of the most rewarding aspects of professionalism. If it is a one-on-one relationship or if it is through taking on the challenge of being a leader by volunteering for the Board of Directors, giving back is always a wonderful reward.