



# New York State Turfgrass Association

## NYSTA "180"

Dear NYSTA Member,

The past 75 days or so have certainly been interesting to say the least!!! I hope this note from the NYSTA board of directors and I finds you and your family, healthy, safe and trying to get back to normal.

It has been some time since you have heard from the NYSTA board. The last official communication announced the cancellation of our Adirondack Regional Conference that was scheduled for March 25 in Lake Placid. Since that time, the board of directors has been meeting almost weekly via teleconference. The title of this update, "**NYSTA 180**", is a reference to how we are changing due to COVID-19. We are truly doing a 180 from the way we ran the association. Many new ideas and methods for how NYSTA does business in the future have been discussed and are being put into action.

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### **VIRTUAL EDUCATION & DEC ACCREDITATION**

NYSTA traditionally has five regional conferences and the Winning Fields Seminar held throughout the state. Our regionals had an excellent reputation for their strong educational content, and their plethora of DEC credits. The board of directors voted soon after the cancellation of the Adirondack Regional, when it was obvious that gatherings of large amounts of people would be prohibited, to pause all Regional Conferences for one year. March 31, 2020 to March 31 2021. In light of that decision, the NYSTA board has contracted with Playbooks for Golf to deliver education via online webinars. **NYSTA will be awarded DEC credits for these webinars!** Webinars will cover all areas of our membership. Golf, sports turf, lawn and landscape and general compliance. There will be strict guidelines to follow for these webinars. However, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, this will be a terrific benefit offered by NYSTA. Look for details of the first NYSTA webinar coming later in 2020.

### **LOBBY EFFORTS**

NYSTA continues to be part of the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns (NYAFEC) which works closely with our lobbyists the Vandervort Group. We had a very successful Lobby Day in Albany on February 26. Participants conducted 77 visits with legislators. Recently, most of the legislators in Albany have been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Vandervort Group continues to monitor bills in both the Senate and the Assembly that could have a negative impact on our industry. This benefit alone is worth the price of NYSTA membership! We are the only association in the industry keeping a watch on policies that effect our livelihood.

**Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund** – One of the most significant accomplishments of our efforts at Lobby Day is the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF). For the past several years, this was a line item of \$150,000 in the state budget that was awarded to NYSTA. For 2021 this amount is \$125,000. What does NYSTA do with the funds from the State?

1. **Support the New York State BMP's for Golf Courses.** The New York Golf Course Foundation has evolved from the BMP project. The success of the BMP efforts is a direct result of the partnership of superintendent leaders in the state, and Cornell University. This work will continue to build on the successful TESH-funded work and will address comprehensive environmental stewardship.

2. **Deliver our new Webinars.** Past TESH money has sponsored our educational outreach. This new funding cycle will help fund the development and presentation of our new webinars.

3. **Membership building.** NYSTA engaged in a strategic planning session in December 2017. One of the results of this planning session was that NYSTA needed to find a way to get young people interested in our industry. This will not only provide current labor, but future leaders! Using the capable leadership, vast knowledge and extensive connections of NYSTA board member, and retired SUNY Delhi Department Chair Dominic Morales, NYSTA has embarked on efforts to accomplish this objective. Dominic has attended the annual FFA (Future Farmers of America) Conventions, Ag. Ed. Teacher conferences and has also sparked interest in a few High Schools in New York State requesting information on starting turf education programs at their schools. These efforts are partially funded by TESH.

These are just a few of the highlights of NYSTA board activities. Most importantly, we want you to know that **NYSTA is HERE!** We are hard at work, deciding on the future direction of the association to best benefit our members.

I look forward to sharing information regarding our new online webinars very soon!

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [jdc4turf@aol.com](mailto:jdc4turf@aol.com).

Sincerely,

John D. Carlone, CGCS  
President, NYSTA



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