Synthetic Turf Council’s Spring Membership Meeting Focuses on Science in the Industry

(Atlanta, Ga.) – Held from March 17-19, the Synthetic Turf Council’s Spring Membership Meeting in Las Vegas attracted 217 leaders of companies in the synthetic turf industry from throughout the world, including manufacturers, suppliers, installers, landscape architects and engineers, testing labs, and maintenance equipment and service companies.

The educational program included presentations on the latest research and science on synthetic turf sports field and player performance and safety. Chris Sherwood, representing Biocore and the University of Virginia, highlighted the importance of matching the shoe and cleat type to the playing surface in order to minimize the risk of injury. Dr. John Sorochan and Adam Thoms from the University of Tennessee reported new data on the relationship between various synthetic turf sports field systems and player performance. In addition, Dr. Steven Buchberger from the University of Cincinnati discussed the research that his department is doing on accurately simulating stormwater runoff from synthetic turf sports fields. The highlight of the program was the presentation by Chris Nowinski, co-founder and Executive Director of Sports Legacy Institute and author of Head Games, on the risks of concussions to athletes in many sports, including football, soccer, lacrosse, ice hockey, and particularly to young athletes. Following Mr. Nowinski’s talk, the Council membership discussed the need to re-emphasize the importance of regular maintenance and testing of synthetic turf sports fields to assure proper resilience and performance.

To expand the learning experience, there were concurrent presentations on synthetic turf for sports fields and for synthetic grass for landscape and recreation use. For the sports field audience, Dr. Eric Harrison, a consultant to FIFA, the international governing body for soccer, reported on FIFA’s new guidelines on heat and maintenance. Leanne Walsh from the International Rugby Board (IRB) gave an update on the IRB’s One Turf initiative, which is exploring the possibility of creating a set of standards which meet the needs of a single artificial turf surface suitable for many sports, particularly at the community level where multi-use facilities are in demand.

For the landscape and recreation audience, Rick Doyle, President of the Synthetic Turf Council, moderated a consumer panel on the impact that synthetic turf is having in the region, where water is rationed. Panelists included representatives from a local resort hotel, homeowners association, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, which is providing financial incentives to residents to save water by replacing their grass lawn with synthetic turf or other hardscape material.

A pre-conference “Whistle-stop” seminar on the many applications and benefits of landscape and recreation synthetic grass as well as the STC’s guidelines when buying synthetic grass for landscape use. Other highlights of the meeting included an Exhibitor Showcase, and a special report on the North American synthetic turf industry by STC Board Chairman, John Baize of Act Global.
Next Meeting of the Synthetic Turf Council
The STC’s Annual Membership Meeting will be held in San Antonio, Texas from September 29-October 1, 2014. The STC will be donating through the generosity of its members a soccer field to Haven for Hope, a shelter for the homeless men, women, and children in San Antonio.

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About the Synthetic Turf Council
Based in Atlanta, the Synthetic Turf Council was founded in 2003 to promote the industry and to assist buyers and end users with the selection, use and maintenance of synthetic turf systems in sports field, golf, municipal parks, airports, landscape and residential applications. The organization is also a resource for current, credible, and independent research on the safety and environmental impact of synthetic turf. Membership includes builders, landscape architects, testing labs, maintenance providers, manufacturers, suppliers, installation contractors, infill material suppliers and other specialty service companies. For more information, visit www.syntheticturfcouncil.org.

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