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## Message from the President, Lloyd Reese

Wow, what a roller coaster. As I sat down to prepare this letter, I started to reflect on the things and events that influenced the play industry during the double aught decade. To quote Charles Dickens, “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” Calling it the worst of times may be a little too pessimistic, but as most of you know, from an economic view it could have been a heck of a lot better. The majority of the decade saw a play-related market that was growing. Even with the economic distress that we have been battling the last year and a half, as a whole, the last ten years have been pretty good to our industry.

Thinking back on the positive stuff that occurred, it reminds me why I love this industry so much. The growth of modern play and natural play are a refreshing expansion to the post and deck play systems that ruled the ‘80s and ‘90s. The focus on inclusive play opportunities confirms that our industry understands that play is an important part of all children’s development.

IPEMA as an organization grew substantially during this period. Our membership became more global and our name became more recognizable. The public relations committee, lead gallantly by Tom Norquist, played a vital role in making this happen. They were the driving force behind the creation of the Voice of Play Web site and other marketing programs that support the importance of play. We

have also grown our membership by creating an associate level that allows non-manufacturing entities to join our ranks.



Besides the negative economic times, other less-than-exciting events that have influenced the last decade are things like the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act. The financial impact that this act has placed on our member companies is immense. I am not about to debate that our children’s health and safety should not be forefront in the way we conduct our businesses, but I will say that a more rational approach to address the issues behind the Act could have been formulated.

The release of the Draft CPSC guideline in 2008 with several never-before-seen requirements has also been a distraction. IPEMA and its certification committees, along with ASTM, have continued to work to resolve and reconcile these issues with the CPSC prior to the draft’s final approval.

The first decade of this century has also seen a society that is slowly but steadily realizing that benefits of play are far reaching. The growing concern over the impact of childhood obesity and its effect on the future of our society has garnered much media attention. Thanks to programs like the well-funded NFL’s

*continued*

## Marketing Committee

By Tom Norquist, Marketing Committee Chair

### Voice of Play Expands Play Advocacy Initiative in 2010

IPEMA and the Voice of Play advocacy initiative, now in its fourth year, are building on the momentum for free play in 2010 by expanding its outreach as an ongoing clearinghouse for resources and perspectives on a wide range of topics relevant to child development and play. The 2010 public relations program includes an expanded social media program and include expert perspectives from the Voice of Play board of advisors and other play stakeholders to keep content fresh, engaging and relevant.

The program will create more opportunities to encourage parents to sign the “Play Pledge,” committing to make an hour of free play accessible to their children every day.

Look for the following enhancements to the Voice of Play in the Spring:

- The addition of the “Play Café,” a play blog, on the Voice of Play Web site, [www.voiceofplay.org](http://www.voiceofplay.org). The Play

Café will enable IPEMA to “host” an ongoing discussion of important play topics. We invite your suggestions for blog topics, to comment on what others post and to submit your own content as a guest blogger.

- A “Twitter” campaign to enable us to send timely updates as an “in the know” resource for what’s new. IPEMA members will be able to follow the Voice of Play on Twitter or “retweet” Voice of Play messages and important links to share information relevant to play stakeholders.

- Enhancements to the Voice of Play Facebook page. If you haven’t already, please become a “fan” of Voice of Play and invite your colleagues, family and friends to become fans as well.

- Enhanced content on the Voice of Play Web site, including a video about the Play Café, book reviews, videos, play-related events, links to play resources and organizations, an expanded list of play issues in the news and a photo gallery.

- Public relations support for National Playground Safety Week.

IPEMA will also introduce a “National Play Week” in June, which will encourage families to get out and play. We will also continue to support the efforts of the U.S. Play Coalition and the President’s Council.

All of these enhancements to the Voice of Play make it easier than ever for IPEMA members to be advocates of outdoor free play. Whether you become a fan on Facebook, blog best practices or follow us on Twitter, anything and everything you support will help spread the word about the many important benefits of outdoor free play. We hope to see you in cyberspace soon!

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## President’s Message

*continued*

Play 60, we are seeing a renewed focus on active play. IPEMA’s Play Pledge was at the forefront of programs like these and continues to be available on our Voice of Play Web site.

The Summit on the Value of Play held at Clemson University is another great example of how our industry has teamed with leaders from other fields of play and child development to make a positive influence on our children’s future.

As we start into this next decade, let’s continue to build on all the positive things that have happened over the past several years, while working to minimize those things that distract us from our goal of enriching the lives of children.

## Advocacy Reports Available on IPEMA Web site

The February 2010 advocacy report of pending legislation and regulations that may affect the play industry is posted to the IPEMA website.

This document, and previous advocacy reports, can be viewed by visiting the website at [www.ipema.org](http://www.ipema.org) and logging in to the members only section.

Bills were researched by the following subject areas:

- Liability (Product Liability, Joint & Several etc.)
- Equipment Manufacturing Requirements
- Playground and Product Safety
- Lifestyle (Child Obesity, Recess etc.)

- Procurement/State Budget Issues  
(Appropriations/Changes in Procurement affecting playground equipment manufacturing)

Appropriations/procurement bills are generally not noted in the report unless they specifically reference playground equipment.

We hope that providing this information is helpful to you. If you ever have additional legislative activity that you know about which is not included in these reports, we ask that you please contact IPEMA's legislative advisor, Vince Phillips, via e-mail at [vince@vphillipsassoc.com](mailto:vince@vphillipsassoc.com).

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## New Book Highlights Critical Historical Role of Play in Human Development, Warns Against Play Deprivation Crisis

A new book that chronicles the vital role of free play throughout history in the development of children and society warns that parents, educators, healthcare providers and society at large must restore free outdoor play, or otherwise risk a generation lacking the cognitive, social, physical and emotional skills needed to be active, engaged and healthy adults. The author describes where we are today and proposes solutions to play deprivation, specifically, a child-saving movement to preserve children's free, spontaneous outdoor play, recess and natural and built play environments.

Author Joe Frost, Parker Centennial Professor

Emeritus, University of Texas, and member of the Voice of Play Board of Advisors, [www.voiceofplay.org](http://www.voiceofplay.org), cautions in *A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Toward a Contemporary Child Saving Movement*, that children have become increasingly inactive, abandoning traditional outdoor play for sedentary, indoor "cyber play" and diets of junk food. While acknowledging that cyber play is here to stay and enables children to develop many skills well-suited for our technology-oriented lifestyle, Frost cautions that "screen time" is no substitute for the many benefits kids gain from unstructured, free play.

### 2010 Membership and Certification Renewals Coming Soon!

Watch your mail in the next couple of weeks for your IPEMA membership dues renewals. The deadline for your renewal is May 1, 2010.

If your company has certified products you will receive your certification renewal at the same time. In addition to submitting your IPEMA certification renewal fee, each company will also need to return a completed 2010 license agreement and updated insurance certificate.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: Your membership dues renewal and certification renewal are on the same invoice. It is extremely important that you return all documents by the deadline to maintain the status of your membership and certified product(s)! If you do not comply, you run the risk of having your certified products removed from the IPEMA Website and no longer being able to promote those products as IPEMA certified.*

# Association Releases Information Regarding Use of Recycled Rubber on Playgrounds

Recently, media reports have raised questions about the use of recycled rubber on playgrounds. As a leader of the play equipment and related materials industry, IPEMA investigated various studies and reports related to this issue. The investigations revealed the following facts:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently studied air and surface samples at four fields and playgrounds that use recycled tires – the same material that cushions the ground under the Obama family’s new play set at the White House. The limited study, conducted in August through October 2008, found that the concentrations of materials that made up tire crumb were below levels considered harmful. In addition, the overall study protocol and many of the methods were found to be appropriate and could be implemented in the field. (The details of the EPA’s study can be found by clicking [here](#)).

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment of the California Environmental Protection Agency tested skin sensitization by playground surfaces made of recycled tires and found no sensitization observed suggesting that these surfaces would not cause skin sensitization in children, nor would they be expected to elicit skin reaction in children already sensitized to latex. (Study dated January 2007 can be viewed by clicking [here](#)).

ChemRisk, Inc. in Pittsburgh conducted a review of exposure to recycled tire rubber found on playgrounds and synthetic turf fields. They concluded that no adverse human health or ecological health effects are likely to result from these beneficial reuses of tire materials. (Study dated July 17, 2008. Detailed information and more studies can be found by clicking [here](#)).

A comprehensive review of the available literature on the potential health effects of crumb rubber infill from synthetic turf fields was conducted by TRC on behalf of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. This review demonstrated that the major health concern of these fields is related to heat. Eleven different risk assessments applied various available concentrations of COPCs and none identified an increased risk for human health effects as a result of ingestion, dermal or inhalation exposure to crumb rubber. (Study dated May 2008 can be reviewed by clicking [here](#)).

IPEMA does not dictate or recommend whether its members use recycled rubber in their products. It is the choice of the individual member. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) determines and guides the safety issues facing the playground equipment industry. Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has endorsed the use of recycled rubber to cushion the surfaces of children’s playgrounds. For more information, visit the EPA’s [Web site](#).

IPEMA encourages its members to follow the guidelines of the CPSC. IPEMA will respond appropriately if the CPSC or EPA identifies recycled tire rubber as a play hazard. The CPSC, the Centers for Disease Control and the EPA recommend that young children wash their hands frequently after playing outside and always before they eat. IPEMA also recommends these practices. IPEMA is always interested in reviewing new safety information, including any independent, third party, scientific studies concerning the use of recycled tires. IPEMA will be monitoring the EPA 2010 meeting with federal and state agencies that will review all new study data and determine next steps.

## IPEMA Visits NRPA Show, Holds Membership Meeting



Every year, IPEMA has representation at the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) Congress & Expo and this year was no different. The IPEMA Board chose to forego having a booth at this year's show in an effort to reduce costs, and instead sent Lisa Herron, IPEMA Associate Executive Director who oversees the certification program, to visit the members in attendance. The annual membership meeting of IPEMA was also held during the show. The NRPA Congress & Expo was held October 14-15, 2009, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The NRPA Expo has long been packed full with IPEMA member companies. IPEMA members value the opportunity to network with thousands of park and recreation professionals from across the country. For IPEMA, it provides a great opportunity to promote members and the certification program. All members who exhibited were provided an IPEMA member sign

for use in their booth to promote their membership. In addition, those companies with certified products were encouraged to promote their certification to the attendees. It has become more common in recent months for park and recreation professionals to seek out IPEMA certified products during their bid process for new business so this was a great opportunity to promote the program.

With so many members at the show, this was also a great opportunity to hold the annual IPEMA membership meeting. Held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at the Salt Palace Convention Center, IPEMA members gathered for an update on the year's activities within the association, as well as vote for the 2010 Board of Directors and approve the 2010 slate for the equipment and surfacing certification committees. The minutes from the membership meeting can be found in the members' only section of the IPEMA Website, or by clicking [here](#).



# ASTM Follows New York State Legislation

*The following e-mail was received from Ken Kutska and we thought you might be interested in reading about this issue. If you'd like to communicate directly with Ken directly, his contact information is located at the end of the message below.*

*The New York State Bill by references, A09464, authorizes the enactment of local laws regarding playground equipment and requires the use of a temperature test on playground equipment installed in cities having a population of one million or more. On January 6, it was referred to the consumer affairs and protection committee.*

TO ALL:

This is really bad legislation for a lot of reasons. Right now there are no thresholds established in law nor are there any other guidelines established for when at what temperatures these test should be taken. There are so many variables that impact heat absorption and transfer to the host surface/mass and likewise there are just as many variables for the person at risk.

At ASTM our Materials Working Group has been researching this topic trying to determine the best way to address the issue of children related burns on public playgrounds. CPSC has not been able to come up with an effective means to address the issue but does provide some warnings to consider in design and management of these facilities. They suggest warnings be posted at playgrounds and this is what the ASTM F15.29 Subcommittee is proposing as the most cost effective means to address the issue.

The users most at risk are the children under two years of age. Their skin appears most susceptible to the transfer and absorption of heat and most sensitive to serious burns from such surfaces. There are many other issues at stake here. Children supervision, especially for children under the age of seven or eight is another major concern to all involved. No one wishes these kinds of injuries to occur in the first place but some will occur whether this kind of law is in place or not. Children should never be barefooted in an unsupervised public area. No young child should be exposed to extreme heat whether in the air or on a surface they will come in contact with. No surface mass

will likely meet the intent of this legislation under certain conditions which exist in many parts of the country and even within New York City. What would the temperature of a sidewalk or any playground surface be when it is a sunny day and the temperature is over 90 degrees. What we are learning through our Materials Working Group research is that the type of material, mass, and color all have an impact on how hot a surface will get in relation to the outside temperature and UV radiation. Some plastic surfaces may get as hot as metal surfaces and many rubber surfacing materials which are necessary to provide a safe impact attenuating surface to reduce serious head injuries and even death will become very hot under certain conditions.

I think we all know about the burn injuries sustained at the New York City playgrounds over the past couple of years. These injuries are very unfortunate. The age of the injured had a lot to do with why the burns occurred. The lack of knowledge with regards to the subject of burns is also a major contributing factor. The lack of more appropriate signs is also a major factor. Better selection of surfacing or play equipment materials is another factor. The one area this legislation seems to be pointing for corrective action is the owner/operator of the playgrounds. It is easy to point blame at government but what is the cost benefit factor to the government to be able to address each and every issue that is possible when it comes to injury prevention in public unsupervised spaces. Every special interest group or individual seems to be a victim. Could something have been done to eliminate these types of injuries? Certainly. How many of these types of injuries occur annually? I am not aware of any epidemic but when they do occur there is a lot of pain and suffering to very young children. I am not aware of any such injuries to children of school age but I am sure there have been a few over the years. How many have occurred in states like Arizona, Florida or California? If this were a big issue in these state then they too would have passed similar legislation.

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# New York State Legislation

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I think there is a much more reasonable solution than some legislative fix that would cost far more to address, enforce, and comply with than addressing the problem with a legislative solution to fund the appropriate corrective action. CPSC or ASTM are working on the appropriate warning signs to address this issue. These signs must indicate what the danger or likely injury will be if the user does not follow the recommendation. In addition to this sign, the media should assist in educating parents of the danger of their young children being barefooted in any public area. Once the sign requirements are completed the signs need to properly posted on all public playgrounds; Beyond the sign issue, the New York Legislature should be looking towards a something more comprehensive in partnership with the New York City Park and Recreation Department. Then the legislation should work with the various park and recreation agencies to provide additional funding to replace or appropriately modify the current black rubber playground safety surfacing. To me, this is more the immediate issue. I do not fault the Parks Department for their installation of the black tiles. they had an immediate safety concern with inappropriate playground safety surfacing for the fall height of their equipment. They needed a solution to their problem that was cost effective and meets the minimum requirements of the current CPSC Guidelines and ASTM Surfacing Standards. They have a unique urban setting with unique urban requirements. They did not have a black check to address their most pressing safety issues. It is commonly known that the number one cause of injuries on playgrounds is falls. 68% of all reported injuries requiring emergency room treatment is falls to the surface around the play equipment and the second cause of death on playgrounds is falls to the surface. Anyone faced with trying to make their play areas safer should focus on surfacing that does not have proper protection for the fall height of the equipment.

The New York Park and Recreation Department acted in the best interest of their constituency and the taxpayers when they installed over \$2.3 million to install the black rubber tiles under their play equipment. I recommend the New York Legislature take the more prudent cost effective solution and avoid a cumbersome costly unenforceable proposed law which will only reduce play opportunities for New York children. I propose New York work with the ASTM on a voluntary basis to come up with more adequate safety signage to address the consumer warning and help us to establish reasonable surface temperature thresholds and testing protocol that the playground surfacing industry can work with understanding that no standard or guideline can address every possible scenario and no legislation can address consumer ignorance to every possible potential for injury, especially children.

Beyond my alternative suggestion to this legislation we also need to do more to enforce and promote personal accountability and proper parental supervision.

Ken Kutska, CPSI  
Executive Director  
International Playground Safety Institute, LLC  
22079 Quebec Drive  
Bend, Oregon 97702  
541-977-4555

### **National Playground Safety Week 2010 is April 26-30, 2010!**

National Playground Safety Week is a time to focus on children's outdoor play environments. A time to pledge to use good judgment when playing. A time for gratitude for all the adults who work tirelessly on maintaining our playgrounds.

# US Play Coalition Steps Forward in Support of First Lady's Let's Move Campaign

IPEMA and the US Play Coalition are working together to advance the cause of free play for all. IPEMA has teamed up with the President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards Program to promote play and physical fitness.

The US Play Coalition, a partnership to promote the value of play throughout life, has been among the first to step forward in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's fight against childhood obesity through her Let's Move campaign. The coalition has also volunteered to assist the new Task Force on Childhood Obesity in any way possible.

The Let's Move campaign promotes nutritional education as well as improvements in school lunches, access to healthy foods, and increased opportunities for physical activity, including play. Both the US Play Coalition and the Let's Move campaign advocate that "children need 60 minutes of active and vigorous play every day" and encourage parents to "make family time play time."

Dr. Joe Frost, Professor Emeritus of the University of Texas at Austin and a key member of the US Play

Coalition said that play deprivation has resulted in "a growing crisis that threatens children's health, fitness, and development."

"As free, outdoor play declines," he says, "fitness levels decline, waistlines expand, and a host of health problems follow." These health problems include not only obesity, but also "heart disease, rickets, and a spiraling upturn in emotional and social disorders."

Clemson University visiting scholar and former director of the National Park Service, Fran Mainella—co-chair of the US Play Coalition—says "Let's Move captures the importance of play in everyone's lives and recognizes along with the US Play Coalition that play is anything but frivolous and can be a key factor in addressing childhood obesity."

For more information on the value of play in the fight against childhood obesity go to <http://usPLAYcoalition.clemson.edu>. For more on the Let's Move campaign go to [www.LetsMove.gov](http://www.LetsMove.gov). Contact Mainella, co-chair of the U.S. Play Coalition, at 864-656-2566 (or [fmainel@clemson.edu](mailto:fmainel@clemson.edu)).

## Calendar

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### **National Legislative Forum on Parks and Recreation**

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

March 16 – 18, 2010, Washington, DC

Information: [www.nrpa.org/legforum/](http://www.nrpa.org/legforum/)

### **44th PAEYC Conference and Exhibit - Creativity: Where the Future Begins**

Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC)

May 14 – 15, 2010, Pittsburgh, PA

Information: [www.pghaeyc.org](http://www.pghaeyc.org)

### **ASTM F08 Sports Equipment and Facilities**

May 18 – 20, 2010, Renaissance Grand and Suites Hotel, St. Louis, MO

Information: [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org)

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