

## An often overlooked expense associated with artificial turf - -

# VANDALISM

The cost of an artificial sports field is sobering even during the best of times, but it should be all the more so at a time when school budgets are tight and small communities and big cities alike are struggling to make ends meet. In addition to the initial investment which in itself is staggering, there's the cost of proper maintenance and equip-

ment. The truth is, artificial fields aren't maintenance free, they require due diligence and care. But there's another often overlooked expense and that's the consequence of damaged caused by vandalism. The following are just a few examples of an unexpected expense that key decision-makers seldom consider until it's too late.

**PEARL, Mississippi** -- Vandalism at two area high schools cause extensive damage to a Pearl High School's new artificial football field.

**GOSHEN TOWNSHIP, Ohio** -- Two teenagers are accused of vandalizing the football field at Goshen High School.

**EAST HAMPTON, New York** -- Police in East Hampton have no suspects identified in the scorched branding of a 60 x 20 foot dollar sign to the East Hampton High School football field. Police reported that the defacement came with a typed five-page letter left in an envelope at the scene that cited the town's budget woes.

**Oregon State University** -- Officials report fire damage caused by vandalism to the artificial turf field at Oregon State University's Reser Stadium.

**PETAL, Mississippi** -- Vandals spray-painted on part of a 7 million dollar football stadium's artificial turf.

**STAMFORD, Connecticut** -- A small fire consisting of several old tires and dry tree limbs damaged a portion of the synthetic turf football field at Westhill High School.

**MELTON, Victoria, Australia** -- A rectangular section of synthetic grass measuring approximately 33 ft by 9 ft was stolen from Kurunjang Recreational Reserve's playing surface. They have now increased security and the police have stepped up patrols around the synthetic playing surfaces."

**CHARLOTTE, North Carolina** -- Charlotte-Mecklenburg police are looking for the people who cut several pieces of turf from the football field at Ardrey Kell High School.

**ANN ARBOR, Michigan** -- University of Michigan police are seeking suspects after someone cut a piece of the block 'M' from the football field at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor.

**EUSTACE, Texas** -- Two individuals have been charged for causing somewhere between \$350,000 to \$400,000 in damage to the three year old FieldTurf surface at Eustace High School.

**LEHI, Utah** -- Five Westlake High School football players were arrested after police say they were spotted vandalizing their rival's football field in nearby Saratoga Springs, Utah.



## BALTIMORE COUNTY, Maryland has a solution - - YEAH, WE KNOW THINGS ARE TIGHT . . . But can you spare another half million dollars?

Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks officials hope that a plan to install video surveillance cameras at 13 athletic fields around the county will prevent the artificial turf fields from being damaged by vandals. So far, two of the fields -- at Seminary Park, in Lutherville, and at Lansdowne High School -- have been vandalized.

In all, there are 13 artificial fields sprinkled throughout the county. The \$13 million the county has spent on the fields since 2007 amounts to a significant investment in athletic fields. In order to protect that investment, the department will spend about \$500,000 to install state-of-the-art cameras to monitor the fields when the parks are closed.

For these and other stories on artificial turf vandalism visit: <http://www.synturf.org/>