

BRIEFS



PROFILE PROMOTES HAVEMAN

BUFFALO GROVE, Ill.—Profile Products L.L.C. announced the addition of Dennis Haveman as south central regional sales manager. Based in Dallas, Haveman's responsibilities include working with local Profile distributors and contacting golf course owners, superintendents and architects.

A certified golf course superintendent for more than 11 years, Haveman has worked as a golf course and construction superintendent on various projects across the southwest. He has also been the owner of Golf Consulting Services since 1995.

VW&R ADDS CASSERLEY, RAMOS

AUSTIN, Texas—Van Waters & Rogers Inc. (VW&R) announced that Sandra Casserley has joined the professional products and services business unit as a turf and landscape specialist.



Sandra Casserley

Casserley comes to VW&R with over nine years professional sales experience and will be responsible for covering South Central Texas.

VW&R also added Angela Ramos to the professional products and services business unit. She will be responsible for covering Southeast Florida.

HAMILTON TAKES POST FOR STN

ROBERTSDALE, Ala.—Southern Turf Nurseries has named John Hamilton as its consulting agronomist for golf course sales in central and southern Florida.

Hamilton has acquired 25 years of experience in the golf industry, and has a degree in agronomics from Purdue University. He has served as a golf course superintendent at various domestic locations as well as in Asia from 1989 to 1995.

ECO SOIL SELECTS CARROLL

RANCHO BERNARDO, Calif. — Eco Soil Systems, Inc. has named Jacob Carroll as its director of corporate development. Carroll joins Eco Soil from George K. Baum and Co., a Kansas City-based investment banking firm. He will focus on developing Eco Soil's future joint ventures and strategic partnerships.

Lesco profits bounce back

Company eyes future growth, brings in new VP, CFO

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ROCKY RIVER, Ohio — Following a rocky 1998 that saw its earnings and market share growth eaten up by rising costs, Lesco, Inc. has turned the corner with second-quarter sales up 12.1 percent and net income up 23.3 percent over comparable numbers last year.

At the root of last year's profit difficulties were ambitious expansion plans.

"We did have a difficult earnings year in 1998," said William Foley, Lesco chairman, president and chief executive officer. "But we also opened 20 new stores, built a new fertilizer plant, started up a joint venture and had two acquisitions. It was a lot to put our arms around, but it was all strategic to position the business for the future."



William Foley

The largest cost factor in 1998 stemmed from the newly formed Commercial Turf Products, Ltd., (CTP) a 50/50 joint ven-

ture between Lesco and longtime consumer lawn care equipment manufacturer, MTD Products Inc.

"We had a number of problems," said Foley. "We missed our sales objective and that cost us \$2 million, and we had serious cost start-up issues that cost us another \$2 million."

According to Foley, these costs were necessary in order to maintain the performance of Lesco's equipment business. "We felt that in the longer term we didn't have the technological expertise to sustain the equipment business at the proper level," said Foley. "So we worked out this relationship with MTD."

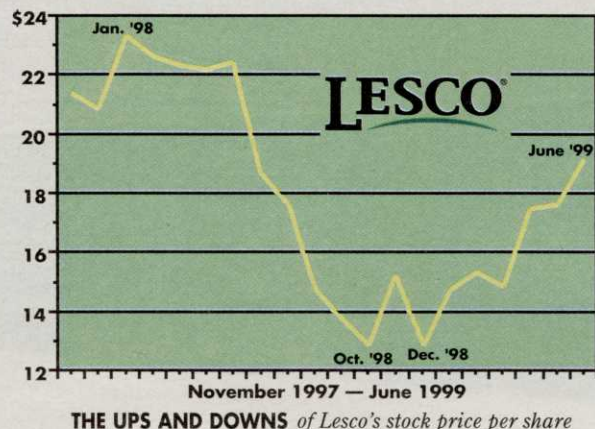
The new plant in Streetsboro produces commercial mowing equipment, renovation equipment, spreaders and sprayers and is now running at expected levels. Increased sales from the joint venture are the key reason behind Lesco's improved bottom line. "We are getting triple the revenue out of the CTP plant this year, which is a big step up," said Foley.

However the CTP start up was not the only source of profit pressure felt by Lesco. "The construction of a new fertil-

izer plant in Florida was delayed for 120 days due to El Nino rains and led to horrible cost over-runs," said Foley. "And we have had to continue to factor in significant price pressures and lower margins on ryegrass for the overseeding market."

However, these short-term growing pains are already leading to increased prof-

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Eco Soil secures credit line, announces earnings

RANCHO BERNARDO, Calif. — Eco Soil Systems, Inc. announced that it has obtained a \$25 million revolving line of credit for its wholly owned subsidiary Turf Partners Inc.

"This will better serve Turf Partners' financing requirements given its significant growth and success in servicing the golf industry," said Mark D. Buckner, chief financial officer for Eco Soil.

The credit line gives Turf Partners working capital financing and allows the purchase of inventory needed to meet the high demand in the summer season.

"The line will support our working capital requirements at Turf Partners for the foreseeable future and may improve operating margins by achieving vendor discounts for volume purchases and early payments," said Buckner.

In other news, the company announced revenues for the three months ended June 30, 1999 of \$40.7 million compared to \$26.9 million during the same period in 1998. Net income for the quarter was \$1.1 million. Eco Soil's turf business reportedly accounted for \$34.2 million of its second quarter-earnings.

Yazoo/Kees picks up CheTech

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JACKSON, Miss. — Aiming to become a player in the utility vehicle market, Yazoo/Kees Power Equipment, based here, acquired the CheTech Company, PUG, Inc. and Applied Design Technology of Chetek, Wis.

Yazoo/Kees, a manufacturer of walk-behind and riding mowers,

will add the CheTech line of utility vehicles to its existing Haul Master line that it purchased from Mendota, Ill.-based HCC,



ACQUISITIONS

Inc. in February.

"The utility vehicle market is growing and we intend to be a very serious player," said Bill Chestnut, director of the utility product division at Yazoo/Kees. "CheTech offers a wide variety of vehicles and Yazoo/Kees brings the marketing and manufacturing capability to grow this business substantially, and that's exactly what we intend to do."

While CheTech has been in the utility vehicle business since the 1960s, the company never fully reached its growth potential according to Chestnut. "It was a family-owned company," said Chestnut. "They took the business to a certain level, but to make that leap into the bigger market it takes a lot of funding and financial backing."

Yazoo/Kees will maintain

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NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



LasTec introduces the model 425D to its growing product line. The 425D combines a floating rotary mower with its own hydrostatic drive and a Kubota 38-hp, water-cooled diesel engine to produce a zero-turn-radius, powerful, wide-area contouring riding mower. It features four individual 25-inch articulating mower decks, comprising a total cut path of eight feet. LasTec's patented drive belt system allows the mower decks to float over contoured turf. The 425D can handle mounded, contoured or hilly areas—without scalping, scuffing or missing grass. It has a wider wheel-base and lower center of gravity that provides for greater side-hill stability as well as safer operation on severe terrain. For more information, contact 1-800-515-6798.

Bayer awards 1999 scholarships

KANSAS CITY, Mo.— The Bayer Corp. Garden & Professional Care (GPC) business group has awarded scholarships to 15 university students pursuing turf-related degrees at 12 different universities. Students selected for the scholarship have demonstrated superior academic and leadership skills. University professors nominate students who demonstrate promising potential for the turf grass profession.

"Bayer GPC is always looking for ways to raise the bar professionally in the turf and ornamental industry," said Neil Cleveland, turf and ornamental market manager. "These students have demonstrated the drive and the skills to help move us in that direction."

The scholarship recipients are: Ryan Vogler and Matthew Boyce, Penn State University; Eric Hogan, University of Missouri-Columbia; Dave Weston and Mieke Damaske, Cornell University; Eric Watkins, Rutgers University; Kris

Kvelling, University of Illinois-Champaign; Cliff Helvie, Purdue University; Adam Haberkorn, Michigan State University; Trygve Ekern, University of Wisconsin-Madison; David Roush, University of Maryland-College Park; Thomas Marks and Jeremy Fall, Louisiana State University; Mark Daniels, Ohio State University; and Jeffrey Urquhart, University of Rhode Island-Providence.

Textron signs deal with American Golf

RACINE, Wis. — Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products announced that it has finalized a supply agreement with golf course management company, American Golf. The company operates more than 300 private, resort and daily-fee golf courses and practice

centers in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The three-year agreement states that a majority of American Golf's new turf-maintenance equipment purchases will be from Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products.

"American Golf's agreement

with Textron Turf Care and Specialty will help us continue to provide the highest level of maintenance possible at our courses worldwide," said John Meyer, American Golf's director of fleet management and national accounts.



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Lesco

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its, said Foley. "The strategic initiatives that we invested in during 1998 are driving our growth and profitability in 1999," he said.

Lesco looks to continue its expansion strategy this year with the construction of a new plant outside of Richmond, Va. that will produce a completely new controlled-release, homogeneous turf fertilizer utilizing matrix technology. "We bought the worldwide rights last year," said Foley. "The fertilizer features an entirely new process that has not been available anywhere in the world before." The plant is scheduled to go into limited production early this fall and product should be available late this year.

Meanwhile, Foley expects to maintain the current growth levels. "We have been growing at 20 percent for the last five years, and I think we'll continue to grow at those rates," said Foley.

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In other Lesco news, the company announced that Breck Denny will replace Ware Grove as vice president and chief financial officer.

Denny worked for investment banking firm J.P. Morgan and Co. for 23 years and most recently served as vice president, finance and treasurer for Ohio-based Medusa Corp.

"He has great relationships with the investment community as well as experience in our market," said Foley.



*Do not overseed or reseed with bent grass after application of Dimension for 90 days.
**1998 GCSAA Plant Protectant and Fertilizer Usage Report.
Product effectiveness for preemergence crabgrass control.

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