Mainscape keeps itself 'commercially' focused

Dave Mazanowski's education at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., included the start of a lawn care business that grew to a company with sales nearing $9 million.

Dave Mazanowski never dreamed the campus business he started as a student in 1981 would evolve into a satisfying career.

A business major at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Mazanowski began a lawn care service with a partner to defray college expenses. By the time he graduated in 1983, Brothers Lawn Service had become his full-time occupation.

Mazanowski's Mainscape now has branches in Ft. Wayne and Cincinnati, in addition to its Indianapolis headquarters. It offers total landscape management, including irrigation, mowing, fertilization, tree & shrub, mulching, landscape installation, and aquatic care for commercial clients. It has annual sales of "roughly" $9 million.

Dave Mazanowski and his brother, Zygmunt, bought out their other partner in 1992 and recently brought their father into the business.

Emphasis on total care

"We put the emphasis on total maintenance with our customers, instead of focusing on things like mowing where we can't be as competitive," says Mazanowski. "We try to be as full service as possible to the point that we visit some properties on a daily basis, doing whatever is needed on a given day. Our basic program includes three to five applications of fertilizer and weed control per year, but most of our customers sign up for much more than that."

Curb appeal vital

With accounts such as hospitals, banks, industrial parks, schools, and apartment/condo complexes, Mainscape looks to provide "curb appeal" for its customers. Its mulch bed maintenance program is an essential component to this aspect of the business, generally requiring weekly visits to each property.

Quick response

"In these situations, you want a product that responds quickly, preferably in a couple of days," says Mazanowski. "We had some problems a few years ago with our previous product. We'd spray and the customer would still see green a few days later. We'd get called back to spray it again and it would still be green."

Two years ago, Mazanowski tried Finale herbicide on a limited basis. He was impressed. "Finale gave us a very quick kill. We saw results within 24 hours," he says. Last year, Mainscape used Finale almost exclusively for post-emergence nonselective weed control.

In its attempt to offer more services to its customers, Mainscape has expanded into erosion control. Many of its customers have ponds with eroding banks. Mainscape offers standard rip-wrap stones for restoring pond banks, also a more natural bio-log method. The company's aquatics program, which is growing at 20 percent annually, provides weed control and fountain maintenance.
With 60 full-time employees at Main-
scape headquarters and another 120 part-
timers added during the season, Mazanowski
faces his biggest challenge: labor manage-
ment. "Development of hourly workers in
addition to management level employees is
one of my major concerns," he says. "Giving
people responsibility and accountability is a
challenge that's easier said than done. We
will be focusing more and more on labor is-
sues in the next few years."

Though his company has experienced
some growing pains since the early years on
campus, Mazanowski plans to expand into
even more areas in the future. He recently
began selling and installing play structures
in city parks and private enterprises. "We
hope to continue attracting more upscale
customers who look to us for quality ser-
vice," he adds. "Our biggest market is com-
panies who don't have time to take care of
their own properties." LM

ALCA Foundation up and running

The Board of Directors for the Associated Landscape Contractors of America
(ALCA) approved the formation of the ALCA Educational Foundation as a 501(c)3 or-
organization. Its purpose is to award scholarships and to fund educational programming
for the landscape industry.

The board allocated an initial $25,000 to the Foundation, and expects the amount to
reach $100,000 in the first six months. The goal is $500,000. A campaign is underway
to solicit corporate contributions as well as individual donations.

President of the Foundation is Chris Kujawa, Kujawa Enterprises, Inc.; Vice Presi-
dent is Drew St. John, St. John and Associates; Treasurer, Karen Corcoran, The Bench-
mark Group; Secretary, Debra Atkins, ALCA; and Director, Steven Glover, L&L Land-
scape Services.

ALCA also announced a pilot program for both interior and exterior contractors
planned for August 21-24 at the Fairmont Hotel, Dallas. The program will focus on the
mid-level and foreman-level employee. Also, ALCA CLP and CLT exams will be of-
fered then. Contact Bob Drury at ALCA at (800) 394-2522.

PGMS expands membership

Membership in The Professional Grounds Management Society now extends to
physical plant administrators and property managers with grounds care responsibilities.

"Increasing inquiries from physical plant administrators and property managers indi-

TURFCO® Aeration

The Aerator: Tough & Simple.

Rental customers range from professional contractors to weekend landscapers.
The Aerator is built to meet the demands of professionals while remaining simple enough for
beginners to operate.

Compact and maneuverable, the
tough little Aerator is designed to
be productive (26,000 sq. ft./hr) and
still take the kind of beating rental
customers can dish out. The steel
side-guard bumpers help protect your
investment and customer property.
The protected external chain really
helps minimize maintenance costs.

Durable, easy to operate turf equipment - perfect for rentals!

Turfco Mfg. Inc. • 1655 101st Ave. NE • Minneapolis, MN 55449-4420 • Ph. (612) 785-1000 • FAX (612) 785-0556

Circle 145