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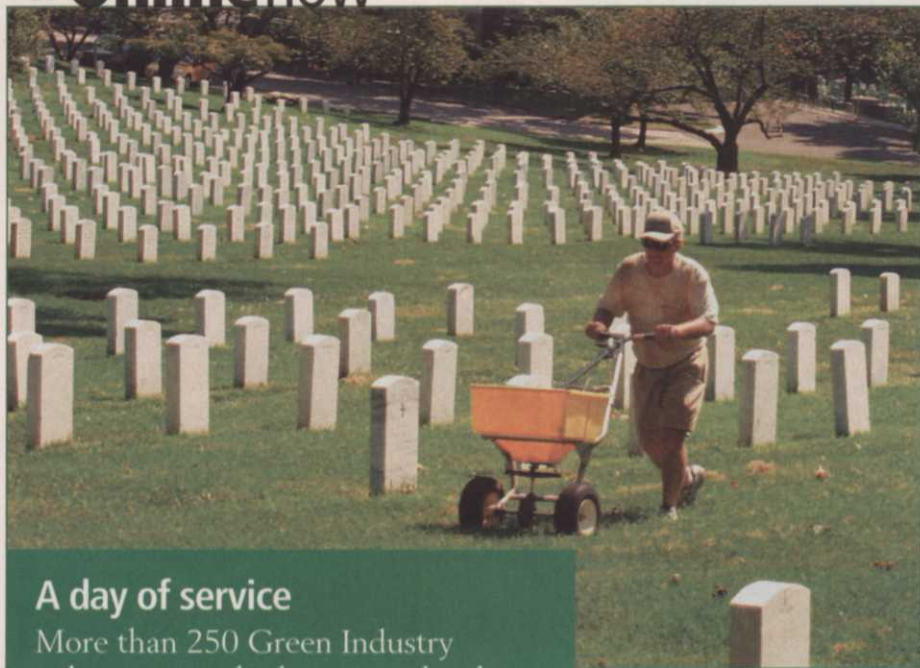
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A day of service

More than 250 Green Industry volunteers made their annual trek to Washington, DC, to spruce up our national resting places. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net for a photo gallery from the day.

» Readers respond

Can you believe we're already looking at the first half of 2006 in our rear-view mirrors? It's time for a mid-season sales checkup, so we asked, **how's business stacking up so far this year?** Here's what you said:

We're blowing the doors off our sales goals **32%**

29% We're right on budget

23% Business is tougher than we predicted

17% Time to pick up the pace

Want to weigh in? Our survey question changes every month and we publish the results here. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net to voice your opinion.

» Special issue

As summer winds down it's time to start thinking about strategic planning for your business next year. Click on the **2006 Business Planner** link at www.landscapemanagement.net. We're already planning for the next Business Planner, hitting your mailbox this October.



» **Overheard** "The late Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the House, said that 'all politics is local.' The same goes for today's pesticide issues." — Ron Hall, LM editor in chief, introducing the first Grassroots Lawn Care Forum.

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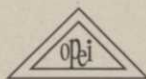
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Arlington payoff enormous

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

I stopped to chat with Gilbert Peña and his lovely wife Mel, walking in the steamy heat along the narrow roads of Arlington National Cemetery. They were picking up empty lime bags and other debris. They didn't have to be walking. After all, Gilbert, commercial mowing manager for John Deere, could have commandeered one of those zippy JD Gator utility vehicles buzzing all over the cemetery's 600 acres. But the Peñas walked and offered humble service.

Service — Stop and think about what it means. What it really means. In a sense, we're all here to serve, right?

I saw arborist Ron Haymaker from Maryland's Eastern Shore with his 12-year-old son Joey and Ronnie Sr., his father. The younger Haymakers, working 25 feet above the pavement, had set themselves the task of cabling several huge willow oaks. The father offered encouragement from below.

I visited briefly with Robert Hursthouse of Bolingbrook, IL. His shirt was plastered to his body in sweat. He was pushing a spreader with 40 lbs. of lime between rows of headstones that twisted over several small knolls. Other volunteers did the same.

I rode on the same bus to Arlington National Cemetery with Burton DeMarche, his wife and their three cute children. We arrived in time for the opening ceremony of the Renewal and Remembrance

service project. We were moved when Bob Dolibois, Vietnam-era Navy veteran and executive vice president of the American Nursery & Landscape Association, got the day's efforts off to a reflective start with heartfelt thoughts about what Arlington National Cemetery and the industry's efforts mean to him.

Visit www.landscapemanagement.net to view Dolibois' presentation.

Then, of course, Burt and his family went to work with the 200 other volunteers.

Vicky, my lovely wife of 37 years, often sternly reminds me, especially when I'm in a not-so-generous mood, that "you can't receive life's blessings if your hands are clenched tight." I take this to mean that if you open your hands to give, your palms will be open to receive as well.

Even though I have no idea why it works, I'm convinced that it does. People who give time and effort to help others and their communities always get more in return. More friends. More positive energy. More life satisfaction.

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Burton DeMarche, from LaurelRock Co. in Wilton, CT, and his family stop for a photo before getting down and dirty in Arlington.



People who give time and effort to help always get more in return.

The more you can meet face to face during the renewal process, the greater success you will have.



Renewals take planning

BY BRUCE WILSON

Companies with high renewal percentages generally provide high levels of customer service. They're good at matching service levels to customer expectations. But all companies have service glitches. Companies lose employees that customers like. Many things can go wrong that can end up damaging the customer relationship.

Assess the relationship

It's always wise to plan ahead when it comes to renewals. The "best practice" is to have a system in place to remind you 90 days prior to a contract expiration that a contract is coming up for renewal. Next, bring it up at a staff meeting and assess where you're at with this particular client.

Let's consider several items regarding the renewal:

- ▶ Have you had any service glitches that might put you in a bad light?
- ▶ Have you made any personnel changes that could affect the client?
- ▶ How were you doing on the

job? Did it look like you would need a larger than normal increase.

- ▶ How has the customer's business been doing?
- ▶ Have there been any changes in personnel on the customer's side that could affect your relationship?

Next steps

After completing this assessment, you might still run into some obstacles before you can complete the renewal. At this point discuss strategy options to better position your company to get the renewal. You might want to visit the client in person to assess your position.

If you think a price increase is in the works, first take a hard look at your own operations with respect to the job. Are you as efficient as you could be or were some of your cost problems caused by your own inefficiency? Or, did you have high cost early in the contract, but now it is going smooth? This often happens. In this case you might be OK going forward.

With respect to any price increases, first talk to the client about the increase. If you send it to the client in a letter you cannot read his/her reaction. The client might see the increase and decide to go out to bid. If you ask first you can better assess whether you should hike the price and the chances of the contract going out for bid.

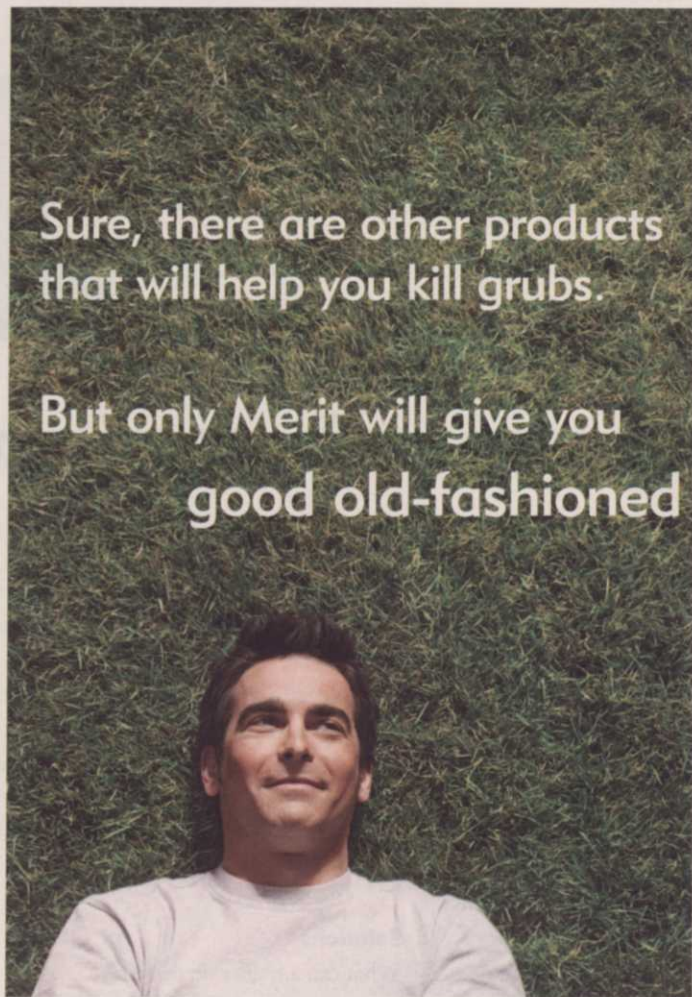
This is still a very personal business. The more you can meet face to face during the renewal process, the greater success you will have.

— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.



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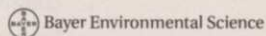


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Stay in a negative, out-of-control frame of mind for an extended period and the best of us will show signs of burnout.



Key burnout warning signs

BY BILL HOOPES

Consider this "typical" Monday morning team meeting: As Jim, the manager, passed out some routine assignments, everyone could see his hand shaking. "Rough weekend," someone laughs. "Yeah. Too much of a good thing I suppose," Jim quips.

As the last of his team loads up and leaves for the first job, Jim grabs the ibuprofen bottle and swallows three pills. Back in the front office, Sarah the office manager stops him to tell him, "Mrs. Lawrence doesn't agree with the comment you left her Friday about the dead tree. She says we killed it and wants it replaced now."

Jim lets loose a string of profanities. As Sarah walks out of the room she mutters to herself, "Jim's had it. He's losing it and it's only 8 a.m."

Burnout symptoms

Jim's actions are symptomatic of the burnout that threatens all of us, especially during peak production seasons.

Stress (from a variety of work and personal sources) can lead to burnout. First, it's a fact that, when we spend our time doing what we believe we are good at and succeeding, we feel a sense of pride, accomplishment and self worth. We feel good. Conversely, when we are forced to live and work in situations that are unpleasant and in which we feel out of control, negative stress, frustration and the potential for burnout builds.

Here are some symptoms of burnout:

- ▶ Noticeable fatigue and a lack of energy.
- ▶ Anger or inability to control your temper when demands are made on you.
- ▶ Negativity toward others and self-criticism for "putting up with it."
- ▶ A sense of inability to escape the pressure and helplessness.
- ▶ Headaches and possible weight loss.
- ▶ Trouble relaxing and sleeping.

Solutions

What can a trainer do to help?

- ▶ Meeting topic: Explain/teach how stress and how burnout happens.
- ▶ Have each team member do a burnout self-exam. Look for behavioral changes in the last 90 days and symptoms above (at work or at home).
- ▶ Identify negative and stress-triggering situations and look for practical ways to either modify the demands or acknowledge and deal with them for a limited period of time.

Tip: While you cannot always remove the situations leading to burnout, simply acknowledging them and letting yourself know that feeling stress is normal will help. Most negative situations are temporary or seasonal. Create a "light at the end of the tunnel" plan. Mark your calendar and focus on the end of the most stressful period. Then work toward it, one day at a time.

— The author offers consulting on employee development through Grass Roots Training in Delaware, OH.

Contact him at hoopes@columbus.rr.com.

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ON THE HILL

From left, Maurice Dowell of Dowco; Fred and Kelly Haskett of U.S. Lawns; Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO); and Doug Obermann from PBI Gordon

WASHINGTON, DC — Maybe it was the mid-term elections just around the corner. Or maybe Green Industry service contractors are just getting better at it, or at least more persistent.

But on Tuesday, July 25, landscape and lawn care service business owners racked up more than 100 visits to the offices of U.S. Senators and Representatives at this year's Legislative Day, sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

Dan Cheslock, owner and president of Mountaineer Lawn Care, Morgantown, WV, was one of 10 people from West Virginia who met with both U.S. Representatives from his state and Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) to discuss small business issues.

"We went up there with an agenda of things we wanted to get done," he says.

Maurice Dowell, president and owner of Dowco, Chesterfield, MO, and his fellow Missourians met with Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) and several House staffers.

"Our biggest concern is H-2B, and the expiration of the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act on Sept. 30," says Dowell. He says that two-thirds of the production workers at his company are seasonal immigrant workers. If the Act is not extended (it's been attached to stalled immigration reform legislation) he says his company may not be able to get the workers it needs to start the 2007 season.

On Capitol Hill, progress may seem slow but these efforts make a difference, assures Thomas Delaney, PLANET's vice president of legislative affairs.

"We are building an army of Green Industry lobbyists," he says.



Former President, George H.W. Bush, received a Kawasaki Mule 3010 at his home in Kennebunkport, ME. Bush, a noted outdoorsman, uses the Mule both for recreational and utility needs, and to shuttle visitors around the complex.

LESCO sales staff returns

CLEVELAND — LESCO will reinstate its direct-sales program. Last year, former LESCO CEO Michael DiMino, who resigned last fall, dissolved the direct-sales force and increased the company's mobile Stores On Wheels units to sell its turf and golf care products. The move backfired on the company, which announced it anticipates a \$4 million net loss for 2006.

Aquascape gets new name, logo

ST. CHARLES, IL — Effective January 1, 2007, Aquascape Designs will be known as Aquascape, Inc. in a massive branding initiative that will include changes to product names and a new company logo. The company also announced that it has launched a new Web site, www.pondlifestyles.com, which contains water gardening information for both homeowners and industry professionals.

Syngenta acquires Fafard

GREENSBORO, NC — Syngenta agreed to acquire Conrad Fafard, Inc. (Fafard), the North American producer of peatmoss, top soil, peat humus, potting soils and other growing media for the professional ornamental grower and consumer retail markets. Fafard will become a stand-alone business unit in the Syngenta Professional Products group. The company, a third-generation family business headquartered in Agawam, MA, has 240 employees and had sales of \$76 million the last fiscal year.

[CLIPPINGS]

38:53

Hours Bill Owen worked last week

7:34

Hours Martin Cruz worked last Friday

372:16
238:49

Total hours: Irrigation

Total hours: Placing Sod

611:05Total hours to date:
Fairview Townhomes

TRACK WORKERS' HOURS AND COST CODES WITH DEAD-ON ACCURACY.

WEEKLY TIMECARD

NAME: *Bill Owen* DATES: *14-15*

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOB SITE/PROJECT	HOURS
Mon.	7:00	1/2	3:30		FairView	8
Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00			8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00			8 1/2
Fri.	▽	▽	4:00			8 1/2

SIGNATURE: *Bill Owen* TOTAL HOURS: **41 1/2**

GUESSWORK

Employee Report

Bill Owen

Jobsite Name: Fairview Townhomes Date Range: 8/14/2006 through 8/18/2006

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 8/14	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 8/15	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 8/16	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 8/17	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Placing Sod	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Placing Sod	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 8/18	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Placing Sod	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Placing Sod	2:55 hours 7:49 hours

SIGNATURE: *Bill Owen* Employee total **38:53 hours**

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Circle 113

In the Know

OPEI could take CA city to court over blower ban

ALEXANDRIA, VA — The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and several of its members are urging the city of Palo Alto, CA, to reverse its ban on gasoline-powered leaf blowers, and will take the case to court if necessary.

The OPEI and the local Bay Area Gardeners Association (BAGA) claim that Palo Alto duped local gardeners into purchasing nearly \$4 million of new gas leaf blowers with the agreement that they would be the quietest and cleanest models available. The gardeners participated in training programs and obtained operator certifications per the direction of city officials. Despite this agreement, the city council voted to prohibit the use of gas powered leaf blowers last June.

"The Federal Clean Air Act prohibits a

patchwork quilt of emission regulations," explained William M. Guerry Jr., attorney for BAGA and OPEI and a partner at Kelley Drye Collier Shannon. "The City of

Palo Alto needs to comply with federal law, keep its commitments and reimburse the gardeners and blower manufacturers for enforcing an illegal ordinance."

Husqvarna on its own; focused on growth

CHARLOTTE, NC — The break is complete. Husqvarna is on its own and no longer a subsidiary of Electrolux. The 18-month process of separating the world's largest appliance company from the world's largest supplier of outdoor power equipment is final.

"Two public companies were formed out of one," says David Zerfoss, president of Husqvarna Professional Outdoor Products North America. "Husqvarna is a separate entity, a separate corporation, focused on outdoor power equipment."

The transition will not be noticed by commercial end users, says Zerfoss. But they and the dealers that serve them shouldn't be surprised to see the new company develop and acquire additional products to solidify the company's status as the only outdoor power equipment manufacturer in the United States that can outfit a landscaper's trailer "from stem to stern."



David Zerfoss

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Circle 115

FMI Services acquires Bass Custom Landscapes

CHARLESTON, SC — FMI Services Group, based in Charleston, SC, acquired Bass Custom Landscapes (BCL), of Bonaire, GA.

BCL employs more than 70 full-time technicians and has

more than 400 clients in central Georgia with annual revenues around \$4 million.

The management team at Bass will remain intact, though founder Tony Bass no longer will have a day-to-day role with

the company. Instead, Bass said he will work to expand his Super Lawn Trucks business.

"The timing was right for me personally. I operated Bass Custom Landscapes for 19 years and two weeks," Bass said.

"This business and this industry have provided a wonderful career for me and my family. I decided to sell the company so I could retire earlier than I planned and advance other business interests."

People & companies

Deborah M. Hamlin, a professional association executive who led the International Association of Plastics Distributors for 10 years, will be the next executive director of the **Irrigation Association**.



Scott Dahlberg, managerial and account specialist, recently joined Dallas-based **Moore Tree Care**, a subsidiary of the Lambert Landscape Co., in its Business Development Division.

Jeff Mariola, president of **Initial Tropical Plants**, has been promoted to managing director, Tropical Plants, overseeing the interior landscaping business in North America and Europe, effective Sept. 1. The company also appointed **Denise Senior** as Midwest regional sales manager, **Ed LeMieux** as West Coast regional sales manager and **Brad Lockhart** as Northeast regional sales manager.

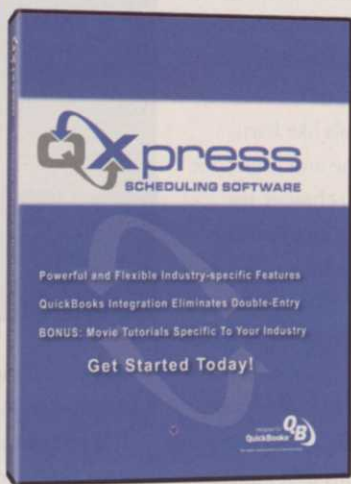
Irv "Irv" B. Stacy III joined **Advan LLC** as Southeast Area sales manager for the company's Turf & Ornamentals Division.

Orlando's **Middleton Lawn and Pest Control** named **Edward Carriero** as chief financial officer.

Request a web-based demonstration!



HIT THE GROUND RUNNING



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Circle 116

Add-On Biz

BUSINESS

EXTEND YOUR BUSINESS

Retaining walls

► Rein in profits with these hardscape projects

BY STEPHANIE RICCA /
Managing Editor

DTR Associates' David Thorn has noticed a design/build trend emerging over the last few years: "Since 9-11, my client base has requested landscapes that create a sense of peace and safety," says this company president. "Instead of taking extensive trips outside of the country, my clients want to create their own vacation spots in their backyards. Outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, fire pits and spas often require stone or brick walls."

Retaining walls function primarily as decorative enclosure elements or as a means of stabilizing landscapes on sloped surfaces. Today landscapers interested in branching out into hardscape construction have options ranging from pre-constructed retaining wall systems to a wealth of natural materials they can use for custom projects.

Trends and value

Thorn, whose Northeast Ohio-based company focuses mostly on residential work, says retain-

ing walls are a big part of his installations. "Clients are becoming more educated and appreciative of landscaping and the value it adds to a home," he says. "If stonework is done property, it can last the lifetime of a home."

Thorn custom designs his projects to fit the client's needs as well as to blend in with the site and complement the home's architecture. While natural materials like barnstone, sandstone and limestone are his primary choices, his crews often use interlocking systems like Unilock's. "For severe slopes, when cost is an issue, we use alternative methods," he says. "It's more efficient to install and affordable. There are also a few newer tumbled options that look less commercialized and blend better in a natural setting."

Installation and pricing

"A qualified contractor should understand drainage principles and construction techniques relating to all wall systems before adding this to his list of services," Thorn advises.

Construction knowledge is a must, since contractors have to have the basics of grading,



drainage, settling and other hardscape skills mastered.

Getting into this line of service can have a payoff, Thorn says, if you're willing to go the extra mile.

"Hire the right installer, estimate the project competitively but accurately and install it under the estimated hours," he says. "The toughest challenge is finding an affordable foreman who is passionate about the construction end of the business, and who also understands the need to finish

under the estimated production hours."

If your company adds the service, consider marketing it to your current customers with a mailer. Building additional business from your existing client base is easy and economical.

Under those conditions, retaining walls can be moneymakers, Thorn says. "Clients are more landscape-savvy and are asking for more sophisticated projects that often involve retaining walls," he says. **LM**



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GMC

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BY CHARLES SIMON

TRACKING TECHNOLOGY

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Driver, Tom G.

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2:45 arrival
35-minute stop

One reader
shares firsthand
how **GPS**
improved his
business efficiency

Charles
Simon found
success with
passive GPS.

If you're sending your trucks out each morning and just hoping for the best, read on because there's a better way.

By investing in a passive global position system (GPS), you might end the days of inefficient routes, wasted fuel, unsafe drivers and moonlighting technicians.

Here's what it does for us and maybe it can help you lose those windshield blues too:

- ▶ Reveals technicians' driving habits.
- ▶ Records where they've been and how long they've been there.
- ▶ Decreases the chances of employees moonlighting on company time.
- ▶ Serves as valuable documentation in the event of an accident.
- ▶ Reduces vehicle insurance premiums.
- ▶ Clears up disputes with clients about service stops.
- ▶ Saves fuel.

Is there a downside? In the minds of some employees there might be, especially the ones who want to control the workday their way and not necessarily the company's way. But generally, when you explain the advantages of the system (including boosting productivity and profitability so they can be paid more or receive bonuses), employees like the idea.

How it works

First, what is it? Simple. It's just a small black data recorder attached to two antennae installed in each truck.

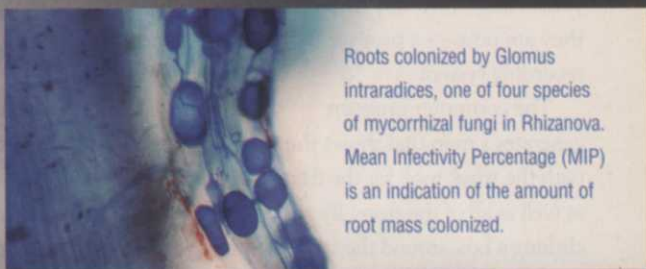
What it does is impressive. It records a service vehicle's speed and location every few seconds via data received by the first antenna, a satellite antenna.

continued on page 28

always thinking ahead.



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Circle 118

continued from page 26

When the truck pulls into the lot at the end of the day, the second antenna, an RF antenna, transmits the data to your computer. You see where your trucks were, not where they are now — a passive recording system.

The computer program generates a map that shows the path the truck took for the day as well as all of the stops. By clicking a box around the stops on the computer map and assigning a customer name to the box, the program remembers each customer location.

With this knowledge it prints customer visit reports. Any time a truck stops in the marked box, the report prints the customer name and the amount of time spent at the location.

Reports tell the story

Our company discovered

from a summary trip report that one driver rarely shut off his truck's engine. This report has a column devoted to parked idling. He would leave the motor running while getting loaded at the nursery, off loading and just about all other times.

With diesel prices as high as they are now, we instituted a "No Parked Idling" rule. Each week we print the GPS report that shows parked idling times for all of our trucks. Quick note: The report shows time stuck in a traffic jam as parked idling so watch for idling patterns over a few weeks before confronting a driver.

The parked idling totals are clear and easy to interpret, but the route maps are even easier. You can tell at a glance if there is a problem. We know Roberto is worried about getting lost, but didn't know he always returned to the main avenue when going from one customer to another. One look at his route on the map report and it was clear his path was wildly inefficient. Roberto is a good employee so we approached the problem by calling the changes "short cuts." There were no bad feelings

TIME SPENT VS. REVENUE EARNED

You can spend hours looking at maps, plotting paths, checking distances and more from the data generated by a GPS system. With our system we print the summary reports each day. It's just one page per truck for customer visits. If I spot a problem or an unknown stop, then I dig a bit. Once a month I look at the routes to make sure the order is efficient and to keep an eye on patterns.

Passive GPS makes it possible to gather customer history. Without some type of profit analysis by customer a small bidding error can go on for years.

The crews all get a route sheet each day with their daily customer stops listed. For years they filled in the times, often guessing as they filled out the sheet in our parking lot after they returned. With the GPS report of customer visits we now know exactly how much time was spent at each customer. As we enter the work completed in our billing system we also enter time spent. The billing system produces reports that present hourly income by job type.

★ TIP: Create an easy customer profit analysis: Compare the total time spent for the year with the total revenue for the year in a spreadsheet. You can tell at a glance which customer's rates are too low. It's not a perfect report since some customers have special projects, but the revenue per hour information is an eye opener.

We increased the rates of the 10 lowest-yield customers.

— C.S.

GPS EQUIPMENT

The system includes a small data recorder -A- attached to two antennae installed in each truck -B- and -C-. One is a satellite antenna. The second, an RF antenna, transmits the data to your computer.



and once he was shown the quicker way, he took the "short cut" route every day.

Change bad driving

You can probably identify your worst drivers right now. But licensed drivers with no DUI citations are so hard to find that you may have been willing, as many of us have been, to overlook some of your concerns and hope for the best.

How many of you have a route like this one — a four-lane, 35-mph road that melts into a divided highway as it passes under the interstate? The only way to reach 70 mph (or more) with a truck

and trailer on this stretch of road is to be at a good speed as you start down the hill and then floor it. This is not wise considering the trailer is loaded with mowers, string trimmers and blowers.

A GPS report showed that one of our drivers reached 72 mph near the base of the hill. Did he hear from us? You bet. Report in hand, we warned him that if he drove that way again he would be fired and had him sign a discipline sheet. The next day his top speed was 53 mph. He hasn't broken 60 since.

If one of your techs is in-

continued on page 30

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Untreated Plumbago



Untreated Boxwood

Treated Boxwood

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continued from page 28

volved in an accident you can download every second of activity just before the crash. The GPS system beeps to prompt drivers to insert a USB-like flash drive that allows the black box to record the driver's name for reports. The flash drive also allows for programming changes and an accident download.

Our accident kit, in addition to the camera, checklist, and other items, includes an accident flash drive that can download second-by-second truck data for about 90 minutes prior to the accident.

It is also possible to tell if the driver stopped at a stop sign, slowed down before a red light or applied the brakes with force. While this data could show that an accident is our own fault, our insurance agent is thrilled. He claims more documentation

is better. He says that an insurance company is more likely to give us their best rates because of our documented system. Also, should an accident occur, we have a better chance of keeping good rates because of the documentation.

Catch moonlighters

All of us have heard stories about crews moonlighting with company equipment. Now, when a truck stops at an unfamiliar location we enter the zone as "unknown customer" with the street address. In every case, these stops have been related to business for potential or just-landed customers. As the company grows and new crews are added, these GPS reports remove any worries about moonlighting with our equipment.

MORE INFO

Landscapemanagement.net Learn more about how the author uses passive GPS to track the profitability of each customer. And would you believe it's a great tool for snow and ice management?

Proof of service

Now that we can tell exactly when a customer has been served we can verify service with just a click of the mouse.

"The grubs are back! You didn't treat the lawn and I'm not paying," complained a customer last year.

We are now able to tell this customer we have a GPS tracking system in all of our trucks, and yes, Turf Care Truck #32, driven by Peter, was at your house for 32 minutes, beginning at 2:12 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3. We can confidently say, "We did the service; we stand behind our work and we will credit your account or treat your lawn again."

Installation is easy

The process of installing the GPS system

More Software Tools Period

Hardware:

- Check Reader** - automatically reads your customer's checks for quick receivables.
- CLIP Connect** - Use your Nextel or other phone for live, real-time route sheets. See what customer is being serviced.
- CLIP Trak** - Instantly know where your trucks are, then have this data automatically download into **CLIP** via GPS.
- Erouter** - go paperless and send your crews out with Palms that have the day's work on them.
- Bill on website** - your customers can view their bills on the web.
- Bar Code Scanner** - print bar coded sheets for the crews and scan as they get to each property.

Software Links:

- Links with MapPoint** - automatically route all your customers on the map.
- Links with Microsoft Word and Excel** - Make estimates and letters inside the customer's file.
- Link with Scanner** - Save the signed contract right inside the customer file.

Language Translation - Route Sheets notes print in Spanish and Portuguese.

Links with Microsoft Outlook - Send email to customers from within the **CLIP** program.

Links with QuickBooks Pro - Send all billing data directly to QuickBooks.

CLIP Software:

- Bill from **CLIP** or QuickBooks.
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Circle 120

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Circle 121

YOUR CHOICE — ACTIVE OR PASSIVE SYSTEM

We chose a passive system over a real-time system to avoid monthly network fees. Real-time GPS systems plot the location of your trucks at any moment in time by digitally sending the latitude and longitude every few minutes over the cell phone network. In addition to the initial cost of the hardware, you pay a monthly cell phone network fee for each truck.

The passive system records truck activity throughout the day and transmits the data to the office computer when the truck enters the yard at the end of the day automatically — we don't need to do anything. There are no monthly fees. For our business, once the mowing routes are set, it's almost the same schedule each week. We rarely change the schedule during the day, so it's not important to be able to see the exact posi-

tion of a truck at any given moment. in each truck is straightforward: Connect power and place two antennae, one on the dash and one on the inside of the windshield. It cost us about \$85 per truck to have a professional install the system, in addition to the cost of the GPS unit. But if you are handy you can do the job yourself. The software installed easily; the computer's antenna connects to a USB port. This antenna allows the trucks to download data to the computer automatically.

The benefits of this passive GPS system are significant. Knowing the time spent at each customer and billing properly has improved our bottom line. Using less fuel by reducing parked idling and improving route paths has also helped.

Safety is the biggest payoff. By reading each day's report we know that our drivers are not speeding and they're not spending time in high-accident areas. **LM**

— The author is a certified landscape professional and manages an East Coast landscape operation. Contact him at cs@charlessimon.com.

tion of a truck at any given moment.

If you dispatch during the day, an active system may be worth the extra fee.

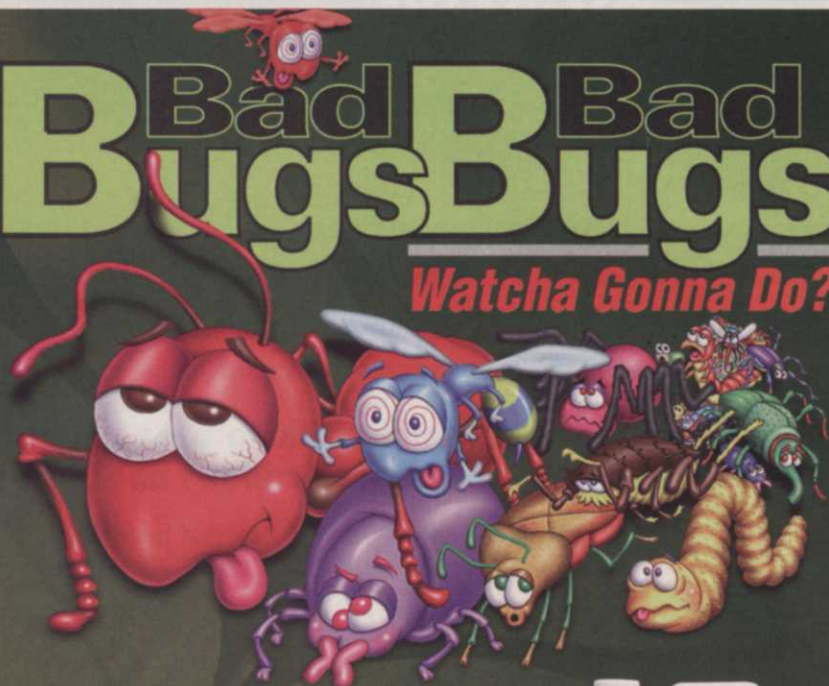
★ **TIP:** If you choose a active or real-time system, install it only on the trucks you dispatch by the hour and put the others on a passive system. Stand up to

the sales pitch that you must have all of your trucks on one system. You purchase other equipment from different vendors and you can do the same with a GPS system and save a bundle on monthly charges.

— C.S.

Bad Bugs Bad Bugs

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Circle 122



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SNOW & ICE GUIDE

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What's ahead for winter?

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor



With record-breaking heat hitting the Midwest right now, it's hard to imagine that snow season is right around the corner. This year, it's hit or miss when it comes to predictions about conditions. Last year's

snowfalls around the country were low, which of course resulted in fewer opportunities for plowing and salting. In fact, in a recent State of the Industry survey published by *Landscape Management's* sister publication, *Snow Business*, 44% of respondents reported less than average snowfalls.

Twenty-eight percent even said snowfalls were far less than average in their area.

Who knows what this year will bring? Keep this Web site bookmarked to stay up to date as weather forecasts get more solid:

www.nws.noaa.gov. It's the National Weather Service page of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration site. It's got great, constantly updated data on weather events — whether it's a hurricane or a snowstorm blowing through your neck of the woods.

We bring you some additional information from that State of the Industry report in this supplement, including some tips from contractors at the top of the heap — those turning \$1 million or more from their snow operations. That elite club grows more every season.

Good luck in your planning. **LJM**

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Top of the snow pile

Four million-dollar company officials share their insights on the industry's **challenges & opportunities**

BY HEATHER GOOCH / Contributor

IT

might seem relatively easy to turn a profit in the snow-removal industry, but what about grossing \$1 million or more in revenue?

It's being done all across the country – and there seem to be several common themes enmeshed in these mega-successful firms' approach to business.

According to *Landscape Management's* sister publication *Snow Business' 2006* state of the industry survey, some surprising statistics emerge from polling the

segment of respondents who are at the \$1 million-and-above mark (approximately 45 respondents):

- The average full- and part-time staff for a \$1 million-plus firm is 31 people, compared to just a 2-person staff industry average.
- 58% of the \$1-million club saw sales increase 10% or more in 2005, compared to the overall average of 27%. This, despite the fact that 70% of

The average full- and part-time staff for a **\$1 million-plus firm** is **31 people**.

respondents reported snow as "less than average" or "far less than average."

■ 42% of the big guys use a liquid de-icing agent – compared with 17% overall.

■ 36% listed "underpricing/undercutting" as having the most impact on their businesses. About 25% of respondents reported it as their top trend.

Rising costs an obstacle

In addition, many firms in this segment cite increased insurance and fuel costs as growth inhibitors for the industry at large.

"I believe insurance costs are putting small guys out of business," says Michel Bergeron, president of Landtech, Inc. in Rockland, Ontario. "This means there

are fewer companies competing, but the ones who remain have more overhead costs. It's changing the face of business somewhat."

Bergeron adds that in Ottawa, licensing requirements have been in place for about three years. They mandate that every snow-removal vehicle in a fleet, from the largest truck to the smallest skid steer, have a license on file that is renewed annually. While he admits it can be a paperwork headache (not to mention the \$15 cost per vehicle), he sees a silver lining in the practice: "It forces you to keep your fleet updated, so it helps improve overall quality among snow professionals and helps keep reputable people in.

Mike Jones, CEO of True North Ser-

vices in Kansas City, KS, also sees a change in the level of industry professionalism in recent years. Jones attributes this trend to increased public awareness efforts by the Snow and Ice Management Association, although he points out the strategy has a down side.

"I think prices are being driven down because of increased competition," he says. "More people are learning about snow removal, and thinking 'Hey, I can make some money at this.' Some are going about it the right way but others are not. I've seen some businesses implode because they're either undercutting prices completely or bundling services (with lawn maintenance and parking lot sweeping, for example) and pricing at just the direct job cost. They're not looking at the costs long-term, with overhead and volume. Then, when they try to grow, they can't afford to make a hire. The good news is these competitors are not in business for long."

The people factor

Sources interviewed for this story say that hiring and retaining full-timers and subcontractors is not that big of a challenge for them because they take pains to offer good wages and respect.

For example, Ken Pagurek, CEO of Philadelphia-based Cenova, Inc., throws an annual appreciation barbecue for his 200-plus subcontractors. Efforts like that, as well as paying on time, every time, go a long way, he says.

"We also offer a merchandise partnership program," he adds. "We're like a buying group: We pass along discounts and savings to our subs. They come to us when they need new pieces of equipment, everything from tamper plates to mowers."

For full-time employees, Jones notes

continued on page 56



"I believe **insurance costs**
are putting small guys
out of business."

— **Michel Bergeron,**
president of Landtech, Inc.



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One-fourth of respondents at the \$1 million-plus level named balancing work and family as a top challenge.

continued from page s4

that promoting from within whenever possible is important to company growth – and it goes beyond buoying company morale.

“Anytime you’re growing a business, there’s an opportunity there to get quality people at the entry level, then let them grow along with the company,” he says.

Steve Pearce, operations manager of Sebert Landscaping in Bartlett, IL, agrees. His company makes it a priority to have employees learn all sides of the business as they move up the ladder. Pearce believes it helps formulate good pricing strategies as well.

“Our company sees operations and

financial knowledge as going hand-in-hand. The same people who are selling are also producing,” he says. “If you’re just sending a salesperson to sell and don’t know about the technical aspects of snow removal, things are going to get skipped or overpromised.”

Work/life balance

Pagurek, who got married last June, admits that balancing personal and corporate life can be a challenge. He’s not alone – about a fourth of respondents at the \$1 million-plus level named balancing work and family as a top challenge.

“We have to keep in mind that our

families have needs, too,” says Pagurek, who estimates he and his two co-owners average about 70 hours a week. “So we have to rely on each other to be there when we can’t.”

To help cut down on work stress, at press time Cenova was finishing construction of a 3,200-sq.-ft., state-of-the-art headquarters facility. It’s a 24-hour call center that features showers and locker rooms for long events. In addition, the offices are equipped with technology that allows the owners to work from home or on the road.

“I log on to a remote server and my entire work desktop shows up on my laptop,” Pagurek says.

Jones says True North addressed the work/family balance in a big way about two years ago, when it streamlined its services.

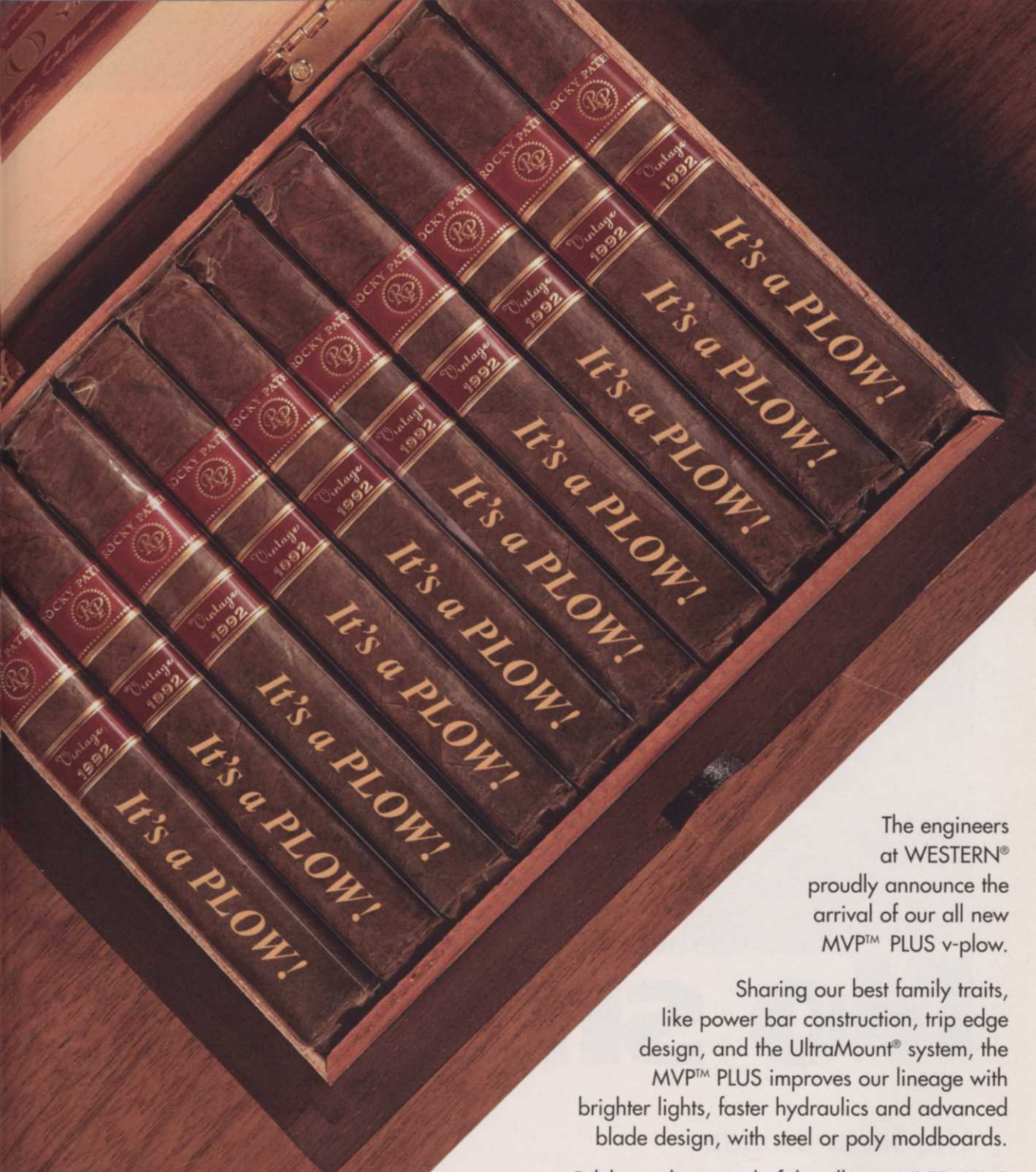
“We used to offer parking lot sweeping and things like that,” he explains. “Now we focus on just a couple core services, and that has helped balance the workload a lot.”

For Bergeron, just moving the business “out of the house and into an office” went a long way toward keeping a healthy balance. Delegation has also helped.

“With the other divisions we have, such as our garden center, greenhouse and grass divisions, I have key people in place that I can trust,” he adds.

Pearce teases that it hasn’t been an issue as much this season as in years past because “there haven’t been as many snow events.”

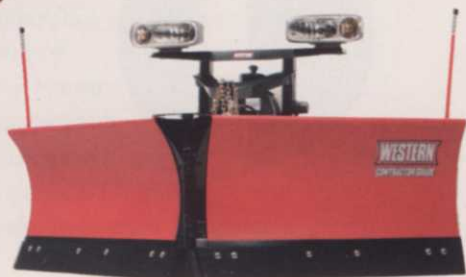
“But work and family can be a balancing act, especially where there are long events, day after day,” he continues. “We try to offer time off for time for time served, but we are an aggressive company that’s trying to grow. It’s definitely a challenge.” **LJM**



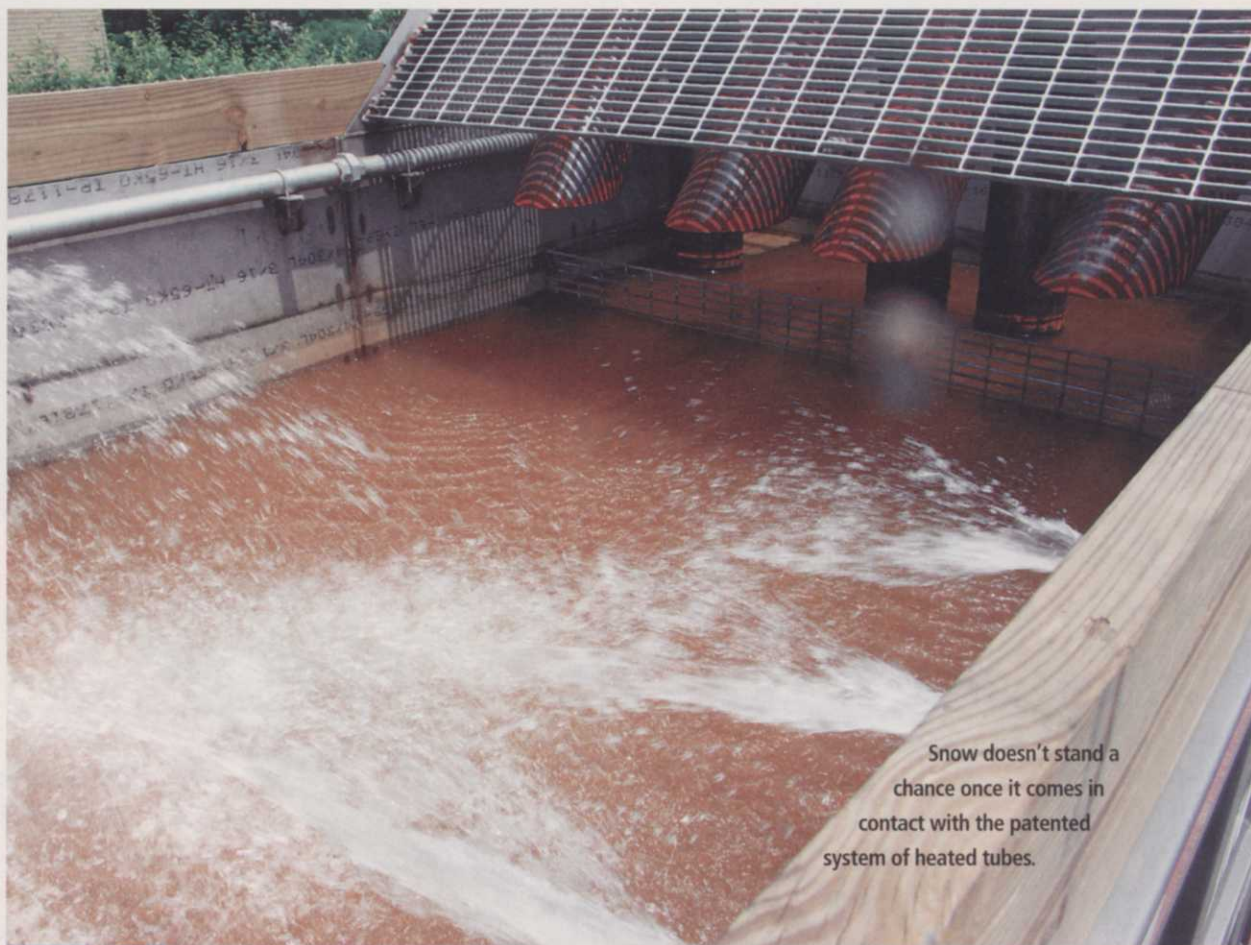
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No snow, no problem

The Snow Dragon gets its first big send off on a hot summer day

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief



Instead of pushing snow to generate winter revenue and profits, some of you will be melting it instead.

It's just a matter of time, says John Allin, president of Snow Dragon, a company that makes units that melt snow.

On a sunny, hot day in June, Snow Dragon, a subsidiary of Park-Ohio Holdings Corp., invited more than 50 municipal, airport and other managers responsible for maintaining

large properties (and several members of the press) to a demonstration of one of its units in Cleveland.

"All we do is heat up snow and let it run off as water," explains Allin.

Well yes, that's true. But the units feature a lot of engineering too. In fact, it's the patented engineering involving 20-in.-diameter tubes heated by diesel-fired flames that make these units hot items and turn snow in water. But before being released into a storm sewer or retention pond, the water travels through three filters. "It comes out cleaner than the snow that went in," Allin says, and no special permits are needed to release the water.

Allin says that Snow Dragon units, like any piece of equipment, require regular cleaning and maintenance, including the water pumps, regularly removing the "gunk" that accumulates in the units after extended use and replacing the burner nozzles every 500 hours of use.

Snow Dragons come in three sizes. The smallest SND900, with a retail price of \$165,000, can be pulled behind a dual-wheel pickup or 1-ton dump. The largest is the SND5400 for the airport market with a melting hopper 32 ft. long.

Boston-area landscape pro Richard Churchill is the first purchaser of the SND900 15-ft. unit, that the manufacturer claims can melt 75 cu. yds. of snow per hour. Churchill's company offers property management services, including snow and ice, for condos and large commercial and retail sites.

He was one of a dozen contractors and large property facility managers that tried out the first prototype more than a year ago and offered suggestions.

Because his company is often faced with removing snow from difficult locations (like a rooftop parking lot) and is charged a dumping fee to get rid of it, Churchill said he carefully reviewed all costs and determined that melting is

Bad storms give birth to the 'Dragon'

John Allin says he began seriously thinking about melting snow as an alternative to pushing it when his company tackled the record snowfall at the 2002 Winter Games (Olympics) in Salt Lake City.

But the expense of the units available then and other considerations kept him from pursuing the idea further, he says.

Then several years later when a record snowfall literally buried much of the Northeast and New England he became convinced that the industry needed another method of snow removal in addition to plowing.

About two years ago he approached Ed Crawford, CEO of Park-Ohio Holdings Corp., with the idea of manufacturing a snow-melting unit using a patented heat exchanger, and the experienced manufacturer liked the idea. Within a year the first prototype had been rolled out and was being tested.

Now that production units are available, Allin is convinced that the concept of snow melting (and the Snow Dragon brand) will catch on worldwide. He says both Russia and China have expressed interest in the units for their city streets and airports.

Allin was the founder of Snow Management Inc., the Erie, PA-based national network of snow contractors that approached \$40 million in annual revenues before Utah-based Symbiot acquired it and Allin's services in 2004. This past December he and Symbiot parted company and Allin, in January of this past year, was named president of Snow Dragon.



SNOW & ICE GUIDE

"All we do is heat up snow and let it run off as water."

— **John Allin**,
company founder

often more cost-effective than loading snow onto trucks and dumping it elsewhere. At least for his operation it is.

While there were several landscape contractors at the press conference, most of the invitees represented municipalities or airports, and that's where much of the interest in the machines, especially the largest unit, seemed to be coming from.



John Allin (right) was named president of Snow Dragon in January.

"In the next two or three years we plan on revolutionizing the way snow is handled," adds Ed Crawford, chairman of Park Ohio Holdings Corp., relating how he watched trucks being loaded with snow at nearby Cleveland Hopkins Airport this past winter. "It doesn't make any sense to plow and load snow. Think about the cost of those trucks and trailers

running back and forth, back and forth."

Crawford says, "We have put the capital behind this and we're going to keep the capital behind it." Park Ohio Holdings Corp., parent company of Snow Dragon, is an industrial supply chain logistics and diversified manufacturing business with sales of \$932 million in 2005. **LMI**

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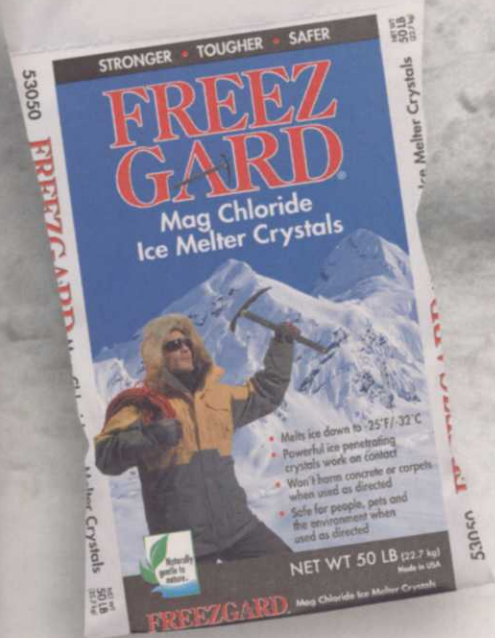
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Even for veterans **challenges** **remain**

Industry leaders find **solutions** for the **changing face** of the snow business

BY CHRISTINE BLANK / Contributor



now and ice professionals face a number of stresses that were not there when they started.

National property management firms have come into the picture, negotiating lower prices for jobs; competition from smaller companies is heating up; and higher expenses, such as fuel and bothersome litigation, are driving up costs.

Because of these challenges, many veterans (those interviewed for this story responded that they have 16 or more years in business) say their profit margins are not as strong as they used to

be. At the same time, many businesses are growing year-over-year and are willing to reinvent their businesses as the industry changes.

"It can still be a profitable business if it is run properly, but it is not as profitable as it used to be," says Frank Schembre, owner of Executive Snow Control in Maspeth, NY. The 20-year-old company, which has annual 7-figure revenues, serves commercial customers in Manhattan and its surrounding boroughs.

Outside forces

National property management companies taking over commercial client accounts is one of the major factors affecting snow and ice professionals today, since snow removal companies sometimes feel compelled to stay in the game by bidding jobs lower than they did before and national firms sometimes delay paying the snow companies.



Competition from new, smaller operators that undercut on prices is another factor affecting the veterans' businesses. In *Snow Business'* recent State of the Industry survey, 31 percent of respondents said pricing undercutting was the "biggest trend" in the industry.

The veterans are competing with small operations that may only stay in the business a year or two, but snare some of their customers. "There are a lot of us. There are one- or two-person trucks, and some will fade away," says Mark Dean, owner of Grounds Maintenance Services Inc., Park City, UT.

Dean also faced a fairly unique situation last year that cut into his company's profits. As an Army Reservist, he was called to service from October 2004 to October 2005. He served at a U.S. base, getting troops ready to go overseas. "My three managers and wife did their best, but they faced a lot of issues. The cost of fuel doubled or tripled at one point," says Dean. Last year was his worst year for sales, he says.

While Becker Landscaping in Indianapolis has seen profits increase annually this year, the company takes some lower-paying jobs because of increased competition, says owner Todd Becker.

"Competition is not always good; we

have done some work lower in price than we have in the past," Becker says.

"To get those customers back, you have to educate them about why they have to pay more for your service," Becker adds.

For example, he explains to clients that he keeps detailed records on every job, to be prepared for slip-and-fall litigation.

Lawsuits and labor

Fighting the increasing number of personal injury lawsuits is another concern for these longstanding businesses. "It takes several hours a week [to fight lawsuits]," Schembre says.

Finding reliable staff in the winter is another ongoing challenge veteran operators face.

"Finding good people is always a challenge. We have exceeded the seasonal average snowfall for four straight years," Schembre says.

Still, the longstanding companies have learned how to organize and schedule their full-time and seasonal employees. "We lose about 60 percent [of staff] in the winter. You have to be

cognizant of that when you are doing sales," Becker says.

The large veterans are primarily working with commercial companies, including large retail chains and shopping centers, but some also work successfully in residential areas, includ-

ing entities such as homeowners' associations.

Grounds Maintenance Services Inc., for example, contracts primarily with homeowners' associations in upscale neighborhoods, but also serves businesses and private schools.

Becker Landscaping, in contrast, is moving from residential accounts to commercial business. "We're trying to wean off the multi-family and residential [accounts]. There are parked cars and traffic moving through. There is more chance of liability," Becker says.

Striking a balance

Despite their longevity in the industry, balancing work and family life continues to challenge the veterans—but they do

not see another way around putting in long hours during snowfalls.

"There is no such thing as balancing work and family life," Becker says.

Veterans are working with commercial companies, including large retail chains.

After Dean returned from military service, he decided to be more selective about the contracts he takes to spend more time with family. "I'm going to work on quality of life, and do away with some contracts," Dean says.

Despite all the challenges and their Pepto-Bismol days, industry veterans seem to thrive in the competitive environment and plan to continue growing their businesses.

"They say it is one of the most stressful businesses you can part of. You're dealing with the weather, which you have no control over. But my son and the people who work with us take pride in doing the job right," Schembre says.

Working with loyal customers is also a big plus for some of the veterans.

"We want companies like banks that are very safety conscious. These are the companies that want us there at one inch or two inches of snow," Schembre says. **LM**

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1 Read the owner's manual. Get a thorough understanding of all recommended operating and safety procedures before turning on the snow thrower.

2 Never put your hands inside the chute for any reason. When the snow is wet, the snow thrower chute may become clogged. When this happens, turn off the snow thrower engine and wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop. Then, with a cleanout tool, clear the chute. If repair is needed, be sure to turn the engine off first and wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop.

3 Never disable safety features. The OPC (operator presence control) causes the snow thrower engine to stop within five seconds after an operator lets go of the controls. This is an important safety feature designed to help protect users. No matter how often the snow thrower may clog with wet snow, never disable this important safety feature.

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4 Wear appropriate reflective clothing and footwear. Avoid loose-fitting clothing. Wear safety glasses to protect eyes from thrown ice, stones and other projectiles and pull long hair back.

5 Never allow children to operate the equipment. Keep children indoors and under supervision.

6 Stay back. Never allow anyone in front of the equipment.

7 Keep your target in mind. Never throw snow toward people or cars.

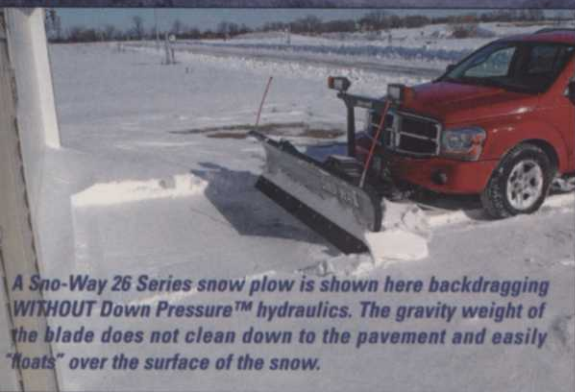
8 Watch out for hidden dangers. Be aware of any objects that may be buried under the snow.

SNO-WAY®

SNOW & ICE CONTROL EQUIPMENT

ONLY SNO-WAY® HAS REAL
HYDRAULIC DOWN PRESSURE™

EVERYONE ELSE
JUST PRETENDS.



A Sno-Way 26 Series snow plow is shown here backdragging WITHOUT Down Pressure™ hydraulics. The gravity weight of the blade does not clean down to the pavement and easily "floats" over the surface of the snow.

EXPO
International Lanes, Garden
Equipment Exposition
2006

VISIT SNO-WAY AT
BOOTH 3757

30%
↑

SNO-WAY®

DOWN PRESSURE™ HYDRAULICS

With Down Pressure™ activated, the blade is forced down to the pavement. The result is dramatic. The increased force on the cutting edge provides a cleaner backdrag. Down Pressure™ also redistributes the vehicle weight from the front axle to the rear axle, effectively increasing vehicle traction.

WHAT'S RIGHT. Only Sno-Way® can offer real Down Pressure™ hydraulics. No other plow manufacturer has this option. Some claim that the heavy weight of their plow produces Down Pressure™-like results. But, take it from us – the leader in snow plow D.P. technology – no plow will clean as efficiently or quickly as a Sno-Way plow equipped with Down Pressure™ hydraulics.

How does Down Pressure™ work? Glad you asked. At the touch of a button, a double acting cylinder applies over 250 pounds of force on the snow plow cutting edge. The Down Pressure™ is instantaneous and reactive. When ground contours change, the hydraulic system self-regulates to maintain force on the cutting edge. This exclusive Sno-Way feature allows you to scrape and backdrag more

snow in less time with 30% more efficiency. So what are you waiting for? Avoid the pretenders and call Sno-Way today. You'll be glad you did.

Sno-Way. NEW plows. NEW spreaders. NEW technology. NEW OPPORTUNITY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 262.673.7200.

New products



Quick hitch ▲

The V-Plow from Hiniker Co. lets you easily break, scoop and stack snow. The Quick Hitch Mounting System, a drive-in single-lever hook-up system, dramatically reduces time and effort spent attaching the plow. A 5-in.-square trip tower provides maximum strength and performance.

For more information contact Hiniker Co. at 800/433-5620 or visit www.hiniker.com

Push and stack ▼

Daniels' patented, fold-back wing design can reduce the plow size by up to 50 percent for unsurpassed maneuverability, ease of transport and when conditions call for a smaller plow size.

For more information contact Daniels at 847/426-1150 or visit www.danielsplows.com



A bird? A plane? ▲

It's Super-V Meyer Products' Super-V plow. The company offers a three-year warranty as well as a five-year structural steel warranty. Available in 8.5- and 9.5-ft. sizes, the 30-in.-tall Super-V has an aggressive attack angle of 70 degrees. Its bottom-trip design holds most of its load if an obstruction trips the plow, reducing the number of passes

required to finish a job.

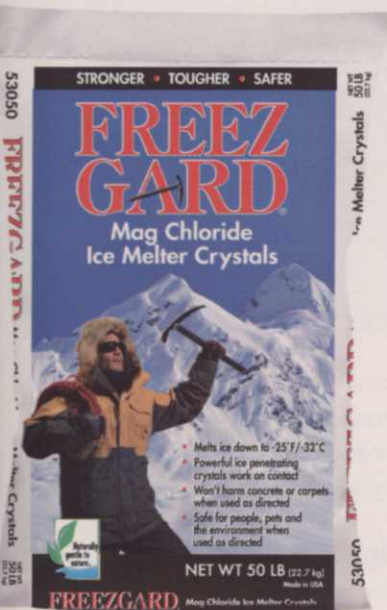
For more information contact Meyer at 216/486-1313 or visit www.meyerproducts.com



Tow the snow ▲

The Snow Dragon SND900 snowmelter can save you more than 50% when you melt snow instead of hauling it. Fabricated on a tri-axle trailer, the SND900 tows and goes with a 1-ton truck.

For more information contact Snow Dragon at 888/441-2493 or visit www.snowdragonmelters.com



Safety first ▲

North American Salt Co. introduces FreezeGard Mag Chloride Ice Melter Crystals. Easily melting ice and snow at temperatures as low as -25°F/-32°C, it leaves no slick oily residue and is safe on vegetation, concrete and people. The unique crystal shape means rapid ice penetration and good scatter control.

For more information contact North American Salt Co. at 877/462-7258 or visit www.nasalt.com



New arrivals ▲

Western Products' MVP Plus V-plow features Western's new halogen Nighthawk plow lights. The V-plow lineup includes 7.5-, 8.5- and 9.5-ft. sizes in steel or poly. All-new hydraulics produce industry-best operating speed. The trip-edge design and double-acting cylinders are standard. The water-tight Nighthawk lights feature two-stud mounting to reduce shock and vibration, while state of the art reflector optics provide a smooth, wide beam pattern.

For more information contact Western Products at 414/354-2310 or visit www.westernplows.com

Trip-edge ▼

The BOSS Trip-Edge Skid Steer Plow takes the surprises out of blade-jarring obstacles like ice, rocks and manhole covers. This plow has a built-in float feature to follow the contours of the area being plowed, and uses adjustable trip springs for superior control. The reinforced moldboard, cast-iron blade shoes and heavy-duty push frame give extra muscle for the toughest jobs like deep, wet snow. With a

built-in hydraulic crossover relief system and angle cylinders protected by a mechanical stop, the BOSS Trip-Edge Skid Steer Plow makes jobs smoother and safer.

For more information contact BOSS at 800/286-4155 or visit www.bossplow.com

Safer passage ▼

The SnowEx Junior 325 spreader from TrynEx International maintains roads, parking lots, driveways and recreational paths. It



is built with a low-maintenance, direct-drive system and minimal moving parts. Featuring a high-density polymer, UV-protected material hopper, the Junior 325 holds 2.7 cu. ft. of material, and spreads up to 25 ft. A cab-mounted controller allows spinner speed to be adjusted from inside.

For more information contact TrynEx at 800/725-8377

SNOW & ICE GUIDE

Power and efficiency ▶

Sno-Way offers its 29T Trip Edge Series snow plow, available in three widths and with steel, polycarbonate or stainless steel blade skins. Features include the Shock Killer and Down Pressure systems, wireless remote controls, the quick and easy Drive-In Mount System, and an exclusive five-year structural warranty.

For more information contact Sno-Way at 262/673-7200 or visit www.snoway.com



New V-plow ▼

Fisher introduces the XtremeV plow, featuring Fisher's new Intensifire plow lights. Available in 7.5-, 8.5- and 9.5-ft. sizes, in powder-coated or stainless steel finish, the plow line includes all-new hydraulics, which produce a 50% increase in operating speed. The Intensifire halogen lighting features two-stud mounting, an adhesive-bonded lens to seal out water and a 1,500-hour, H13 long-life headlamp bulb to minimize replacement.

For more information contact Fisher at www.fisherplows.com

Steel trip edge ▲ ∂

Pro-Tech Manufacturing and Distribution introduces the IST Sno Pusher. IST stands for Ice Scraping Technology, and was created as the first steel trip edge designed for Sno Pushers to incorporate the longevity and limited moving parts of rubber-edge pushers. The urethane-based technology ushers in a new generation of steel trip edges that does not require springs or hinges.

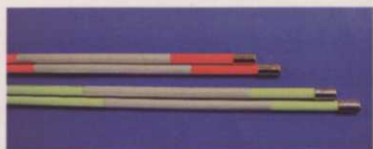
For more information contact Pro-Tech at 888/787-4766 or visit www.snopusher.com

position, enabling it to carry as much as 20 percent more snow than other plows.

For more information contact Blizzard at www.blizzardplows.com

Light your way ▼

Fiberglass Innovations' Snow Pole features a metal cap for pounding and highly reflective tape for night vision. Stop paying for costly repairs and mark your properties with the Snow Pole.



Available in HiViz orange or yellow. Poles are 5/16-in. wide and are available in 4, 5 and 6 ft.

For more information contact Fiberglass Innovations at 815/962-9338 or visit www.fiberglassinnovations.com

Advanced plowing ▶

The Blizzard Power Plow is the only snowplow on the market that can hydraulically extend its moldboard width from 8 to 10 ft. (model 810) or from 8.5 ft. to 11 ft.-3 in. (model 8611) at the flick of a switch. It can fully angle left or right while in the scoop



continued on page s22



FURTHER PROOF THAT ALL PLOWS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL.

At THE BOSS, we're in a category all our own. And what sets us apart is that our focus is you. Your needs. Your solutions. Your jobs. Because the last time we checked, a plow that's just tough enough, just reliable enough or just fast enough, just doesn't cut it. That's why we keep working to make your hitch system



PUSHING THE EDGE

faster, your cutting edge tougher, your job easier. And as a result, we end up driving the industry forward with products that are so far-and-away superior, the rest don't even compare. Experience THE BOSS for yourself by visiting bossplow.com or calling 800-286-4155 for an authorized dealer near you.

continued from page s20



New line added ▲

Winter Management offers a complete line of ice melt products known as Ice Ban by Bare Ground. Ice Ban is manufactured from a co-product of corn, grain or agricultural processing, which contain brewers' condensed solubles that are added to a base of magnesium chloride (MgCl₂). The company also added Snowman Snowplows to its distribution.

For more information contact Winter Management at 617/333-6900 or visit www.wintermgmt.com

Adjustable versatility ▼

Team Storm's MaxxPro is equipped with hydraulic side wings for wider capacity and back dragging. The MaxxPro can be used on all equipment with its own lever system, including skid steers, loaders and backhoes.



For more information call 866/362-1688 or visit www.go-teamstorm.com

Lightweight spreader ►

Buyers Products offers a 2.1-cu.yd., gas-powered poly hopper spreader. The poly hopper offers a lighter weight and improved durability, compared to steel. The spreader uses a stainless steel platform and chute assembly, standard drag chain for moving material, and cross members in the hopper for support and mounting an inverted-V.

For more information contact Buyers Products at 440-974-8888 or visit www.saltdogg.com

Valve tank package ►

Force America's VT-25 Hydraulic Valve Tank Assembly is designed to meet the needs of the light- to medium-duty truck market. The VT 25 combines all components, including a 25-gal. tank, valve, filter, filler/breather, sensors, cables, valve fittings and hose ends, under one rubber latched cover.

For more information contact Force America at 888/993-6723 or visit www.forceamerica.com



Weather Central

The Connecticut Weather Center has a network of weather observers trained in measuring snow. This network, along with its state of the-art Doppler Infinity Radar, allows the weather center to compile the most comprehensive list of official snow totals for the northeastern United States. These totals are backed with an offer of one official

forensic report per year for free.

For more information contact Connecticut Weather Center at 203/730-2899 or visit www.ctweather.com



True blue ▼

BlueHeat Ice Melter, manufactured by Dart Seasonal Products, is a fast-working blended ice melter. Its light blue tint functions as a usage indicator to avoid



over-application. BlueHeat is safe to use and works well below 0° F.

For more information contact Dart at 516/569-SNOW or visit www.dartsp.com

continued on page s24

HINIKER

SCOOP

Move More Snow.

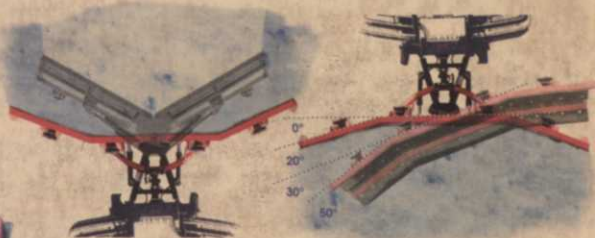
The Hiniker Scoop Plow carries more snow to improve your plowing capacity! The unique concave design actually captures snow, reducing spillage and increasing plowing efficiency. Plus Hiniker's exclusive high-clearance three-section trip-edge provides smooth plowing and full-width protection. Improve your bottom line with innovative design and solid manufacturing from Hiniker.

Twelve (8') or fourteen (9') laser-cut ribs strengthen the moldboard frame.

Trouble-free compression-type trip springs.

Durable, low-friction HMW polyethylene moldboard is virtually maintenance free.

Horizontal-truss moldboard frame provides exceptional strength.



The Scoop's concave shape (20° fixed angle outer ends) captures more snow than other plow designs, letting you clear large lots and parking areas faster than ever. It also angles left and right (up to 30°) for conventional plowing!

With the Hiniker Scoop you can move more snow. The Scoop plow has so much capacity...what used to take me an hour, now only takes 45 minutes!

Steve K. • Stuart's Landscaping • Fond du Lac, WI



The Hiniker Line

All plows work with the Hiniker Quick-Hitch Mounting System.



C-PLOW



CONVENTIONAL PLOW



SCOOP PLOW



V-PLOW



HIGH PERFORMANCE PLOW



SPREADER

HINIKER

www.hiniker.com

PUT SNOW IN ITS PLACE

800-433-5620

continued from page s22



Commercial grade ▲

Curtis' Hitch-N-Run system, which allows for automatic attachment and detachment of snow plows, has been incorporated into its municipal/commercial grade snow plow. The plow is available in 9 and 10 ft., and fits the full line of medium trucks for Ford, Chevrolet and International.

For more information contact Curtis at 800/343-7676 or visit www.curtiscabs.com



Skid steer on snow ▲

Caterpillar skid steer and multi-terrain Loaders pair with a variety of Cat work tools to tackle tough snow-removal jobs. Ten wheel models and five tracked models offer a wide range of horsepower and operating capacities, along with joystick controls for reduced fatigue and ease of operation.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 888/OWN-A-CAT / 800-RENT-CAT or visit www.cat.com/legacy

Rugged design ▼

Ventrac's KX520 Snow Blower is a two-stage unit to meet heavy-duty demands. It features a large 26-by-52-in. opening coupled to a 5-by-20-in.

blower to move large amounts of snow in little time. Features include ad-

justable skid shoes, 16-in. serrated double spiral saw-tooth auger, 220° hydraulically rotated discharge chute, hardened cutting edge, and extra heavy-duty shaft and bearings.

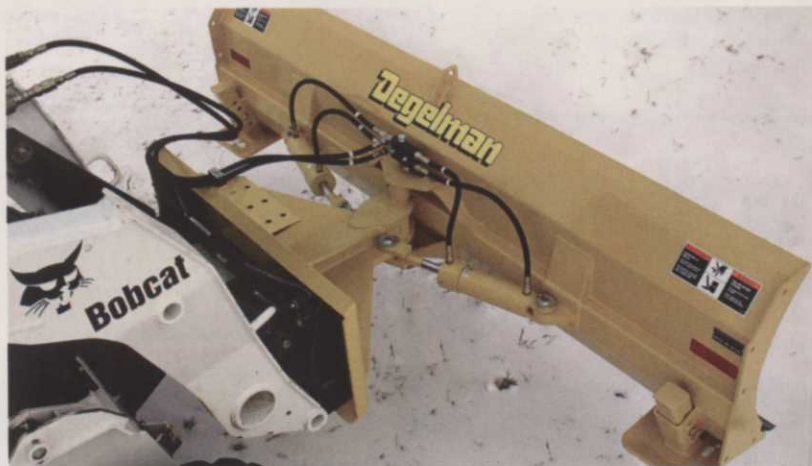
For more information contact Ventrac at 866/VENTRAC or visit www.ventrac.com



Quick and efficient ▼

Degelman's skid steer and front-end loader mounting systems quickly attach to its 3500 Series blades. They're double walled, non-ribbed and built to last. These new mounts attach in seconds to skid steers or front-end loaders.

For more information contact Degelman at 800/667-3545 or www.degelman.com



Rubber blades ▲

Smith Industrial's rubber snowplow blades can be fitted for V-plows and plow wings. They are made of a tough, resilient rubber compound that shows little wear after many hours of use.

For more information contact Smith at 815/874-5364 or visit www.smithindustrial.com/SnowplowBlade.htm

Magic show

Magic Salt is a non-corrosive, biodegradable and environmentally friendly ice melter — effective down to -30°F — that can save you up to 50% in salt use. Snow "burns off" with no plowing.

For more information contact Magic Salt at 845/485-4200 or visit www.magicsalt.info

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They said you'd have to grow up and get a real job someday.

So tell them that you bought a brand new FISHER® XtremeV™ v-plow because it's got the fastest hydraulics and the brightest lights. Tell them it comes in three sizes in either stainless or powder coated steel. Just don't tell them how much fun it is.

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Wonder how the
Green Industry ranks
for labor requests?
The answers may
surprise you



H-2B BY THE NUMBERS

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor

EVERY EMPLOYER USING THE H-2B GUEST WORKER VISA PROGRAM HAS A STORY.

Maybe it's about the cost and labor involved with getting people here. Maybe it's about the problems, the benefits or other business-related issues.

Numbers tell a story, too. The data presented here were collected during 2004 about *all* employers requesting H-2B guest workers.* It's the most complete record presently available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Take wage statistics for example. Around the country, most H-2B

workers made \$7/hour in 2004, but some made a lot more, others less.

The story behind these numbers is still the same today, only with even more volume. The cap in 2004 was 66,000 workers, but the difference today is that returning workers can come back with an H-2R visa and not count against the cap — at least until Sept. 30 when the two-year law allowing returning workers expires.

We will continue to share more statistics from this data in upcoming issues.

Take a look and see the bigger picture of H-2B. ►►

NO. 1

The **Green Industry** consumes the largest segment of H-2B visas. The 58,687 immigrants who entered the U.S. for industry jobs in 2004 represents **29% of the total**.

That's a lot.



WHO THEY ARE

Green Industry visas fell into 20 categories in 2004. "**Landscape laborer**" is the largest. That title represents **25% of all visas** and **87% of the Green Industry**.

- Garden worker
- groundskeeper
- irrigation system installer
- lawn service worker**
- snow shoveler
- tree trimmer ... and more

Housekeepers and maids

8%

Forest and conservation workers

8%

Construction workers

5%

Fish processors

4%

Waiters/Waitresses

3%

Truck drivers

1%

HOW THEY STACK UP

Other industry segments don't even come close. Here's how other major groups compare.

WHERE THEY ARE

While the Lone Star State houses the largest number of Green Industry visa holders, the Midwest isn't far behind. Here's where the most H-2B employees live:



Colorado	13%
Pennsylvania	7%
New Jersey	7%
Missouri	6.5%
Virginia	6%
Maryland	5.8%
Michigan	5%
Ohio	4%
New York	3.4%

*** METHODS** *Landscape Management* thanks Robert Wingfield, president of Amigos Inc., for sharing raw H-2B data he requested and paid for via the Freedom of Information Act from the U.S. Department of Labor in 2005. Editors then analyzed the data to determine occupational breakdowns, regional breakdowns, averages and other trends. Contact Stephanie Ricca at sricca@questex.com for more information or visit www.dol.gov/dol/foia/.

WHO MADE THE LEAST

2,740 employers paid their Green Industry workers an hourly wage. While most organized labor groups require employers to at least match prevailing wage, that's not always the case. The **lowest-paid** landscape laborers in 2004 made **\$5.72/hour** compared to the state's prevailing rate of \$6.02.

Wonder where it was?

Ponchatoula, LA.

WHO MADE THE MOST

On the flip side, some landscape laborers in *New Roche, NY*, made almost **\$18/hour**, higher than the prevailing wage of \$15.25 in their area.



PUZZLE #1

SUN

Thermal Blue

Solar Green

Thermal Blue Blaze

Dura Blue

A. The best heat tolerant bluegrass under the sun.



Each variety in the Heat Tolerant Bluegrass Series has been specifically bred to thrive much farther South

than traditional bluegrass regions. These bluegrasses look much more attractive than tall fescue and provides four seasons of color, plus they stand up to heat and wear in commercial and residential landscapes. The

Series started with the popular Thermal Blue and now includes three other varieties. Each of the four shows excellent disease and shade tolerance, yet each has characteristics all their own.

For beautiful landscapes with the luxurious look of bluegrass and all the heat, disease and shade tolerance you need, insist that the Scotts® Heat Tolerant Bluegrass Series is part of your blends or mixtures.



For more information, contact Landmark Seed at 1-800-268-2379 or visit www.scottsproseed.com.

Innovations

TECHNOLOGY

HOT NEW PRODUCTS



1



3

2



4



1 Groundsmaster adds versatility

The Toro Co. introduces the zero-radius turn rotary Groundsmaster 7200 and 7210 mowers. Three mowing deck configurations are available: 72-in. side discharge, 72-in. Guardian Recycler and 62-in. Guardian Recycler. Use the Groundsmaster to groom infields and blow leaves with accessories such as the debris blower, finish grader, tooth rake, drag mat carrier system, cocoa drag mat, steel drag mat and grooming broom. Accessories use Toro's Quick Attach System, which takes less than a minute to change with no tools required.

For more information contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or visit www.toro.com/gm7200/ / circle no. 250

2 Take this, varmints

Burrowing rodents can become intolerable at golf courses, schools, parks and home landscapes. The Rodenator Pro Pest Elimination System delivers a precision underground shockwave to the targeted animals' tunnels and dens, collapsing their tunnels to prevent re-infestation — without the use of chemicals, poisons, or baiting and trapping. Insert a wand into a burrow hole, shoot a mixture of oxygen and propane gas into the hole for 60 - 90 seconds, press a button to ignite a spark into the mixture and say goodbye to Mr. & Mrs. Varmint and all the little Varmints.

For more information contact Meyer Industries at 877/763-3628 or visit www.rodenator.com/ / circle no. 251

3 New diesel mini-skid

Compact Power, Inc.'s track-driven Boxer 526DX diesel unit is the only mini-skid that offers an integrated track system that retracts from a fully extended 43.5 in. to a width of 35 in. and is controlled by a joystick lever on the control panel, the company says. The variable track design makes it simple for the operator to maneuver the 526DX through tight areas, such as gates and sidewalks with ease, then extend back to full width for increased stability. The 526DX handles more than 50 universal compact utility attachments.

For more information contact Compact Power at 800/476-9673 or visit www.boxerequipment.com/ / circle no. 252

4 Multi-tasker

Bobcat Co.'s new 2300 4x4 (4WD) utility vehicle can be equipped with five specially designed Bobcat attachments, including a bucket, mower, pallet fork, snow blade and whisker push broom. The RapidLink attachment arm can lift loads up to 500 lbs. as high as two feet. Users can operate and change attachments from their seat with a joystick. When not in use, the RapidLink attachment arm can be removed for traditional 4WD applications. The 2300 offers Bobcat's IntelliTrak drive system for maximum traction. Powered by a 20-hp diesel engine, travel speed reaches 25 mph.

Contact Bobcat at 866/823-7898 or visit www.bobcat.com/ / circle no. 253

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- Held in conjunction with two optional green industry conferences with more than 100 educational sessions

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COMMERCIAL POWER

What makes an engine commercial?

Manufacturers offer "commercial" engines with enhanced reliability and durability. These engines feature elements that add up-front costs but also value to end users. Landscape pros recognize their equipment must be reliable and productive.

Most modern small air-cooled engines use blocks cast from aluminum. They are light weight and efficiently dissipate heat into the forced stream of the air cooling system.

Cast iron cylinder sleeves are often cast into the aluminum blocks of commercial engines for enhanced durability. Cast iron sleeves provide the additional structural integrity and wear resistance necessary for the engine to survive in a commercial environment. Additionally, the microscopic pores surface of the cast iron sleeve provide superior lubrication to the piston rings.

Most diesel-fueled engines use cast iron blocks. These engines have higher compression pressures. They need additional strength.

Lubrication is critical to a commercial engine. Most engines employ one of two types: splash or pressurized lubrication. Splash uses a paddle that splashes oil on the moving parts within the crankcase as the crank rotates. Splash lubrication is a good solution in many commercial applications.

Most commercial engines use a pressurized system with an oil pump that forces oil under pressure through passageways to the critical bearing surfaces within the engine. Most pressurized lubrication systems also incorporate a replaceable spin-on oil filter – a significant durability enhancement in itself.

Commercial engines also feature enhanced air filtration, a dual system that has both foam pre-cleaner and a paper cartridge element. An increasing number of engines include a cyclonic filter system that uses centrifugal force to separate large particles out of the airstreams before passing through a paper.



By Mark Nelson, Master Instructor, Briggs & Stratton Customer Education

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY

READ THE MANUALS

Long-time employees are the most likely to disregard the safety rules.



Got safety training?

BY HARRY SMITH

Do you want to save time, reduce injury to your employees, prevent damage to your equipment, curb lawsuits and increase productivity?

Of course you do. Every supervisor, owner or manager in our industry is interested in these things. So when was the last time you reviewed your safety training program? Who is delivering the training? What kind of training are you doing? Is it effective? You need to answer these questions honestly.

Just read it

The first secret to creating safe operators starts with RTM, short for Read The Manual. Equipment manufacturers spend time and money to create them. They include cautions, operating tips and safety warnings. The manufacturer is the best resource for machine-specific safe operating information. If you are creating your own safety program, collect all the manuals for your equipment and start reading.

I know there is a pervasive attitude that goes like this: "I have been running zero turns (insert any equipment type here) for years. What can the manufac-

turer tell me I do not already know?"

You might be surprised. Take advantage of all the resources your equipment manufacturers offer. You will find great videos /DVDs, training outlines and test material from many manufacturers.

The basic rules for creating effective training are to keep the training simple, present it in small, easily digestible chunks and make it interesting and varied from session to session. Safety training is not a one-time affair. It must be repeated to all operators, not just to new hires. Your long-time employees are the most susceptible to complacency and disregard for the safety rules.

A great place to start looking for training is the Professional Landcare Network Web site at www.landcarenetwork.org. Check out its STARS program.

Also, Toro and Exmark have teamed up with the National Safety Council to produce a zero-radius turn mower safety training package. This "tailgate" training approach looks promising. Toro has a promotional video for this training at www.toro.com/safety/index.html.

Remember safety training does not cost, it pays. Pay yourself with good safety training.

— The author is turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. Contact him at smith@lakecitycc.edu.

For when you want it gone and you want it gone fast

Customer callbacks – they're a part of the business. Did you spray these weeds? Why aren't they dying? These calls take time to answer – time you don't have!

Razor Burn™ is the new post-emergent, systemic herbicide that controls weeds quickly and easily in ornamentals, in bed maintenance, for crack and crevice treatments, brush and vine clearing and perimeter treatments. Visible results occur in 24 to 48 hours!

This unique liquid formulation is a great product for situations where mechanical efforts are not suitable or other herbicides don't provide the speedy visual results.

- ▶ *The complete control of glyphosate combined with the quick burndown of diquat – visible results in as little as 24 to 48 hours*
- ▶ *Unique, liquid formulation is easy to pour, measure and mix and will not settle out in solution and is essentially non-volatile*



- ▶ *Squeeze-and-measure container ensures there is no waste and no worries about over-application that might lead to incomplete control*
- ▶ *Reduces applicator followup, creating more productivity and customer satisfaction*

RAZOR BURN™

Contact a Nufarm representative or your local distributor for more information:
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Turf & Specialty

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Driving customers to your Web site is the first step. But what happens next? Do they bounce off or do they linger, explore and spend money?



Fill your site with info, fun

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Yes, you have a Web site, but what happens when people visit? Do they bounce off, never to return, or do they linger, explore and spend money? The next level of Web site design is all about building a sense of community.

Most Web sites in our industry are little more than an online brochure. They give the vital facts about the services offered, pictures of crisp, clean landscapes and the company's contact information. For any online community to survive you need more functionality and content. You need to expand your online brochure into a destination Web site.

Create a place to learn

People are curious. They want to know what it takes to turn their backyard into the ultimate neighborhood hangout, or to transform an old stand of trees into a secluded private setting complete with a bench and water feature. Others are interested in the name of a particularly plant or tree they saw down the street. Go crazy with articles, case studies of your best jobs, answers to frequently asked questions, and plant and tree guides. The key is to develop a lot of content that is easy to find.

As potential customers read through your site they may have questions or comments. How about an online forum where people can ask questions and discuss related topics? People feel more connected when they have a chance to add to the discussion.

Extra, extra, read all about it

Don't forget news and events. People like to hear about what's going on both inside and outside of your company. Consider hosting a Web log, otherwise known as a blog (See "More Info" box). A blog is a Web page that you update regularly with thoughts, comments and opinions. The goal is to give your Web site a space that is constantly changing. Write about your customers, the local scene, happenings in your company.

One blog idea is to sponsor a "Yard of the Month" contest with local cities. The city benefits from the property improvements and you get another source of Web traffic. This is a great way to showcase the work you are doing around town.

Shopping and service

Don't forget a place to spend money. You'll need a secure SSL certificate, a shopping cart system and a merchant account. Your Web hosting company should be able to provide everything you need. Consider allowing customers to pay their monthly invoices online as well. It's easy and convenient.

When we think of e-commerce we normally think of product sells. And by all means sell any kind of product you can find: books, plants, trees, bags of mulch, the sky is the limit. But don't forget to sell your services as well.

A well-designed Web site will get visitors to return more often and hopefully spend more money.

— *The author is a freelance technologist focusing in business automation. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit his blog at www.tylerwhitaker.com.*

MORE INFO

green-seeker.com
Visit LM's vertical search engine and type in "blog" to find Tyler Whitaker's past column on blogging.

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Fall Clean-up Products

BY MIKE SEUFFERT



JRCO ▲

The JRCO Leaf Blade plow cuts down fall clean-up time by quickly moving large piles of leaves. The 55-in.-wide galvanized steel blade fits commercial walk-behind and zero turn mowers. It attaches to the JRCO mount bar with two clevis pins. The heavy-duty blade has center and bottom reinforcement bars, flat stainless spring steel tines and two adjustable caster wheels. The plow rotates up and over the mower for easy storage.

For more information contact JRCO at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 254

Grasshopper

Grasshopper's PTO-driven Remote Vac uses a Quik-D-Tatch Vac assembly mounted in place of the deck. A flexible, 12-ft-long, 6-in.-diameter hose with hand-held swiveling nozzle

comes 360 degrees to vacuum leaves and other debris from hard-to-reach areas. Compacts debris for easier handling, then deposits it into any PowerVac Collection System.

For more information contact Grasshopper at 620/345-8621 or www.grasshoppermower.com / circle no. 255

John Deere

The John Deere 72-in. rotary broom effectively removes dirt, sand, debris and gravel from your path. Powered by a 10-hp Kohler gas engine, the rotary broom features a 24-in. diameter brush, dash-mounted hydraulic controls to raise and lower the broom as well as angle it 20 degrees to the right and left, a deflector kit to prevent material from being thrown on the operator, and castor wheels that allow the broom to easily follow various types of terrain.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 256

Billy Goat ▲

Billy Goat Industries' Multi-Vac is equipped with a top-load design, rear wheel drive for traction and an adjustable intake to pick up objects of varying sizes. The Multi-Vac also features a new self-propelled drive system and a 30-gallon, zipperless bag for debris. The push and self-propelled models both

come with 6.5 Honda engines and can hold up to 50 pounds of debris. The self-propelled model comes in three speeds: 1.2 mph, 1.7 mph and 2.2 mph.

For more information contact Billy Goat at 816/524-966 or www.billygoat.com / circle no. 257

Grassroots Technologies

Grassroots Technologies' MulchPRO aerates and rejuvenates mulch, bringing back the new look and preventing fungus and mold from growing. The MulchPRO also works for overseeding preparation. It easily tills dead spots in lawn and turf creating a seedbed, ready for overseeding or planting. The original MulchPRO provides 14 in. of tilling width, though 10-in. and 26-in. versions are available for narrow/wide areas.

For more information contact Grassroots Technologies at 262/242-1944 or www.grassrootstechnology.com / circle no. 258





Bobcat

Bobcat rotary cutters can easily mulch small branches and saplings up to 3 in. in diameter and cut through the thickest grass and brush. The attachment comes in five models with varying auxiliary hydraulic flow capabilities and is available in both 60- and 72-in. widths. Brushcat rotary cutters have a parallel linkage system that allows the cutter to better traverse rough terrain. The system allows the cutting head of the attachment to move independent of the loader with up to 9 in. of vertical travel.

For more information contact Bobcat at 866/823-7898 or www.bobcat.com / circle no. 259



Dixon Industries

Dixon's two- and three-bag commercial grass catching attachment systems increase the versatility of Dixon ZTR riding mowers. The new bagger design and improved blower system makes fall leaf clean up a snap. The Free Flow hood design directs clippings evenly to the bags while allowing sufficient air flow for maximum vacuum power. Durable mesh fabric bags are tapered and have plastic bottoms with metal handles for easier dumping and trash bag removal.

For more information contact Dixon Industries at 620/251-2000 or www.dixon-ztr.com / circle no. 260

Mulch Mule

The Mulch Mule offers an optional 24 hp high-performance Leaf Vac for leaf and debris clean up in the fall. The Leaf Vac is designed for quick set up and removal, and the machine has a capacity of 15 cu. yards. Mulch Mule is a labor-saving device that will deliver a full load of mulch

into a wheelbarrow in as little as three seconds, with no shoveling required, through a conveyor system. It can also be used as an enclosed trailer system for transporting materials.

For more information contact Mulch Mule at 330/453-3300 or www.mulchmule.com / circle no. 261



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Circle 125

LM Reports

Patriot Products

Patriot Products' CSV-3090H Wood Chipper Shredder combines a 9-hp Honda engine with a heavy duty, tri-plated rotor. Outboard bearing supports the rotor, taking the load off the engine shaft for longer life and smoother running. Also includes low oil shutdown, semi-pneumatic tires, 3-in. chipping and 1-in. shredding capacity.

For more information contact

Patriot Products
at 800/798-2447
or www.patriot-products-inc.com /
circle no. 262



Echo

The ES-230 Shred 'N' Vac is designed for professional use. Powered by a 22.8-cc Tornado Power Boost engine, it reduces debris volume by 12:1. A 35-in. intake tube provides good reach for getting to debris. Unit comes with pipes to easily convert it to a blower.

For more information contact Echo at 847/540-8400 or www.echo-usa.com / circle no. 263

Worksaver

Ideal for loading logs or piling brush and other hard-to-handle debris, the Worksaver Grapple Rake has dual upper grapples for picking up brush and leaving dirt behind. It fits most front-end loaders or skid steers and tractors. Comes in 62- or 77-in. widths.

For more information contact Worksaver at 217/324-5973 or www.worksaver.com / circle no. 264



Toro

The Toro Power Box Rake attachment, for use with Toro Dingo compact utility loaders,

transforms rough terrain into a prepared seedbed. It is designed for projects including seedbed and sod preparation, trench filling, blending grades and leveling surfaces, plus job site clean-up. It features triple-sealed, shielded roller bearings that stand up to harsh soil conditions.

For more information contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 265

Caterpillar

Five Caterpillar brush cutters cut brush and trees as large as 3 in. in diameter. Three cutters, the BR160, BR166 and BR172 are designed to use with Caterpillar loaders with standard flow hydraulics. The working widths are 60 in., 66 in. and 72 in., respectively. A

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hydraulic brake and a safety lift restriction help ensure safe operation. All of the brush cutters are joystick-ready for easy control.


For more information contact Cat at 309/675-5175 or www.cat.com / circle no. 266

RedMax

A vacuum kit is available for Redmax's HBZ2600 handheld blower for debris pick-up. The HBZ2600 develops a maximum air speed of 114 mph and maximum air volume of 395



CFM. RedMax's Strato-Charged engine uses about 35% less fuel than the company's regular 2-cycle engines, and meets clean air standards by introducing fresh air into the



engine between the exhaust gases and the fresh charge of air/fuel mix.

For more information contact RedMax at 800/291-8251 or www.redmax.com / circle no. 267

Buffalo Turbine

Buffalo Turbine's KB2 and Hurricane/pto blowers will produce up to 10,000 cfm at 175 mph. The self-contained KB2 comes with a 23-hp Kohler engine, bolt-on trailer package and remote throttle and nozzle control kit. The model Hurricane/pto model is a 3-point hitch, belt driven blower unit, equipped with a remote nozzle control kit and built-in rear roller (designed for turf protection).

For more information contact Buffalo Turbine at 760/599-6915 or www.buffaloturbine.com / circle no. 268

Little Wonder

The Little Wonder Self-Propelled High Performance Vacuum (HPV) features a hydrostatic drive to power over any terrain with complete control. A 6.5 hp Briggs Intek V/C engine offers variable speed up to 4.8 mph. The HPV handles the collection of rocks, bottles, cans, glass, paper, leaves, wet debris and fine material. The cyclonic separator and bag design,

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LM Reports



Bear Cat ▲

Process large volumes of branches with the new Bear Cat 12-in. Chipper. Model 7812086 handles branches up to 1 ft. in diameter, and its 14 x 20-in. feed opening lets users chip limbs and branches without additional pruning. The solid steel cantilever chipping disc is equipped with four reversible chipper blades, which produce a small chip.

For more information contact Bear Cat at 800/247-7335 or www.BearCatProducts.com / circle no. 272

Glenmac

The Harley Power Box Rake uses a tooth roller to handle rocks down to one-half in. in diameter. Comes in two versions: 48-, 72- or 90-in. roller widths for skid steers; and 48- and 66-in. widths for tractors.

For more information contact Glenmac at 800/437-9779 or www.glenmac.com / circle no. 273

with 90-lbs. capacity, ensures easy unloading. **For more information contact Little Wonder at 877/596-6337 or www.littlewonder.com / circle no. 269**



Swisher

Swisher's 2-in-1 Lawn Vacuum and Trailer quickly converts to a trailer by removing the mesh cover to get a sturdy 11.7-cubic ft., 500-lbs capacity trailer with dump feature. Exclusive Snap Fit blower tube provides quick

and easy dumping and reattachment. The vacuum is powered by a 5.5-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek engine. Vacuum bag capacity is 37 cu. ft., and it folds for easy storage.

For more information contact Swisher at 800/222-8183 or www.SwisherInc.com / circle no. 270

JP Carlton

JP Carlton offers 6-in. (Model 1260), 9-in. (Model 1790), 12-in. (Model 2012) and 18-in. (Model 2018) wood chippers for landscape, tree maintenance and land clearing applications. Heavy-duty construction including a form-welded frame, superior Torflex axle strength and construction grade tires are standard on all models. Carlton chippers feature high-speed dynamically balanced disk rounds for maximum chipping power.

For more information contact JP Carlton at 800/243-9335 or www.stumpcutters.com / circle no. 271



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The TM-62 is a high-production, commercial-grade aerator that can tackle a field in 35 minutes or less, making aeration quick and easy. Its 72 deep-coring tines create 3/4-inch holes up to 4 inches deep, alleviating thatch and compaction problems. Ground-driven tine wheels are mounted in pairs to allow turning without tearing the turf. Available in tow-type and 3-point hitch, the TM-62 is an economical investment to improving your field conditions.



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Excel ►

Front-mounted Sweepster power sweepers offer a full 60-in. sweeping width. Units are available with either mechanical or hydraulic drive. While the 30-degree angle is standard, adjustable hydraulic angling is available.



For more information contact Excel at 800/395-4757 or www.excelhustler.com / circle no. 276

TrynEx International

Designed for cleanup, material handling and snow removal applications, the SweepEx Mega 480 is ideal for use with compact utility loaders. Built with a 48-in. mainframe, it is adaptable to most service vehicles. Unit has 11 brush rows. Attach broom extenders to each end of the broom to increased width to 84 in. SweepEx brooms have no moving parts, eliminating cleaning and lubrication of sprockets and bearings.

For more information contact TrynEx International at 800/725-8377 / circle no. 274



Vermeer

Vermeer's BC1400TX brush chipper can process wood up to 15 in. in diameter and is powered by a 122 hp CAT 3054 DITA engine. A flexible track undercarriage allows operators to steer the mid-sized chipper through areas where a tow vehicle cannot maneuver.

For more information call 641/621-7731 or visit www.vermeer.com / circle no. 275



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- CONTRACTOR/SERVICE COMPANIES
- 01 Landscape Contractors (Installation & Maintenance)
 - 02 Lawn Care Service Companies & Custom Chemical Applicators (ground & air)
 - 03 Irrigation Contractors & Consultants
 - 04 Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____
- LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS CARE FACILITIES
- 05 Sports Complexes
 - 06 Parks
 - 07 Schools, Colleges & Universities
 - 08 Other Grounds Care Facilities (please specify) _____
- SUPPLIERS AND CONSULTANTS
- 09 Extension Agents/Consultants for Horticulture
 - 10 Sod Growers, Turf Seed Growers & Nurseries
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 - 12 Manufacturers
 - 13 Other (please specify) _____

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- 2. Which of the following best describes your title?** (Fill in ONE only)
- 10 **Executive/Administrator** - President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Director of Physical Plant
 - 20 **Manager/Superintendent** - Arborist, Architect, Landscape/Grounds Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Supervisor
 - 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
 - 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
 - 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____
- 3. Which of the following services does your company provide?** (Fill in ALL that apply)
- MAINTENANCE SERVICES
- 01 Mowing
 - 02 Turf Fertilization
 - 03 Turf Insect Control
 - 04 Turf Disease Control
 - 05 Turf Aeration
 - 06 Hydro-seeding
 - 07 Turf Weed Control
 - 07 Irrigation Services
 - 08 Bedding/Perennial Installation
 - 09 Tree Care
 - 10 Pond/Lake Care
 - 11 Snow Removal
- DESIGN/BUILD
- 12 Landscape Design
 - 13 Landscape Installation
 - 14 Irrigation Installation
 - 15 Paving/Deck/Patio Installation
 - 16 Landscape Lighting
 - 17 Other (please specify) _____
- 4. Which of the following landscape products do you purchase or specify?** (Fill in ALL that apply)
- 27 Mowers
 - 28 Engines
 - 29 Blowers
 - 30 Chain Saws
 - 31 Line Trimmers
 - 32 Fertilizers
 - 33 Insecticides
 - 22 Herbicides
 - 21 Fungicides
 - 40 Biological/Organics
 - 36 Turf Seed/Seed
 - 32 Spreaders
 - 39 Bedding/Perennials Plants
 - 28 Ornamental/Nursery Products
 - 24 Irrigation Systems
 - 38 Ponds/Water Features
 - 29 Pavers/Masonry/Bricks/Rocks (Hardscape Materials)
 - 31 Skid Steers
 - 42 Compact Track Loaders
 - 33 Tractors
 - 44 Pick up Trucks
 - 43 Cab Forward Trucks
 - 37 Utility Vehicles
 - 41 Business Management Software
 - 97 Other (please specify) _____
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- 001 More than \$4,000,000
 - 002 \$2,000,000 - \$4,000,000
 - 003 \$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999
 - 004 \$1,000,000 - \$1,499,999
 - 005 \$500,000 - \$999,999
 - 006 Less than \$500,000

106003

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 - 08 Other Grounds Care Facilities (please specify) _____
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- 09 Extension Agents/Consultants for Horticulture
 - 10 Sod Growers, Turf Seed Growers & Nurseries
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 - 12 Manufacturers
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 - 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
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 - 17 Other (please specify) _____
- 4. Which of the following landscape products do you purchase or specify?** (Fill in ALL that apply)
- 27 Mowers
 - 28 Engines
 - 29 Blowers
 - 30 Chain Saws
 - 31 Line Trimmers
 - 32 Fertilizers
 - 33 Insecticides
 - 22 Herbicides
 - 21 Fungicides
 - 40 Biological/Organics
 - 36 Turf Seed/Seed
 - 32 Spreaders
 - 39 Bedding/Perennials Plants
 - 28 Ornamental/Nursery Products
 - 24 Irrigation Systems
 - 38 Ponds/Water Features
 - 29 Pavers/Masonry/Bricks/Rocks (Hardscape Materials)
 - 31 Skid Steers
 - 42 Compact Track Loaders
 - 33 Tractors
 - 44 Pick up Trucks
 - 43 Cab Forward Trucks
 - 37 Utility Vehicles
 - 41 Business Management Software
 - 97 Other (please specify) _____
- 5. My firm's annual revenue is:** (Fill in ONE only)
- 001 More than \$4,000,000
 - 002 \$2,000,000 - \$4,000,000
 - 003 \$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999
 - 004 \$1,000,000 - \$1,499,999
 - 005 \$500,000 - \$999,999
 - 006 Less than \$500,000

106003

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Get a Grip

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WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS

No, you don't have to buy an electric unit to stay on the good side of the 'noise' police.



Let's keep it quiet

BY ALLEN SPENCE

What should I do now?" You might ask yourself this question as the police officer drives off. "My customer's

neighbor called the police to complain about how loud my blower is. Now it looks like an electric blower and a generator are my next equipment purchases!"

Been in a similar scenario? Rest easy, you're not alone. Noise ordinances are sprouting in a lot of communities. These ordinances are here to stay, and many communities are aggressively enforcing them. Ask yourself this: "How loud is it to others if I have to wear ear plugs to operate it?" You guessed it; this month we're focusing on backpack blowers.

Check local rules

The good news is that outdoor power equipment manufacturers are paying attention and gasoline-powered equipment that will meet your needs is here. In my area, a maximum of 90 db (A) seems to be the standard used for enforcement. Many communities have time-of-day limitations on when noise levels can be exceeded.

Most of these ordinances do not target outdoor power equipment, just loud noise in general. Several zoning administrators I spoke with did indicate that outdoor power equipment had not yet been a problem, but yes, the police department would be the ones to enforce any problems. Officers have decibel meters in their patrol cars to check noise levels.

Choices abound

I visited four manufacturers' Web sites, and in only a few moments I found lots of information. All of them had several gasoline-powered models that fall well under the 90 db (A) level. You can also find several models in the 88 to 92 db (A) range. All of these manufacturers I checked have at least one backpack model, and one company even has three in the 65 to 70 db (A) range. Added insulation, redesigned fans and housings, and redesigned engine exhaust systems are some of the features used for these low noise level models.

So, to answer the question above, for most of the United States, at least: "No, you don't have to buy a generator and electric blower, not just yet."

—The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds

Community College in Raymond, MS.

Contact him at haspence@hindsc.edu.

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Property at a glance

- Location: Dallas
- Grounds Supervisor: Kevin L. Dilliard
- Category: Urban University
- Total budget: \$605,000
- Year site built: 1911
- Acres of turf: 50
- Acres of display beds: two
- Total paved area: 95 acres
- Total man-hours/week: 760

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Continuing construction of new buildings
- ▶ Added responsibilities for irrigation installation and landscape design, added maintenance of university president's home

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Irrigation and landscape of Perkins Administration Building and McFarlin Auditorium
 - ▶ Landscape of Dedman School of Law and Faculty Club building

On the job

- ▶ 19 full-time staff, two licensed pesticide applicators

What attracts many visitors to the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, whether they are a student headed to class or a neighbor taking a bike ride through, is that the landscaping is beautiful yet attainable.

"We want to be a destination where people can come and see plants they can grow in their own yards and gardens," says Kevin L. Dilliard, SMU's landscape manager. "We're a resource to people both on and off campus because we are in an educational setting."

Dilliard and his staff of 19 full-time employees have moved in that direction in the past few years, incorporating more native Texas materials into the landscape, such as salvias, sages, ornamental grasses and yuccas. The two acres of display beds around campus are changed out three or four times per year to give the university splashes of color. The spring display, for instance, includes nearly 50,000 bulbs of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and muscari.

The campus itself is located on 175

acres north of Dallas, and the 75 buildings which house more than 11,000 students are surrounded by stately oak trees, separating them from the sprawling urban metropolis which surrounds them on all sides.

Though the campus was built in 1911, it has been going through a growth spurt recently, with five new buildings constructed in the last five years. The construction, along with working

around students, staff and other visitors, is a challenge to Dilliard and his crew, but it has also given them an opportunity. As buildings are constructed and renovated, it allows the crew to add new elements, new materials into the landscape, giving the campus an exciting, diverse look.

"When I first came here, all the flowerbeds were contracted out so it was pretty monotonous. As we've added beds and changed things around, we tried to make it so that when visitors go through the campus, they don't see the same thing all the time," Dilliard says. "We like it that everywhere people go, they see something different."



Kevin Dilliard

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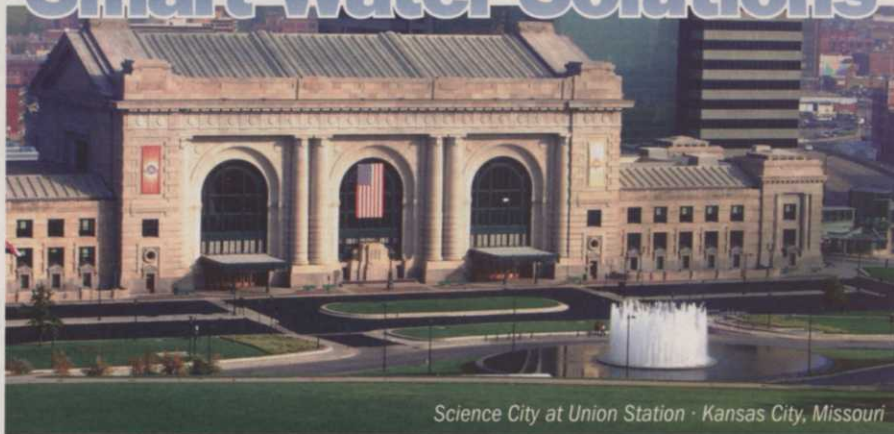


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16-20 PLANET Summer

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17 VNLA 2006 Field Day /

Smithfield, VA, Sponsored by Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, 800/476-0055,
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23 Michigan Turfgrass Field

Day / East Lansing, MI, Sponsored by MSU Extension, 517/321-1660,
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24 IPLA Summer Field Day /

Carmel, IN, Sponsored by Indiana Professional Lawn & Landscape Association, 317/575-9010,
www.ipla.com

September

6-8 Green Summit /

Lenox, MA, Sponsored by New England Nursery Association, 508/653-3112, www.nensyassn.org

13-16 ANLA Landscape

Distribution Tour / Dallas, Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association, 202/789-2900, www.anla.org

18-21 North American Weed Management Association

Annual Conference / Calgary, Canada, Sponsored by North American Weed Management Association / 970/887-1228,
www.nawma.org

19-23 ANLA/WNGA Kick the

Dirt Tour & Sessions / Cleveland, Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association, 202/789-2900,
www.anla.org

20-21 Garden Market Expo /

Las Vegas, Sponsored by California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers, 800/748-6214,
gardenmarketexpo.com

22-23 Monopolize Your

Marketplace / Linthicum, MD, Sponsored by Professional Landcare Network, 800/395-2522,
www.landcarenetwork.org

24-27 RISE / CroLife America

Annual Meeting / Orlando, FL, Sponsored by Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment,
www.pestfacts.org

28-30 America in Bloom

Symposium / Eureka Springs, AR, Sponsored by American Bloom, 800/632-7608,
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Highland Outdoor

Merger results in more competitive, diversified services

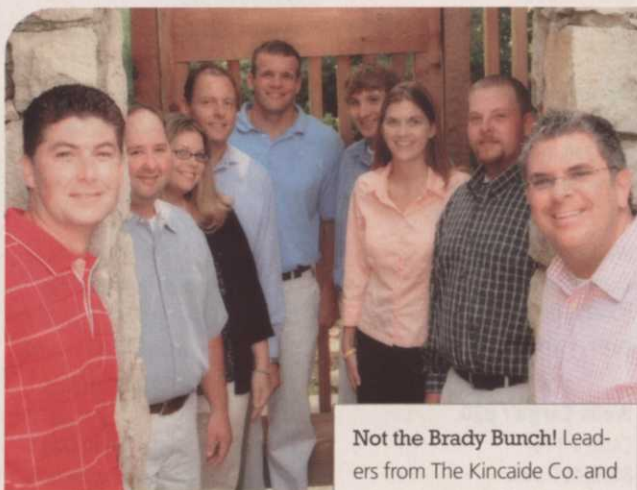
BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Metropolitan Kansas City is loaded with excellent landscare companies. Few, however, have been more aggressive in making their mark in this region than Highland Outdoor.

Formed from the 2004 merger of The Kincaide Co. of Kansas City, KS, founded in 1987, and 8-year-old ADKI Group LLC, Highland Outdoor set to work to become one powerful customer-centric, systems-driven landscape company.

Equals unite

"Kincaide and ADKI was a merger of equals," says Chad Fulk, Highland Outdoor president and CEO. "Kincaide had focused on high-end residential landscape design/build, where ADKI targeted maintenance. When we penciled together the organizational chart of the merged company, we were excited to see how our staffs lined up — from sales to design to operations to finance."



Not the Brady Bunch! Leaders from The Kincaide Co. and ADKI Group LLC form one big family — Highland Outdoor.

Olathe, KS-based Highland Outdoor was a merger four years in the making, born out of regular breakfast chats between The Kincaide Company's Jason Cupp, CLP, and Fulk, one of the founders of ADKI Group. Literally over coffee the two men agreed that the companies' cultures and services could be blended to form a larger, more competitive operation offering a fuller palette of services.

"We have clients who ended agreements with five or six different landscape companies to begin one relationship with us. It's amazing to us that high-end

clients ever wanted to deal with that many different companies," says Fulk. "It's a great opportunity for us."

Challenges arise

The company's first year in business was challenging, concedes co-founder Cupp, who now serves as chairman of the board.

"We underestimated the demands on our legacy company staffs, as well as the differences between the management and leadership style between Chad and I," he says.

"In June of 2005, we realized that our roles were reversed. Chad is best wired for the company's day-to-day operations, and I am better in a

role of the big-picture view of the company — working on our marketing, branding and strategic plan," says Cupp.

Highland Outdoor specializes in services to high-end residential clients, which generates about 70% of its revenues. In January of 2006, the company hired a business development manager to grow turf management and horticulture services.

Cupp and Fulk feel these divisions will benefit from increased sales and additional analysis of operational efficiencies.

Focus, focus, focus

One of the benefits Highland Outdoor didn't know would result from the merger was focus. Their teams are aligned to focus on the particular parts of the business they have the most impact on: the sales team on the revenue, operations on direct expenses, executive management on indirect expenses, and Cupp and Fulk on the profit.

"We're not perfect; we find ourselves straying from our strategic plan, and from time to time we have to rally the troops in a team meeting," admits Cupp.

The future is bright for Highland Outdoor with revenues in 2006 up 22% for the year, while beating profit projections. Cupp says the company has plans to expand beyond Kansas City. **LM**

►► **Online:** www.highland-outdoor.com **Location:** Olathe, KS
Principals: Chad Fulk, Pres/CEO; Jason Cupp, chairman of the board
Employees: 32 full time **Projected 06 revenues:** Up 22%

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