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COVER PHOTO BY: JESSE TALLMAN OF EWING IRRIGATION PRODUCTS



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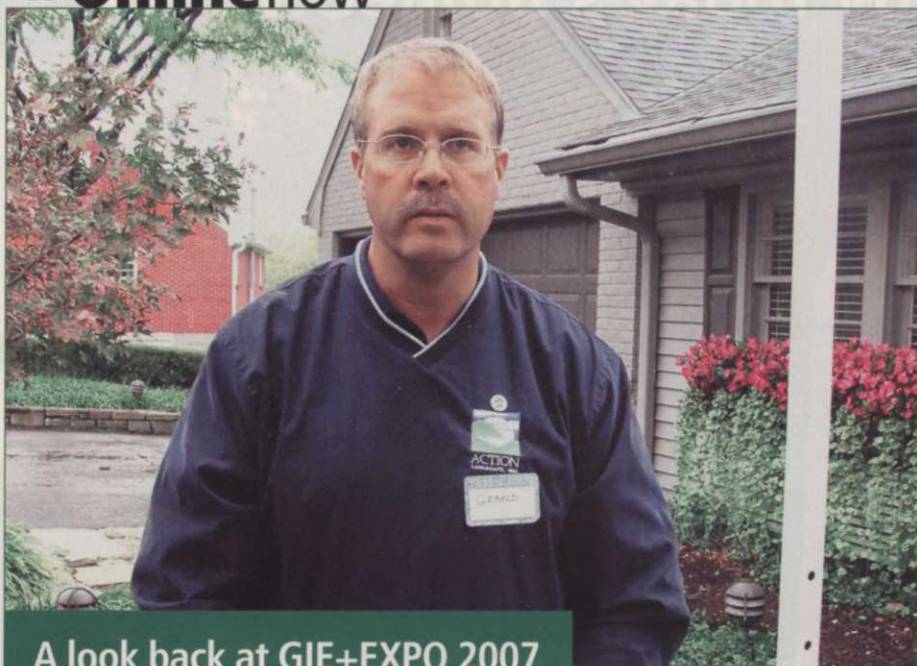


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### A look back at GIE+EXPO 2007

Gerald Heuke shared his sales and marketing secrets as Louisville, KY-based Action Landscape opened its doors to four busloads of participants at PLANET's design/build facility tour at GIE+EXPO. Find out what he had to say, plus check out all of our other coverage of the Green Industry's biggest show right now at LandscapeManagement.net.

## » Special issue

The 2008 Business Planner is chock full of the most useful business information available to those in the Green Industry. If you missed the October issue look for it online.



## » Readers respond

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**18%** There has been some softness in sales to homeowners.

**9%** We have begun to shift more toward commercial.

**38%** No effect that we can determine.

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## » Overheard

**"I'm a lobbyist; I could talk to dead people."**

— Kris Kiser, Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, vice president for public affairs

## » ONLINERESOURCES

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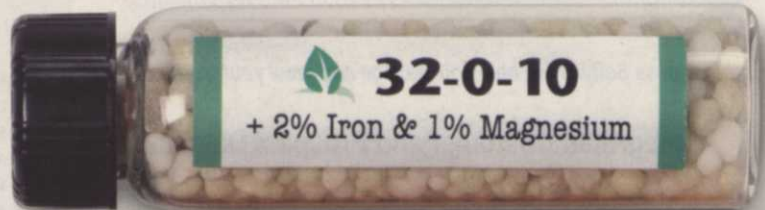
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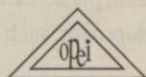
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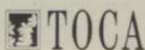
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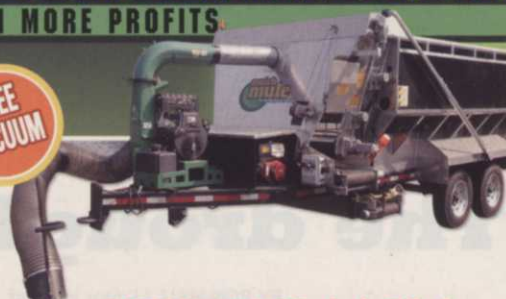


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Circle 107



## The drought's bitter lesson

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

**F**ifteen years ago my wife, Vicky, and I spent several sun-filled late-summer days with friends at Lake Lanier in north Georgia. It's a beautiful inland lake with homes and cottages, many with turf and ornamentals, on water's edge. The lake bends into countless, small, quiet, wooded coves whose shorelines are softened by vistas of pine and live oak.

This is a wonderfully green place to relax and recreate for land-locked Atlantans living less than an hour drive to the south. It's also their main source of fresh water.

As I write this, Lanier is morphing into a giant mud puddle. It has become the poster child of a devastating drought that has settled over much of the Southeast. The drought is at its most vicious in north Georgia where a severe multi-county watering ban was announced early in October. Water your turfgrass or flower garden and face the prospect of a stiff fine.

Neighboring states also suffer from inadequate precipitation. Officials there, too, have taken unprecedented measures to protect and conserve water. These include bans or irrigation restrictions.

### A stealthy destroyer

The nature of a drought is that it sneaks up to do its destruction — day by day, week by week or, in the case of the Southeast, month by month. A drought kills slowly, but it kills nonetheless. It numbers

among its victims agricultural crops, lawns and gardens, urban trees and forests and, in some cases, livestock. Its long-term victims include development that adds to a region's economic growth.

In October, about 30 landscapers whose businesses have been affected by the disaster gathered at the Georgia State Capitol. They prayed for rain.

The lack of precipitation and the resulting irrigation bans have claimed more than 13,000 jobs and cost them \$1.2 billion in lost revenues, they said. Their revenues have decreased 25% or more.

### Now we know

The rain will return and the drought will end, eventually. But the need to conserve water, particularly in regions experiencing rapid development, such as our Sunbelt states, will intensify.

We in the Green Industry are challenged to become more knowledgeable about plants and practices that make best use of water. The same goes for today's cutting-edge irrigation technology. It's available; let's use it.

Beyond that, we must become more knowledgeable and participate in the water-use decision making process.

Actually, we won't have a choice. Our colleagues in the arid Southwest learned this years ago.

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Drought is a killer. Its long-term victims include development that adds to a region's economic growth.





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Successful companies are passionate about their business model. They live, breathe and think it all year long.



## Define your business model

BY BRUCE WILSON

**M**ost highly successful companies become successful as they better define their business model. They define it in a way that is clear to all stakeholders. All actions and strategies revolve around the business model. These successful companies align financial architecture, operational architecture, market positioning and social architecture around this business model and execute.

The business model defines key drivers in the company strategy such as ideal customers, ideal size jobs and geographic areas of operation. Operationally the business model helps managers define the way to operate and better understand how that matches up with those customers, jobs and areas of operation. The company's finances are disciplined to support these business drivers, as does the social architecture of the company.

All systems are built to support the business model. This is contrary to the way some companies build. Many managers go to industry meetings and pick up random ideas that address their company's issues and adopt them. You hear this often in crew size discussions, for example the ideal crew size. A successful company explains how 5- and 6-man crews are better because they need less equipment, fewer foremen, because of crewmember ratios that lead to lower average hourly wage and so forth. So now the company adopts the large crew concept

but only has a few job sites large enough for a large crew to work efficiently.

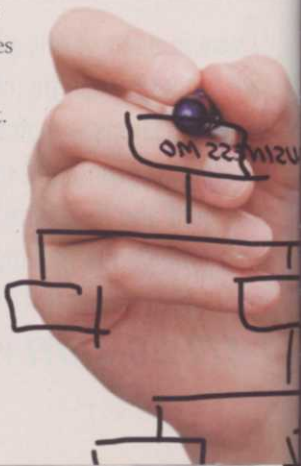
A company that understands and executes its business model matches the operational practices such as crew size to job size. In this model it targets large job sites. Its financial strategy involves budgeting for large equipment, and within its social architecture it develops and trains foremen that can manage 4- and 5-man crews.

### Discipline matters

To stay true to its model, this company disciplines itself to turn down small jobs. It disciplines itself to turn down work outside a tightly defined geographical area. This company, following the plan its model dictates, defines the right customers for its particular model, the minimum or maximum job size, the scope of work to be done and so forth.

Generally speaking, successful companies are passionate about their business model. They live, breathe and think it all year long. It drives planning and business improvement. Successful companies also are aware of its strengths and weaknesses during economic cycles and know how to adjust.

— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit [www.wilson-oyler.com](http://www.wilson-oyler.com).







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# In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

## GIE+EXPO highlights

LOUISVILLE, KY — The first combined Green Industry and Equipment EXPO (GIE+EXPO) was undoubtedly the biggest Green Industry showcase ever, as more than 21,000 participants descended upon Louisville for three days of education, equipment and entertainment Oct. 25-27. Rain put a damper on

the 20-acre outdoor demonstration area, which was closed at various times, but the enthusiasm on the show floor and at the education seminars never subsided.

Here's a few pictures to give you a taste of the proceedings. Complete coverage is available online at [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net).

1 Rip Tompkins demonstrates rope climbing at Husqvarna's booth. 2 PLANET's Breakfast of Champions was packed, as usual. 3 Toro unveiled this prototype stand-on mower. 4 Rain didn't deter attendees from riding Wright's Stander. 5 Kawasaki's Greg Knott discusses the new FX and FS series engines.



CLIPPINGS

### Brickman buys Buzzuto Landscaping

GAITHERSBURG, MD — The Brickman Group signed an agreement to purchase Bozzuto Landscaping. With locations in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, Bozzuto Landscaping's 250 team members will continue to serve the greater Washington/Baltimore metropolitan region. Company founder and president Tom Davis will join Brickman's Mid-Atlantic team in continuing to operate the business under the Brickman Group. The sale is set to close December 31, 2007.

### Bobcat book captures 50-year history

WEST FARGO, ND — To mark its 50th Anniversary, Bobcat has introduced "Bobcat: Fifty Years of Opportunity — 1958-2008." Published by Motorbooks International and authored by Marty Padgett, the tome features 11 chapters and 264 pages. A bookstore version with five chapters and 216 pages is also available. The special edition is only available through Bobcat channels.

### Weathermatic buys Ecologic

DALLAS — Mike Mason, president of Weathermatic, reports the acquisition of Ecologic, developer of the RainBrain line of rain and rain/freeze sensors. Ecologic founder Dave Klever will oversee the transition and the move of Ecologic's manufacturing operations into the Weathermatic production facility.



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Total hours: Placing Sod

**38:53**

Hours Bill Owen  
worked last week

**611:05**

Total hours to date:  
Crestview

## WEEKLY TIMECARD

NAME: *Bill Owen* DATES: *10-14*

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOBSITE/PROJECT	HOURS
Mon.	7:00	1/2	3:30		Brentwood	8
Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00			8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00		Crestview	8 1/2
Fri.			4:00			8 1/2

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

GUESSWORK

## Employee Report

Owen, Bill

Date Range: 12/10/2007 through 12/14/2007

Day	Date	Jobsite	Start	Stop	Cost Code	Hours	Total
Mon	12/10	Brentwood	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57	
			12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41	7:38 hours
Tue	12/11	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55	
			12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40	7:35 hours
Wed	12/12	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50	
			12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03	7:53 hours
Thu	12/13	Crestview	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Placing Sod	5:02	
			12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Placing Sod	2:56	7:58 hours
Fri	12/14	Crestview	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Placing Sod	4:54	
			12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Placing Sod	2:55	7:49 hours

SIGNATURE: *Bill Owen*  
Signature Owen, Bill

Total 38:53 hours

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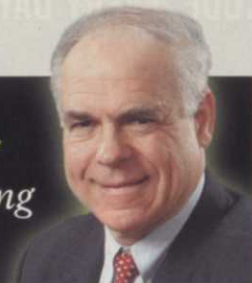
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# In the Know

## LEGALLY Speaking



BY KENNETH D. MORRIS, ESQ. L.L.C.

**Q** As an Association member, I recently attended a meeting where several members appeared to be talking about some sort of pricing scheme aimed at driving a particular company out of business. I was concerned about alienating them if I said anything opposing their idea. What should I have done?

**A** Any discussion of the pricing of products at Association meetings, whether official or ad hoc, is illegal under antitrust law. Once you sensed that some illegal activity was being concocted, you should have immediately left the room. By staying in the room you became part of an illegal conspiracy to violate the antitrust laws by restraining competition and engaging in this group activity. Your departure should have been loud and visible to all present so that it will be remembered in the future should any federal or state regulatory body find out about the meeting and begin an action to prosecute those who were present and participated in the conspiracy. If you can spill water or coffee conspicuously during your departure, so much the better!

Kenneth D. Morris, a Philadelphia-based attorney with more than 30 years corporate and law firm experience, offers information on industry legal issues in each issue of L.M. Contact him via [www.kenmorrislaw.com](http://www.kenmorrislaw.com).

**Note:** The above should not be interpreted as offering legal advice in any jurisdiction where such practice is not authorized. Engage competent counsel familiar with your jurisdiction when legal issues arise.



## Stihl grows U.S. presence with new Virginia Beach plant

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA** — Here's one for you: A major, foreign-based, private company built and staffed a new manufacturing plant in the United States. Handheld outdoor power equipment manufacturer Stihl, Inc. dedicated a new guide bar plant in this city of 435,000 people on Oct. 10.

Ramping up manufacturing and refusing to outsource production is not the only major trend this manufacturer, which recorded worldwide sales of \$2.6 billion last year, is bucking. It's not at all bashful to advertise that it doesn't distribute or sell its products through big-box stores or mass merchandisers. Instead it sells them through designated Stihl servicing dealers. Stihl is also the only chain saw maker that manufactures its own engines, saw chains and guide bars.

"We are in-sourcing," said Peter K. Mueller, executive vice president of operations. "We are bringing as much as possible in house as long as we can make it efficiently." He pointed out that his company has invested \$160 million in its Virginia Beach facilities in the last three years alone, the guide bar plant being the latest

major investment.

With the addition of the guide bar plant, the company's U.S. presence here now numbers eight buildings on three parcels of land that total more than 83 acres. Stihl employs more than 1,840 people, making it the largest manufacturer in Virginia Beach.

Mueller said one of the factors leading to the new 66,000-sq.-ft. guide bar plant being built in Virginia Beach — in addition to cost savings and efficiency of being within the huge U.S. market — was the availability of skilled workers.

"The quality is being built by the people working here," he said. "The people that are running that facility (the guide bar plant) are highly skilled; they're highly sophisticated."

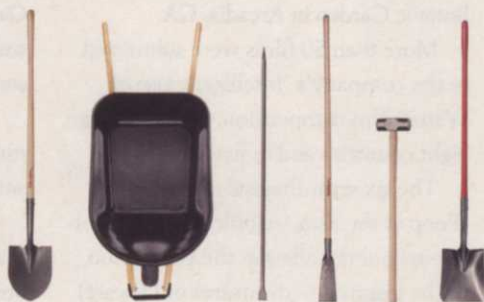
**Hans Peter Stihl cited his company's commitment to quality and innovation as contributing to the success of its products worldwide.**







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## Rain Bird film competition spotlights water

BY JANET AIRD

Of all the ways to spread the word about the importance of conserving water, a film competition must be one of the most creative.

"We were inspired by YouTube," said David Johnson, corporate marketing director for Rain Bird, referring to the Web site where viewers can post videos they've made. Rain Bird co-sponsored the event with the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden in Arcadia, CA.

More than 50 films were submitted to the company's "Intelligent Use of Water" film competition, coming from eight countries and in five languages.

The six semi-finalists ranged from "Poop at the Zoo," a look at the state-of-the-art public toilets at the Bronx Zoo, to the inspired "Adventures of I (heart) H2O Man," a water-saving superhero.

Many were collaborations between landscapers and filmmakers, and "some filmmakers have very strong opinions," Johnson said.

The last category includes Sergio

Cannella, an independent filmmaker from Palermo, Italy, which faces both summer droughts and infrastructure problems with leaking water pipes. The six judges gave him the Jury Award for his gem of a film, "Carpa Diem." It begins with a little girl watching happily as her fish (a carp) swims in its aquarium and then in alarm as the water drains out while her brother wastes water in the bathroom. In less than 2 minutes, Cannella sums up his philosophy of how small efforts by everyone can help conserve water.

"It's possible to make a short film so meaningful when you are aware and sensitive to the environment," Cannella said.

Shalini Kantayya, of Brooklyn, NY, is another filmmaker who is passionate about the use of water. Her film, "A Drop of Life," won the Audience Award. It showed the harm that can be done when pre-paid water meters are installed, in this case, in a poverty-stricken village in

India that used to receive its water free from a communal well.

Rain Bird has posted the films on its Web site ([www.iuowfilm.com](http://www.iuowfilm.com)), and it may take them on the road. The company wants them to be accessible to "anyone who's interested in saving water," Johnson said.

The company is especially trying to reach professionals in the landscaping industry, he said. They're hoping more landscapers will use water-saving irrigation systems as a selling tool.

**From left to right: David Johnson, corporate marketing director, Rain Bird; Sergio Cannella, winner of the Jury Award for "Carpa Diem," Shalini Kantayya, winner of the Audience Award for "A Drop of Life," and Mark Wourms, CEO of the L.A. County Arboretum and Botanic Garden.**



## Save Our Small Business Act moves closer to one-year reprieve

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Senator Barbara A. Mikulski's (D-MD) announced Oct. 15, she added language to the fiscal year 2008 spending bill to extend a critical provision of her Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act that expired on September 30 and protects small and seasonal businesses from cuts to their workforce.

The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 75-19 and now moves into a conference committee where members from the Senate and House will decide if the provision makes it into the final bill, which ultimately must be signed by the President.

"I told small businesses they could count on me to keep fighting, and I meant it," said Mikulski. "Without these sea-

sonal workers, many businesses would not survive, be forced to limit services, lay off permanent U.S. workers or, worse yet, close their doors."

The Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act, signed into law by President Bush in May 2005, exempted returning seasonal workers from counting against the national cap of 66,000 guest workers, but was not made permanent in the 2005 bill, and has to be extended each year until Senator Mikulski's proposal to make it permanent is passed.

The provision is, once again, a one-year extension to allow companies to continue to get the seasonal workers they depend on. It will expire on September 30, 2008.



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**Problem** Summer annuals have been removed from the containers. Our client, who manages an up scale resort, wants a Thanksgiving installation that is "traditional yet dramatic". What would you recommend?

**The cause**  
Customers don't really know what they want. The terms traditional, dramatic, colorful and "like Disney World" are commonly used by clients. When you hear these terms coming from your client's mouth, ask lots of questions to find out what they are really asking for. Ask if they have seen examples installed nearby or pictures. Ask what specific colors they like.

**Solution**

In most cases you are safe doing a display that is very traditional. Most containers need height to make displays more dramatic. The general ratio is that the tallest accent piece should be two-thirds the size of the pot. In this case we reused a purple fountain from the summer program and placed it in the center. In the center, scattered amongst the blades of the purple fountain grass we inserted dried stems of miniature cattails and woody branches that had been coated with gold glitter.

We planted four mums, two yellow and two orange over sized mums to completely fill the pots. (Note: if you have multiple containers in a row make sure the color placement is the same for all the containers as the design repetition makes a bolder statement in the landscape). In the gaps between the plants we inserted some Spanish moss and large pinecones to create a finished appearance.

Always instruct employees to water the installed container immediately after planting. This will assure the plants last as long as possible and also so that as the soil settles if the soil settles you can make any needed adjustments in the container.

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**AFTER**



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# Organic lawn care program tried at National Mall

WASHINGTON, D.C. — [SafeLawns.org](http://www.SafeLawns.org) is undertaking what it is describing as the highest profile organic lawn makeover in America.

Representatives of SafeLawns.org recently completed a 2-week project that involved plowing a section of existing lawn at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The group then added compost, other natural soil amendments and fertilizers before reseeding the area. The representatives will return to the site frequently in the next two years to continue an organic maintenance program on the area that measures more than four acres.

The National Park Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, which both partnered in the project, will now evaluate each of the three plots; one maintained conventionally by the National Park Service, a second that has received standard organic treatment and a third that has had a complete organic makeover.

"This is a pilot project to demonstrate whether environmentally friendly soil treatments such as compost tea can improve the viability of the soil enough to make grass more viable under the extreme compaction conditions of the National Mall," according to the National Park Service website at <http://www.nps.gov/nama/parkmgmt/upload/SafeLawns.pdf>. The three-block comparison is between the U.S. Capitol Building and the Washington Monument, starting at 3rd Street and extending to 7th Street.

"This is exactly the kind of high visibility project we had in mind when we conceived our organization in February of 2006," said Paul Tukey, founder of SafeLawns.org and author of the best-selling book, *The Organic Lawn Care Manual*. "If we can grow resilient grass

on the National Mall, where 27 million people trample the lawn each year, then we will have demonstrated that we can grow grass anywhere."

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The advertisement features a central image of a house with a garden. A small inset labeled 'Before' shows the house without landscaping. A larger inset labeled 'NEW 3D' shows the same house with a detailed 3D rendering of a garden with flowers and trees. Below these are three software interface windows: 'Realistic Photo Imaging' showing a photo of a house, 'Easy-to-Use CAD' showing a technical drawing of a garden plan, and 'Customer Proposals' showing a list of items and prices. To the right is the software box for 'PRO Landscape' by drafrix software inc., which includes the text 'The Standard in Design Software for Landscape Professionals' and the website 'www.prolandscape.com'.

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# In the Know

## People & companies



**Craig Rupert** has been named 2007 Easter Seals Philanthropist of the Year

for his work in contributing and raising money for the organization's new intergenerational center.

The **Scotts Company** added two new territory managers: **Cameron Smith** for California, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah; and **Kim Moore** for Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

A new learning center in a Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago is named after **Carlos Cantu**, the late **ServiceMaster** executive known for his participation in Memphis civic life. The \$7.7 million center, which will offer everything from early childhood education to university courses taught by professors from Chicago colleges, reflects Cantu's belief in the value of education.

**Halco Lighting Technologies** appointed **Ernest L. Johnson** to the newly created position of product manager.



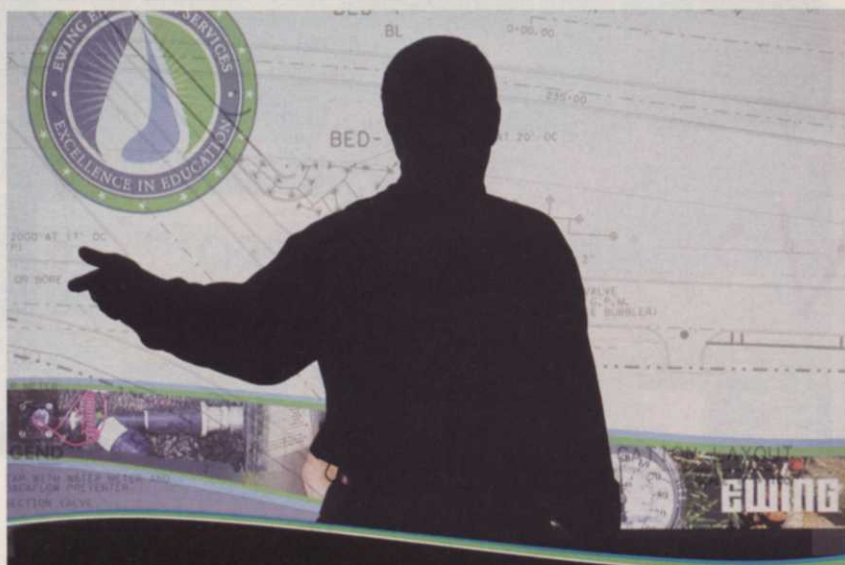
**Vermeer Manufacturing Co.** has announced that two members of the Vermeer family's third generation have joined the company. **Jason Andringa**, son of co-CEO **Mary Vermeer-Andringa**, joined the company as an environmental solutions segment manager and **Allison Van Wyngarden**, daughter of co-CEO **Bob Vermeer**, joined the company in 2007 as an industrial distribution manager.



**Sunlawn Inc.** added **Beth Lowry** (above, left) and **Carl F. Melchior** as national sales representatives.

**Andrew Bell**, Ph.D. joined the **Chicago Botanic Garden** as the new curator of woody plants.

**Arysta LifeScience** has named **Bill Liles** as a key account manager and **Steven Dal Sasso** as T&O business manager. The company also added **Gary Watschke** and **Sam Wineinger** as regional turf and ornamental sales representatives.



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*Water is a problem, or to be more accurate the lack of water is a problem.*

Drought in the West is not big news. Much of the Southwest is a desert, after all. But, Georgia? The "green" Southeast? Georgia officials last month reported that Lake Lanier, a reservoir serving some 3 million Georgia homes had only 81 days of water left.

The news isn't better in much of Alabama and the Carolinas. New water restrictions or outright bans appear weekly. And there's nothing to suggest this will change soon. The question then becomes, not should you begin offering irrigation services at some level, but how do you do it well? That typically begins by finding the right people?

Expanding your service offerings to include irrigation system repair and maintenance is one of the best ways to grow your bottom line. Not only does it help expand revenue streams, it can deepen your relationship



# TAP *into* IRRIGATION

with existing customers. It demonstrates that your business is in tune with one of the most pressing trends facing the Green Industry — water availability and cost.

There is a common misconception among many traditional landscape maintenance providers that irrigation system renovation or repair is not profitable. But, savvy contractors realize that they can make irrigation renovation and repair work within their organizations. Most follow these simple strategies:

► **Target renovation/maintenance.** Total system installation, especially if the bulk of your yearly sales come from more traditional landscape installation and maintenance services, may not be as profitable as your other services. Focus instead on identifying irrigation problems and solutions within your existing customer base. That's where the higher margins are hidden. You will be surprised to find out how much work can be secured from this previously untapped market.

## When regions measure drought in years, it's time for contractors to boost irrigation expertise

BY JIM BORNEMAN

*continued on page 26*





PHOTO BY JESSE TALLMAN OF EWING IRRIGATION PRODUCTS

## HOW TO REVEAL THE REAL PROS

Everybody is looking for the “ideal” irrigation technician. But finding that rare breed can be tough. Sometimes it comes down to asking the right questions — and, of course, getting the right responses.

Successful owners and managers start by finding people with the right attitude, that positive, alert, can-do personality. In many cases, job knowledge and technical ability is given less weight because the feeling is that it can be learned on the job or through additional training. But, technical ability is important for an irrigation tech, so don't skimp on the technical questions as you interview.

Begin with questions related to electrical control components and low voltage wiring problems. Broaden your questions to address entire systems, the issues one might face when retrofitting a system or solving a specific problems (e.g. over-watering). This will provide an accurate picture of the applicant's knowledge of irrigation. Next you need to find out how the prospect works with customers and on job sites.

**Your question:** How would you use a checklist during a bidding process?

**What you want to hear:** If a project has substantial electrical problems, it may be difficult to manage, and landscape quality will be hard to maintain. On existing projects, these electrical problems may represent significant opportunities for renovation.

You may want to include the following items on the checklist:

- ▶ Ask if the candidate is certified and by whom? Also ask about other types of training or continuing education programs they may be enrolled in.
- ▶ Discuss how the candidate has solved situations with irate customers.

- ▶ Give the candidate a complex problem to determine his/her math skills. Consider giving the candidate several problems using a PVC pipe sizing chart and a given length of pipe. Have the prospect determine flow in gallons-per-minute and calculate the pressure loss at the given flow rate.

- ▶ Discuss scenarios where he/she has been in leadership situations.

- ▶ Ask how he/she would analyze opportunities to suggest retrofit, repair or other maintenance functions to a customer (e.g. if a customer's site has “mixed zones” of sprinklers and rotors, it may affect applicable product rebates from municipal water districts).

- ▶ Discuss his/her management style, and how he/she likes to be managed.

- ▶ Determine the candidate's depth of knowledge of agronomics by asking about the watering needs of specific types of grass, shrubs and trees.

- ▶ Have him/her describe a typical workday at their current employer. Does he/she describe a day that's planned, or does he/she just “go through the motions?” The candidate may have aptitude, but you need to determine if he/she is willing to do the job.

Once you have completed the interviews, ask yourself which of the candidates has the experience best suited for your business. For example, if you want your irrigation technician to help cold-call and market the new services, and this person has strong technical skills but low interpersonal skills, you may want to pass.

Hire carefully and thoughtfully. Spending extra time to find just the right person — in technical ability and attitude — makes the difference in the success of your irrigation business.

— JB



continued from page 24

► **Make it a separate profit/loss center.**

"Set up irrigation as a separate profit and loss center, which makes it easier to track the health of that business element," says Andy Smith, state and affiliate relations director for the Irrigation Association (IA). Profits or losses resulting from irrigation won't be masked by



revenue from traditional landscaping. Smith says an acquisition or merger is another good way to get into the irrigation business.

► **Employ competent, certified irrigation pros.**

Jerry Grossi, owner of Spartan Irrigation in East Lansing, MI, knows the value of hiring qualified irrigation personnel at his 30-year-old company. "Though we started from scratch, we made sure to hire 'irrigation people' with knowledge to run the business. I am not interested in hiring someone who does not have experience," he says.

► **Experience matters.** "If you look at the market right now, there's a significant level of consumer frustration about the quality of workmanship. This is partly because there is little regulation...and there's a lot of inexperienced people



doing the work," says IA's Smith.

"I'm interested in hiring someone with specific skill sets," adds Grossi. "Attitude is very important, but we really look for aptitude and demonstrated mechanical skills. Also, they must be

continued on page 28

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*continued from page 26*

personable, work well with customers and fit in well with my management style."

Smith echoes Grossi, noting that candidates must have the aptitude and the problem-solving skills to make a profitable impact on a business. "Having specific problem-solving skills, such as hydraulic system analysis, is vital. Irrigation is a 'hard science' that involves many engineering principles. Landscaping is creative and is a 'soft science.' Just because a candidate is good at one does not necessarily mean he's good at both."

But not everyone, even the most likely candidates, may be good for your particular organization. Consider doing some type of test or exercise to deter-

For more on the importance of water management see **WATER WOES**, pg. 30

mine if the candidate will be a good fit for your company. Grossi says he has used the Wonderlic test for several years to help him analyze the best candidates for jobs at Arborlawn. The Wonderlic, long used by the National Football League to gauge interpersonal and leadership qualities of rookie players, is a 12-minute, 50-question exam to assess the aptitude for learning on the job, adaptation to an organization and other problem-solving skills.

Hiring seasoned irrigation technicians brings an aura of professionalism, security and trust and to an organization that speak volumes to customers. Those earning certification through the Irrigation Association, irrigation system manufacturers or distributors add an additional level of professionalism to a company's staff. While certification is not required in many states, irrigation professionals who go through the process gain a level of knowledge and sensitivity to current trends (e.g. water scarcity issues and associated homeowner rebate programs) that will increase customer confidence in your services.

Having seasoned irrigational professionals on staff just makes good business sense. Because they generally possess a "big picture view" of how irrigation relates to the overall health of the landscape — such as agronomic and overall maintenance issues — urge them to identify issues before they become problems, provide additional up-sell opportunities and improve the overall customer experience.

The technician that will make a positive difference in your business will be able to evaluate problems faster, understand your billing process and equipment inventory issues, continually build their knowledge of new products and trends and, in the best workers, are entrepreneurial. If they have the ability to train other employees, including your maintenance personnel, you have a real winner. **LM**

— The author is vice president of educational services for Ewing Irrigation. Contact him at [jborneman@ewing1.com](mailto:jborneman@ewing1.com).

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# WATER WOES

BY MARY KAY WOODWORTH

Public perceptions are difficult to work with. Erroneous public perceptions are not only difficult; they are dangerous, especially when they become the foundation for bad public policy. Yet, that could be exactly what is happening in Georgia with the state's recent watering ban in 61 North Georgia counties. The watering ban communicates to the public, legislators and policy makers that landscaping is "non-essential." This perception could not be further from the truth.

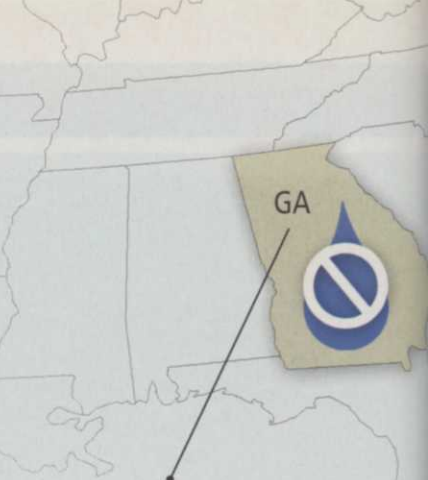
The urbanization and suburbaniza-

tion of Georgia has been enormous, providing jobs, economic opportunities and stability for millions of people not only in Georgia, but also throughout the southeast region. It has also brought problems. Urbanization decreases water quality and increases water use. About one-half of the land cleared or disturbed for development is covered by impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs, and parking lots and is a significant contributor to the current "water crisis." Landscape, also known as urban agriculture, has become the best method for addressing these problems.

Landscapes are critical to water management and storage in an urban environment. Lawns, ground covers, vegetation and even hardscapes are crucial to managing ground water and assist in retention, filtration and purification of a watershed. Vegetative systems also increase the urban forest, remove CO2 from the air, reduce the urban heat effect, improve air quality, reduce stream pollution, provide critical wildlife habitats and provide a more aesthetically pleasing and sustainable environment. All of this is essential to maintaining good environmental health and a good quality of life.

A properly installed landscape is also important because vegetative landscaping is required at any land-disturbing activity. Inadequate landscape and plant health can create additional irrigation and storm water costs for the public as well as flooding, pollution and erosion for surrounding properties. Fall and winter temperatures provide the optimum growing season for much of this vegetation, permitting several months of vigorous root growth, in turn requiring much less water in times of drought and allowing years of healthy growth.

Another perception problem with water is that few people understand



There are 61 counties in North Georgia facing watering bans.

their own water use. Residential water use represents roughly 50% to 65% of all water use. Indoor water use is typically 80 percent of all residential water use – washing dishes, clothes, humans, and pets or meeting basic plumbing needs. On an annualized basis, outdoor water use only accounts for approximately 20 percent of all residential water use. An outdoor watering ban does nothing to limit most residential water use and waste – which happens inside the home. So no one should expect an outdoor watering ban to have much of an impact on the current water crisis. An outdoor watering ban only addresses the most visible element of the water use, not the crisis itself.

The watering perception problem also creates a huge economic problem for one of Georgia's largest and most vibrant industries. Urban agriculture in Georgia represents more than \$8 billion in sales with 7,000 companies and more than 80,000 employees. The industry includes retail garden centers, floriculturists, turf grass and sod growers, the nursery and horticulture industry, landscape architects, landscape installation and maintenance, green wholesalers, florists and golf courses and their related businesses. It is the second largest agriculture industry in Georgia, just behind poultry and larger than all food and fiber production in the state.

— The author is Vice President of the Georgia Urban Agriculture Council. Contact her at [www.maltandscape.com](http://www.maltandscape.com)

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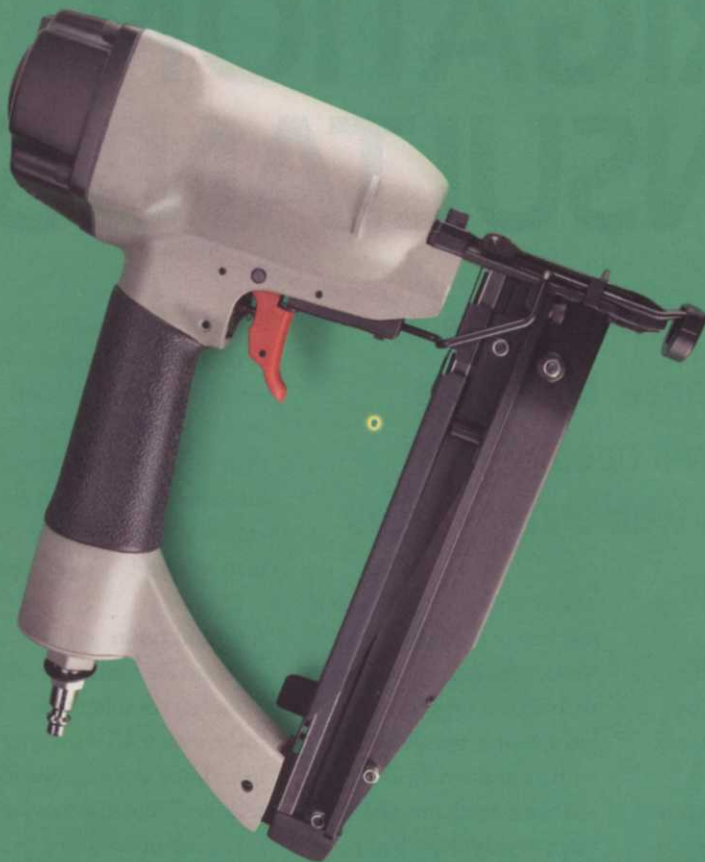
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**P R O V E N   S O L U T I O N S**





# Partnering with IRRIGATION CONSULTANTS

As irrigation technology gains more importance, landscape contractors will need to form relationships with water experts

BY LUKE FRANK

**T**ry to define the relationship between landscape contractors and irrigation consultants and you'll realize it's very much like family. Some get along great; some manage to tolerate each other and there are those who prefer not to interact. But those at the top of their game do hold professional respect for their counterparts.

We spoke with Dan Benner, an irrigation consultant in the Southeast where recent severe drought combined with hungry urbanization have really smacked the industry with a one-two punch; and Ivy Munion, a consultant in California who

has witnessed a more gradual reaction over the years to these same influences, but with no less urgency. Each has a unique perspective, but with a common denominator — when consultants and contractors work together, good things happen.

"In most instances, we're professional allies," explains Benner, president of Hydro Environmental Inc., in Marietta, GA. "When we work together, we get a feel for how reliant we are on one another to make a project successful and profitable. There's no room or time for animosity."

Munion, principal with The I.S.C. Group Inc., in Livermore, CA, agrees. "Open communication is the key between consultants and

installation and maintenance contractors," she insists. "We need face-to-face contact with one another. They know their site's opportunities and limitations, and we can provide direction, tools and contacts to address these factors."

#### A dream team

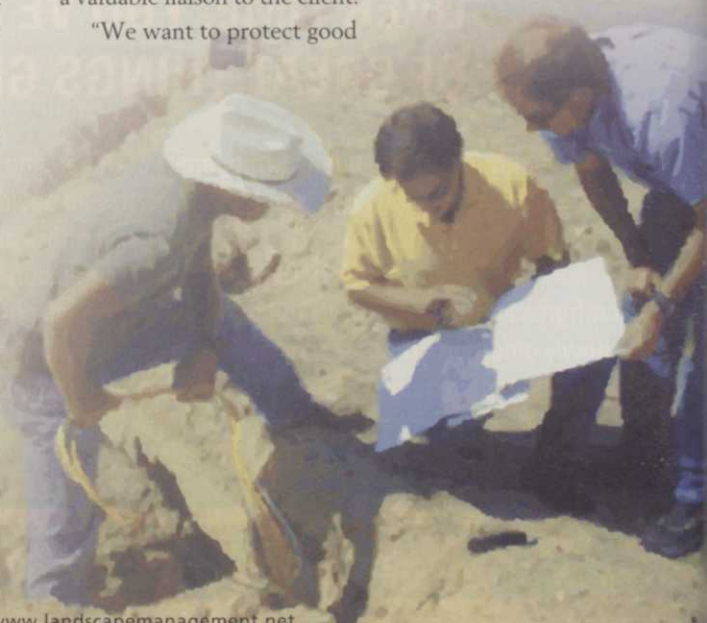
A reputable contractor and irrigation consultant can make for a solid team effort. In addition to a consultant's technical expertise in water resources and delivery, irrigation consultants can become a valuable liaison to the client.

"We want to protect good

landscape contractors from other low-balling contractors," Benner says. "Independent irrigation consultants become advocates for all parties to get to the finish line with the best product for the client."

Oftentimes a consultant becomes this critical liaison between contractor and owner out of sheer necessity. "Owners can have unrealistic ideas of what tasks or services a contractor should perform or be held accountable for," he explains. "A third party helps, and we can become the go-betweens who explain each party's roles; help to justify upgrades with water-use reports and water and soil quality inputs; and justify expenditures through system performance analyses and quantified water budgets."

*continued on page 35*





# 2008 TURF EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

**BASF**  
The Chemical Company

The BASF Early Order Program provides significant savings to Turf Professionals and an advantage on current pricing prior to scheduled price increases which will be effective on December 15th, 2007. Turf Professionals should complete this form and provide it to their agent to execute the order. **Note: Agent Sales Representative – Keep this original form for your records and make a copy for the end user.**

## PRODUCTS:

The following products are eligible for the 2008 Early Order Program (EOP):



- Controls key turf diseases for up to 28 days.
- Delivers better control of the top 5 diseases.
- Is rainfast within one hour.
- Suppresses dollar spot.



- Controls a broad spectrum of diseases including anthracnose, brown patch, take-all patch, summer patch and dollar spot.
- Can be used whenever you need it, even during summer stress periods.



- Controls dollar spot for 14 to 28 days with a single application.
- Delivers better dollar spot control in bentgrass and other dollar-spot susceptible turfgrasses than other fungicides.
- Gives superintendents a true resistance-management tool.



- Economically controls dollar spot and eight other diseases including brown patch, leaf spot, red thread and melting out.
- Is safe to use on all cool- and warm-season grasses at any stage of growth.
- Lowers labor and materials costs through effective control and long residual.



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- Reduced staining potential.
- Increased ease and flexibility of handling, mixing and cleanup.
- Improved storage stability and environmental profile.
- Now in a new 15 gal. drum.

## DATES:

**October 1, 2007 to December 14, 2007.** In order to qualify for the BASF Turf EOP, products must be purchased and delivered between the program dates.

## DETAILS OF OFFER:

The Turf Professional must purchase a minimum of \$4,000 dollars of eligible BASF products to qualify through one authorized BASF agent.

## TERMS:

All orders invoiced between October 1, 2007 and December 14, 2007 will receive June 13, 2008 terms.

The Turf Professional will receive an incentive on the total invoiced dollar volume of qualified products purchased from an authorized BASF T&O agent. All incentives will be issued to the qualifying agent who processed the order. The incentive will appear as a credit on the Turf Professional's account with their agent.

## QUALIFYING INFORMATION:

- Incentive will be based upon reported sales from the BASF T&O agent.
- This program applies only to end-user Turf Professionals (Golf, L&L, Sports Turf and Sod Farms).
- The Turf Professional incentive is not cumulative.
- Cumulative sales for one customer will qualify if ordered between program dates and from one authorized agent.
- Orders for multiple courses that are owned or managed by one payer can be combined and rewarded at the highest level of qualifying incentive. Orders must be submitted through the normal reporting process. Notification of combined qualification needs to be supplied to BASF no later than January 31, 2008.

INVOICED DOLLARS	INCENTIVE
<b>\$4,000 - \$9,999</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>\$15,000 - \$19,999</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>\$20,000 +</b>	<b>7%</b>

BASF reserves the right to cancel or modify this program at any time.



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Product	Price	Package Size	Order Quantity	Total Dollar Purchases	% Incentive Earned	\$ Incentive Earned
INSIGNIA® Fungicide	\$1,044/case	3 x 2.4 lb.	cases	\$		\$
INSIGNIA® Fungicide	\$1,392/case	4 x 2.4 lb.	cases	\$		\$
INSIGNIA® Fungicide	\$3,024/case	3 x 7.2 lb.	cases	\$		\$
TRINITY™ Fungicide	\$1,475/case	2 x 2.5 gal.	cases	\$		\$
EMERALD® Fungicide	\$1,323/case	10 x .49 lb.	cases	\$		\$
CURALAN® Fungicide	\$957/unit	12 x 2.7 lb. (33 lb. keg)	kegs	\$		\$
PENDULUM® AQUACAP™ Herbicide	\$693.75/unit	15 gal. drum	drums	\$		\$
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>\$</b>

Note: California users are subject to applicable mill taxes.

INVOICED DOLLARS	INCENTIVE
<b>\$4,000 - \$9,999</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>\$15,000 - \$19,999</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>\$20,000 +</b>	<b>7%</b>

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(Please provide the following information to your agent sales representative)

## AGENT

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agent \_\_\_\_\_

Street / P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## TURF PROFESSIONAL

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street / P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_

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*continued from page 32*

**No mixed loyalties**

"Ultimately a consultant's loyalty is to the owner, but our roles in project permitting and documentation, and construction supervision, mean that if the contractor has a great idea or a legitimate concern, we need to effectively communicate that to the client."

Another component of communication that Munion emphasizes is leaving the contractor with important contact information. "We've been putting manufacturer and distribu-

and installation contractor, and installation contractor and landscape manager."

**Got water?**

Increasingly, irrigation consultants are being hired to develop new water sources. "We're pretty versed in comprehensive water-use reports," Benner points out. "Basically, we employ seasonal rainfall and evapotranspiration inputs into a pretty comprehensive report to determine the worst-case-need scenario and then locate sources of water that can



Ivy Munion works with contractors to ensure clients receive the best solution.

development up front. "If we demonstrate through our calculations that an alternative water supply project can pay for itself in three years, most property owners will go for it," Benner explains. "We also can factor in the expense of a landscape investment that could go dry in the future. We can help to sell it."

For example, property owners might want to drill a well. It can be expensive, but when considering installing a \$300,000 landscape, \$20,000 for a well might not look so bad. Moreover, many cities are way behind in developing infrastructure for treated wastewater resources. Irrigation consultants can help with the needed permitting, acquisition, delivery and storage of treated wastewater.

**Accountability**

Over the past decade, water-use accountability has spread its tentacles across the country. Larger projects require extensive evaluation and justification for water resources, and efficient irrigation system performance must match a formula of climate, weather, exposure, soil, plant and water parameters.

"When an irrigation con-

sultant conducts the field work, crunches the calculations and matches a system to the site, we are essentially entering a contract with the client that very specifically quantifies resource needs and forecasts consumption," Munion says. "Business decisions are made on such data, and if our numbers don't hold, we're accountable."

Contractors should know that consultants are always watching their sites. More and more they're coming out to perform inspections and sign-off on installations.

"Independent irrigation consultants don't design irrigation systems to sell product; we design systems for long-term irrigation performance," Benner concludes. "Consequently, our systems generally involve more product to assure long-term efficiency and durability. We detail the system so that operation, care and service will be minimal to the end user. That benefits the supplier and the contractor, and a good contractor wants a quality system to work with." **LM**

— *The author is a freelance writer who knows the irrigation industry. Contact him at [lukefrank@comcast.net](mailto:lukefrank@comcast.net).*



We get a feel for how reliant we are on one another.

— Dan Benner, president, Hydro Environmental Inc.

tor contact information on the plans themselves, so the contractor has direct access to the folks with the most knowledge about their specific products," she says. "One of the biggest downfalls in system installation and maintenance is a lack of technical information.

"Irrigation equipment is changing rapidly. There's a disconnect between people incorporating new products into their designs and the people who end up using them. There needs to be better communication and training between manufacturer and consultant, consultant

serve the site for each particular time of year.

"Right now in the Southeast, we have a total water ban," he continues. "And we have to plan for such contingencies. We have to plan for watering restrictions from the start. Irrigation consultants have been developing alternative water supplies for decades. A good water-use report will show what the site demands will be at installation, and in the near and distant future.

From those water-use reports, consultants can develop cost-efficiency reports, which helps to justify capital



# Innovations

TECHNOLOGY HOT NEW PRODUCTS



1



2



3



4

## 1 Dumper 201

The Dumper 201 from Grillo hauls the heavy loads with ease in uneven terrain taking the stress off of the arms, back, shoulders and legs. The Dumper 201 is powered by a 6-hp Briggs & Stratton Commercial engine or 5.5-hp Honda GCV engine; 5-speed transmission with reverse; large, wide 16-in. Ag-type pneumatic tires with anti-puncture sealant and the Quick Dump Latch for easy front dumping. The 4.6-cu.-ft. bucket lets you haul up to 440 lbs. on flat terrain and up to 330 lbs. on slopes. The Dumper 201 has 360-degree pivoting rear wheels for easy maneuvering in tight areas.

Contact Grillo at 503/675-9800 or [grillo-eurosystems.com/](http://grillo-eurosystems.com/) / circle no. 250

## 2 Wider Stander

Wright Manufacturing's Stander ZK combines the benefits of a mid-mount zero-turn mower with the traditional Wright Stander. The ZK features wider deck widths of 52 in. to 72 in. The ZK is powered by engines up to 37 hp. Decks are deeper; wheels are larger; and fuel capacity is greater. The ZK offers low center of gravity for hillside stability and shorter overall length for added maneuverability. The ZK is also equipped with Wright's Rapid Height Adjustment, which lets the operator quickly raise or lower the cutting height without getting off the mower.

Contact Wright Manufacturing at 301/360-9810 or visit [www.wrightmfg.com](http://www.wrightmfg.com) / circle no. 251

## 3 New Mule

Green Industry Innovators launched six new models of the Mulch Mule. The redesigned Mulch Mule saves time and labor in transporting and distributing landscape materials including mulch, top soil, compost, peat, loam, sand and now also stone and rock. The redesigned model features direct drive hydraulic motors operating all functions. A rust-free aluminum frame with high-density composite floor and side walls makes it lighter in weight, yet increases overall load capacity by 1,200 lbs. The walking floor speed has been increased to unload in 45 seconds.

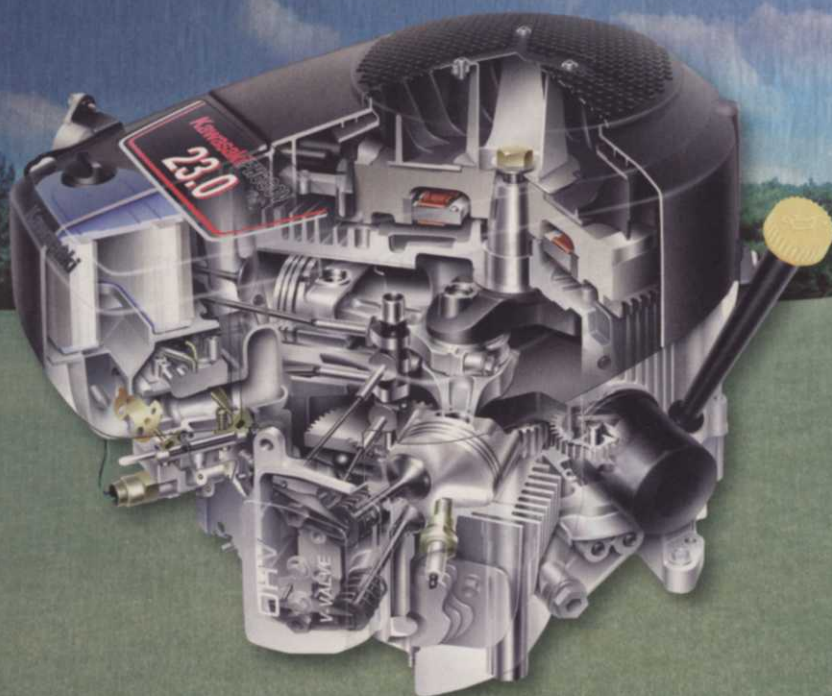
Contact Green Industry Innovators at 330/875-0769 or [www.mulchmule.com](http://www.mulchmule.com) / circle no. 252

## 4 Compact chipper

Pequea's Champion CX-851 chipper clears fallen branches and other wood debris quickly by shredding them into chips for mulching or quick disposal. The compact chipper's 19-in. feed roller operates with tractor hydraulics and uses a control valve to regulate the roller speed for more efficient chipping. The CX-851's hydraulic feed system has a 22-in. feed height and 36-in. by 36-in. hopper opening that eats up branches without difficulty. The compact chipper's 8-in. top discharge chute rotates 360 degrees, and its adjustable deflector directs wood chips into a compost pile or onto a truck.

Contact Pequea at 866/684-0393 or [www.pequea.com](http://www.pequea.com) / circle no. 253





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If creating and starring in your company's next commercial is a little daunting, you might consider starting your own corporate podcast.



## Now starring on YouTube...

BY TYLER WHITAKER

**L**ately I've noticed three very different, but related things about my life. I love my digital video recorder (DVR). I don't listen to the radio much. And I have no idea if I have a current copy of the Yellow Pages. Now, don't get me wrong. I haven't gone and buried my head in the sand. And the effect of these seemingly unrelated items is that my consumption of traditional advertising is way, way down. Companies wanting to sell me their products and services really need to get creative.

So, why do I love my DVR? Because when I watch TV, I can watch whatever I want, whenever I want. But what originally sold me on the technology was the ability to fly past commercials. When it comes to radio, my commute just isn't long enough for radio ads to get much playtime — not to mention the commercial-free satellite radio options now available. And the Yellow Pages have been replaced by a Google toolbar in my Web browser and my radio by podcasts (short audio programs) that I've downloaded from the Web.

I have noticed, however, that I am spending more time reading the ads on the industry Web sites and in the blogs that I frequent. I also receive a number of trade magazines and email newsletters where the vertical focused advertising is directed toward things I'm interested in. So what should your company do to reach my demographic? The answer is simple: Be where your customers are.

One of the more entertaining examples of using technology in this respect comes from BlendTec ([www.blendtec.com](http://www.blendtec.com)). Instead of running TV ads, BlendTec is using YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) to distribute videos of their blenders mixing up everything from golf balls to iPods. These viral videos have taken this company's product to new consumers.

Now, if creating and starring in your company's next commercial is a little daunting, you might consider starting your own corporate podcast. It could be a weekly discussion about the benefits of your products and services. Or you might talk about other local or industry related topics that would be of interest to your customers. The key is to provide valuable information in a short and entertaining format.

Once you have your content in place, the next step is to get your potential customers to find it. Start by finding out what Web sites they frequent. You need to find the industry and local Web sites that sell advertising or will do a review of your video or podcast. Don't forget blogs. The more focused on your desired customer the better. Getting links and articles from these Web sites will help your search engine rankings, which in turn will help more potential customers to find you.

To be clear, continue to use traditional advertising methods. My counsel here is to broaden your horizons and try to add some of these new technologies to your marketing plan. Most of the time the cost is minimal and the reward could be huge.

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



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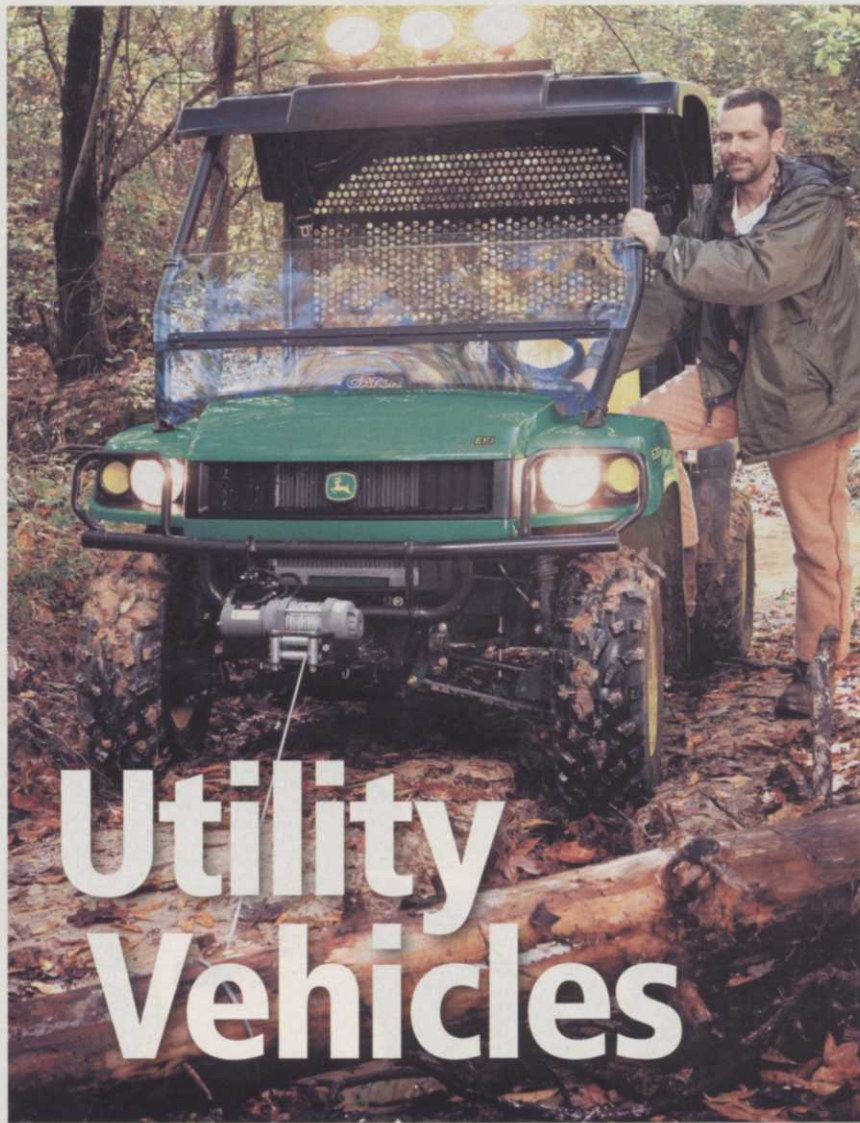
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# LM Reports

TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH



## Utility Vehicles

**A** trend that began more than 20 years ago continues to fuel one of the fastest growing segments in outdoor power equipment.

According to reports from Power Product Marketing, a market research and consulting firm that closely follows trends in the utility vehicle industry, this segment more than doubled from 2001 when 100,000 utility vehicles were sold, to 230,000 units shipped for the 2006 model season.

Dave Crocker, Power Products Marketing senior partner, says the ever-increasing versatility of these machines, along with the expansion of the overall buyers' market, has increased demand for these nifty transporters.

"Five years ago, 60% of utility vehicles were sold to commercial businesses and government entities for commercial-grade work," says Crocker. "Today, only 30% of the units sold are used for commercial-grade work and approximately 70% of vehicles are sold to in-

dividual consumers for outdoor chores and recreational purposes."

Kevin Lund, John Deere utility vehicle group product marketing manager, says a majority of customers are looking for a utility vehicle that provides exceptional crossover performance.

"People want to work hard and play hard with their vehicles," explains Lund. "They want comfort, power, stability, acceleration, and the ability to do work and the capability to operate in all types of terrain."

When shopping for a crossover utility vehicle, Lund says to consider the following:

- ▶ **Versatility:** Make a list of how you'll plan to use your vehicle and make sure that the unit has the power, performance, attachments and accessories you'll need.
- ▶ **Comfort:** An independent rear suspension provides a smooth ride, and creature comforts, such as A/C and cab enclosures further enhance the driving experience.
- ▶ **Speed:** If work requires you to keep a leash on your speed, consider a speed limiter kit that allows you full power and acceleration while locking out top speeds to around 20 mph. Also test the vehicle for creepability performance to make sure that it doesn't jump or lurch when operated at very low speeds.
- ▶ **True 4WD:** The operator can select 1-, 2-, 3-, or 4-wheel-drive operation, to optimize for turf friendliness or for rugged terrain.
- ▶ **Suspension:** A utility vehicle with an optimized suspension provides stability, and better handling when loaded to full capacity.

Lund adds that your local equipment dealer can help you through the decision-making process.

— Liz Suter-Van Leer, Senior Public Relations Account Executive, Osborn & Barr Communications

*continued on page 42*





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HERBICIDE



# LM Reports



continued from page 40

## Cub Cadet 4x4 ▲

Cub Cadet's 4x4 Utility Vehicles are rugged and hard working on the job and smooth and fun-loving off-road. They come with a choice of 20-hp Kohler V-Twin or Cat diesel engines. A 4-wheel, fully independent double A-arm suspension and a wide stance offers increased stability on rough terrain. The tight curb-to-curb turning diameter and rear anti-sway bar provide superb cornering at faster speeds. High back bucket seats provide operator comfort and reduce stress. It also features 14.4 cu. ft. cargo box volume. **Contact Cub Cadet Commercial at 330/225-2600 or [www.cubcadetcommercial.com](http://www.cubcadetcommercial.com) / circle no. 254**



## Kubota

Kubota's RTV900 utility vehicle is designed for heavy-duty use with its liquid-cooled, three-cycle Kubota diesel engine, hydrostatic transmission and 1,600-lbs. payload. New for 2007, the RTV900 features a deluxe hard cab with factory pre-hung doors, thermoformed roof and door panels, sound-proofing lowers noise level to 84 dBA, standard,

AM/FM/CD player and speakers in hard cab. Kubota also offers its hydraulic tool system on the utility vehicle, which allows the operator to operate one of nine different available hydraulic power tools off of the back of the RTV. **Contact Kubota Tractor Corp. at 888/4-KUBOTA or [www.kubota.com](http://www.kubota.com) / circle no. 255**



## Bobcat

Bobcat Co.'s 2300 4x4 utility vehicle can mow, sweep, and move materials with its RapidLink attachment system. The removable attachment arm can lift loads up to 500 pounds as high as two feet with five specially designed attachments, including a bucket, mower, pallet fork, snow blade and whisker push broom. Users operate and change attachments from their seat with joystick control. The 20-hp vehicle includes Bobcat's IntelliTrak drive system for maximum traction while traversing hills or traveling soft terrain. The 4x4 reaches up to 25 mph. **Contact Bobcat at 866/823-7898 or [www.bobcat.com](http://www.bobcat.com) / circle no. 256**

## ASV

The ASV Scout SC-50 is the only rubber-tracked utility vehicle on the market. With 2.5 psi under the tracks, the Scout has less impact on the ground than a person on foot. The undercarriage features the same Posi-Track technology used in ASV's earthmoving equipment. The combination of suspension, all-rubber track, 10 rubber wheels that disperse weight across a 15-in. wide track and a uniquely designed sprocket with roller system provide the machine with



a smooth, quiet and efficient operation. The Scout offers travel speed up to 11.5 mph and 30 gallon fuel capacity. **Contact ASV at 218/327-3434 or [www.asvi.com](http://www.asvi.com) / circle no. 257**

## Columbia ParCar

The Scout 510G is tough enough for expansive job sites and rugged terrain yet gentle on groomed turf. Aggressive tread tires allow for "go anywhere" scouting. An optional heavy-duty front rack increases the rated capacity to 1,000 lbs. It also features a gasoline engine and rear tubular steel bumper with integrated receiver hitch. **Contact Columbia at 800/222-4653 or [www.parcar.com](http://www.parcar.com) / circle no. 258**

## Bush Hog ▼

Bush Hog utility vehicles deliver a smoother ride — 49% smoother than a leading competitor — to make short work of long days and rough terrain. Double CV joints at each wheel stand up to punishment with longer wheel travel to reduce vibration. More torque reaches the ground because wheels stay on the ground, more torque is transmitted to the wheels, rear wheels grip better in turns. Bush Hog's Trail hand Series totes rectangular hay bales in cargo bed Handles oversized loads on optional flatbed. Vehicle payload capacity reaches 1,500 lbs. and can tow 1,500 lbs.-plus. Four-wheel drive available. **Contact Bush Hog at 334/874-2700 or [www.bushhog.com](http://www.bushhog.com) / circle no. 259**

continued on page 44







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**Echelon™**  
HERBICIDE





continued from page 42

## Club Car ▲

Club Car's Carryall 295 4x4 series commercial utility vehicles are equipped with powerful engines, on-demand all-wheel-drive capability and a host of industry-exclusive features. The Carryall series boasts a fully-automatic hydraulic-powered quick-change attachment system and features Club Car's IntelliTrak true-all-wheel-drive system. By continually sensing driving conditions, it automatically engages and disengages all-wheel-drive without requiring the driver to stop, shift gears, push buttons or lock differentials.

Contact Club Car at 800/258-2227 or [www.clubcar.com](http://www.clubcar.com) / circle no. 260



## TimberWolf

Timberwolf Corp.'s PowerWolf is a utility vehicle designed for ease of use and versatility in gardens, stables, barns, garages-anywhere you need to go. Engineered as a "work-horse" vehicle, the PowerWolf offers a load capacity of up to 1,200 lbs. and a short 9 ft. turning radius. The Power Wolf's safe, stable and vision-friendly design features the only electric front dump on the market today. The traditional steering wheel combined with

low-maintenance, hands-free automatic transmission and simple controls promises safety and maximum ease of use.

Contact TimberWolf at 800/340-4386 or [www.powerwolf.com](http://www.powerwolf.com) / circle 261

## Land Pride

Land Pride's 10 Series Treker takes traction capabilities to another level. An auto-lock rear differential senses wheel slippage, instantly locking the differential for traction capability. The rear differentials also have built-in overrunning clutches to minimize turf damage. Four-wheel independent



suspension offers a smooth ride, and the cargo box design has a ribbed bottom and removable sides for flatbed capability. It also features a 20-hp V-twin air-cooled Honda engine and comes in 2- or 4-wheel drive.

Contact Land Pride at 888/987-7433 or [www.landpride.com](http://www.landpride.com) / circle no. 262

## Steiner

The versatile Steiner UtiliMax is a utility vehicle and tractor combined. It has more than 25 Quick-Hitch attachments. A liquid-cooled 34-hp turbo diesel engine provides plenty of power. Comfort features include a tilt steering wheel, easy on/off access, and user-friendly controls.

Contact Steiner at 888/922-TURF or [www.steinerturf.com](http://www.steinerturf.com) / circle no. 263

## Kawasaki

The Mule 3010 Trans 4x4 allows the driver to transform it from a 4-passenger 4x4 to a 2-passenger 4x4 with an extended cargo bed. It has a cargo capacity of 400 lbs. in 4-passenger mode, and 800 lbs. with the cargo bed extended forward. It can also



tow up to 1,200 lbs. with an optional towing hitch. Braking power is provided by four hydraulically operated, self-adjusting drum brakes sealed for protection. 23-in. tires provide maximum traction over all surfaces.

Contact Kawasaki at 800/661-7433 or [www.kawasaki.com](http://www.kawasaki.com) / circle no. 264

## e-ride

e-ride Industries' evx2 is a two-passenger neighborhood electric vehicle with optional removable windows, rear enclosure, tool boxes and removable tail gate. The environmentally friendly, reliable and virtually maintenance-free utility vehicle has a range of about 60 miles, zero emissions and simplified maintenance procedures. The evx2 is street legal on roads with speed limits up to 35 mph. At a cost of about 1.5 cents per mile, the evx2 can be used in a variety of settings,



including campgrounds, park areas, golf courses, sports fields and neighborhoods.

For more information contact e-ride at 800/950-4351 or [www.e-ride.com](http://www.e-ride.com) / circle no. 265

## Jacobsen

The Cushman Turf-Truckster features: 2,850-lbs. payload; steel or poly dumping beds available; choice of transmissions — automatic 3-speed transmission available; dash-mounted shifter for automatic, 4-speed, or

continued on page 46





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# LM Reports

continued from page 44

5-speed manual transmission. Gas engines for the Turf-Truckster are available in 32-hp EFI; 26.1-hp Diesel engine. With the hydraulic drive system, auxiliary hydraulics come standard, with an optional high-output system. A heavy-duty PTO is available, along with many other options to choose from.

**Contact Jacobsen Golf & Turf at 704/504-6600 or [www.jacobsencorp.com](http://www.jacobsencorp.com) / circle no. 266**

## Toro

The mid-duty Workman utility vehicle offers extraordinary stability, traction and ride in your choice of gas and electric powered models. The mid-duty Workman features a 16-hp Briggs & Stratton engine and up to 1,650 lbs. total capacity. The new e2065 Workman offers electric power for a quiet ride. Toro also offers heavy-duty Workman models, which feature a 26.5-hp Briggs &



Stratton Daihatsu engine. The heavy-duty Workman provides more operator comfort, easily accessible controls, more value and a cutting edge design. The reliable utility vehicles provide durability, up to 2,725-lb. capacity and a rugged, long bed design. There is also a variety of Workman attachments.

**Contact Toro at 952/888-8801 or [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com) / circle no. 267**



mud tires, a heavy duty brush guard, power tilt bed, nerf bars, differential guards with a skid plate belly pan and a sealed CVT for extremely difficult trail conditions. The power tilt bed carries 800 lbs. for quick dumping of mulch, firewood and other heavy cargo. Other features include all-wheel drive traction system, standard ROPS system: 4-wheel hydraulic disc brake system and corrosion resistant aircraft grade aluminum frame.

**Contact Husqvarna at 800/HUSKY-62 or [www.usa.husqvarna.com](http://www.usa.husqvarna.com) / circle no. 269**

## Polaris

Whether you want to work or play, the 2008 Polaris Ranger line up has something for everyone. With the ability to carry six people at a time and 1,750 lbs. of total payload, the Ranger Crew is ideal for farming, ranching and hunting. With a 700 Twin EFI Polaris engine, the Polaris features exclusive Independent Rear Suspension, 44 mph top speed, True All Wheel Drive and dual under-seat storage. For 2008, all Ranger models will feature Dual Bore Piston Brakes with 30% more braking force, dashmounted parking brake and headlights 40% brighter. All EFI models' dash-mounted parking brake also includes shift interlock which prevents driving with the parking brake engaged.

**Contact Polaris at 800/765-2747 or [www.polarisindustries.com](http://www.polarisindustries.com) / circle no. 270**

## E-Z-GO

With a 16-hp, 480cc, V-twin engine plus on-demand locking rear differential, the EZ-GO ST-480 is ready to tackle those big tasks. It features a top speed of 17 mph, 800-lbs. payload capacity, 500-lbs. maximum bed load and flexible dent resistant cowl.

**Contact E-Z-GO at 800/241-5855 or [www.ezgo.com](http://www.ezgo.com) / circle no. 271**



## John Deere

John Deere's new Gator XUV 4x4 utility vehicle will be available at dealerships in March in electronic fuel injection gas and diesel versions. The Gator XUV features a True 4WD system with an on-demand locking front differential for superior terrain capability. The Gator XUV features 11-in. ground clearance and a new Advanced Suspension System that provides customers with a comfortable ride, even when tackling the most rugged terrain. Maximum cargo capacity is 900 lbs. for the cargo box, 1,300 lbs. total payload. It reaches a top speed of 30 mph.

**Contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or [www.JohnDeere.com](http://www.JohnDeere.com) / circle no. 268**

## Husqvarna

Husqvarna's HUV4421GXP utility vehicle's "severe off-road" package upgrades the standard HUV4421 utility vehicle with 25-in.



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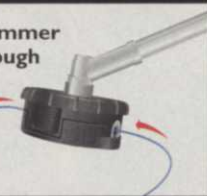
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- Patented Bump-feed
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Step 1

Feed trimmer line through eyelet.



Step 2

Re-load by turning knob on head.



Step 3

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Circle 134

# Get a Grip

TECHNOLOGY

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Think about it. When the warranty is voided, shouldn't that tell you something?



## Trimmer savers

BY ALLEN SPENCE

**Y**our trusted hand held equipment repair dealer (you do trust him don't you?) just informed you that your piece of equipment is junk.

"I can't do anything with it. It's worn out" is the technician's statement. In disbelief you ask, "that trimmer is only six months old. Why didn't I get more service out of it?"

Ever happen to you? Well, you're not alone. As a technician, I've heard other professional landscapers utter similar words many times. Below are a few pointers to help prevent you from having to ever hear those words again.

Let's start by saying that proper use and maintenance are both critical to equipment longevity. As a small engine and equipment repair instructor and equipment technician I've seen firsthand how a lack of maintenance and improper usage contribute to premature equipment failure.

### Three big "no, no's"

Three types of improper usage come to mind instantly:

1. Incorrect size trimmer line

2. No lower guard

3. Using the trimmer to mow

Using the correct size trimmer string is critical to the proper use and life of the trimmer. Too large a diameter string places additional load on the engine, and operating without a guard allows you to run the string at a longer than specified length. Trust me I have heard the arguments. "I can trim longer before I have to service the head when I run the larger diameter line." The other one is: "If I don't run a guard I can use longer lengths and cover more surface area." Both are correct statements. However, either of these conditions voids your warranty. Think about it, when the warranty is voided, shouldn't that tell you something?

Most people use trimmers to mow steep inclines. Recent emissions laws have made purchasing a mower that can handle steep difficult. There is not a lot we can do about that except buy a trimmer that can handle the job. Yes, they do cost more, but you still have a warranty and a piece of equipment usable for more than spare parts.

In these situations, improper usage amounts to a lack of maintenance.

— The author is a turf equipment management instructor at Hinds

Community College in Raymond, MS.  
Contact him at [haspence@hindsc.edu](mailto:haspence@hindsc.edu).





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# WATERING AT THE rootzone



# level

BY GREG EHMS

Homestead Gardens provided Maryland parks with subsurface irrigation systems that conserve water and eliminate runoff

**A**s co-owner of Homestead Gardens, Davidsonville, MD, Brian Riddle's workload includes capital expansion projects, land development and overseeing the company's information technology infrastructure — just for starters. This versatility and his 10 years of irrigation experience came to task when he took on his first subsurface irrigation installation. The project involved two Anne Arundel County parks, nine playing fields — and nearly 500,000 ft. of subsurface dripperline tubing.

Homestead Gardens is one of the largest enclosed garden centers in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. metropolitan area. In addition to a full-line garden store and a nursery with a wide selection of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs, the company has a respected landscape design/build division. And — possibly unique in the entire Green Industry — it also maintains a small herd of llamas as a visitor attraction.

#### Why subsurface?

Homestead Gardens got involved with the irrigation project when Anne Arun-



del county leaders decided that subsurface irrigation would conserve water and eliminate the runoff of silt and other contaminants into neighboring Chesapeake Bay. With multipurpose fields that receive heavy, ground-compacting use, they also needed a system that wouldn't interfere with core aeration.

Thanks to the mild 2007 winter, Riddle completed the Davidsonville Park playing fields, each measuring about 380 ft. x 220 ft., in about four weeks. Workmen installed tubing six inches deep in rows 18 in. apart. Their biggest challenge was working through all the material that wasn't supposed to be in soil since the area in which they worked had been a reclaimed sand and gravel pit, says Riddle.

At Tickneck Park, another site where they worked, the soil composition was better, but Homestead Gardens' workmen had to wrap up the day's work each

day before football practice started.

On this project, crews completed work in "stations" which meant opening a header supply trench, installing and connecting tubing, backfilling the header supply trench, tamping and relaying the

sod each day. Crews completed three stations a day and left virtually no impact. "If you didn't know something was going on, you wouldn't have seen any trace that we'd been there," says Riddle.

For safety reasons, Riddle avoided



Homestead Gardens installed tubing six inches deep 18 in. apart in the Davidsonville Park.

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## TECHNOLOGY WATERING UNDERGROUND

leaving barrier fences, exposed tubes, ground stakes or open holes. "When you pull tubes in," says Riddle, "tubes will stick out of the ground. We didn't want anyone getting hurt, so we pulled the tubes back under the ground and stake them down. When we got to the opposite end, we cut the tubes and plowed them under."

Crews also removed their equipment from the fields every day. While this required an extra 20-mile haul, keeping students safe was essential.

### How it's done

Crews installed Netafim tubing and used the Vermeer LM42 lawn plow with a multi plow blade attachment. "Had it not been for the LM 42, I don't think that I would have had any interest in taking on a project like that because of

the challenges of other installation methods," explains Riddle.

The lawn plow pulls up to three irrigation lines simultaneously at a predetermined depth and spacing determined by soil conditions. The plow blade attachment uses high-frequency vibration to cut through the ground and close up the channel around the dripperline. Three reels hold up to 1,000 ft. of tubing that spins through a feed shoot and is dispersed in the ground. A packer wheel recovers the trench after placing the product in the ground.

Riddle saved time with the lawn plow. From Day One, crews put down up to 2.5 times more tubing than expected. Plus, this is the only installation method that provides uniformity of depth. Because tubes stay at a consistent



With fields that receive heavy use, Homestead Gardens needed a system that wouldn't interfere with core aeration maintenance.

depth, tubing isn't damaged during core aeration, or other field maintenance.

Increasing environmental concerns will create new market demands. But business owners like Brian Riddle have proven those needs can be met efficiently and cost-effectively. **LM**

— The author is with Two Rivers Marketing, Des Moines, IA. Contact him at [greg@2rm.com](mailto:greg@2rm.com).

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# Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

CURB APPEAL / YARD AMENITIES / WATER FEATURE

## The design

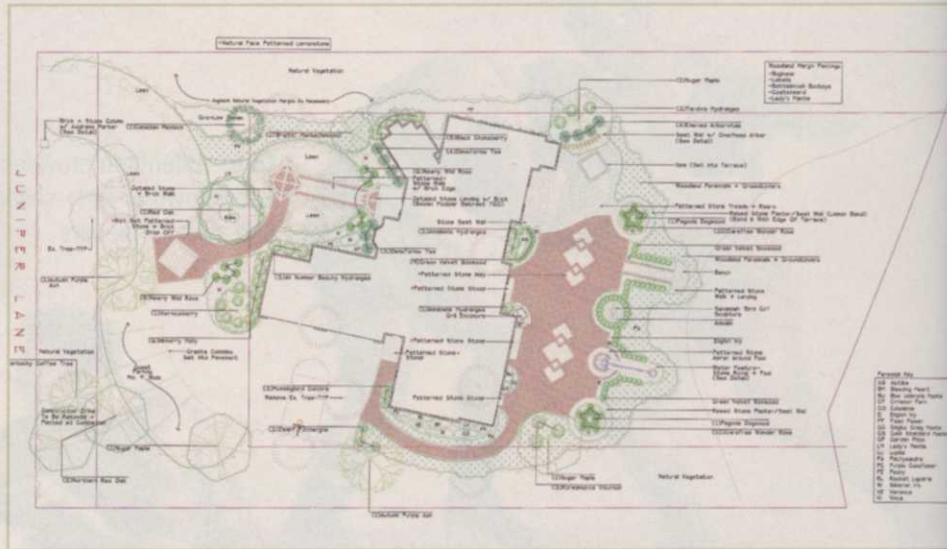
Minimize finished lawn areas and incorporate a large rear terrace into the natural surroundings.

## Project Requirements

- Incorporate the property's steep ravine.
- Protect and preserve the trees.
- Develop vehicular and pedestrian routing that was both functional and appealing.

## Project Specifics

The clients desired an outdoor environment to both entertain and relax.



**ABOVE** A key view from the home to the terrace leads to the water feature. Using the same materials as the home and remaining proportionate to the large terrace, the water feature was designed to produce sound throughout the area. It was also designed to have minimal surface area to reduce the amount of leaf litter.

**LEFT** The recessed spa, seat wall and pergola outside the master bedroom and bath create a more personal, private area.







**ABOVE** Introduced to the project at an early stage, but after the home design was finalized, the firm was charged with the task of siting the home on the heavily wooded property. The drive passes in front of the home with a drop-off landing to the front walk.



Walk landings reflect the home's architectural features.

### Project Principal

■ Jeff Hershberger, David J. Frank  
Landscape Contracting, Germantown, WI,  
[www.davidjfrank.com](http://www.davidjfrank.com)

■ Services include commercial and residential landscape design build, contracting and management. It also offers renovation services, water management, interiorscape and holiday decorating, and architecture and CAD/design graphics services. Services include commercial and residential landscape design build, contracting and management. It also offers renovation services, water management, interiorscape and holiday decorating, and architecture and CAD/design graphics services.

**RIGHT** Back-terrace amenities were to include a spa, barbecue, water feature, planters, and an art piece (pictured) the client had already procured.



This project was a winner in PLANET's 37th annual Environmental Improvement Awards program. For more information on the program, visit [www.landcarenetwork.org](http://www.landcarenetwork.org).



# Inspired by nature



The Arbor Terrace water feature in Fallbrook, CA, is a popular location for special events such as weddings, anniversaries and civic events.

The stunning water feature created by Waterfall Creations delights visitors at The Arbor Terrace in Fallbrook, CA

BY JANET AIRD

**B**ob Jorgensen started building waterfalls in his backyard as a child. These days, he's the owner of Waterfall Creations Inc., Fallbrook, CA, and the winner of the California Landscape Contractors Association's (CLCA) 2006 Trophy Awards first place award for water features.

"I grew up with a love of waterfalls," Jorgensen says. "I loved watching water going over rocks."

The Arbor Terrace project offers a stream almost 200 ft. long, multiple waterfalls and a large lagoon. The highlight is the triple waterfall, which consists of a center waterfall 18 ft. high, and smaller ones on either side, one measuring 16 ft. high, and the other, 12 ft. high. It flows into the lagoon, which is 20 ft. by 30 feet.

The Arbor Terrace Pavilion and gardens are on part of a large property called the Grand Tradition Estate, in Fallbrook, owned by the McDougal family. Both are venues for special events such as birthday and anniversary parties, proms and chamber of commerce events and especially weddings, says Scott McDougal, the general manager. They've held between 50 and 60 weddings this year. The Arbor Terrace is a new addition to the business, for clients who are looking for a more casual setting than the Grand Tradition.

Jorgensen spent more than 20 years in the swimming pool industry, doing construction and service for swimming pools and spas. In 2000, he founded Waterscape Creations, which specializes in water features. This project took about three and a half months to complete.

*continued on page 58*



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continued from page 56

Centella Jorgensen, who is Bob's wife and works in the company's office, says, "Bob really wanted to do the project. He knew it would be challenging and good for our portfolio and business. We're

very proud of it. It's the largest one we've ever done."

**Nature is their guide**

Jorgensen's designs are inspired by nature. The couple often goes to the Sier-

ras to see how nature has put rocks in places, Centella says.

Jorgensen also uses his life-long experience observing water flowing over rocks. When he finds certain rocks, he says, "You can see in your mind how water will fall over them and how they will look."

For years, McDougal had envisioned a water feature on the property. He'd done some excavating, Jorgensen says, and he had a general idea of where the water would start and where it would go down the waterfall to the stream.

Jorgensen designed the entire stream onsite — waterfalls, subwaterfalls, lagoon, pools and all. "Building what we build isn't something you can sketch out," he says.

**The work itself**

Jorgensen's crew of eight men did some additional excavation and put down Styrofoam sheathing, then covered the sheathing with a 45 mil EPDM rubber liner with a 20-year warranty. "It can last 40 to 50 years if it's properly installed," Jorgensen says. They put down rebar and footings under the larger waterfalls.

Then came the placing of the boulders, starting with the ones that were in the most prominent positions, and filling in with the less important ones. Some were up to eight feet high and weighed between five and a half and six tons. They moved them until he was satisfied with the way they looked.

"Just changing five or 10 key boulders changes the whole way it looks," Jorgensen says. "Place boulders the way they'd look in nature."

They covered the liner with various sizes of rocks, from large ones to small river cobblestones and even some gravel. It's all cemented in, he says, and the cement is colored to match the ad-

continued on page 60

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continued from page 58  
jacent rocks.

The boulders in this project are an example of the benefits of planning ahead. Years before work began, the owners noticed that a developer was hauling truckloads of boulders from a nearby construction site. They asked him if he'd like to drop them off on their property instead of hauling them away, which he did.

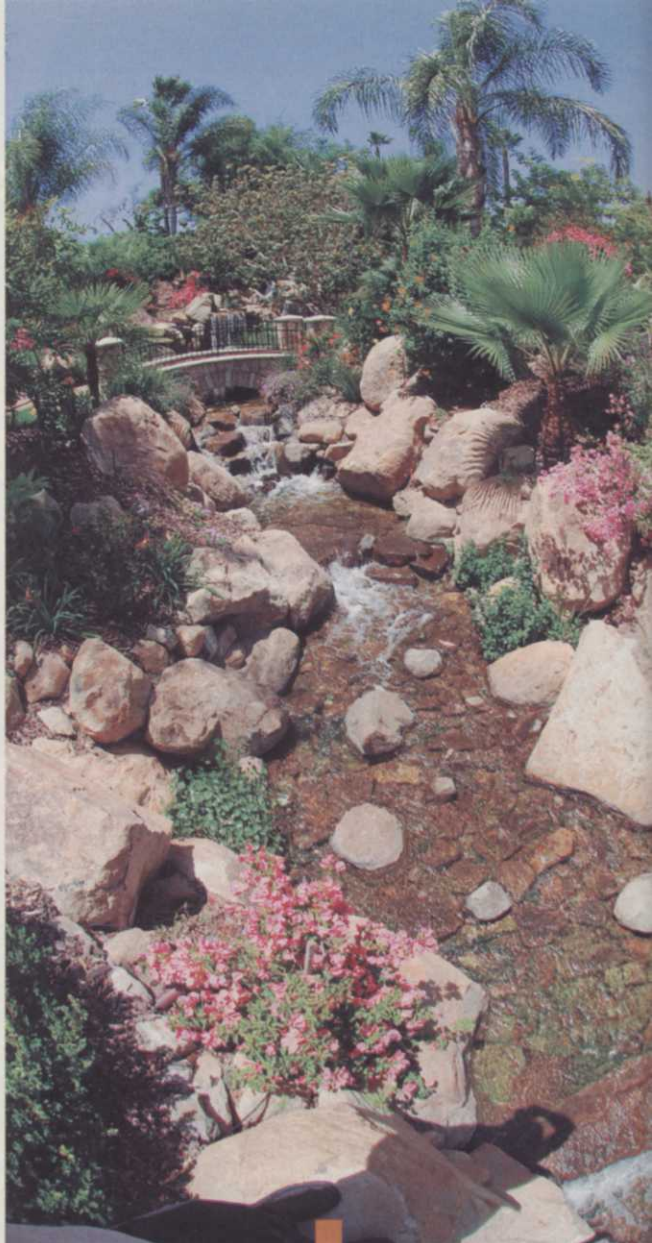
**A matter of engineering**

Jorgensen learned water-engineering techniques such as pump hydraulics and piping during the years he installed

swimming pools and spas. "There was a lot of engineering on this project," he says.

The whole system is integrated and shares the same water. They used different-sized piping in different areas, from three inches to six inches diameter. There are two 7½-hp pumps, each of which pumps 600 gpm, for a total of 1,200 gpm. The pumps are in a cement vault below ground level and can be lifted out for maintenance.

Both pumps connect to every waterfall, and every waterfall has its own plumbing. This allows the owners to control the amount of water



**Bob and Centella Jorgensen go to rivers in the Sierras for inspiration in designing streams, ponds and falls.**

that goes over each waterfall, by using water from one or both pipes, and by using valves on each waterfall to adjust the amount of water from each pipe.

At one point, the water flows horizontally into a large drainpipe that feeds into the stream. Jorgensen used his engineering know-how to keep the drainpipe from backing up, then he set rocks to make it look like an underground stream.

Centella says, "We feel this is a craft."

**Just add water**

The owners added ornamental koi and landscape plants, including lilies. Plants should cover about half the pond's surface once they've matured, Jorgensen says.

"Any pond without plants won't be a good ecosystem," he says. They help shade the water, stabilize the water

*continued on page 62*

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This is the largest project Waterfall Creations Inc. had attempted at the time, and it came out spectacularly, says the client.

*continued from page 60*

from temperature fluctuations and give fish a place to hide from predators, such as herons. They're essential for filtering water and removing toxins.

In addition to pond plants, other water-lovers were at key points in the streams, the flowing water, he says, such as corners and various nooks and crannies. This is partly for appearance and partly for the same reasons they should be in ponds. A lot of the same plants can be used for both ponds and streams, although some are better for places where water is more still.

The project has worked out beautifully, McDougal says. "People love it. It's been really good for booking weddings." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer who lives and works in Altadena, CA. Contact her at [janet.aird@earthlink.net](mailto:janet.aird@earthlink.net).





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# GO gazebo

**G**azebos are springing up in yards and within gardens across the country. They come in all shapes and sizes to satisfy the desires of homeowners and business owners seeking beautiful, relaxing landscapes. And it doesn't hurt a contractor's desire of building a profitable company either.

The primary target market for the gazebo industry include consumers looking to shelter pools and spas, and prospects wishing to maintain a personal area to enjoy their landscapes without having to keep a fly swatter and a can of Raid within arms reach. Gazebos are also used for keeping a dry area so clients can enjoy their outdoor spaces year round.

Gazebos provide shade from a hot sun or shelter from a rain storm. They're functional as well as being beautiful.

## Homeowners look to bring indoor worlds to their landscapes

BY BETH ANN SCIALABBA

### Design your gazebo line

Some contractors find it extremely rewarding to put their ideas and layout designs down on paper and setting them in front of current or potential customers. Whether you do it yourself or contract the design out to others, gazebos can improve a bottom line.

"You can do anything when designing gazebos," said Doug Damewood, owner of Gazebo One in Corona, CA. "Creating a focal point in your customers' backyards is the best part of owning your own gazebo business."

According to Damewood, gazebo designs go from a basic wood or concrete motif to heated, enclosed havens for people to enjoy the work and investment they've put into their landscapes. Damewood started his contracting business in 1986 and has grown his company to 25 locations in Southern California. His company installs an average of two to four gazebos each week.

Building a gazebo isn't as simple as turning a blueprint into a project. An





vital part of owning and operating a gazebo business is meeting customer expectations. It's often difficult for clients to envision the finished project. It's your job to not only prepare a design, but also aid them in choosing a location where a gazebo would look best. This includes helping them choose a roof that's similar to the color and texture of the roof on their home. Show your customer your designs, and modify them as needed to meet their expectations.

To Damewood, the key word when it comes to owning a gazebo business is "understanding."

"You'll achieve the best results when you take time to make sure the customer understands everything about your business, while you take time to understand what your customer needs," Damewood said.

### Market to market

Finding the right customers is essential in starting up and building any business, and there's no better way to find your consumers than through marketing.

Matt Pomeroy, owner and operator of River Mill Decks in Powell, OH, will soon be celebrating his 25th anniversary in the gazebo building business.

"As a business owner, I've tried every avenue of marketing," Pomeroy said. "Advertising in the Yellow Pages and search engine optimization are among the best areas of building my business."

To expand your customer base, especially if you're starting up your business, put some effort into marketing. Distribute flyers around local neighborhoods and create direct mail letters and postcards. These build consumer interest to the beauty gazebos can bring to their yards. Meet potential customers through home and garden shows, and show them how you can beautify their landscapes.



Designing and installing gazebos presents a welcome creative challenge for many contractors.

After you start gaining some customers, start a referral program. Provide discounts to new customers who were recommended by your previous clients and additional incentives to customers for referring their neighbors, friends and family. If you're already a business owner, contact your existing customers to spark their interest in gazebos.

### Get involved locally

Join your local business network association to meet business owners like yourself, and share best practices. "Becoming part of the Better Business Bureau was one of the greatest things I could have done for my business," Pomeroy said. "When you have a good record, people feel better about hiring you."

According to Pomeroy, his customers appreciate the personal feel of his business. Pomeroy is the one to make the sales, as well as install the gazebos.

In essence, sales and installations of gazebos is an extremely viable and lucrative avenue for starting or expanding your business. The demand for custom-built gazebos continues to grow and houses the potential for hefty profits.

If you're already a landscaper or just someone who wants to startup a side

## Starting your gazebo business

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Affiliate your business with contractors you trust to provide you with the proper materials and tools to build and install your customers' gazebos.
2. If you're new to owning your own business, get a tax identification number, setup a financial account, become insured, and check your area's licensing, zoning and building code requirements.
3. Hire high-quality employees and sub-contractors to build your business's name and brand.
4. Create a good, trustworthy name for your business by building personal relationships with your customers.
5. Keep in mind that a gazebo has the potential of becoming the focal point of your customers' landscapes, and you can add to the investment and beauty of their homes.

business, you may come to appreciate working from the comfort of your own home or office, and enjoying the outdoors, while you create an outdoor paradise for others. **LM**

— The author is a freelance journalist from Freehold, NJ Contact her at [bethannscialabba@yahoo.com](mailto:bethannscialabba@yahoo.com).



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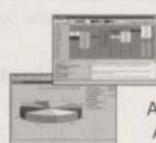
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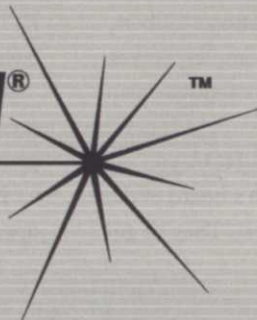
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# Winners

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SMALL/MID-SIZED COMPANIES TO WATCH

## Clean-Cut Lawns

Backing into the business didn't stop this landscaper from becoming a success

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS /  
Managing Editor

**M**any landscapers learn the business slowly, working for someone else before they venture out on their own. When they break away a whole new education begins learning the financial side of the business. Not John Nation.

"From the time I was in high school, I'd decided I was going to study accounting with the goal of owning my own business," says Nation, owner of Clean Cut Lawns. As he was finishing up his accounting degree, that's when he was first approached about becoming a partner in his landscape company.

### Know your niche

His approach seems to be working. Nation's Gilbert, AZ-based company serves primarily homeowner associations.

"With an HOA you're dealing with a board of directors," he says. "They've got a



### Business first.

John Nation's accounting background gives him solid footing as a landscaper.

set budget and money coming in on a regular basis from a whole bunch of homeowners. Of course, they're conscientious about how they spend that money, but they also recognize there's a need for regular improvements. Those things are built into their budgets. As long as we don't have a slow down in HOA fees being paid, we have a pretty secure future."

Nation's work ethic, he says, gives the company a leg up on competitors.

Nation has structured his operation so he can keep his

40 full-time employees pretty busy year around.

"With the renovation process that we've adopted with our plant pruning, it's really balanced out the workload. In the winter, when most companies are slowing down, we're doing a lot of plant renovation" Nation says. "In the summer, when most landscapers are killing themselves trying to keep up, we're not."

### Do one thing well

"I have a specialized crew philosophy," Nation says.

Some of his crews mow grass and do weekly maintenance. Others come in once a month and prune plants. And

still another group takes care of irrigation repairs.

That approach has helped his company develop an enviable reputation with the HOAs in the area.

"We try to stay on top of issues," Nation says. "When customers contact us with their concerns or if we see concerns, we're contacting them right away.

"The other thing is fair pricing and not trying to gouge people. We believe in the philosophy that everything needs to stand on its own. If we charge you a fair price for maintenance, we can charge a fair price for irrigation repair and not pad numbers there."

### An eye to the future

Unlike other areas of Arizona and the Southwest, the Phoenix area has yet to see the watering restrictions imposed on so many other communities. But when the time does come, he'll be ready. Both he and General Manager Gary McCunn have become certified water auditors.

It's all about serving customers and being ready to service their needs — even before they know what their needs are. **LM**

►► **Employees:** 40 **2007 Revenue:** \$2.1 million **Location:** Gilbert, AZ **Principals:** John Nation, owner; Gary McCunn, general manager **Web site:** www.cleancutlawns.com





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