Davey celebrates a century of education and training

In 1909, 20 employees of The Davey Tree Expert Company arrived in Kent, OH, to study at the first Davey Institute of Tree Surgery. In 2009, 47 Davey employees came to Kent from across North America to participate in the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences (DITS) — and to mark the 100th anniversary of the company’s premiere training program. This year’s graduates join the nearly 3,000 Davey employees who have taken part in DITS training over the century.

The curriculum has evolved over the years, but the intent is still the same: make sure that Davey employees are the best trained in the business. The early students studied botany, entomology and related sciences, as well as accounting, English and business ethics. Current students dig deep into the biological sciences, but also sharpen their skills in climbing and safety procedures, tree and plant care, disease diagnosis and management techniques.

Greg Ina, general manager of The Davey Institute, points to DITS and the continued

Proper care of tools was part of the early Davey Institute curriculum.

continued on page 28
Gehl celebrates 150th anniversary

WEST BEND, WI — To commemorate its sesquicentennial, Gehl Co. “chromed-out” a Gehl model 7810E. The one-of-a-kind skid loader clocks in at 10,000 lbs. The Gehl Co.’s history began in 1859 in a blacksmith shop located at the westerly bend of the Milwaukee River in a small farming community. Since then, the company has been led by three generations of Gehl family members — and still operates in the same Midwestern town where it began 150 years ago.

ANLA offers expanded industry resources

WASHINGTON — The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) has relaunched www.ANLA.org "As technology, time and generational change diversify the way our members wish to network, learn and gain knowledge from ANLA, we knew that we needed to broaden the availability of ANLA’s resources beyond our traditional base of face-to-face meetings," says Greg Schaan, Imperial Nurseries, Granby, CT.

IA offers show details

FALLS CHURCH, VA — The 2009 Irrigation Show, the annual trade show of the Irrigation Association, will be held Dec. 2-4 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. The show offers irrigation professionals the opportunity to connect with industry peers and learn strategies and skills to improve their bottom line. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the show schedule will vary from years past. Education classes will run from Monday, Dec. 1, to Friday, Dec. 5. Certification exams will be offered from Tuesday, Dec. 2, through Saturday, Dec. 6.

Drought update

It’s over.

OK, it’s not exactly time to party, but the drought that has kept much of the Southeast drier than a vermouth-less martini officially ended when three storms dropped 3 to 6 in. of rain from the Gulf Coast to the Florida Panhandle.

"Marked changes of improvement are noted on the heels of this drought-breaking rain, with removal of D1-D2 in Louisiana, D1 in southern Mississippi and Alabama, and D2 in northeastern Georgia and western North Carolina," according to the March 31 "National Drought Summary" from the National Drought Mitigation Center. (See chart at right for explanations of the drought designations.)

It is the first time since February 2007 that Alabama has been drought-free.

A portion of the Northeast corner of Georgia still suffers from below-normal stream flow and ground water conditions. The severe drought area in upscale South Carolina remains, though it is smaller, according to the report.

"In addition, D0 was removed from all but extreme northern Louisiana, all of Mississippi, and all but a sliver of extreme east-central Alabama along with the Florida Panhandle, with the potential for more heavy rains over the next week," the report continued. The rest of Florida remains in drought conditions, as does deep Southern Texas.

For more on drought conditions, and to read the National Drought Summary visit: www.drought.unl.edu.

Drought intensity categories

D0 ... Abnormally Dry — used for areas showing dryness but not yet in drought, or for areas recovering from drought.
D1 ... Moderate Drought
D2 ... Severe Drought
D3 ... Extreme Drought
D4 ... Exceptional Drought

Drought or dryness types

A ... Agricultural
H ... Hydrological

Stens donates ambulance

Jasper, IN — It was the spring of 2008 when a vendor approached Stens with a request to donate an ambulance to Mercy & Sharing, an organization dedicated to helping feed, educate and medically care for children and widows in Haiti.

"The request was a bit of a surprise, to be honest," recalls Stens President Peter Ariens. "It’s not often that we have vendors approach us for such specific donations."

Mark Salter, the Stens vendor who asked for the donation, has grown used to soliciting for such useful donations. Since his involvement in the Mercy & Sharing organization, he has taken the role of program director and has helped Founder Susie Krabacher foster the children of Haiti.

"I have been to Haiti and seen the dangerous and unhealthy conditions these children live in every day. It’s truly heartwrenching," Salter admits.

"As a business owner, my hope is to always change lives in a positive way," says Ariens. "After hearing Mark’s stories and getting to know the organization, it was nearly impossible to say no. Especially in this time of economic change, we feel it is particularly important to remember those less fortunate than us."

Mercy & Sharing’s Mark Salter (right) thanks Stens President Peter Ariens.

PHOTO COURTESY STENS. ILLUSTRATION BY STOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.
Bucking conventional wisdom

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

With the economy tanking and design/build among the harder hit segments of the Green Industry, it might seem an odd time to develop and promote those services, but that is just what one California company is doing.

Sierra Landscape Co., Palm Desert/San Diego, announced the formation of a full-service landscape design/build division. The company has engaged in a strategic partnership with RGA Landscape Architects Inc. of Palm Desert/San Diego.

"Today's competitive market demands developers and owners to have designs based on realistic budgets, shortened project timelines, clearer and earlier understanding of overall project costs," the company said announcing the partnership. "By organizing a collaborative approach, Sierra Landscape is filling a growing customer need that has never been available in the past."

LM spoke with Randy E. Mitchell, vice president of Sierra's new division, to find out what was behind the company's thinking.

Given the economy, is this really the time to be pushing/promoting design/build work?
We have found there are an increasing number of owners with major projects who are faced with serious budget challenges. We are able to minimize these problems very early in the design stage to maximize the outcome of the owner's budget. This process can only be accomplished when a team schooled in both design and construction are collaborating as a single unit and are key shareholders from the beginning.

How does this change what Sierra Landscape was already offering in terms of design/build work?
Our core business has always been driven by our landscape construction and landscape maintenance services. What design/build does is enhance our offerings — and provide an ideal series of professional landscape services offered by one source, from the early conception of the design stage to long-term maintenance.

Why RGA?
The two firms have successfully worked together for 29 years on a wide variety of projects, but as independent participants. Teaming our expertise and creating an informal alliance between both companies permits both RGA and Sierra Landscape to offer our customers the resources of both businesses under one contract.

Is this more or less a referral system, where you push your design/build clients to them for their expertise and vice versa?
Both companies maintain very effective business development departments, which reach out to many regions of Southern California. All inquiries will be shared between the two companies, with Sierra Landscape handling the leadership and coordination of all potential work.

Does this change your staffing in any way?
Very little staffing adjustments are required.
Girard Environmental donates landscaping services

Sanford, FL — Girard Environmental Services — a full-service landscaping company based in Seminole County, FL — recently donated more than $5,000 worth of landscaping services to Midway Safe Harbor Center, an after-school program in Sanford. The Girard team installed irrigation and stone pavers, and provided arbor and landscaping care to the community center’s 10,000-sq.-ft. outdoor garden classroom.

“The landscaping infrastructure that Girard Environmental donated is priceless because it helps us maintain our garden project, which functions as a learning tool to help teach kids about horticulture,” says Pat Cucci, executive director of the Midway Safe Harbor Center, which also serves as a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Seminole County.

Nearly 180 students work on Midway Safe Harbor Center’s garden throughout the year — and grow everything from onions and corn to pineapples and red peppers.

“We are happy to help give Midway Safe Harbor Center’s garden classroom a much-needed landscape facelift,” says Alan Wing, vice president of operations at Girard Environmental Services. “Most of our employees live in Sanford, and we take great pride in this community.”

believer IT

Lawsuit Abuse Awareness

Rick Popp, owner of Ozark Outdoors in Springfield, MO, is featured as part of the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform’s “I Am Lawsuit Abuse” national awareness campaign. Popp’s company sold a riding lawnmower to a customer who used it all spring and summer, then sued the firm to get his money back once the mowing season was over. To hear Popp’s story, check out www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxegWf-FWWw.
Newnan, GA — Catalpa Landscape Management has signed on to donate full landscaping services to Angel's House, an emergency shelter for children of Newnan and Coweta counties. The landscape company is volunteering a full year's worth of landscape maintenance services valued at $5,000 to the children's shelter.

"As a small business operator in Coweta County, Catalpa Landscape Management is always looking for ways to help out and give back to the local community," says Owner Rod Smith. "We think that supporting vital not-for-profit organizations in our area, such as Angel's House, is one way we can do that."

Angel's House provides children a comfortable place to stay and be nurtured and cared for until a permanent foster home can be found for them. It is supported with the help of corporations, foundations, churches, community groups and concerned individuals locally and throughout the state. In other words, it's not the kind of place that prefers to spend its limited funds on maintenance services.

"Our maintenance crew will visit Angel's House on a weekly basis," says Catalpa's new-business manager, Casey Child. "The shelter provides such a valuable service to the community, and we are extremely proud to help them in every way possible."

Work has slowed down. You're looking to generate revenue between irrigation and landscaping jobs. Add outdoor lighting to your list of services. You already have many of the skills, and we'll provide everything else you'll need to be profitably successful.

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Call 800-766-VISTA or visit www.vistapro.com.
Bobcat helps defend Fargo-Moorhead community from flooding

Residents of North Dakota, home of Bobcat Co., prepared for major flooding in the eastern part of the state and battled flood conditions in the west and central areas in late March. Early on March 28, the Red River hit a record stage of 40.82 ft. Efforts then switched from fighting the flood to monitoring the river and returning the communities back to normal.

In response to the flood threat in the Fargo, ND, area, near the company’s world headquarters, more than 100 Bobcat employees volunteered around the clock to help fill and place sandbags, build flood walls along the water’s edges, provide meals and answer phones at the volunteer center. Bobcat’s donation of more than 40 machines and 40 volunteer operators helped accelerate National Guard efforts to efficiently fill a portable floodwall system throughout the city.

Management at Bobcat recognized the need for volunteers, especially operators, and encouraged all employees to leave their positions that week to help with the protection efforts.

Bismarck and Gwinner, ND — both homes to Bobcat factories and their neighboring communities were hit with overland flooding, washed-out roads and near-blizzard conditions. Gwinner employees ramped up volunteer efforts to support neighboring communities, while other employees volunteered around Gwinner and in the Red River Valley, operating equipment, participating in sandbagging, and providing food and support to community members. In Bismarck, where the Missouri River had ice jams that led to unexpected flooding, employees offered assistance to community members and neighbors in sandbagging and evacuation efforts along the river.

Bobcat dealers around North Dakota stepped up to help their communities as well by supplying equipment and resources toward flood fighting. Another reason Bobcat equipment was highly visible in the Fargo-Moorhead areas was that many customers were both working and volunteering their time and equipment to help protect the communities.
The Dallas Water Utilities are taking their slogan “Save water — nothing can replace it” pretty seriously. The organization put out a list of do’s and don’ts for those responsible for irrigating properties. Those violating the outdoor watering guidelines can result in fines of $250 to $2,000 per incident. First offenses will be issued a warning. While the fines might only apply to residents of Dallas, the principles stress good water management no matter your locale.

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- Best spray on the market using a unique, adjustable high-pressure, high-velocity system that creates larger droplets for better coverage, less drift and fewer callbacks

**Do**

- Hand water or use a soaker hose. They’re permitted at any time.
- Maintain your sprinkler system. Repair any broken, missing or misdirected sprinkler heads.
- Install rain and freeze sensors on your sprinkler system.
- Monitor your total water usage. If you use more than 15,000 gallons a month, you’ll pay a surcharge on the amount above 15,000.

**Don’t**

- Don’t water during any form of precipitation.
- Don’t allow your sprinkler system to water driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- Don’t waste water by allowing runoff onto a street or other drainage area when you’re watering.
- Don’t water your yard between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. between April 1 and October 31.
Reclaimed water use gains steam

Whether they are motivated by drought conditions or environmental concern, many cities around the country are turning to reclaimed water. Treatment facilities create reclaimed water by taking wastewater (sewage), treating it to remove the solids and impurities, and making it available for non-drinking purposes. A quick Internet news search provides a list of stories discussing the various cities — mostly across the South — that are using or exploring the possibility of using reclaimed water.

A recent story in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune reports how residents of Southern California cities are "wasting 45 million gallons of usable water every day." According to the article, the three treatment plants in the San Gabriel Valley process 87 million gallons a day, but only 42 million gallons are actually reused — enough for about 5,000 families a year. The goal is to increase that figure.

According to an article in The Tampa Tribune, Tampa city officials are considering giving away reclaimed water for lawn use to help ease the city's drought problem: "They are contacting landscapers and utility contractors to determine whether it's feasible to fill watering trucks with reclaimed water that, in turn, would be sprayed onto lawns."

The Naples Daily News reported a change in a ruling that "discouraged homeowners from using reclaimed water to irrigate their lawns." The ruling required those using reclaimed water to sign an agreement that held the city blameless if the reclaimed water damaged their landscaping.

Entrepreneur wins KIOTI’s 2008 success story contest

Wendell, NC — KIOTI Tractor named Richard Vega of Lake George, NY, the winner of the 2008 National Success Stories contest. Entrants were required to submit a KIOTI tractor serial number, the dealer name and date they purchased the tractor, a description of how they use their tractor and a photograph of themselves with the tractor. One winner was selected each month, with the monthly winners becoming eligible for the grand prize.

Vega uses his DK45SE HST tractor for a variety of tasks from landscaping, to tree cutting and hauling, to snow removal and lifting. To accomplish this diversity of tasks, he equipped the tractor with a number of implements, including a loader, landscape rake, blade and pallet forks.

"A picture is worth a thousand words," states Ron Parrish, KIOTI market development manager. "The photos sent with Vega's entry really made it apparent how much work he has done with his tractor."

As the national grand prize winner of this year-long contest, Vega received a $1,500 gift card.
Precision Laboratories added David Keating to its Turf and Ornamental sales team. Keating assumes the role of district manager for the northeastern United States, where he is responsible for professional turf sales and customer relationship management.

Charles Granger joins Austin Outdoor's Business Development Department as business development manager - government services. Granger is responsible for focusing on developing relationships with city, county, state and federal government entities in the geographic areas served by the company in Florida.

The ServiceMaster Co. announced that Stephen M. Donly is the new president and chief operating officer of TrueGreen LawnCare. Prior to joining TrueGreen, Donly was president and chief executive officer of Enterprise Media Networks Inc., a San Diego-based technology company that specializes in cutting edge high-tech solutions for the entertainment and restaurant industries.

Phoenix Environmental Care welcomes Mike Layel as national accounts manager. Layel is working to develop and implement sales and marketing programs.

Gary Watschke and Phil Spitz have been named territory managers for the Lawn & Garden sales team at Syngenta Professional Products. In their new positions, they work directly with golf course superintendents, lawn care operators and other turf professionals to help meet product and sales consultative support needs.

President and Chief Executive Officer Douglas W. York has announced a reorganization of Ewing Irrigation Products executive board as part of a plan to prepare the company for continued growth and efficiency. As vice president of sustainability and conservation, newly appointed Warren S. Gorowitz will spearhead future sustainability and conservation initiatives both internally and externally for Ewing. The company says this reorganization will foster collaboration and improve Ewing's ability to serve internal departments, Green Industry professionals and industry partners.

Stantec recently hired Keith Wilson as Senior Landscape Architect. In his new role, Wilson, a former president of the California Sierra chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, provides project management and supports business development from Stantec's office in Sacramento, CA.

John F. Brailsford, Jr., of Orangeburg, SC, assumed the presidency of the Horticultural Research Institute in January. Brailsford is the president of Shady Grove Plantation and Nursery, which was established by John F. Brailsford, Sr. in 1939.
other training programs as a distinguishing feature of the Davey Co.

"The Davey Co. recognized long ago the value of investing in our employees through extensive education and training opportunities," Ina says. "The DITS tradition is unique in our industry; we were proud to celebrate our 100-year anniversary this winter."

Early DITS students participated in a variety of intramural athletic activities, including tug of war.

RJ Laverne, manager of education and training, calls DITS a foremost example of the company's commitment to and investment in its employees.

"I think this group can make a positive difference in our company, in the profitability and the way we conduct business and the way we're honored within the industry," Laverne says. "There is great potential with this group to sustain us as a great company and take us into important places."

Although DITS was established 100 years ago, the program was interrupted by the Depression and World War II.

In 1946, DITS was re-established with a refresher course for employees returning from military service. The course's duration was reduced from three months to six weeks. In the early 1950s, the program was reduced to five weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Service.

In 1976, the program was condensed to four weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences, as it is currently known.

Bruce Wilson
Tom Oyler

The company's mentoring program truly educates, motivates and inspires. Wilson-Oyler's unique, proven approach understands that the underlying attitude in positive performance is that people do best when they have a passion for what they do. It's not really "work" if your people love what they do. And if your people really love what they do, and they do it well, then your customers will love your work, too — and they will tell others! LM's Best Practices Consulting Club will help you find, develop and reward that passion, and build leaders at every level of your organization.

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