



**Mark Grunkemeyer**, past president of the Ohio Lawn Care Association and a former board member of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, says the benefits he has received by participating to industry events far outweigh the effort. "I can pick up the phone anytime and network with any number of great people in this industry as a result," he says.

**How did you get into the lawn care business?** I wanted to work outside. It's the reason why I studied to be a golf course superintendent at The Ohio State University. Then I developed a passion to help homeowners improve the green spaces where they live, work and play.

**What do you like the most — and the least — about owning/operating a lawn care business?** It's been exciting to be a part of the evolution of what is still a young industry, and the constant change that is taking place in the lawnscape business. One of the most frustrating aspects of the business, at least for me, is dealing with people, including clients, who have little or no patience.

**What is your company's competitive advantage?** Our technicians have been trained to give lawns only what they need, and can use either liquids or dry treatments. We can do this because our trucks are equipped with 600-gallon split tanks and dry boxes. Our technicians are well trained

and well compensated. Even the newest guys have been on the same lawns for five years.

**What do you see as the largest challenge for the lawn care industry?** The largest challenge for the lawnscape industry is the environmental groups that mistake perception and emotion for science and reality. That's why we must continue to educate our clients and the public about what we do to keep their properties healthy and attractive, and the reasons about why we do it.

**We visited your Web site and downloaded several of your most recent quarterly newsletters. In terms of design and content, they're excellent — among the best we've seen. Who produces them?** We contract with Focal Point in Cincinnati. The professionals there produce the first page our newsletter, and I

produce the second page. It takes me about two hours five times a year. We produce one for every round or application, and every customer gets one. We did a survey to see how many are being read, and we discovered that about 15 percent to 20 percent of our customers read them. We think this is a pretty good rate.

**What would you describe as your company's best marketing tool?** Our people are our best marketing tool, but we're very proud of our printed material and our Web site, too.

**Will you be attending the Ohio Turfgrass Conference again Dec. 7-10?** I never miss the conference. It's always a great opportunity to learn and network.

## AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** Buckeye Ecocare, Centerville, OH

**FOUNDED:** 1984

**PRESIDENT/OWNER:** Mark Grunkemeyer

**NUMBER OF LOCATIONS:** 1

**EMPLOYEES:** 30

**INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:** past president of the Ohio Lawn Care Association, seven years on the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Board, member of the Bayer National Lawn Care Advisory Board

**BUSINESS OUTLOOK FOR '09:** "Same as '08: residential sales up, commercial sales down."

**PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS/HOBBIES:** "Good friends, great times, competitive golf and being outside and near the water."

**FAMILY:** wife of 33 years, Peggy, two grown children, three grandchildren

**WEBSITE:** BuckeyeEcocare.com

THE LARGEST CHALLENGE FOR THE INDUSTRY IS ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS MISTAKING PERCEPTION AND EMOTION FOR SCIENCE."