



AT A GLANCE

COMPANY:

Fairway Green Inc.

ONLINE:

FairwayGreenInc.com

PRESIDENT: Robert Windish

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:

Longtime member of PLCAA & PLANET, PLANET Trailblazer

HEADQUARTERS: Hillsborough, NJ (sole location)

SERVICE AREA: Central Jersey

FOUNDED: 1987

EMPLOYEES: 35

SERVICES: lawn care, tree and shrub care, tick control, core aeration, liming, seeding, deer repellent, geese control

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS/HOBBIES:

Golf ("wish I had time to golf more"), travel, scuba diving

FAMILY: Wife and two daughters

For nearly a quarter of a century, **Robert Windish** has owned and operated Fairway Green, serving the homeowners of central New Jersey. He's learned a lot in those years and, like many leaders, he's decided to share that knowledge with the rest of the industry. Windish is one of the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) Trailblazers, a program that gives less-experienced lawn service professionals an opportunity to spend time and learn from lawn care veterans.

Robert, tell us how and why you became involved. The Trailblazer program is a great opportunity to give back to the industry and help someone from a non-competing market who's just getting started or needs some help. When I became a PLCAA member more than 20 years ago, I got involved with the education committee. The others on the committee were older and more experienced in the industry than I was. I felt quite comfortable talking lawn care, both technical and business with them — kind of like today's Trailblazer program.

What have you found to be most rewarding about being involved with PLANET? The friendships you develop. I look forward to seeing them at industry events and sharing experiences with them, what's working and not working.

In a nutshell, describe your market and your customers. We're about a 50-minute drive from New York City if there's

no traffic. We provide services in about a 25-mile radius in central New Jersey. The lawns we treat are large compared to other regions of the country. They average about 22,000 sq. ft. There are a lot of professional people in our market, and they don't have time to do their own lawn care.

How would you describe your growth strategy? I grow my business based on the quality of people I can bring into the business. For the most part, I've been lucky. There was a time after I started the business when I wanted to grow it into multiple branches. As I got older, maybe I got smarter. I decided I didn't want to go that route.

Describe the biggest competitive challenge facing your company. Over the past few years, more customers purchase by price — so we're constantly battling against lower prices offered by the largest lawn care companies. We may be one of the most

expensive companies in our market — maybe the most expensive — because we offer superior service.

Share any changes you will be making in your marketing or operations for 2011.

We continue to search for superior products that will add efficiencies in delivering our services.

How do you see the 2011 season compared to 2010? It looks like the people who normally spend money on services will continue to do so. But new customers who have not typically purchased service-related products will continue to be hard to find.

What are your feelings regarding the proposed Child Safe Playing Field Act that, if passed, would ban pesticide use on all New Jersey school grounds? The Green Industry has to unite and take a stand on issues that threaten our industry, the loss of thousands of jobs and our personal liveli-

hoods. Too many companies are unaware of this proposed legislation that ultimately will affect them. Whether you're a small one-man company or a multiple-branch national company, you have to get involved. Once we concede an issue like this, which is purely emotional and has no scientific basis, what's next? We've all seen what's happened in Canada, where lawn care chemicals have been banned. It could happen here.