

Needed — youth's energy

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

This month's cover article focuses on innovative programs to bring talented young people into our fold. Our coverage is long overdue. We hope it inspires you to take a similar interest in bringing fresh young talent into our industry.

There seems to be a feeling by many within the Green Industry that high school students aren't aware of its many career opportunities. Or not enough of them are aware anyway which prompts the question — how many are enough?

The only answer that we consistently hear is "more." Owners tell us that the lack of sufficient numbers of sharp, responsible managers, including entry-level managers, is limiting their growth.

From there discussions revolve around the need to work with our local schools and vocational training programs, perhaps through guidance counselors or FFA advisors, to enlighten young people to our role in beautifying properties, adding enjoyment to people's lifestyles and improving the environment.

Opportunity aplenty

We know that the Green Industry offers energetic young people fine career opportunities, including the chance for steady and long-term employment, not to mention the very real likelihood of many of them becoming owners and entrepreneurs. But how many of them know this?

Indications point to continued growth for the Green Industry, not only in terms of the numbers of customers and revenues, but in a growing diversification of services, too. Who knows what additional

services we will be offering property owners or society, in general? No question that we will be expected to deliver and take a more visible role in improving the environment. More erosion control. Property remediation. Water and, perhaps even, energy conservation. We and the next generation of industry owners and managers will have to be ready.

Imagine the possibilities

Let's use our imaginations to keep discovering and delivering new services for clients and our society. The possibilities are endless. We only have to look at the incredible range of services that we now deliver to see how far we've come and as a promise of how much more we can do.

Indeed, how many of us 25 years ago imagined companies growing to five, 10 or 15 million dollars in annual revenues by offering property management services — primarily mowing and trimming?

How many of us envisioned the huge and more recent consumer move to "outdoor living" and all that implies?

The fact is we're going to grow in both importance to society and in terms of size and services.

We will need the imagination and energy of talented young people to continue to make it happen.

Contact Ron at 216/
706-3739 or e-mail at
rhall@questex.com

We know the Green Industry offers young people fine career opportunities.



Mine your data to determine whom to target and where to place your emphasis for profitable growth.



Base your moves on facts

BY BRUCE WILSON

Most companies grow, but not all grow profitably because not everybody takes advantage of leads they get from referrals and elsewhere in the same way. While all companies process leads, they can become more profitable if they develop and use more fact-based decision making to build growth, in particular, profitable growth.

By "fact-based decision making," I'm referring to using data to make decisions. For instance, many companies get business through a combination of word-of-mouth, cold calling, advertising and joining organizations to network and develop business relationships that lead to new business. However, most companies do not have or use a database to track the source of their new business. They believe they know and will tell you that one or the other is the best source, but do they really?

Don't trust your gut

For instance, I own a company that gets its new business through referrals, direct mail, and advertising in a local money mailer. When I reflected back on the year, my feeling and that of my manager was that the money mailer, which we had tried for six months, produced a lot of small nuisance jobs or opportunities. We considered dropping the service.

We track all inbound calls and enter the information into a database, which we check periodically.

Looking at the data, we found that the mailers actually produced jobs that were the same average size as both of our other sources. In fact, they produced work more consistently than the referral source. Our referral business was good but sporadic. The mailers produced work in each month at about the same sales level. This was valuable factual information in determining whether or not to continue to invest in this type of advertising.

Use the data wisely

We were able to change the promotion on the mailers to discourage the small jobs by stating a minimum size for the promotion to be valid. Since we implemented that change, we have increased the job size in that category, although there are fewer opportunities. There are also fewer wasted sales calls and our close ratio has improved.

This type of data leads to more profitable growth. Another thing to track is individual job profitability. Track it by type of service; landscape maintenance, enhancement, landscape construction, irrigation, hardscape, etc., as well as by size and customer type. You can then mine that data to determine whom to target and where to place your emphasis for profitable growth.

You want to use factual data about your business that helps you to link your sales and operations so that you sell work, which you know for a fact that you can produce profitably.

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

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In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

SURVEY SHOWS ILLINOIS WANTS

'greener' landscapes

URBANA, IL — A survey of Illinois Green Industry professionals and residents shows a trend toward environmentally friendly practices and concerns. According to the survey, the top emerging trends for landscaping are: to be low in maintenance; incorporate native plants and grasses; use drought-tolerant plants to reduce water use; and use disease-resistant plants in order to reduce the need for chemicals.

"Management practices can be changed to include alternative methods such as biological control and the use of organic fertilizers and pesticides," said Gene Campbell who conducted the survey. "These types of products were promoted, used or sold by 17% to 30% of Green Industry businesses and by up to

23% of residential households. And, all of the participants in the survey reported that they expect to increase their level of activity regarding the use of these environmentally friendly alternatives within the next three to five years."

"Using less water and applying fewer chemicals are also more environmentally friendly trends," said Bill Krudenier coordinator of external relations in the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

Additional information can be downloaded from the University of Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences Web site:

www.nres.uiuc.edu

Livescapes debuts to landscape contractors in July 2007

CLEVELAND — Questex Media Group, Inc., publisher of *Landscape Management* magazine, will launch a new supplement called *Livescapes*.

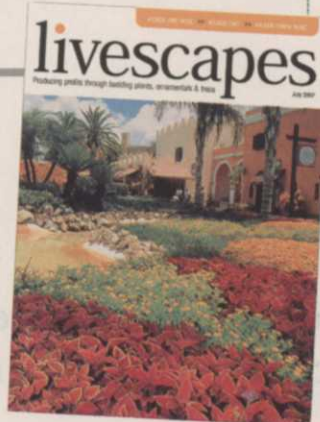
Set to debut in July 2007, *Livescapes* will target landscape contractor professionals who perform installation services and purchase bedding plants, ornamentals and trees. It will focus on such topics as how to make installation projects more profitable, addressing product challenges, and choosing among the many varieties available.

Livescapes is supported by OFA — an Association of Floriculture Professionals, and ANLA, the American Nursery & Landscape Association.

"We are excited to be a part of this endeavor because our members, who are the leading floricultural professionals across the country, are very interested in enhancing their relationship with the landscape contractors who install color," said OFA Executive Director John R. Holmes.

"A publication such as *Livescapes*, which will ultimately bring nurseries and garden centers closer to the landscape professional, is a great idea," said ANLA Executive Vice President, Robert J. Dolibois.

Two more issues are planned for 2007 in September/October and November/December.



[CLIPPINGS]

Borst Landscape expands reach

ALLENDALE, NJ — Borst Landscape and Design of Allendale, NJ, has expanded its eastern Bergen County customer base with the purchase of Valley Landscaping. Valley Landscaping serves about 60 residential and commercial clients. Valley owner Guy Nicolosi has joined the Borst team as a sales associate.

Two-year turf care warranty

SOUTHAMPTON, PA — Schiller-Pfeiffer Inc., is offering a new two-year warranty on all Classen turf care equipment shipped. Visit www.classen-mfg.com.

New Finn supply store

CLEVELAND — Cincinnati-based FINN Corp. opened another store location for its Wholesale Landscape Supply division, d.b.a. CWS Inc. in Cleveland. The newest location is the third CWS Inc. storefront that FINN has built to satisfy landscape supplies, erosion control products and FINN equipment sales, rentals and parts sourcing for the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana tri-state customers.

Lifetime zero-turn warranty

JOHNSON CREEK, WI — Commercial Grounds Care Inc., announced a new Lifetime Deck, Cradle, and Engine Deck (DCED) Warranty for all Bob-Cat and Bunton "E" model zero turn mowers. Visit www.cgcequip.com.

Tired of losing money on every payroll?

EMPLOYEE TIMESHEET

NAME: Bill Kemp DATES: 11-15

DAY	START	LUNCH	END	JOBSITE	WORK DONE	HOURS
MON	7:00	1/2	3:30	Brentw.		8
TUE			3:30			8
WED			4:00	↓		8 1/2
THU			4:00	Crestv.		8 1/2
FRI	↓	↓	4:00	↓		8 1/2

Employee Signature: Bill Kemp **TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2**



Reality?

Employee Report

Kemp, Bill Date Range: 6/11/2007 through 6/15/2007

Day	Date	Jobsite	Start	Stop	Cost Code	Hours	Total
Mon	6/11	Brentwood	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57	
			12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41	7:38 hours
Tue	6/12	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55	
			12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40	7:35 hours
Wed	6/13	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50	
			12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03	7:53 hours
Thu	6/14	Crestview	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02	
			12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56	7:58 hours
Fri	6/15	Crestview	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54	
			12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55	7:49 hours
Total						38:53 hours	

Signature: Bill Kemp Kemp, Bill



Reality Check.

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 > **DOZENS** of cost codes?
 > Crews on the **MOVE?**

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In the Know

LEGALLY Speaking



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

Q Why is maintaining written employee procedures and policies important?

A Because it can cost your company a lot of money if you do not. Don't believe me? Ask Mitsubishi, who settled a sexual harassment class-action suit for \$34 million in 1997. Or Coca-Cola, who settled a class-action race discrimination for \$192.5 million. Or Triton, who paid one ex-employee \$124 million for a wrongful termination suit (awarded by a Texas jury). And, even if you are not guilty, the cost to successfully defend a single employment discrimination claim can easily approach \$100,000-\$200,000.

Q Besides the courts, are there other institutions that might investigate my company's conduct?

A Yes. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) typically resolves tens of thousands of claims each year through settlements, conciliations, mediations and litigation. Recent increases in the numbers of EEOC charges involve matters of religious, age and nationality discrimination.

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 LM. Contact him via 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.

BYU wins big at PLANET Student Career Days

EAST LANSING, MI — For the second year in a row, Brigham Young University swept the field with the Idaho campus winning first place at the event and the Provo campus coming in second at the 31st Annual Student Career Days, hosted by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) March 28-April 1 at Michigan State University.

Following were Colorado State, Kansas State and Pennsylvania State. The host school, Michigan State University, placed 8th overall. The event has steadily grown through the years, with students from 53 schools participating this year.

Winners of the individual competitions, who were identified as "Superstars" are Ken Kwiat of the University of Illinois, Champaign; Adam Barnshausen of Clemson University and Nathan Roach of Alamance Community College.

The 24 individual and team competitions included tree climbing, skid steer operation, patio installation, wood construction, plant identification, personnel management, sales presentation, exterior/interior design, irrigation troubleshooting, equip-



ment operation, and others.

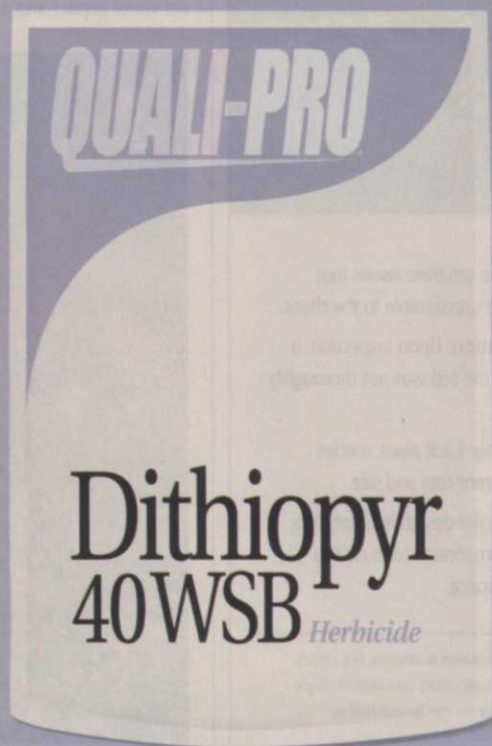
In addition, this year's PLANET Student Career Days drew the largest national gathering of landscape, lawn care, and interior plantscape employment recruiters. The Career Fair offered students the opportunity to interview with Green Industry companies for full-time positions and internships.

For a complete list of winners, please visit the Web at www.StudentCareerDays.org



1. Nathan Baker of BYU begins a near-perfect climb **2.** Jenna Knackstedt from Kansas State University tests out a Toro walk-behind mower **3.** Joe Plummer and Brent Davies from Pennsylvania College of Technology lay pavers down

Use as directed for *Crabgrassus vanishus.*



What it doesn't do is almost as good as what it does. New Dithiopyr 40 WSB from Quali-Pro does provide the outstanding broad spectrum control you expect — with an application window wide enough for both pre- and early post-emergent control of crabgrass — in a formulation that doesn't stain. Another solid addition to the industry's most comprehensive product portfolio, Dithiopyr 40 WSB makes crabgrass and more than 40 other tough annual grasses and broadleaf weeds disappear without a trace.

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BEFORE



Problem The client is unhappy with the appearance of the flower display. What are the potential reasons for the problem? What would you do?

The cause

There were three separate issues that made this space unpalatable to the client.

- 1. Soil Preparation:** Upon inspection, it was found that the soil was not thoroughly prepared.
- 2. Plant Spacing:** Each plant species grows at a different rate and size.
- 3. Complexity:** the design is simply too complicated. Someone tried to do too much with the space.

Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are much more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com

Solutions

There are several reasons why the plants in this flower display are not creating the desired impact. Let's address each of the causes.

- 1. Soil preparation:** A soil test should be taken and the soil amended. Soil should be tilled to a depth of eight to 10 inches.
- 2. Plant spacing:** Know or increase your knowledge of plant materials!
- 3. Complexity:** When designing a floral display use the KISS Method (Keep It Simple & Smile). Simple, well managed displays create the greatest visual impact and a positive long-lasting impression for your client.



AFTER

Their time is up.
Starts working in hours—even minutes.



CAT Chopper raises funds for children's camp

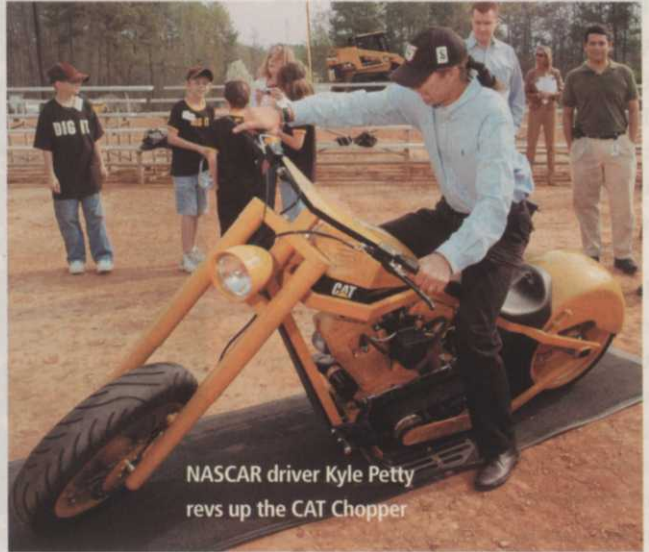
CLAYTON, NC — Caterpillar donated a CAT Chopper to the Victory Junction Gang Camp for seriously ill children. The charitable organization was founded and is supported by the Petty family of NASCAR racing fame, and the plan is to use the motorcycle to raise funds for the camp.

The mission of the Victory Junction Gang Camp is to enrich the lives of children with chronic medical conditions or serious illnesses by providing life-changing camping experiences that are exciting, fun and empowering, in a safe and medically sound environment. Kyle and Pattie Petty founded the camp, which operates solely on donations.

The camp features a NASCAR racing theme, and it has been strongly supported by the NASCAR community. Caterpillar is now in its 14th season of NASCAR participation as a sponsor — starting in 1993 as an associate sponsor of Kyle Petty's #42 Pontiac in what was then the NASCAR Winston Cup Series. Caterpillar now is the primary sponsor of the #22 car driven by Dave Blaney in the Nextel Cup Series.

Caterpillar officials donated the CAT Chopper to the camp, represented by Petty family members, in a ceremony at the Caterpillar Building Construction Products Division in Clayton, NC.

"I can't thank the folks at Caterpillar enough for donating this beautiful custom chopper to the camp," said Pattie Petty, CEO and co-founder of Victory Junction. "This donation will help raise funds to continue to send children with chronic med-



NASCAR driver Kyle Petty
revs up the CAT Chopper

ical conditions to Victory Junction for a life changing camping experience. The fact that Caterpillar has reached out to create such a great partnership with the camp speaks volumes about their organization."

The donated CAT Chopper being is one of two identical custom motorcycles designed and fabricated for Caterpillar by Orange County Choppers Inc. (OCC), the focus of the Discovery Channel's hit American Chopper television series.

They can crawl, but they can't hide.

No buffer zones to worry about.



In the Know

Bartlett Tree Experts protects historic land

WILLIAMSBURG, VA — To help maintain the splendor of historic Jamestown, Bartlett Tree Experts dispatched more than 40 employees and donated \$26,000 in tree care services in anticipation of the settlement's 400th anniversary.

The services, including pruning, installation of structural support systems and tree lightning protection, helps preserve the landscape of the settlement and provide enhanced safety for visitors. A crew of more than 40 Bartlett employees from across Virginia arrived in the early hours of the morning on March 24 for a full day of tree care and restoration.

"With Bartlett Tree Experts celebrating its centennial this year, it is a great time for both our company and Jamestown from a historical view point," said Robert Bartlett, chairman, Bartlett Tree Experts. "We take great pride in helping our communities, and this is a great way to put our 100 years of experience to work for a worthy cause."

People & companies



In addition to his current role as commercial leader for the company's Pest Management business, **David A. Morris** has been named commercial leader of the Turf and Ornamental and Technical Products business for **Dow AgroSciences**.

Jacobsen, a **Textron** company, promoted **Ralph Nicotera** to vice president of sales for the company.

Signature Control Systems expanded its team to include industry veteran **Dale W. Hansen** as Commercial Sales Director – North America.



Ruppert Nurseries promoted **Jack Jones** to branch manager for the new Maryland Landscape Management Branch located in Forestville, MD.

John Deere Golf & Turf One Source awarded **Greg Goudeau** as its top Territory Manager of the Year.

Bruce Martin has been named interim director for **Clemson University's** Pee Dee Research and Education Center at Florence, SC.

PROFILE Products welcomed **Michael D. Robeson** as its new manager of technical services.



Sakai America appointed **Todd Mansell** as technical marketing manager.

BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals appointed **Thomas Hill** as communications manager for the Professional Turf & Ornamentals business.

Absorbent Technologies Inc. (ATI), the maker of the Zeba brand of soil amendments, added **Michael Harowitz** to its Southeast sales team.

The **Golf Course Builders Association of America** presented the Don A. Rossi Award to irrigation industry pioneer **Edwin J. Hunter** (1917-1998) of **Hunter Industries**.

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seen anything like it.**

New mode of action catches them off guard.

