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November 2000

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## November 2000

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## It's Your Systems, Stupid

*"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." – Andy Warhol*

One of the industry's real success stories from the last few years has been the growth at The Brickman Group, a company that has traditionally been well respected but a relative mystery because of Dick Brickman's lack of interest in the glare of the spotlight.


I spent a morning with Scott Brickman, Dick's son and the current company president, at one of the company's regional offices not too long ago. (The results of this interview can be found as part of our Conversation Series on page 140.)

Aside from its private nature, what has always intrigued me about this company is the consistency of the comments you hear from its competitors: "Man, are they profitable." "They really seem to know what they're doing." "They beat us on the base contract and then they make up the difference with add-on services."

What became clear in talking with Scott is that this company hasn't grown to \$225 million in annual sales through better ideas as much as it has succeeded because of a commitment to constantly refining its systems. If Scott had to sum up the company's operations philosophy in four words, I bet they would say, "Reduce waste, eliminate callbacks." Those two ideas surfaced time and time again during the interview, and that's a lesson all contractors should take to heart.

Think about what those four words tell you – the elements for success may already exist in your business. What may be lacking is a system or series of systems that produce the desired results. There needs to be a system for hiring. There needs to be a system for training. There needs to be a system for pricing. The list goes on – selling, quality control, purchasing, reviews, etc.

Yes, The Brickman Group is a dominant industry player. But its employees use the same mowers, drive the same trucks, install the same plants and dig with the same backhoes as every other company. The key to the company's success is efficiently managing operations.

As winter approaches, challenge yourself and your managers to improve your company by focusing on a couple of key systems, breaking them down and improving them. This won't turn your company into one of the largest in the country overnight, but it will be a step in the right direction. 

*Bob West*

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# Market Trends

## FALL COLOR

### Pansies Reign Paramount for Fall

FORT WORTH, TEXAS - Boasting a six-month blooming season from October through May, pansies are now the top-selling bedding plant, especially for southern landscapes, according to Calloway's Nursery.

Planted during cool fall weather, pansies expand autumn's traditional color palate of harvest gold, rust and pumpkin to a rainbow of blues, roses, yellows and whites, pointed out Calloway President John Peters.

"Pansies will continue to bloom when winter temperatures drop - even down to 20 degrees," Peters said. "With that kind of blooming season, they are a great value."

New varieties, such as Contessa, Panola Panache and Colossus, along with other fall color favorites like snapdragons, mums, asters, ornamental peppers, kale and cyclamen, offer a variety of options for landscape contractors to sell to clients in a seasonal color package.

## Election 2000: DOES THE ENVIRONMENT MATTER?

|  | EXTREMELY IMPORTANT | VERY IMPORTANT | TOTAL |
|--|---------------------|----------------|-------|
| Education                                | 43                  | 46             | 89    |
| Economy                                  | 35                  | 51             | 86    |
| Health care                              | 37                  | 47             | 84    |
| Social Security                          | 37                  | 45             | 82    |
| Handling budget surplus                  | 32                  | 47             | 79    |
| Medicare                                 | 34                  | 44             | 78    |
| Taxes                                    | 33                  | 44             | 77    |
| Creating better-paying job opportunities | 28                  | 44             | 72    |
| THE ENVIRONMENT                          | 29                  | 42             | 71    |
| National defense                         | 30                  | 40             | 70    |
| The gun issue                            | 30                  | 32             | 62    |
| Foreign affairs                          | 18                  | 40             | 58    |
| Abortion                                 | 25                  | 27             | 52    |
| Foreign trade                            | 15                  | 36             | 51    |

Source: The Gallup Poll

## ELECTION 2000:

### Environment Won't Rock Votes

Although the environment remains an issue on Americans' minds this election year, it is not going to make or break their votes, according to a recent Gallup Poll.

The Sept. 25 poll ranks the environment at the ninth position on the list of 14 issues driving the campaign (see chart above). Eighty-nine percent of Americans thought education was the most important voting issue with the economy following closely behind at 86 percent.

While the percentage of Americans who think the environment is an extremely or very important presidential voting influence is more than half - 71 percent - eight other issues surpassed environmental concerns. Twenty-nine percent said the environment will be only somewhat important or not important at all in their choices.

The environment also has very little top-of-the-mind significance at this point in time. Over the past eight years when Americans were asked to identify "the most important problem facing this country today," very few - between 1 and 4 percent - stated the environment as one of them.

However, there is somewhat greater recognition that the environment will be a key concern in the future. In a Gallup poll conducted earlier this year, 14 percent of adults said that in 25 years the environment will be the most crucial issue the country faces - the most mentions of any one concern in response to this question. Mentioned most frequently after the environment was ethics, morals and family decline.

The environment's low- to mid-range importance in the presidential race this year is similar to the relatively low rating Americans give green issues com-

(continued on page 24)



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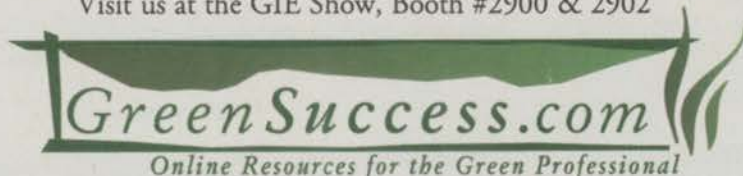
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# Market Trends

(continued from page 10)

IN THE NEWS

## Strategic Outsourcing

HOUSTON, TEXAS—A new study conducted by the Houston-based International Facility Management Association (IFMA) revealed that outsourcing is a major part of many companies' strategic plans, despite the trend to consolidate the number of vendors used.

The survey, which was directed to 4,000 North American members of IFMA last spring (and yielded a 15 percent response), reported that 70 percent of respondents said outsourcing was in their companies' future plans. Each respondent estimated using an average of 20 vendors. Sixty percent of companies report using the same number of vendors in 1999 as they did two years ago. Approximately 32 percent rely on more vendors while only 8 percent use fewer vendors than in previous years.

Out of the 10 service-oriented businesses

(continued on page 14)

# People

**Tom Cunningham** was appointed to customer service representative and **Kirk Uhlenhopp** was named regional hooklift sales manager for the Midwest region at Stellar Industries.

**John Johnson** has been appointed to director of marketing at Pursell Technologies.

American Forests recently elected **R. Douglas Cowan**, chairman and CEO of The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio, to chairman of the board of directors.

**Jim Pahno** joined Weathermatic as vice president of manufacturing. Swingle Tree Company promoted **John Gibson** and **Jeff Oxley** to directors of operations.

**Tom Burns** was appointed to vice president-International sales and marketing for Pickseed West.

Pursell Technologies named **Jeff Higgins** director of market development.

**Karla Aaland** has been named chief operating officer of Loegering.

Scotts Lawn Service announced that **Elliott Schaffer** accepted the position of training manager.



Oxley (top),  
Pahno (bottom)

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- LANDSCAPING Work Order/Invoice**: A form for tracking work and billing, with a yellow header and a table for work order details.
- Lawn Maintenance Invoice**: A form for billing lawn maintenance services, with a green header and a table for service details.
- LANDSCAPING WORK ORDER/INVOICE**: A form for tracking work and billing, with a green header and a table for work order details.

Red circular callouts highlight features of the forms:

- Doorknob Hanger**: A feature on the proposal form.
- Estimate**: A feature on the estimate form.
- Proposals Laser & Manual**: A feature on the proposal form.
- Lawn Maintenance Invoice**: A feature on the lawn maintenance invoice form.
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# Market Trends

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most commonly outsourced, landscape maintenance ranked No. 5 on the list.

All survey respondents outsource services requiring specialty skills that are unavailable or not cost-effective to handle in-house. Furthermore, these companies outsource services so they can focus on their core competencies.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Texas Hits Snooze on Power Equipment Use

HOUSTON, TEXAS – The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) is trying to overturn a proposed ban on the morning use of gasoline-powered lawn equipment in Texas.

The ban, proposed by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), would prohibit machine operation between the hours of 6 a.m. and noon

(continued on page 16)

# Association NEWS

Phil Fogarty has joined other industry leaders on the **Evergreen Foundation** board of directors, an organization that fosters appreciation for green spaces and currently is spearheading developments for a national Greenway system. Fogarty currently serves as president and owner of Crowley's, Euclid, Ohio.

The **Nevada Landscape Association** named newly elected board members as follows: Paul Flint, president, from Lawns, Etc.; Greg Hughes, president-elect, from Reno Lawn & Landscape; John Marman, secretary/treasurer, from West Coast Turf; Bill Carlos, director, from UNR Cooperative Extension; John Giossi, director, from G & G Nursery & Landscaping; John Cerul, director, from Park Landscape Maintenance; Don Crawford, director, from Camden Development.

The **California Landscape Contractor's Association** recently named Kristy Lewis as events assistant and promoted Larry Rohlfses to assistant executive director.

A one-on-one mentor program designed to provide personal guidance to exterior or interior landscape contractors who want to grow their businesses will be offered through the **Associated Landscape Contractors of America**. The program will run through April 2001, matching current ALCA members with new member protégés.

The **Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association** released a 20-minute videotape to educate leaf blower users on proper operation and maintenance. For more information, call 301/652.0774.

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# Market Trends

(continued from page 14)

from April 1 through Oct. 31 in eight counties in the Houston/Galveston area, beginning in 2005. TNRCC's objective is to help achieve compliance with federal ozone and urban smog standards.

Due to the ban's potential impact on landscape contractors and their businesses, OPEI executives recently met with TNRCC representatives to propose alternatives. These op-

tions include:

- Working with TNRCC to refine the Texas emissions model for outdoor power equipment, which may have overestimated total emissions.

- Working with TNRCC to adopt regulations for all new portable non-spill gas cans and spouts, which will provide Texas with emission reductions similar to those achieved through the proposed ban.

While their proposals are pending, OPEI representatives reported they were optimistic about the meeting and think such efforts will achieve mutually beneficial results.

## IN THE NEWS

### Landscaping at Top of Compost Market Charts

The U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) program recently completed a survey of 32 composters to track compost market trends. Landscape contractors were cited as composters' most popular market segment.

The participants of the survey specified their top three compost market segments based on volume, as well as the top three compost applications. The most popular market identified was landscape contractors, which was identified in 94 percent of the responses. Homeowners were identified 55

(continued on page 18)

## On the WEB

EZ Gate - [www.ex-gate.com](http://www.ex-gate.com)

GreenWorks Lawn Co. - [www.pair.com/gworks](http://www.pair.com/gworks)

Kelly Sprinkler Systems - [kssystemts.tripod.com/home.html](http://kssystemts.tripod.com/home.html)

Small Business Legislative Council - [www.sblc.org](http://www.sblc.org)

Florida Turfgrass Association - [www.ftga.org](http://www.ftga.org)

The Service Dealers Associations - [www.servicedealers.com](http://www.servicedealers.com)

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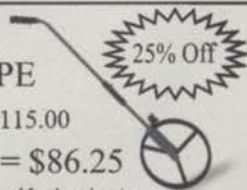
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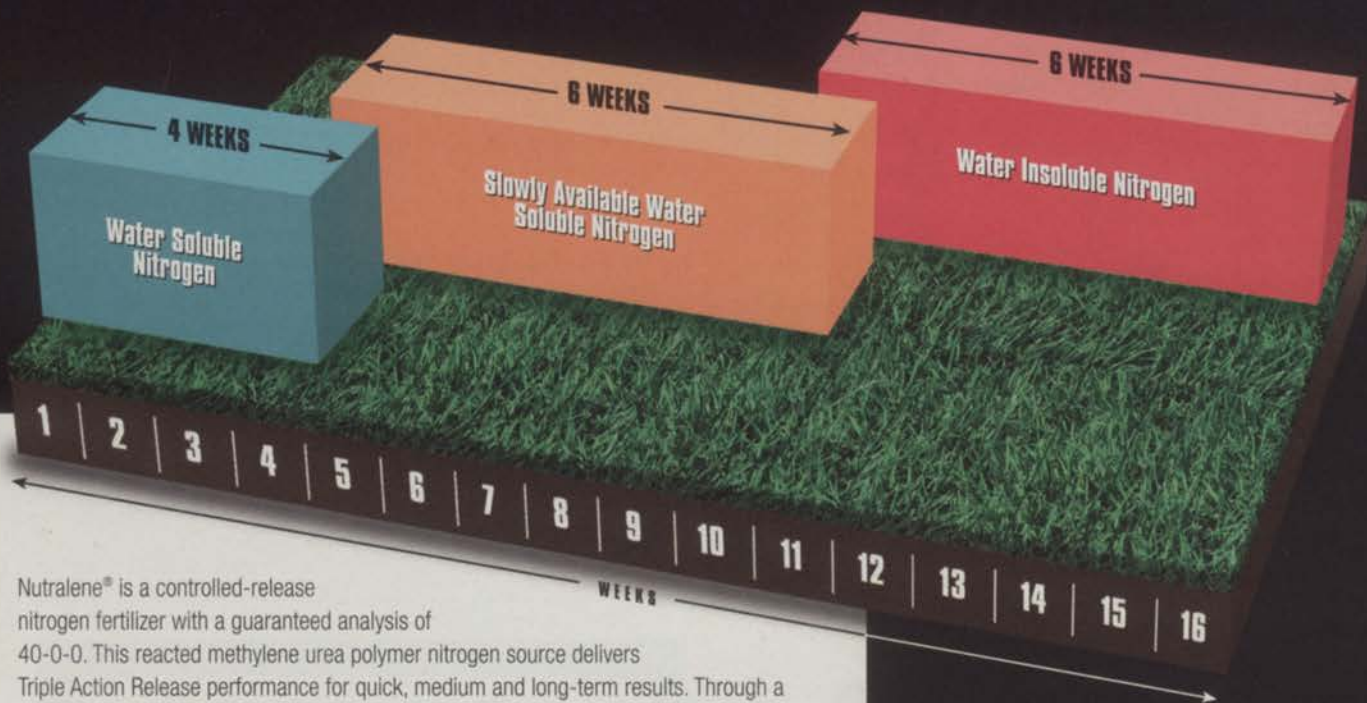
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**USE READER SERVICE #78**

# Market Trends

(continued from page 16)

percent of the time, topsoil manufacturers 32 percent of the time, retailers 23 percent of the time and nurseries 19 percent of the time.

The survey identified soil amendments for use in turf and garden applications as the top compost application. This use was one of the top three end uses in 97 percent of the responses. The use of compost as a mulch (39 percent), growing media component (32 percent), top dressing (26 percent) and in garden bed establishment (23 percent) were the next most popular applications. Only 10 percent of the respondents identified erosion control as a common application.

All but one of the composters involved in the survey have been composting for less than 15 years. Six of the composting facilities have been in operation for less than two years. The composting facilities began their active marketing programs an average of 4.3 years in relation to when their facilities opened. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents stated that they were customizing their compost product to increase sales.

# Calendar of Events

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scape Calendar*,  
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OH 44113.

**NOV. 11** Ohio Lawn Care Association's "A Grateful Embrace," Dayton, Ohio. Contact: 800/510-5296.

**NOV. 12-14** International Irrigation Association Show, Phoenix, Ariz. Contact: 800/458-3466.

**NOV. 13** Certified Professional Landscape & Certified Landscape Technician Interior Exams, Omaha Neb. Contact: 800/395-2522.

**NOV. 13-15** Cornell/New York State Turfgrass Association Business Management Institute, Part I, Syracuse, N.Y. Contact: 800/873-8873.

**NOV. 14-16** National Irrigation Symposium, Phoenix, Ariz. Contact: 800/458-3466.

**NOV. 14-16** Turf and Grounds Exposition, Syracuse, N.Y. Contact: 800/873-8873.

**NOV. 14-16** Virginia Turf and Landscape Conference and Trade Show, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact: 540/942-8873.

**NOV. 14-18** California Landscape Contractors Association Annual Convention, Hawaii. Contact: 800/448-2522.

**NOV. 15** Mid-America Green Industry Council Recertification Seminar, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323.

**NOV. 17, DEC. 15** State Pesticide Exam, Waltham, Mass. Contact: 617/626-1786.

**NOV. 28** Vermont Greenscape Association Conference and Trade Show, White River Junction, Vt. Contact: 802/773-7833.

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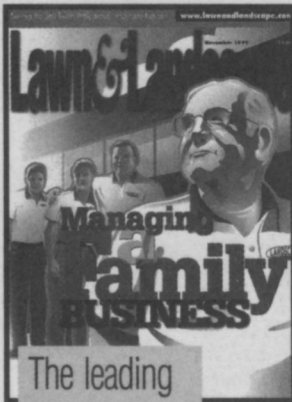
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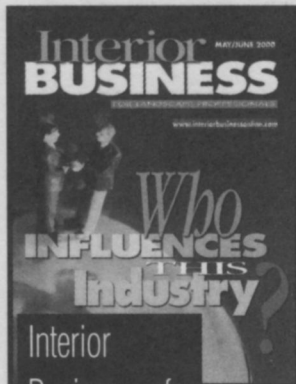
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#### III. DISTRIBUTOR/ MANUFACTURER

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- 3. Formulator
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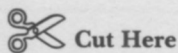
- 1. School, College, University
- 2. Trade Association, Library
- 3. Others (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What best describes your title?

- Owner, Pres., Vice Pres., Corp. Officer
- Manager, Director, Supervisor
- Horticulturist
- Service Personnel, Technician, Crew member
- Scientist, Researcher
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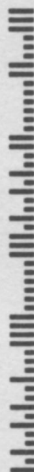
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# Market Trends

The participating facilities compost a variety of feedstocks, including yard trimmings, biosolids, industrial by-products, manure and plant debris. — Ron Alexander

**NOV. 28-29** "Master in Management for the Landscape Industry: Real World Techniques," Westboro, Mass. Contact: 413/396-4731.

**NOV. 29-DEC. 1** Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association Turf Conference and Trade Show, Denver, Colo. Contact: 303/770-2220.

**DEC. 3-6** American Society of Consulting Arborists Annual Conference, Newport, R.I. Contact: 301/947-0483.

**DEC. 4-7** Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Trade Show, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 888/683-3445.

**DEC. 8-9** Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show, Denver. Contact: 303/770-2220.

**DEC. 13** Southern California Turfgrass Council 2000 Institute, Calif. Contact: 800/500-7282.

**JAN. 5-7** Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association's 2000 Great Lakes Trade Exposition, Lansing, Mich. Contact: 800/879-6652.

**JAN. 7-9** Western Nursery & Landscape Association Convention and Trade Show, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481

**JAN. 8-10** Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association's Great Lakes Trade Exposition, Lansing, Mich. Contact: 800/879-6652.

**JAN. 8-11** North Carolina Turfgrass Conference, Charlotte, N.C. Contact: 888/695-1333.

**JAN. 8-11** Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show, King of Prussia, Pa. Contact: 610/828-0253.

**JAN. 9-11** Western Nursery and Landscape Association's The Big Show — Western 2000, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481.

## BREAKING NEWS

### Turfco Is First To Offer Direct Parts On The Web

MINNEAPOLIS — Turfco Direct has become the first manufacturer in the landscape industry to offer machine parts direct to landscape contractors through its Web site: [www.turfcodirect.com](http://www.turfcodirect.com).

If contractors need to order parts for machines in their equipment fleets, Turfco Direct Vice President Scott Kinkead said he hopes this additional ordering avenue makes their lives easier. "By the time contractors are finished working for the day, the dealers and manufacturers are closed," Kinkead explained. "This gives them an opportunity to order at their convenience."

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| DIMENSION <sup>b</sup>  | H         | M          | H           | M         | H              | M      | M      | M         |
| TEAM <sup>c</sup>       | H         | M          | M           | M         | M              | M      | NR     | NR        |
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USE READER SERVICE #60

# Market Trends

Manuals and technical product information along with photos of each part can be found online during the ordering process so contractors are assured the correct item, Kinkead pointed out. Also, if contractors place their orders before 2 p.m., Turfco Direct guarantees 10 a.m. next day delivery, Kinkead said.

As far as the potential for other manufacturers to set up a similar type of direct-to-customer service through the Internet, Kinkead said this depends on the product type. "I don't know if manufacturers that make out-front rotary mowers with parts that typically wear more often and that generate more profit for dealers can do something like this," Kinkead said. "For someone like us who make renovation equipment, it just makes sense.

"I'm not saying this avenue is a better option for contractors who want to purchase parts either," Kinkead continued. "Our goal isn't to replace the dealers or the service they provide. This just offers contractors another avenue for purchasing equipment." 

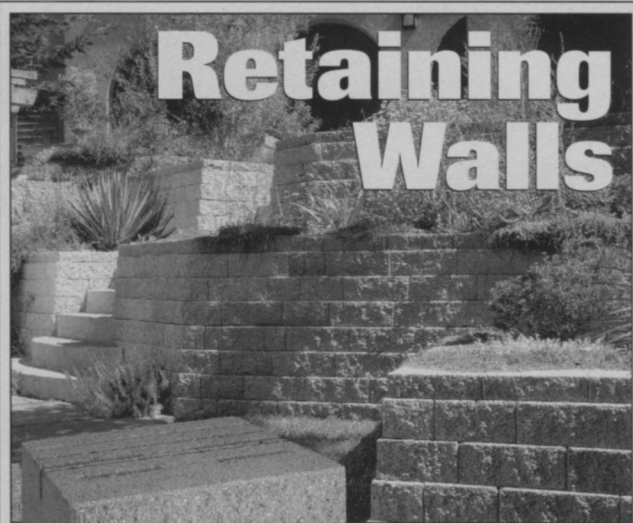
## Rock Votes (continued from page 10)

pared to other national problems. The most serious problems, the public noted, include drug use at an 83 percent seriousness rating, crime and violence at an 82 percent rating, poor health care at a 67 percent rating and hunger and homelessness at a 66 percent rating. Only 55 percent of Americans believe that environmental problems are a hot-button issue, placing it fifth on the list of seven problems tested.

The reason the environment may not rank as high as other issues on this list is because a 1999 Gallup poll reported that 69 percent of Americans are satisfied with current environmental protection efforts. This number has risen since a similar January 1993 poll that showed roughly half of all adults (52 percent) stated they were very or somewhat satisfied with environmental protection.

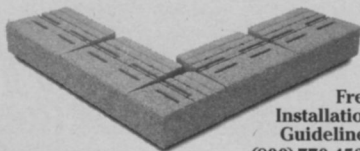
Along the same lines, Americans also are now more likely to sense progress in correcting or dealing with environmental problems. In 1990, only 14 percent of Americans felt that a great deal of progress had been made in handling the green issues facing the United States since the 1970s.

This year, nearly double the amount of respondents – 26 percent of adults – feel that progress has been achieved. On the other hand, the number of people who notice little progress has dropped significantly over the past 10 years. In 1990, 21 percent of adults said hardly any progress was made. In the 2000 survey, the proportion has dropped to only 9 percent. – Nicole Wisniewski



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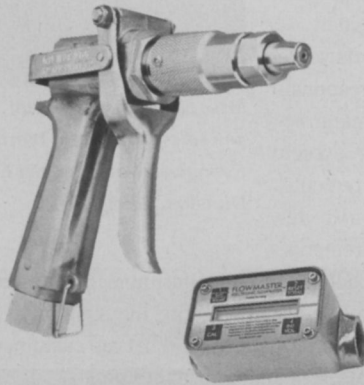
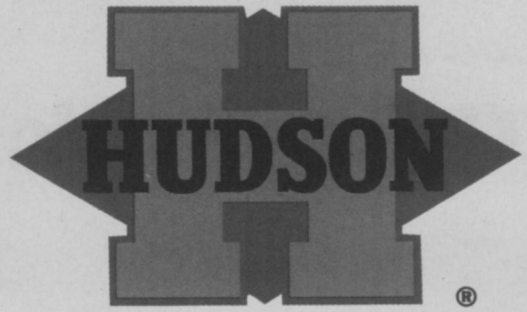
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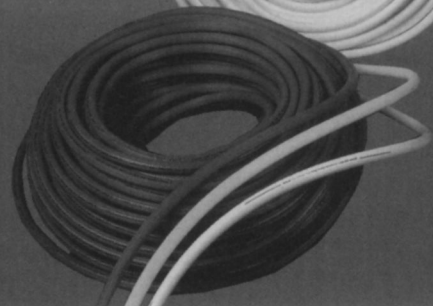
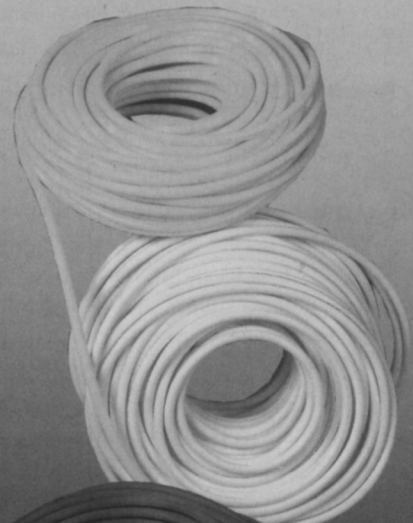
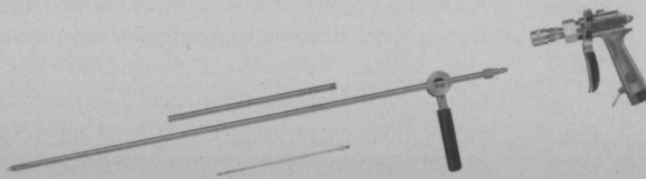


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USE READER SERVICE #79

## A Call to Action

**I**n today's era of instant litigation and multimillion-dollar settlements for even a slight mishap, there is no manufacturer in the green industry – or in any industry for that matter – who will not claim that it considers safety. However, many consumers do not hold manufacturers responsible for proving their safety claims.

The last time you purchased a piece of power equipment did you determine if that product met basic safety standards. Did you consider operator safety? Did the label attest to specific safety standards?

If you're like most people, your answer is "No." Often, consumers and commercial equipment users make similar assumptions – that products must meet basic industry standards. Let me give you some real-life examples of where this is not the case:

- One company advertised a blade tip speed of 19,000 feet per minute on its latest commercial mower. It neglected to advertise that the equipment couldn't pass a thrown-objects test, and it disregarded the increased noise level created by the blade speed.

- Another company claimed its machine could operate at a speed of 15 mph, but it didn't pass a brake test.

- A third company elected not to install an operator presence system that automatically shuts down the equipment when the operator leaves the seat or lets go of controls. The result: Operators faced unnecessary dangers when they got off the machine.

- A manufacturer claimed its machine was great for mowing severe slopes, but it couldn't verify whether or not it passed a stability standard to prevent rollover.

These examples uncover the safety issues commercial equipment users face. Fire prevention, cut and shear protection, bystander entanglement and pinch points also translate into potential risks that users assume manufacturers have already considered. Because of this liability, safety must be a part of operator training.

Also, machines should meet basic safety standards, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) safety specifications for commercial turf care equipment.

During the development process at John Deere, product safety committees in each factory assess a variety of safety factors during production. Also, a product safety department provides expertise and a review.

So, why should companies conform to a set of safety standards? The answer is straightforward: customer and

bystander safety. Meeting ANSI standards is how manufacturers demonstrate a commitment to safety.

ANSI standards serve as a minimum responsibility for each manufacturer to meet or exceed basic safety requirements. Customers should demand these requirements.

However, cost defers some manufacturers from designing with safety in mind. Some ignore the standards to allow for cheaper equipment prices. What can customers do to protect themselves and their operators?

There is a great deal that can and must be done. First, customers should become knowledgeable about equipment safety standards. Review the ANSI standards – you don't need to be an engineer to understand them. Manufacturers that provide a review help customers appreciate the value of maintaining safety features and reduce the temptation for companies to remove or sidestep regulations. Industry publications also can play a critical role by providing safety, training and maintenance reminders.

Third, customers purchasing new equipment should move price to No. 2 on their priority list and put safety at the top of the list. Ask dealers to describe the equipment's safety features. Ask whether or not the piece of equipment has been tested and, more importantly, if it meets ANSI standards. Ask whether or not safety is built in or is an optional add-on, and reject equipment that doesn't provide a safety-first working environment.

Fourth, I encourage current equipment owners to perform safety checks on all equipment. Check to see if it's best to add operator presence systems if needed. Ensure that shields and guards are in place. Check with the equipment's manufacturer to determine if basic safety tests were performed.

Determine if the equipment is ergonomically designed to provide a comfortable and efficient operator station. Equipment that unnecessarily tires or strains users places both operators and bystanders at unnecessary risk.

Finally, support associations and trade groups for manufacturers and commercial professionals, and urge them to take a strong stand on equipment safety.

As our equipment says: "Safety – Live With It." The safety of customers is all too important. **LI**



*Mike Mack, vice president, marketing and sales, John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division, Raleigh, N.C.*



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# Environmental

# Forum

## The Organic Approach

With consumer concerns and anti-pesticide legislation on the rise, organic lawn care is garnering more attention as an effective approach to residential turf maintenance. While these programs vary depending on the provider, certain practices and philosophies are consistent throughout this expanding niche market.

For starters, an organic lawn care program often is a blend of organic and integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. "Organics and IPM go hand-in-hand," noted Dan Sutherland, president, Gro Pro Organic Lawns, West Warwick, R.I., adding that his program uses or-

ganic-based fertilizer, cultural practices and, if absolutely necessary, synthetic pesticides to spot control pests or weeds.

Similarly, Phil Catron, president, NaturaLawn of America, Frederick, Md., takes a three-part approach to organic lawn care: To prevent, monitor and control any problems. Prevention, of course, is the ideal, and Catron said this can be accomplished with the first focus. For example, he recommended using certain endophyte-enhanced turf types that will resist insect pressure.

From a monitoring standpoint, Catron advocates collecting a broad range of data on the lawn to ensure soil health, such as checking the soil temperature at a 3-

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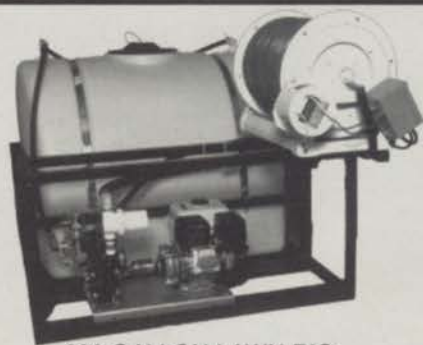
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# Environmental Forum

inch-depth, comparing that information from year to year to better anticipate when outbreaks may occur.

A key concept for control is spot treating. "It makes no sense for us to treat an entire lawn," Catron pointed out. "If I cut my finger, I don't wrap my entire body in gauze."

Gary Roux, president, Grounds Crew, Monroeville, Pa., agreed, noting that spot treating can reduce pesticide use and cost.

In addition, Roux noted that sound cultural practices are a critical component of an organic lawn care program. These steps include sharpening mower blades, mowing at a good height to establish a thick turf and diligently scouting for weeds. He also advised checking soil pH regularly since certain weeds can flourish when this is off.

**GOING ORGANIC.** Organic lawn care means looking at turf as part of a larger system, according to Catron. "Because the soil is full of organisms, it needs to be fed and then the plant gets fed," he said.

"A good plant starts with healthy soil,"

Roux added. "You need to make the soil healthy and get the microbial activity going." Once soil needs are being met and providing a healthy foundation for turf, the lawn will need less attention, Roux described, comparing a healthy lawn to any other thriving, living organism. "If a person is healthy and strong, they don't need medication to keep on going," he noted.

To practice organic lawn care properly, soil development and IPM need to be used together, Catron advised, noting that these approaches have been around for ages.

Still, an organic lawn care program isn't for every company. To build a successful organic program, a company must dedicate more time, energy and resources than if it followed a conventional lawn care approach, according to Catron. "This is not something you do for a season or a month. You've got to be in it for the long haul," he advised.


Since an organic program can be more detail-oriented and labor intensive, finding the right employees can be a challenge.

In his experience, Roux has found the need

to hire "sharper" people, he said. "An organic/IPM program takes a brighter individual," he noted. "There is a longer learning curve."

An organic lawn care company must hold ongoing training for its employees, Catron advised. "(Training) is not a rainy day event," he said, adding that having regular training sessions every three to four weeks is ideal.

While an organic program often costs customers more initially because of the price of organic products, training and education, it's an investment that pays for itself over time, Catron asserted, adding that organic lawn care companies benefit from fewer service calls and lower cancellation rates.

Roux disagreed with the claim that organic programs cost more. While this approach might cost more at first, he acknowledged, once the lawn care company gets the lawn under control, the ongoing costs for lawn care services are much less. Compared to conventional lawn care, an organic approach "really can be the same or better while limiting the amount of chemical use," Roux observed. — Cynthia Greenleaf 



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# Design Notebook

## Design Notes

When new Cedar Creek homeowners made a substantial investment in their Ambassador Home in an upscale, Olathe, Kan., subdivision, they wanted the exterior of the property to match the splendor of their Mediterranean-style home. They already had solicited landscape plans from two companies, but neither company was able to deliver a workable landscape plan involving lighting, irrigation and design.

"They came back with plans that were disappointingly bland, featuring evergreens in buckets planted in mulch," the Olathe, Kan.-based homeowners said. "These weren't cheap proposals but they weren't what we wanted."

The couple was forced to take their quest back to the drawing board, and they contacted Johnson County, Kan.-based Hermes Landscaping.

**DESIGN CHALLENGES.** Tom Hall, residential landscaping designer at Hermes, recognized the project would pose some significant challenges. Creativity would be needed to develop a front-yard plan that would complement the home's facade. Another challenge was the backyard, which fell

away from the home at a 45-degree angle.

Armed with those general guidelines, as well as some specific ideas about the types of plants that the homeowners wanted,

The front yard landscape design blended with the Mediterranean style of the house by incorporating a fountain and a number of strategic plantings (bottom picture). A step-down patio design provides function despite a 45-degree slope behind the house (top picture).  
Photos: Hermes Landscaping



**PROJECT:** Ambassador Construction home in Cedar Creek subdivision, Olathe, Kan.

**LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR:** Hermes Landscaping, Johnson County, Kan.

**PROJECT DESIGNER:** Tom Hall

**SIZE OF PROPERTY:** ½ acre

**MAN-HOURS TO INSTALL:** 1,000 hours

**PLANTS INSTALLED:** 41 varieties of plants and 860 total plants used

**FEATURES:** Courtyard with fountain, "forgotten patio"

**PROJECT COST:** \$72,000

Hall developed a comprehensive landscaping plan for the ½-acre property that also addressed additional challenges like hiding power boxes in front of the house and working with a \$20,000 retaining wall mistake made by the builder.

**DESIGN SOLUTIONS.** From the beginning, Hall established a positive working relationship with the homeowners. "I never told them 'No,'" he said. "I just explained all my decisions and concepts to them in full and if something they wanted wouldn't work, I would tell them my honest opinion and come up with an alternate suggestion."

This time spent with the clients proved invaluable throughout the project because the homeowners wouldn't let builders or subcontractors install anything without calling Hall first to make sure the addition worked with his design.

Hall's plan dealt with the front yard by converting much of it into a courtyard, which he softened and blended with several varieties of plants and shrubs.

An elegant fountain, that was wholly Hall's creation, became the center of the courtyard. "A Mediterranean look like the one I was trying to create typically has a water element, and this piece was missing from the design," Hall said. "So, I suggested the idea, described the look to the homeowners and then helped them pick out a fountain to fulfill this design."

The plant material for the design was chosen to provide color all four seasons. Hall placed aspens and maples on each side of the home's entryway to give a burst of yellow and

(continued on page 32)

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# Design Notebook

(continued from page 30)

red in the fall. Sages and perennials that bloom throughout the season were placed in the design for an arid feel that complements the home's Mediterranean design. Evergreens, such as pine and spruce, were also added into the design so green was visible and the landscape wasn't entirely dead in the winter.

Power boxes that would have cost \$15,000 to move because of the fiber optic cables were hidden with native boulders and plants.

Hall emphasized flow throughout the design by removing the driveway so that the extra half lot of property the owners bought alongside their home didn't look like a separate piece of property.

Elements like the driveway and the fountain weren't established as stand-alone pieces, however. "I didn't make the house and fountain obvious," Hall said. "I tried to create the feeling of seclusion and at the same time make sure the landscape flowed."

The original plan for the backyard called for a retaining wall built on the edge of the property with a huge deck extending from

the house onto a solid foundation to satisfy the fact that the homeowner suffered from vertigo and the back of the home overlooked a large valley and a golf course.

Unfortunately, builders installed this wall too close to the home, making the creation of a deck impossible.

Hall devised a solution to this problem and created a stone patio with two steps down to an open area that overlooked the valley and golf course and was protected with a rod iron railing.

Another area of the backyard that Hall got creative with was a native space with some stone steps that he turned into a forgotten patio. The forgotten patio, defined by a natural boulder wall, is accessed by a meandering path of natural limestone steps and stepping-stones. Interspersed and blended among the existing trees were 8-foot blue spruces that added to the patio's solitude. Numerous stone stairs curve around the wall and onto a limestone stepping stone terrace that descends into the patio, which was accented with benches and birdbaths.

"I tried to create a look that showed a path going somewhere, but no one is quite sure where," Hall explained. "The patio isn't visible until you arrive there and a bird bath and aged or fallen pillars and urns are there to provide that forgotten look. The homeowners wanted a place they could come home to and enjoy. This forgotten path illusion, where ivy, Hosta and ferns will grow over the steps slightly and make the area look truly forgotten, created this environment."

Lighting the property was the final touch and made for a complete job. "They wanted to highlight focal points, but they didn't want the place to look like a neon beacon," Hall said. "So, we put bullets of light here and there, such as in the cobble creekbed so the water is illuminated and ripples with light. I wouldn't add more light until the clients requested it, which they eventually did, because I knew they were concerned about having too much." — Phil LaCerte **LL**

The author is a consultant with Hermes Landscaping, Lenexa, Kan.

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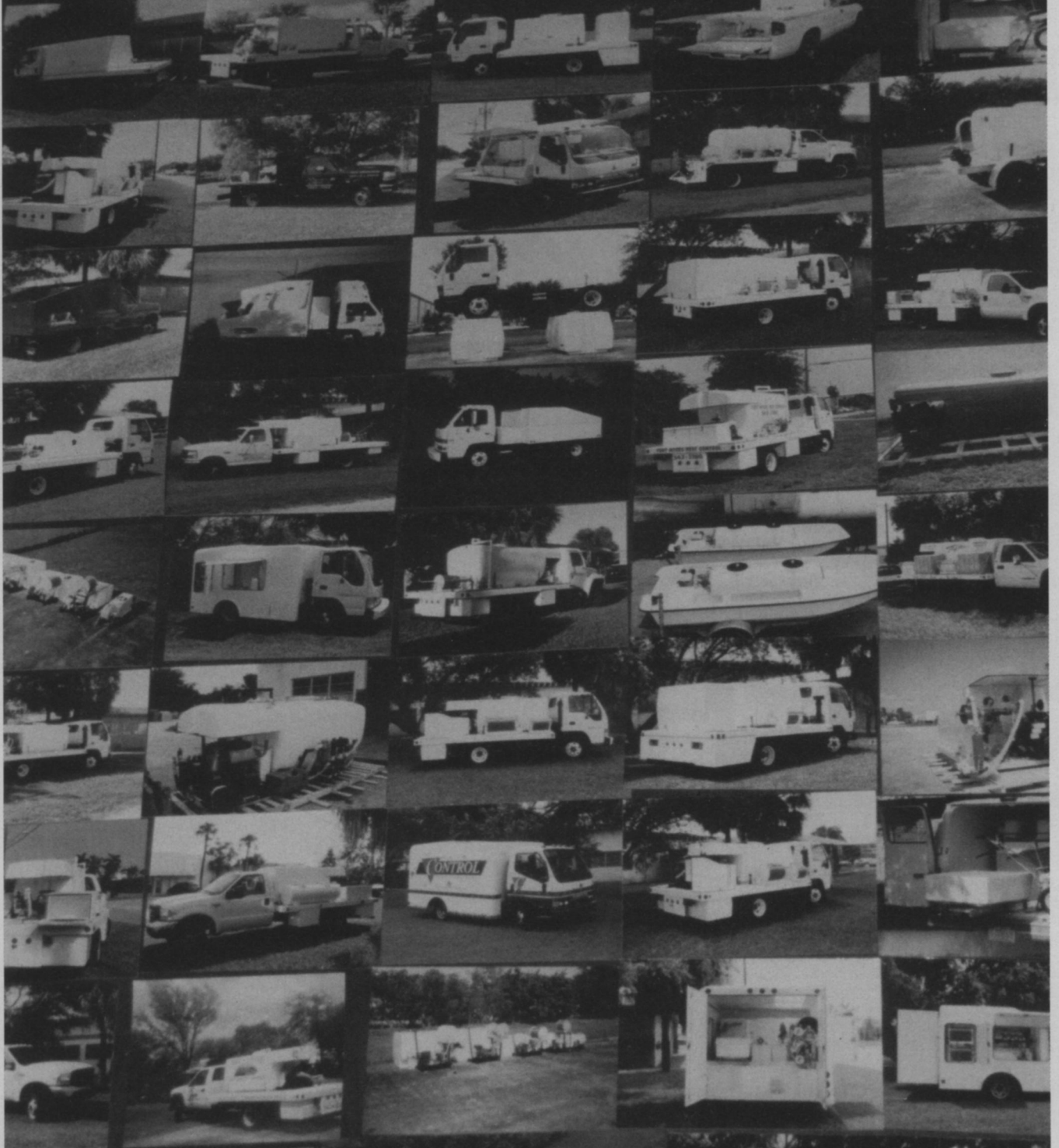
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# Insect I.D.

## BATTLING PESTS

# Biological Control

Soil-inhabiting pests have many predators, parasites and diseases that attack them. Many of these are naturally occurring organisms but most rarely act rapidly enough alone to adequately control pests. Because of this, biological agents are usually reared and released into the environment with the target pest. This process is called augmentation. In a few rare instances, biological control agents not normally present have been introduced into the turf habitat. These foreign introductions are most commonly used to control introduced pests.

**PREDATORS AND PARASITES.** Though naturally occurring predators and parasites are occasionally effective in suppressing turf insect pests, they usually have unreliable and

*Insect I.D. features excerpts from Destructive Turf Insects, the book by Harry Niemczyk and David Shetlar, entomology professors at The Ohio State University. For information on the book, call 800/456-0707.*



unpredictable efficacy. In some cases, predators and parasites, such as spiders and wasps, cause more concern than the target pest.

The wasp, *Scolia dubia*, is a parasite of the green June beetle. It has been effective in lowering grub populations below damaging levels. Unfortunately, these large, often hairy wasps can cause great alarm in people afraid of being stung. Actually, these wasps rarely sting humans, and then only when severely provoked. Other parasitic wasps, *Tiphia* spp., parasitize masked chafers, May-June beetles and Japanese beetles, but most of these wasps rarely control their hosts on a regular basis.

*(continued on page 36)*

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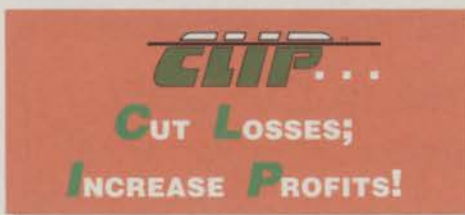
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# Insect I.D.

(continued from page 34)

**PATHOGENS.** Insect pathogens (diseases) have been the most promising and effective biological control agents. Bacteria and fungi are often easily reared or produced in artificial media. Many of these microbes also produce resistant spores that may be formulated and distributed. In the past, only a few pathogens were commercially available but recent production and formulation techniques are making more available.

**BT FOR WHITE GRUBS.** The bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (commonly called BT), is a common bacterium found in soils. When first discovered, some strains contained toxin granules that seemed to affect the gut lining of certain insects, mainly leaf feeding caterpillars such as sod webworms and armyworms. Since discovery of this original group of strains, over 10,000 different strains have been characterized.

The white grub active strain is BT variety japonensis, strain 'buihui.' Initial field tests have shown promising efficacy (70 to 90

percent control) against Japanese beetle and masked chafer grubs. Other grub species may be controlled, but to a lesser extent. At present, no commercial preparations of this strain are available.

BTs are used differently than milky diseases. BT bacteria are easily produced in large fermentation tanks, in vitro. Spores of BT are fairly susceptible to degradation from sunlight and other microbes may kill the spores. Therefore, this BT is applied using "inundative augmentation." In other words, large numbers of spores are applied to the area where white grubs are active, similar to broadcast application of an insecticide. The infection is rapid and maximum control is achieved in a few days to two weeks. Though some BT spores may survive until the next season, most simply decompose. Annual application is needed whenever the grub populations reappear.

**MILKY DISEASE OF BTA.** Black turfgrass ateniensis (BTA) grubs are susceptible to infection by a specific strain of *Paenibacillus*

popilliae. Occasionally, significant numbers of BTA larvae are infected with this naturally occurring strain. Infected larvae are opaque white and, though still alive, are not as active as healthy grubs and stopped feeding. The presence of infected grubs should be viewed as "good news" because dead larvae release millions of spores that remain to infect future generations of BTA.

The BTA-infective milky disease has caused some confusion. Examination of turf one to two weeks after application of an insecticide for control of BTA larvae sometimes reveal considerable numbers of milky grubs. Apparently, the milky larvae survive the insecticide while the healthy grubs are killed. One might conclude that the insecticide failed and another application is warranted. In fact, this result is ideal since healthy grubs are killed and the surviving milky disease infected grubs will die of the disease and add to the spore residue in the soil. Our theory is that infected grubs stop feeding and therefore survive because they do not ingest the insecticide. **ll**

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# In Minor's League

Editor's

Note

**Q:** I am considering adding irrigation as a new service. Can you give me some ideas on where to begin?

**A:** Start by doing some research on the market to determine if there is sufficient demand for this new service in your area. Consider whether irrigation meets your customer or prospective customers' needs. From a competition aspect, determine how many and what kinds of irrigation competitors are out there and if there will be a significant difference between your service and theirs. Determining the potential market for irrigation work is also important because you certainly don't want to expend your capital and energy on a service that will not allow for meaningful growth and profits.

The market research can be done at a minimal cost. Start with your customers or prospective customers. Solicit feedback by creating a survey that addresses all of the previously mentioned questions. Your customers will be great resources, and with prospective customers the survey could double as a marketing piece. One bit of advice: Offer some type of incentive to ensure that you get a good

return on the surveys. Maybe a cash drawing, football tickets or whatever you think will motivate those surveyed to respond. This will also help convince them to include their name and address on the survey, which helps build a potential customer database.

Customer or potential customer focus groups are also good research tools in evaluating this new service line. In fact, I've found them to be the most beneficial research methodology available. Some general questions to consider may include: When do they buy irrigation services? What irrigation services do they buy? How do they select an irrigation contractor? Why do they buy irrigation services?

Be prepared with follow-up questions to ensure that you get the most value out of everyone's time and you get the information you need. An added benefit to holding a focus group is the positive perception customers gain in these meetings—they can see you are sincerely interested in their ideas, and that pays off in the long run.

From an operations perspective, you also will need to learn the technical issues related to performing irrigation work and acquire valuable certifications. I strongly suggest joining the Irrigation Association (703/536-7080, [www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org)). Like many of the other trade associa-



David Minor was founder and former president of Minor's Landscape Services, a \$12-million company in Fort Worth, Texas, that he sold to TruGreen-ChemLawn in 1998.

In addition to serving the industry as a consultant and speaker, Minor is professor and

director of The Entrepreneurship Center at The M.J. Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University. Readers with questions they would like to ask Minor can fax them to Lawn & Landscape at 216/961-0364 or e-mail them to [bwest@lawnandlandscape.com](mailto:bwest@lawnandlandscape.com).

tions that serve various disciplines of the green industry, the IA is the place to obtain information.

Go to or send your key people to the association meetings, and make sure you attend both the conference and trade show to network with contractors and exhibitors. They will be your best source of information on how to get started. Prepare in advance of the meeting by identifying the questions you want answered and make it your mission to get responses.

You should also talk to area irrigation distributors about the training they offer. If the distributors can help you become a successful contractor, then they stand to profit by selling you product. This is a great way to form a win-win relationship.

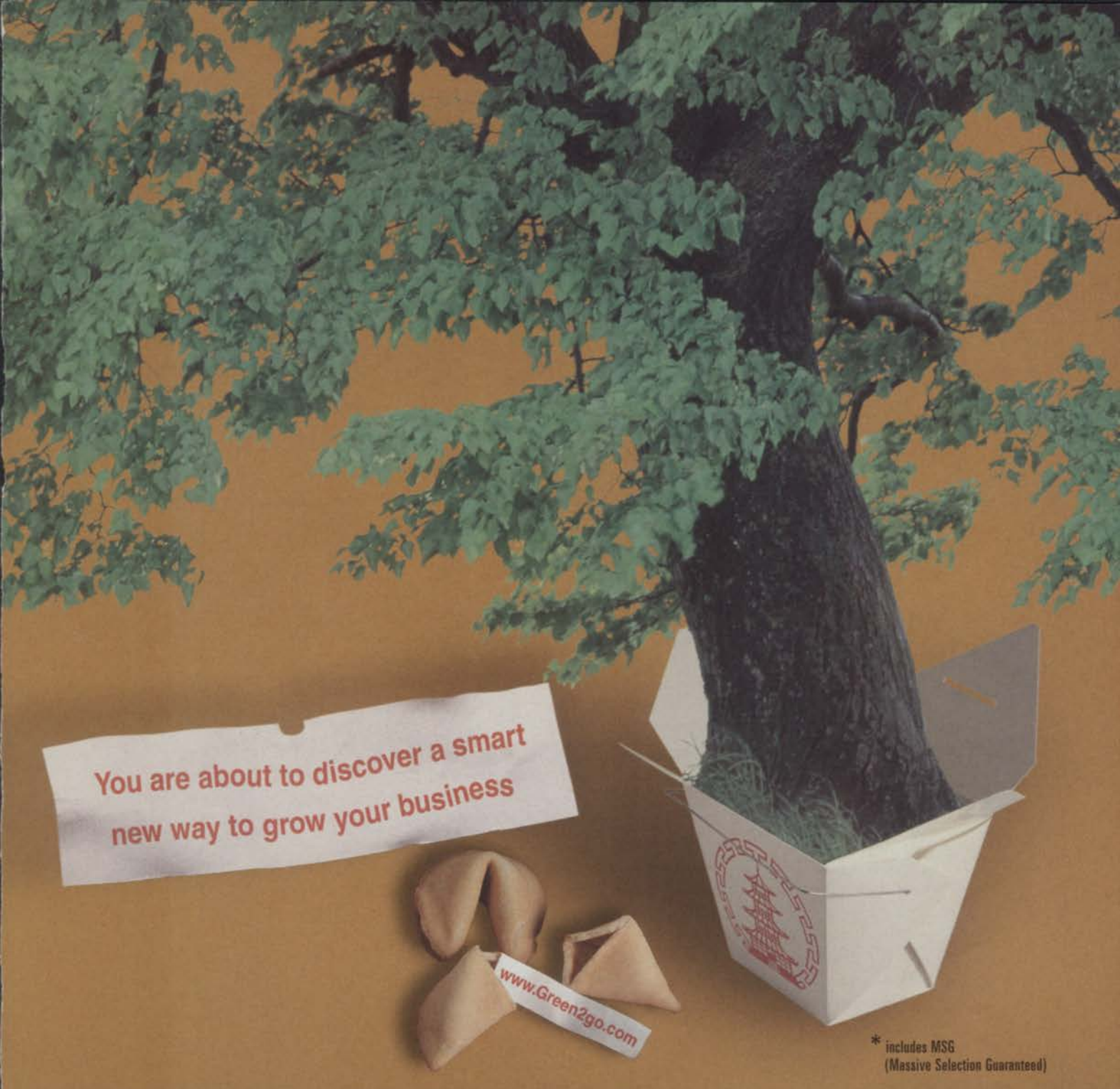
Learn who the industry consultants are and talk with them. Consider bringing in one or two to help you evaluate this new opportunity and implement systems that will accelerate your learning curve and boost profits.

Read everything you can get your hands on about the field. Become a student of irrigation. Tapes and videos are available for a nominal fee.

Lastly, a word on positioning. Whether it is this service or any other you may pursue, deciding on a market position is critical. For example, will you be the high-cost, high-value provider? Or will you be the lower-cost provider that meets financial goals through greater volume? Whatever direction you choose, be clear in the market and with your people. Develop a service that stands for one thing, and make that service mean something to your potential customers. ■

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research on the  
market to  
determine if there is  
sufficient demand  
for this new service.





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USE READER SERVICE #39

# Minding Your

# Business



## Delivering Silver Platter Service

Regardless of our companies' size, location or niche, the reason we all exist is that there are customers who are willing to pay us for the services we provide.

Sometimes, though, we lose sight of what it is we really do or need to do. The excuses are numerous. Have you ever heard, "I don't have time to check that property, visit that customer or spend the afternoon with that crew?" More importantly, have you ever made these statements yourself? If so, now is the time to reevaluate how you can serve your customers better.

Each and every business day we should serve the needs of our clients. But do we understand our customers' buying motives? What did we sell them anyway? Better yet, what do they think they purchased?

The real work in providing excellent customer service is making sure our customers get what we promised. Often, after the rush of the spring season and the excitement of a new property subsides, our purpose and commitment to our customers wanes. At this point, it is time to work smarter.

Ask yourself: Are we really providing what we promised? Are we professionally maintaining the properties or are we just mowing them? To answer this, visit your properties, meet with your crews and, most importantly, talk to your customers. This is the only way to ensure exceeding your customers' expectations.

One tool that ensures top-notch service is a written evaluation of the property. Judge the quality. A good report both complements great workmanship and identifies areas to be improved. Grade the property and review this with the crew. See if you can get the crew to view the property through the customer's eyes.

Spending time doing regular evaluations has an extra bonus. It will often prevent situations that require urgent attention, and who wouldn't like to extinguish

fewer "fires" each week? Successful companies have been doing these evaluations for years, and that is one reason why they are successful. Doing these evaluations well takes practice. However, if you make them a habit, they will pay huge dividends in the future.

A consultant also can help you provide solid service. Nothing is more sobering than bringing an impartial party with *real* industry experience in your company for a day or two. A good consultant will turn your company upside down, find your Achilles' heel and beat you up while making you feel good about it.

Similar to making written property evaluations a habit, the real work of having a consultant evaluate your business begins when he or she leaves. Bad habits have to be dropped and changes have to be made, and some of this has to happen immediately. And, if you do not make the changes and adhere to them, then the check you wrote the consultant is not an investment. Rather, it becomes another expense with no return.

A third way to provide superior service is the most basic of all – ask your customer how you are doing. Phones don't allow for a personal touch, so visit your customers at their property. Be sure to respect their time, but you will find your customers thrilled to see you and interested in talking to you. Then, be sure to follow up with the necessary changes. Customers love to see changes being made as a result of your meeting, especially when it was "their idea."

Regularly performing written job quality evaluations, consistently following advice from a competent consultant and visiting customers are three tools for our service toolbox. We should always look for new tools, as well. If a tool can help you produce positive results, use it. As a fellow manager in our company says, "If we do not take care of our customers, someone else will." Nothing could be more true. – Mike McCarron

We want to know what smaller contractors are thinking. Send comments and ideas for future "Minding Your Business" topics to [cgreenleaf@lawnandlandscape.com](mailto:cgreenleaf@lawnandlandscape.com) or fax 216/961-0364.

The author is president of Image Works, P.O. Box 2564, Springfield, Va. 22152. He can be reached at 703/451-0297 or [mccarron@digizen.net](mailto:mccarron@digizen.net).

# Now You'll Know!



1

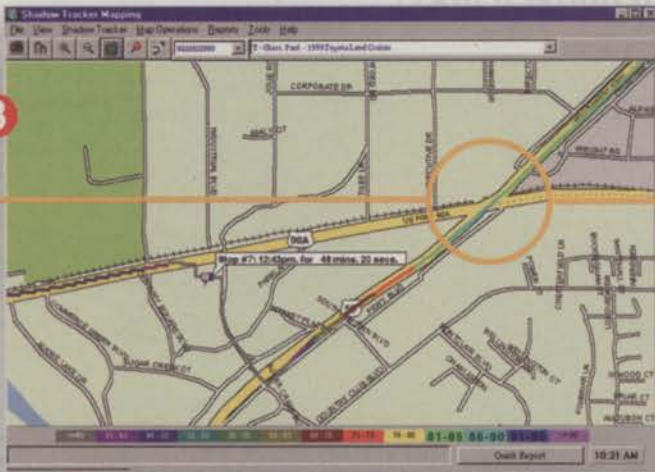
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| Start Time | Stop Time | Time Duration | Location Name             | Mileage |
|------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|---------|
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| 6:28AM     | 11:18AM   | 04:50         | S-Your Company Office     | 0.00    |
| 11:19AM    | 11:22AM   | 00:03         | In Transit                | 1.10    |
| 11:22AM    | 11:27AM   | 00:05         | L-Exxon Gas Station       | 0.00    |
| 11:28AM    | 11:31AM   | 00:03         | In Transit                | 1.10    |
| 11:31AM    | 4:14PM    | 04:43         | S-Your Company Office     | 0.00    |
| 4:14PM     | 4:17PM    | 00:03         | In Transit                | 1.18    |
| 4:17PM     | 4:19PM    | 00:02         | L-Grand & Hwy 90          | 0.00    |
| 4:19PM     | 4:36PM    | 00:17         | In Transit                | 15.01   |
| 4:36PM     | 6:50PM    | 02:14         | B-Home, Employee U.       | 0.00    |
| 6:50PM     | 6:54PM    | 00:04         | In Transit                | 1.61    |
| 6:54PM     | 6:55PM    | 00:01         | L-Stop Light at 1654 Pine | 0.00    |

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USE READER SERVICE #63

Cover Story

by Nicole Wisniewski

# Breaking

# GROW

Lawn & Landscape  
*recognizes the 25 professionals  
who planted the seeds  
of today's growing industry.*

# IND

Whether they carved an exclusive niche in the landscape marketplace, defended its players from harmful legislation or inspired an association start-up or acquisition storm, the following individuals have sown the industry into its current booming state.

**THE BUYERS.** *Dave Slott and Don Karnes, TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn., & Bruce Church and David Luse,*



Dave Slott

*LandCare USA, now TruGreen LandCare.* Slott, Karnes, Church and Luse each played a roll in bringing new meaning to the term "acquisition" in early 1998 when they, along with their colleagues, launched the industry's largest shopping spree and began acquiring multimillion-dollar landscape maintenance companies, separately, yet simultaneously. While Slott and Karnes headed up the development of TruGreen-ChemLawn's landscape arm, Church and Luse were two of the point people recruited by Notre Venture Capital to spearhead the formation of LandCare USA.

Each company continued the race and garnered equally eye-catching results. But nine months later, the competitive growth rush came to a sudden halt when one giant purchased the other, creating an even larger landscape maintenance conglomerate.

"Dave Slott took industry acquisition to enormous speed and scope," said Kurt Kluznik, president, Yardmaster,



David Luse

Painesville, Ohio. "TruGreen turned the industry on its ear and made the word 'acquisition' the most commonly used and understood word among landscape contractors."

**THE COMPETITION.** *Pat Norton, past president, Barefoot Grass, Worthington, Ohio, and current chief financial officer, The Scotts Co., Marysville, Ohio.*

Who would have expected to see an accountant accomplish as much in this industry as Norton has? After The Toro Co. sold its lawn care service to a number of managers, including Norton in 1981, Barefoot Grass went on an explosive, 15-year growth run to assume a dominant No. 2 position in the industry following TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn., with \$125 million in annual revenue. While this feat alone was impressive, the real moment maker was when Barefoot Grass became the first company to challenge TruGreen-ChemLawn by becoming its main competitor.

Even though ServiceMaster acquired Barefoot Grass in 1996, Norton still influences today's market as a member of The Scotts Co. team and by serving on a number of boards of directors. Many people even believe Norton's role on the LandCare USA board of directors was to do little more than broker another deal with TruGreen-ChemLawn, though this story has not been confirmed.

**THE BRIDGE BUILDER.** *Ron Kujawa, president, Kujawa Enterprises Inc., Cudahy, Wis.*

Every November, three green industry associations join forces to produce the industry's premier trade show and conference – the Green Industry Expo (GIE). Now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, the GIE has grown into the conference of choice for contractors who can only attend one event each year, and the concept never would have become a reality if not for Kujawa's efforts.

While his contributions to the industry have been plenti-

*(continued on page 46)*



Ron Kujawa

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**USE READER SERVICE #62**

(continued from page 43)

ful, it was his unsinkable spirit and vision for the future that persuaded the collective personalities of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, Professional Lawn Care Association of America and Professional Grounds Maintenance Society to work on one common agenda and create this event.

### THE FINANCIAL WIZARDS.

Frank Ross, Ross-Payne & Associates, Chicago, Ill.

Lawn and landscape contractors generally enter into this industry because they love the work, not because they want to run a business. Fortunately for many of them, there

is one consultant who has spent the last 30 years advising hundreds of landscape firms nationwide on finances and management through Ross-Payne & Associates.

Ross has become one of the industry's most popular speakers, presenting to jam-packed rooms at numerous events throughout the years.

"You'll never find a harder worker than a contractor - smarter, either," Ross once wrote, quoting his friend and mentor Emol Falls, in his second edition of *Pricing for the Green Industry*. "It's just that he never had an opportunity to be exposed to the intricacies of financial management. But it's our responsibility to teach him, and teach him we shall." Clearly, Ross has done just that.

### THE FORTUNE TELLER.

Tom Lied, president, Lied's Landscape Design & Development, Sussex, Wis.

Even in the early 1960s, when he answered a trade magazine ad calling for contractors to meet and discuss the possibility of creating a national association (the meeting resulted in ALCA's formation in 1963), Tom Lied was a go-getter with a grand vision for the future.

While he claimed to be the youngest and most naive person at the meeting, Lied networked unmercifully. The tidbits of information he collected helped him develop his company's design/build focus and grow it to nearly \$15 million in 1999.

But Lied didn't use this information just for his own benefit. He also was influential in forming the Crystal Ball Committee, a group of ALCA members who agreed that the young, energetic landscape industry should become more proactive in determining its future. The committee members declared: "If landscape contractors could accurately predict future opportunities and roadblocks, then they could plan to maximize opportunities, minimize problems, increase profitability and please their clients more effectively." Throughout

(continued on page 48)



Tom Lied

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USE READER SERVICE #27



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For Kay Gambill, time was running out. The temperature was dropping, the weeds were growing, and she and her team had a 2 acre ornamental landscape to clear and re-build in Fayetteville, NC. “Cardinal Landscape works right through the winter” she explained “and that’s when most systemic weedkillers quit. But not Finale® Herbicide. Where it’ll take Roundup® a month or more, Finale does the job in a few days, even when the thermometer’s below 40°. For weeds, it’s a sudden death experience, winter as well as summer. Kinda gives you the shivers, doesn’t it?”

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**Finale**  
HERBICIDE

## Cover Story

(continued from page 46)

the years, this committee has produced 21 reports that have provided other landscape contractors with opportunities to realize their grand visions for the future.

**THE INVENTORS.** Dane Scag, president, Great Dane Power Equipment, Elm Grove, Wis., & Herb Bunton, founder, Bunton Co.

If you've ever used a walk-behind or riding commercial lawn mower, then you probably should thank Dane Scag and Herb Bunton. While many individuals have contributed to the evolution of this crucial landscape maintenance tool, every commercial mower manufacturer today is building machines that bear the influence of these pioneers.



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## THE FRANCHISE FRONT MEN.

Russ Frith, president, Lawn Doctor, Holmdel, N.J., & Dez Rice, The Weed Man, Canada. After his predecessor, Tony Giordano, suddenly passed away in 1983, Russ Frith stepped up to the plate for a great takeover and turned a company with an unsettled work environment and 40 franchises into one with clear goals, employee trust and nearly 400 franchises to its name.

Previously, the company was on a clouded path and needed direction, according to Lawn Doctor National Sales Director Ed Reid. Frith provided that map. "I certainly respect him tremendously," Reid said. "Russ brought fiscal responsibilities to this company, and without his insight, knowledge and sense of detail, we would not be where we are today."

Dez Rice has been one of the pioneers of the lawn care industry, as well, building his franchise organization, The Weed Man, throughout the past 30 years into Canada's largest lawn care outfit.

One year ago, after accumulating approximately 150 franchises and more than \$50 million in annual sales north of the border, the company announced plans to aggressively pursue the U.S. market and rapidly signed up some of the industry's more prominent names to serve as master franchisers.

## THE IRRIGATION AUTHORITIES.

Brian Vinchesi, Irrigation Consulting, Pepperell, Mass.; Bob Dobson, Middleton Sprinkler Co., Port Monmouth, N.J. & Larry Keesen, Keesen Water Management, Denver, Colo.

Persistence pays off in more ways than one, particularly in New Jersey, where Bob Dobson's tenacity ushered a state irrigation certification law that originally was filed in 1970 through legislation. The statute requires that after Dec. 31, 1996, all irrigation contractors must be tested and certified by the De-



Russ Frith

(continued on page 50)

USE READER SERVICE #28

# Whats New in the Green Industry?



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*How the Green Industry Grows*

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**USE READER SERVICE #113**

## Cover Story

(continued from page 48)

partment of Environmental Protection.

"Dobson convinced legislature to believe that automatic irrigation conserves water; it doesn't use water," pointed out Vinchesi, a longtime friend of Dobson. "He continually gets involved and makes sure irrigation is represented wherever he goes."

And while Dobson carries the banner for certification, Vinchesi and Keesen are committed to educating their peers about the best ways

to install, operate and maintain irrigation systems. Thousands of irrigation professionals have improved their skills through the teach-

(continued on page 52)



Brian Vinchesi

**W**e would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the following four people who brought business knowledge, product information and education to the industry.

### **THE BUSINESS GURU.** *Phil Christian, pdc Consultants*

Phil Christian, who passed away in 1997 at the age of 63, dedicated a great deal of his time to improving contractor's operations and productivity through lessons on job estimating and the benefits of smaller crew sizes.

### **THE EDUCATOR.** *Bob Callaway, Mississippi State University*

Bob Callaway was instrumental in developing Mississippi State University's horticultural school into one of United States' finest. At the same time, Callaway drove the development of ALCA's Student Career Days event. More importantly, however, Callaway's efforts brought the industry onto the radar screen for numerous other two- and four-year colleges and convinced them of the value of offering landscape-related courses.

### **THE PRODUCT PROFESSIONALS.** *Bob Burkhardt and Jim Fitzgibbons, founders, LESCO, Rocky River, Ohio.*

Ask contractors if they have ever bought anything from Lake Erie Supply Co., and they probably will tell you they've never heard of the organization. But ask them if they rely on LESCO as one of their main suppliers and they will most likely give you directions to the nearest service center. Originally founded by Burkhardt and Fitzgibbons, LESCO has evolved into a dominant player in the industry supply chain. — Nicole Wisniewski

## Industry **FOUR-FATHERS**

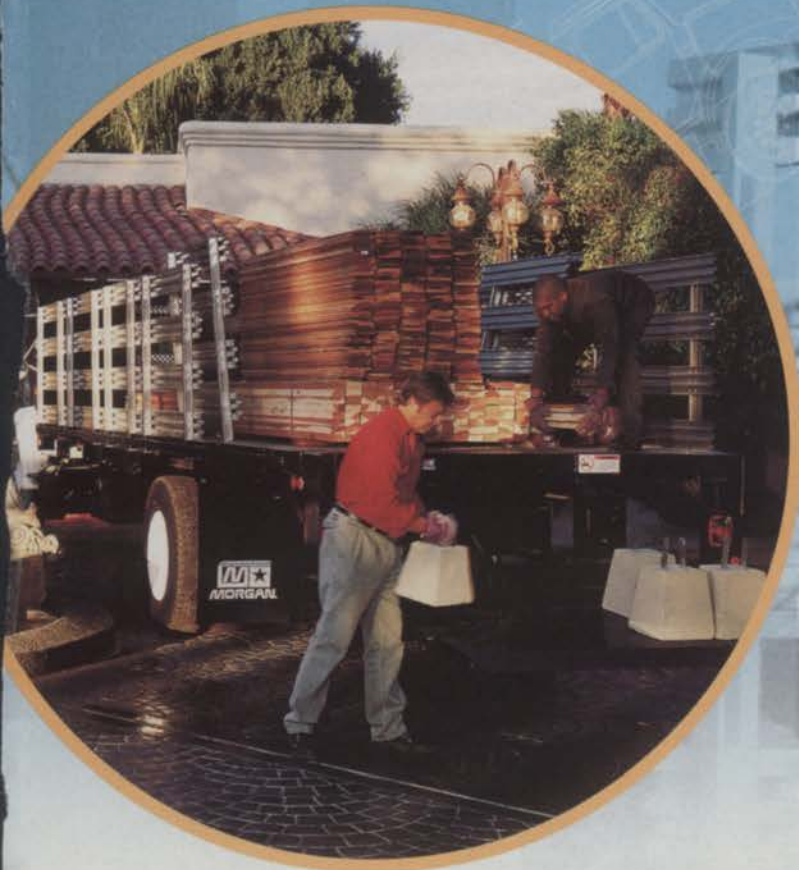


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USE READER SERVICE #35

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Cover Story

(continued from page 50)

ings and writings of Vinchesi and Keesen.

"Some people take up space – others do," shared Tom Kimmell, executive director of the Irrigation Association, Fairfax, Va. "These guys are doers."

## THE LANDSCAPE MOGULS.

Burt Sperber, founder, president and chief executive officer, Environmental Industries Inc., Calabasas, Calif., & Bruce Wilson, director of business development, Green Zebras, Maynard, Mass., and past vice president of EII and past president of Environmental Care Inc. While Burt Sperber holds a lifelong interest in magic, a simple, swift slight of hand is not the reason he runs the nearly \$500-million landscape company he founded more than 50 years ago and why many landscape contractors respect and copy his company's structure and professionalism.

Besides overseeing all five operating divisions of EII, Sperber also established many California Landscape Contractors Associa-

tion chapters while serving as president of the association in the 1960s. "Burt caused the industry to grow beyond most people's expectations because he had the foresight and vision to try new things and diversify himself – he didn't let any one type of business pin him down," said Mickey Strauss, president, American Landscape Cos., Canoga Park, Calif., and a past EII employee.

Strauss also said Sperber surrounded himself with "brilliant people," and Bruce Wilson, who headed up ECI for the past 20 years as it grew from \$7.5 million to \$125 million and diversified its services to include arboriculture, interiorscaping, irrigation and golf course maintenance, could qualify as one of those people.

"Burt Sperber and his associates have accomplished a direction for contractors to aspire to take their organizations,"

pointed out Mike Rorie, president, Groundmasters, Cincinnati, Ohio. "They are the evidence that it can be done."

## THE LAWN CARE DEFENDERS.

Bob Andrews, president, The Greenskeeper, Carmel, Ind., & Gary Clayton, director of technical services, All-Green/NitroGreen, Atlanta, Ga.

Pesticide limitations and state and national legislation changes are complicating lawn care technicians' jobs more every day. While some people cower at the thought of fighting impassioned environmentalists and election-oriented politicians, a few others stand strong at the frontline with their boxing gloves on, spearheading the industry's fight back.



Bob Andrews

(continued on page 54)

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## Cover Story

(continued from page 52)

Whether they are arming lawn care operators with the right tools for action, motivating them to get more involved or taking a stand as spokesmen or political liaisons, these heavyweights are the industry's defense against those with plights of crushing its very existence. Bob Andrews and Gary Clayton have been two such individuals throughout the past 20 years. Between their work for a variety of associations – Andrews played a role in the founding of four state lawn care associations, while Clayton headed up the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's government affairs – and their independent efforts on behalf of the lawn care industry, the two have stepped into the ring plenty of times.

### THE QUIET LEADER. J. Landon

Reeve, president, Chapel Valley Landscape, Woodbine, Md.

Today, the Washington, D.C., market is

(continued on page 56)

**M**any industry veterans say other contractors soon will shine through as the next influential elite; whether they are established professionals or relative newcomers.

**SCOTT BRICKMAN, president, The Brickman Group, Langhorne, Pa.** The Brickman Group's powerful position in so many markets undoubtedly places this 38-year-old, third-generation leader in his own position of impact for years to come.

**JIM CAMPENELLA, president, The Lawn Dawg, Nashua, N.H.** While he has got his sights set on building the largest lawn care company in New England, he's also a big believer in everyone's responsibility to counter anti-lawn care regulatory efforts.

**KURT KLUZNIK, president, Yardmaster, Painesville, Ohio.** Kluznik has championed industry certification, particularly ALCA's programs. His continued push for certification will strengthen the industry's professional image.

**FRED LANGLEY, manager, State Government Relations, Greenland, N.H., & Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), Washington, D.C.** RISE will get the chance to make a name for itself by stepping up to the plate to defend the industry as environmental activists and legislators strengthen their efforts. Langley is often the man on the battlefield for this association of pesticide suppliers.

**TOM OYLER, president, U.S. Lawns, Orlando, Fla.** Oyler is growing U.S. Lawns, a national landscape maintenance franchise, in a hurry.

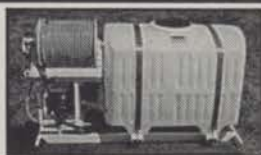
**DREW ST. JOHN, St. John & Associates, Hattiesburg, Miss.** St. John has repeatedly demonstrated a commitment to drive ALCA (and thereby aid thousands of contractors nationally). Seldom is an important association decision made without his input. – Nicole Wisniewski

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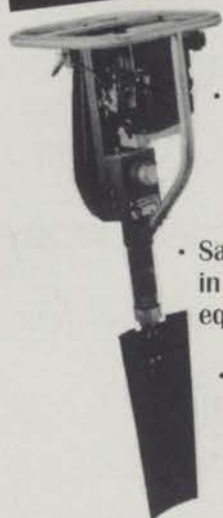
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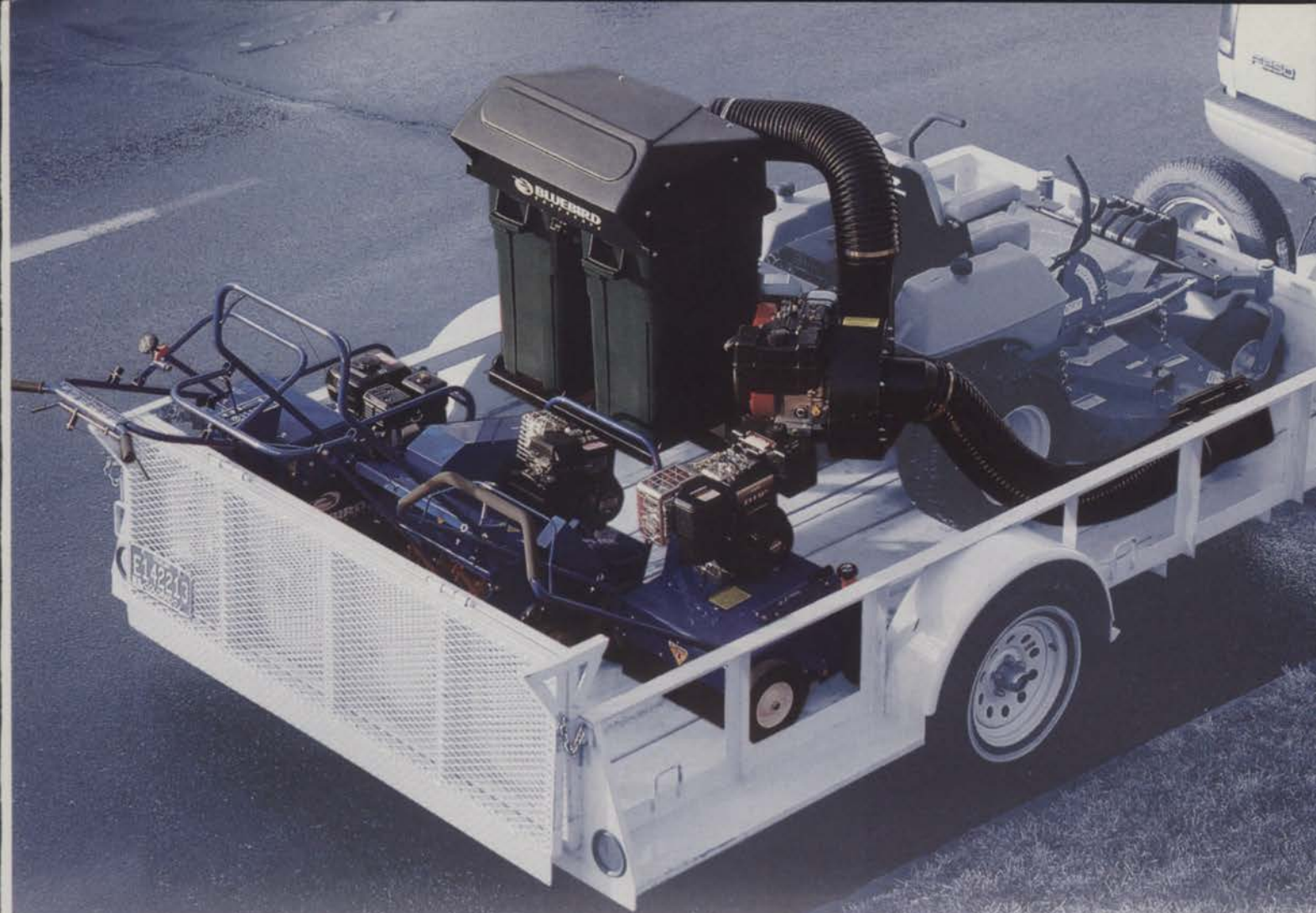
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## Cover Story

(continued from page 54)

widely regarded as one of the industry's most competitive regions. But when Reeve opened the doors for Chapel Valley Landscape in 1968, the market offered little competition. As Reeve grew his organization, he focused on doing so the proverbial "right way," which meant professionally and with standards. When competition arrived in the market, contending companies had a lot of catching up to do, but also had a perfect role model to follow.

"Landon's company set the example for professionalism that the rest of us tried to match," noted George Gaumer, vice president, The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio.

"Landon continues to be a senior spokesman and innovator," related Wayne Richards, vice president, Cagwin & Dorward, Novato,



J. Landon Reeve

Calif. "His organization represents the highest professionalism standards of the landscape industry."

### THE PIONEERS OF LAWN CARE.

Jerry Faulring, *Hydro Lawn, Gaithersburg, Md.*, J. Martin Erbaugh, *Lawnmark, Peninsula, Ohio*, & Jim Brooks  
While the lawn care industry's growth in the late 1970s proved positive, the market's new visibility led

to rising concerns about pesticide use – a problem that, in addition to competition, became an important issue for most lawn care technicians.

On June 14, 1979, a group of lawn care firms gathered in Fort Mitchell, Ky., to address these concerns and formed the Professional Lawn Care Association of America

(PLCAA). Jerry Faulring led the discussion and volunteered to be the first president of the association from 1979 to 1981. J. Martin Erbaugh followed as president from 1981 to 1982. In 1983, PLCAA named Jim Brooks its first executive director. Although trade groups often are created out of turmoil, Faulring said the biggest crisis facing the industry in 1979 was one of identity. "We recognized there was a significant industry already in existence and growing, but there wasn't anyone or anything really equipped to serve our needs," he said. "We needed to be recognized as an industry."

Faulring, Erbaugh and Brooks helped the lawn care industry gain that recognition.

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John Allin, owner, Allin Cos., Erie, Pa.

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(continued on page 157)

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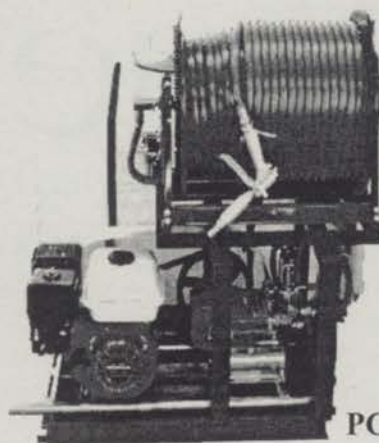
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## Residential Design

by Cynthia Greenleaf

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Prior to being revamped by Horizons West Landscaping, Tucson, Ariz., the Leydet residence was "an overgrown mess," according to J.D. Di Meglio, the company's general manager. To bring the property back to its glory days, the project entailed a complete renovation and replacement of all major landscape elements while preserving the grounds' elegant 1930s style, Di Meglio related.

One of the projects' most interesting challenges was removing 12 palm trees without damaging the existing landscape. "We had to chop them down in between everything else," Di Meglio recalled. The stumps were then buried and a raised perennial bed was placed where the trees once were. Additional project elements included contrasting a subdued green background with heavy annual plantings for vibrant color, using an Octillo screen with honeysuckle vines to disguise the pool equipment area, installing used brick patios and lawn edging as well as a new irrigation system zoned to minimize water consumption.

This project, which took two months to complete, won the Presidential Award from the Arizona Landscape Contractors Association in 1999 as well as the Judges Award for Residential Irrigation and Award of Excellence for Single Family Residential Installation (\$10,001 - \$25,000).

### LEYDET RESIDENCE

Horizons West  
Landscaping,  
Tucson, Ariz.



## RURAL REVIVAL

### RESIDENCE AT

### CLOVER BEND

Bob Jackson Landscapes,

Owings

Mills, Md.

The objective of this project was to complement the European country styling of the clients' house, according to Bob Jackson, president, Bob Jackson Landscapes, Owings Mills, Md. The design focus was to create a landscape with texture and color easily visible from inside the house. The design also needed to capitalize on the house's view of the surrounding rural area.

With many landscape elements installed prior to the project, such as a driveway and an irrigation system, one challenge included taking precautions to avoid damage while installing the cobblestone entrance, front entrance piers, side bluestone patio and specimen trees by crane. Because of "fast track" installation schedule, plant material was dug in spring and carefully held until its mid-June planting. Throughout the summer, planting required special on-site care to overcome drought and heat conditions.

This project won the Grand Award (Residential Design/Build - Above \$100,000) in 1999 from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.



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## Residential Design

(continued from page 59)

### CALIFORNIA DREAM

The goal of this nine-month renovation project was to produce a clean look that fit the coastal home's contemporary, Mediterranean style, according to Richard Taylor, president, Richard Taylor and Associates, Costa Mesa, Calif.

Specific challenges included removing all existing concrete from the yard, which was at least 7 inches deep, took five to seven weeks to remove and was difficult to access, Taylor recalled. The concrete was replaced with limestone imported from France to match existing limestone areas, which were left intact.

Another challenge was finding an 84-inch tree to fit in an 85-inch hole in the front yard. Fortunately, the perfect Ficus was found, Taylor said. Other plant material used included bold Cycas, Zamia and Cacti to contrast with the property's more common plant material. Dracaena dracos and succulents were placed in pots and on pedestals by the pool area.

This project won the 2000 President's Award from the California Landscape Contractors Association's Long Beach/Orange County Chapter.

(continued on page 64)

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(continued from page 62)

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN MAGNIFICENCE

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This project's goal was to create a natural, low maintenance yet stunning landscape, according to Lari Besant, landscape designer, Bear Creek Landscape Co., Evergreen, Colo.

One of the most interesting challenges on this job was to camouflage the house's view of a nudist camp in the valley below. "The trick was to screen out the camp without losing the view," Besant related. To achieve this, mid-sized shrubs were mixed in with aspen.

In order to reduce fire risk, the property's native vegetation was thinned out and much of the new plantings were established away from the house. To "naturalize" the planting, large, granite boulders were trucked in from local stone quarries and partially buried using a crane loader and a skid steer, Besant described. Other key landscape elements – which included all native plant material – included anchoring the entire driveway with large Colorado spruce as well as covering large embankments in wildflowers.

A drip irrigation system also was installed, which fit with the homeowners' desire for a low-maintenance landscape as well as with the native plant material's water needs, Besant noted. The landscape was finished off with low-voltage lighting.

This project took about three weeks to complete and won a 1999 merit award from the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado.

(continued on page 66)

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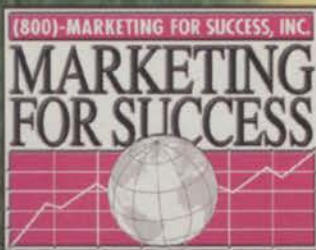
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## Residential Design

(continued from page 64)

### AN IMPRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION

This project's goal was to transform the clients' yard, once overrun with blackberries, morning glory and other noxious weeds, into a private garden space with a European flavor. This design/build project's biggest challenge was access - this property was located in a hilly area of Portland on a narrow, steep street. All work was done by hand since there was no room for installation equipment and little storage space for materials.

A few installation intricacies included constructing a 9-foot-high retaining wall to create more garden space on the front side yard, building a sunning deck and two tile terraces in the backyard along with a small garden planted with herbs, ground covers and perennials. In the backyard, numerous boulders were placed as another retaining wall, allowing for a stairway to be built below the decks. A basalt stone step pathway was installed to provide access from the back deck to the front yard. Multiple stone walls were built to create additional usable garden space. Irrigation and lighting also was added.

This project won a 1999 award in the residential design/build category (More than \$75,000) from the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association.

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## Keys to Sales

by Cynthia Greenleaf

These residential service sales strategies will ensure success.

Even the most spectacular landscape services aren't worth much unless there's a willing buyer. That's why an effective sales strategy is a must, especially in regard to residential landscape work, where a carefully cultivated customer base is essential to building a referral-based business. Creating a strategic sales approach will ensure that the right customers will be there to properly pay for what contractors have to offer.

**FIND A FOCUS.** To avoid squandering employee efforts and valuable company resources, clearly identifying a target customer base is the first step in formulating a successful sales strategy. Johnette Taylor, president, Roundtree Landscaping, Dallas, Texas, urges contractors to avoid the all-too-common scattershot approach to sales and marketing. "Pick two or three markets that you really want to target. And then think of what services clients in those areas would like," she advised. "You need to hone in on what you're going to do. Otherwise, marketing is a waste of time."

Similarly, Grover Landscape Services, Modesto, Calif., only considers work that fits its predetermined criteria. Skipping the "ma and pa" properties, the company caters to large residential and commercial jobs. "We have a target clientele," according to Daniel Machado, a landscape architect with Grover Landscape Services. He added that he always qualifies customers on the telephone, determining their specific landscaping needs, to see if a caller is a "good fit with the company," he described. And when making a first impression with potential customers, Machado advises always going above and beyond their expectations. "Give more than what people ask for," he said.

Daly-Sublette Landscape Architects, Metairie, La., identifies its preferred customer by carefully screening in-coming calls. "They interview us and we interview them," noted Bill Daly, president.

(continued on page 70)

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## Keys to Sales

(continued from page 68)

High-end, residential work is the most profitable niche for P.O.P.S. Landscape Co., Marietta, Ga., and in turn, its target consumer base when marketing, according to Kym Gatti, chief financial officer. And, like many companies focused on attracting a certain kind of customer, P.O.P.S. charges for its estimates and is sure to mention this to anyone who calls for an estimate. This fee eliminates those "who are just fishing for ideas," Gatti said. "That way, we know the customer is serious about landscaping."

Along the same lines, Cayuga Landscape Company, Ithaca, N.Y. screens potential customers carefully to make sure they fit its target customer profile, according to David Fernandez, president. As the season goes on, the company is increasingly careful about which jobs it will even consider. If it's getting enough high-quality leads, Cayuga might not bother with residential projects that are too small or too far away, as to not waste time

(continued on page 72)

Structuring sales compensation is one of the trickier management issues contractors sort out. To motivate a sales staff, commission-based pay is the way to go, according to Johnette Taylor, president, Roundtree Landscaping, Dallas, Texas. "There's more of an incentive with a commission," she argued. "When you're on salary, you might miss a deadline by a day or two. But when it's your money, you tend to hit deadlines and targets better."

Kym Gatti, chief financial officer, P.O.P.S. Landscaping Co., Marietta, Ga., disagrees, however, noting that in her experience, commissions don't motivate salespeople toward the larger picture of ongoing customer service, Gatti observed, adding that her salespeople just receive a base salary.

"If you give a commission on a sale, there's no incentive to follow through," she said. "It doesn't motivate a salesperson to keep customers happy. It just motivates them to make a sale. They also need to be there to implement the job."

Bill Daly, president, Daly-Sublette Landscape Architects, Metairie, La., offers his sales staff a base salary along with periodic incentives. He sees this bonus more as a reward for his employees' efforts than as a means to increase sales, he said.

David Fernandez, president, Cayuga Landscape Co., Ithaca, N.Y., gives a 3 percent sales bonus on jobs that make a profit. In order to determine this, he will do a detailed cost analysis on each job, upon its completion. Fernandez admits that this issue is one he's always wrestling with. "In general, it has the drawback of being a little confusing and open to interpretation," he said, adding that he has "shifted it from year to year," and might very well change it again next year. — Cynthia Greenleaf

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## Keys to Sales

(continued from page 70)

or resources, he noted. "We'll grade prospects by how likely they are."

**FOLLOWING THE LEAD.** Contractors must be ready to handle that first call from a potential customer in an organized, efficient manner so potential customers don't fall

through the proverbial cracks. Roundtree Landscaping recognizes this necessity. "Our office manager is key in asking questions and making sure the customer's need is the type of work that we

To avoid squandering employee  
**efforts** and **valuable company**  
**resources, identifying a target**  
**customer base** is the first step in  
formulating a successful sales strategy.

do best," Taylor said. "If not, then we provide a referral."

Roundtree's office manager maintains a log of incoming calls in a binder kept next to the phone. Then, "trying to extract as much information as possible," he asks callers a series of questions about their landscape needs and what particular services they might require, Taylor described. The office manager then fills in that information on a specified form and forwards it to the appropriate landscape architects, who also function as salespeople and follow up with clients.

Before meeting with one of Roundtree's designers, however, prospective customers are sent a packet of company information, which includes the company's quarterly newsletter, informative brochures with photographs of past projects, details on available services as well as a brief company history. This immediate follow-up to an inquiry always leaves a positive impression, Taylor said. "We're trying to educate our clients all along," she commented. "They can read through materials and get a sense of who we are as a company."

Organization becomes crucial to successfully tracking potential customers after the initial contact. P.O.P.S. Landscape Co., which does primarily residential work, documents every single step in the sales process, according to Gatti. The company's receptionist even works from a set of scripts when taking incoming calls, so she can answer most questions from potential customers, Gatti noted.

Such a systematic approach ensures that P.O.P.S.'s service is consistent and conveys a professional first impression to potential customers. In a booming market such as Atlanta's, saturated with its share of contractors with dubious business practices, P.O.P.S.'s sales approach gives potential customers confidence in its abilities, Gatti said. After all, the secret to sales is often more about selling the company itself than its services, she pointed out.

**GOING TO MARKET.** Another critical component of effective sales is effective marketing.  
(continued on page 74)

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## Keys to Sales

(continued from page 72)

keting. Contractors need to get the word out about their services or the phone is simply not going to ring. P.O.P.S. Landscaping, for one, has experimented with just about every approach to marketing: direct mail, the Yellow Pages, a catchy logo, an Internet presence and even television ads.

Television, by far, has been the most successful medium for promoting the company

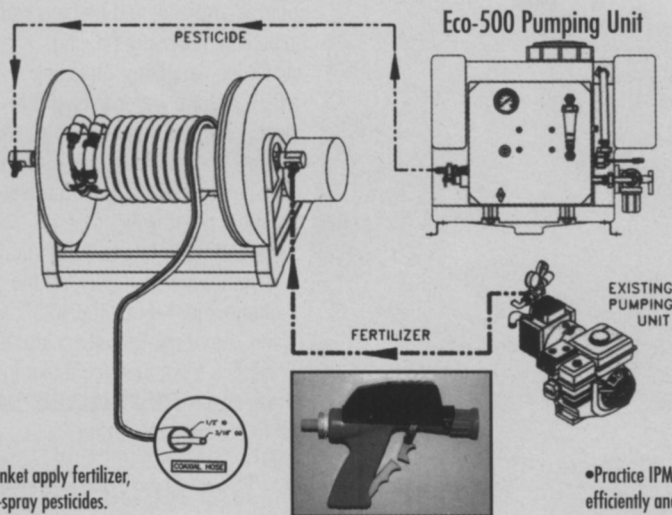
and generating sales leads, Gatti said. "When (people) see you on TV, it's amazing," she said. "They trust everything you say."

P.O.P.S. advertises on three cable channels: HGTV, the Weather Channel and the Discovery Channel. This costs around \$1,400 a month to air 150 spots, not including production costs, which generally total about \$800, Gatti related. Since the television ads

yield consistent, high-quality responses, these costs are more than reasonable, she said.

P.O.P.S.'s retail division also has played a key role in bringing in new design/build customers. At least 10 to 20 percent of its landscape installation work is derived from visitors who stop by the store to look around, noted Gatti. From plant material to water features, these on-site displays allow cus-

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**T**here's far more to selling landscape work than simply securing a customer's money.

David Fernandez, president, Cayuga Landscape Co., Ithaca, N.Y., tries to mimic the people he's selling to, from how they talk and act to how they dress. "If they're upper middle class people in chinos and a golf shirt, I try and dress identically," he said, adding that he always surveys a prospective customer's property and takes in as much detail as possible to get an idea of their tastes and crafts his sales approach accordingly.

Fernandez also advised taking a personal interest in people's children and pets, which always makes a good impression, he said.

Contractors also should pull out all the stops when meeting with a potential client for the first time. "It's important to some degree to put on a little show," Fernandez said, who tries to "bring the landscape alive" for his clients, by conveying enthusiasm for their property's potential and dazzling them with a range of ideas. Descriptive language is also essen-

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tomers to see what their landscape investment might look like. "It has a visual impact," Gatti said, adding that a sense of professionalism is conveyed through an actual, tangible retail site. "They're seeing that we're an established company."

Compared to television ads and the retail division, direct marketing has been a "waste of money" for the company, Gatti observed.

"It's not as effective and people throw it in the garbage," she said.

In order to know which marketing efforts pay off, tracking leads is essential, Gatti advised. Whenever a call comes in, always ask "How did you hear about us?," she recommended, adding that P.O.P.S. keeps track of its leads in a database, "so we can take a look and see what works and what doesn't."

In terms of marketing, Fernandez has also found television ads to be the most effective route to new business. Commercials with images of completed landscapes "convey that we have the capability of coming through with the complete package," he said. "Television is one of the few ways to get vivid pictures of completed work to a broad market."

*(continued on page 78)*

tial. "I use concepts that are more evocative, like a 'small orchard' instead of a 'few fruit trees,' a 'courtyard' instead of a 'walkway,' or a 'meadow' instead of a 'weedy patch,'" Fernandez described, pointing out the selling power of well-chosen words.

He also always totes photo portfolios with pictures of Cayuga Landscape's past projects to show people a wide range of completed work. By conveying this high level of interest and involvement, contractors can earn a potential customer's sense of confidence and trust, Fernandez said.

And since so many companies rely on word of mouth to grow their businesses, thanking existing customers for referrals is a wise move. Fernandez, for example, will sometimes bring a client a chrysanthemum from his stash of plant materials or "warmly thank" them to convey his appreciation for a referral, he said.

Similarly, Roundtree Landscaping, Dallas, Texas, will sometimes deduct a small percentage off of a customer's bill as a "nice sort of thank you" for providing a referral, according to Michael Ward, the company's office manager. — *Cynthia Greenleaf*

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## Keys to Sales

(continued from page 75)

He added that the company does a variety of other marketing, such as displaying company logos on trucks and uniforms and running newspaper and Yellow Pages ads to create an awareness about his company and the services it provides.

When that **first call** comes in, contractors must be **ready** to handle it in an **organized, efficient manner** so no **potential customer** falls through the **proverbial cracks**.

Daly-Sublette Landscape Architects pursues a more affordable route to market its design/build services throughout the greater New Orleans area. Employees deliver informative talks at area garden clubs and to

other organizations. "We've never really done any advertising," Daly observed. "It's a matter of getting out there in the community and talking about the type of work that we do." During these public appearances, which are good for generating word-of-mouth business, Daly will show "before" and "after" photos of past projects and explain the intricacies of landscape architecture, he described.

When it comes to selling landscape services, Sidney Showalter, owner, Showalter Landscaping and Irrigation, Naples, Fla., has not found an acceptable substitute for a personal approach. In his experience running a small landscape company, marketing materials such as flyers haven't been terribly effective, especially with new homeowners who get barraged with mail-

ings and telemarketers trying to sell them services, Showalter noted.

Whether he's out on business or having a slow day, Showalter's personal approach to sales entails scouting new housing developments for prospective customers by simply driving around and knocking on doors. If no one is home when Showalter stops by, he often obtains the name of the property owner from the building permit and follows up with a call, he said.

He has also established relationships with area builders, which helps generate leads. "I'll ask them if they've done anything about their landscaping yet," he said, adding that after a brief conversation with a homeowner or builder, he can immediately tell if they're interested or not. "Either they like me or don't like me," he said. "I've never found that a hard sell did any good." ■

The author is Associate Editor of *Lawn & Landscape magazine*.

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by Kristen Hampshire

Flooded with requests for irrigation services, some landscape contractors are adding water work to create a one-stop shopping mix.

An extended forecast predicts sunny prospects for companies that house irrigation departments.

Though the weather fluctuations that drive demand for irrigation work might be as temperamental as the variables involved in delivering consistent installation and repair, factors such as water conservation and increased construction continue to deliver more irrigation clients to landscape contractors, noted Bert Wood, director of irrigation and water management, The Morrell Group, a division of OMNI Facility Resources Group, Atlanta, Ga.

"When our customers have a need, we figure out a way to provide the service to meet that need," Wood explained. "Irrigation services have become more important as weather extremes have become more severe, water costs have increased, the value of our customers' landscapes have increased and their properties have become more challenging to maintain."

These factors, coupled with pressure for landscape companies to function as a one-stop shop, motivates some contractors to adopt irrigation services. Start-up

capital is relatively minimal and accounts can prove profitable for companies willing to invest time in training technicians, committing to a program and maintaining systems.

**AN IN-HOUSE DRESSING.** Contractors add irrigation to their menus in various portions – some integrate a complete medley of installation, maintenance, management and repair. Other companies pick and choose select irrigation services to deliver.

A contractor's irrigation labor needs will obviously depend on the irrigation services it offers. Creating an in-house irrigation department with dedicated crews to service accounts requires trained technicians, while treating irrigation as a side dish allows companies to subcontract the work. While a dedicated crew is preferable in many ways, some companies new to irrigation often cannot invest immediately in specialized labor. "Once your company is a certain size, it does make sense to dedicate irrigation work," Wood noted.

Control, consistency and customer demand motivated Larry Brinkley, president, BLT Landscape Services, Dallas, Texas, to explore irrigation in 1982, though he began by subcontracting most irrigation work. Now, he services maintenance accounts with an in-house crew.

"Customers were asking for irrigation, so we were having to sell it and tell them it might be two weeks before we could do the project, and they didn't want to wait that long," Brinkley said, explaining why BLT eventually trained one of its technicians to handle some of its irrigation services. "We wanted to have more control over certain plans as far as getting things done timely," he added.

Sheldon DuBrow, president, DuBrow's Nurseries, Livingston, N.J. agreed that subcontracting irrigation work wasn't necessarily the "fast way" to finish. "Subcontractors have their own customers and clients," he explained, which is problematic when service calls flood his company.

While adding irrigation services via in-house crews in small steps can be a manageable method, Steve Ziolkowski, principal, Environmental Landscape Man-

*(continued on page 82)*



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USE READER SERVICE #92

## Irrigation Services

(continued from page 80)

agement, Danvers, Mass., jumped into the work. When a customer asked if the company could provide the service, he answered, "Yes," and turned to a local supply house for an educational crash course. Staff attended seminars, boned up on irrigation basics and took their knowledge to the field without any subcontracting. Now, Environmental Landscape

Management dedicates six of its 55 employees to irrigation work, he said.

"We're able to sell irrigation by promoting that we provide irrigation services without subcontracting," Ziolkowski added. "Other contractors have to subcontract irrigation or tell their customers that they don't want to deal with it. This is another way we are able

to capitalize on being a one-source vendor."

"It's hard to imagine a strong landscape maintenance organization not having an in-house irrigation service department," Wood concluded, noting that The Morrell Group's irrigation department has grown from a two-person team performing basic services to a 20-person group and a \$1.5-million dollar operation. "Our key selling point for irrigation services has been rapid response to emergencies and proactive planned service to limit the number of emergencies."

Wood also noted that in dire situations, customers do not price shop, so irrigation maintenance services can be a profitable ad-

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**– Ron DiPietro**

dition to the business. The fact that irrigation is somewhat of a novelty service and more technically challenging can also contribute to higher profits, he said.

"In the extremely competitive commercial market, we are seeing the companies with these services in-house distance themselves from companies who offer solely lawn maintenance or irrigation," Wood commented. "There will always be a need for these smaller companies, but their customer base will be more limited."

**FLOODING RESPONSE.** Today's customers want to write one check, Wood stressed. They want one exterior service provider and one contact – one phone call to access their needs. "This frees up our customers to focus on higher-payoff activities," he explained.

Brinkley said his company's commitment to irrigation work resulted in increased customer satisfaction. "From the standpoint of keeping our clients happy, our in-house services are already making a difference," he observed. "We're able to respond more

(continued on page 84)

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In any event it is worthwhile to think things through. However certain circumstances do not always allow the *Recommended Safety Gear* time. It is therefore essential to establish a pattern or get in the habit of doing things a certain way when it comes to selecting the proper clothing or apparel as it involves personal safety.

**Recommendations:**  
Full length pants or trousers are recommended for all conditions and especially when the task involves flying debris such as in the case of trimming grass or edging lawns. Except in extremely hot conditions, long sleeve shirts are also recommended as a precaution against flying debris. Sandals should never be worn while performing any type of landscaping and tennis shoes are not recommended but rather a good pair of leather boots. All clothing should also be close-fitting, non restrictive, not loose or floppy and shirt tails should be tucked in. To avoid possible heat exhaustion and to provide shade it is recommended to wear a hat or cap in cases of hot sunny days. Avoid wearing loose jewelry including neck chains or wallet chains. Long hair should be tied up in a pony tail and preferably kept under a hat or cap to prevent contact with any moving machinery. In general, all clothing should be constructed of non-flammable material and kept free of flammable solvents when worn.

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USE READER SERVICE #82

## Irrigation Services

(continued from page 82)

quickly and eliminate problems that might otherwise occur."

This rapid response is a clear advantage, especially since irrigation requests tripled during a recent heat wave, Brinkley noted. Currently, 10 percent of his business is irrigation, and he hopes to grow this figure to 20 percent in the future, he said. Between a booming Dallas construction market and heat-induced sprinkler repair needs, building a client base to meet this goal won't be a problem, he projected.

Environmental concerns also spur irrigation opportunities as water conservation becomes a greater concern for many residents, added Ron DiPietro, president, Landscape East & West, Portland, Ore. Customers are upgrading their systems with more efficient systems, like drip irrigation, and turning manual sprinklers into automatic systems.

"Customers used to have the attitude that if they had a leak, they didn't care about the water loss," DiPietro commented. "But we had a drought in 1992, and people have been more aware of water usage ever since."

While such droughts might bolster business, they can be brutal on employees. Wood said it is not uncommon for crews to work six or seven days a week for 10 or 12 hours every day during summer months. "The hotter and drier the conditions outside, the more popular our group becomes," he explained. "Conversely, no matter how dry the weather has been, many customers do not want to see our irrigation technicians evaluating a system after a rain for fear of wasting water unnecessarily."

**WATER-READY WARE.** Preparing for irrigation crunch times and launching an irrigation department both require proper equipment, supplies, employees and knowledge. Without this investment, services will not produce profits or break even, for that matter.

In addition to having people and patience, Wood recommended that companies entering the irrigation field outfit a vehicle designed to be an "irrigation store on wheels" to allow crews to service accounts efficiently without wasting time on return trips to refill inventory. Contractors who investigate their customers' irrigation systems will learn which supplies to stock in advance, he suggested.

Tools such as shovels, rakes, tarps, tamps and brooms help technicians on repair missions, Wood added. Companies might also invest in electrical equipment like valve locators and actuators, pulsars, toner and volt/ohm meters to serve maintenance and repair needs. Machinery, like trenchers, can be rented in initial business stages and purchased later.

"The costs you need to weigh are the initial cost of setting up an inventory, which is a cost you will eventually be able to recoup, and the cost of driving around town to obtain parts and supplies as you need them - a cost you may not recoup," Wood explained.

Lack of trained technicians is the most common contractor gripe and a driving factor for companies that rely on subcontractors for irrigation needs. "The most critical need, the one that generally prevents most organizations from starting up a successful irrigation service group, is people," he stressed.

To maximize his options, Wood utilizes an inclusive approach when hiring employees for his irrigation staff. Often, training an existing employee is more successful than orientating a new technician with company policies and goals, he mentioned. "We can hire

## Irrigation Services

just about any individual and train them within our system, so my approach to hiring employees for this type of work is to never exclude anybody who doesn't have experience."

Attributes such as technical capabilities, eagerness to learn, and a team-focused attitude are valuable qualities for irrigation technicians, Wood added.

Company owners who have irrigation experience might be able to jumpstart their irrigation departments without hiring skilled labor, Wood said. Hiring a trained, knowledgeable irrigation employee to create a foundation for the division is necessary for irrigation novices since the service requires technical expertise.

The need for technological expertise can create a learning gap among new technicians, DiPietro explained, adding that the mathematically minded tend to excel. "Irrigation is one of those things that either you get or you don't," he noted. "Not a lot of people are mathematicians or can grasp the technical aspect, like calculating gallons, flow, pressure and understanding how systems work."

His company's irrigation services comprise two departments – repair and installation, which is included in the construction division since 99 percent of new landscapes require irrigation installation. Repair is growing and requires more advanced skills and training, he

pointed out. Irrigation services can also entail a little bit of guesswork.

"You are repairing something you can't see – you have to go underground," DiPietro described, noting a challenge. "The guys call it a little bit of McGyver. You have to figure out

"The **hotter and drier**

the **conditions outside,**

the more **popular** our

group becomes."

– **Bert Wood**

how things are going without really knowing what you have."

**A SPRINKLE OF ADVICE.** Irrigation's technical nature demands field experience – knowledge learned on the job. "When it comes to irrigation work, there are very few specific guidelines to accomplishing any particular task," Wood noted. "You have to allow technicians to use their own problem-solving talents."

When employees' talents produce quality results, Wood emphasized the importance of recognizing them for their work. "Consistently praise technicians for a job well done, because they will rarely receive reward from anyone else," he recommended.

Adding irrigation to a company's service mix can be an opportunity for current employees to branch out and expand their knowledge. The answer to placing qualified technicians in the field might already be within company limits, Wood pointed out.

"A person with the talent and desire to perform this type of work is very difficult to find," he stated. "Many times, these people are within your own organization and provided with the opportunity, they will excel. Training a group of horticulturists to become irrigation technicians is a lot easier than training a group of irrigation technicians to be horticulturists." □

*The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.*

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USE READER SERVICE #84

NOVEMBER 2000

by Kristen Hampshire

# FRANCHISE FOCUS

*The franchise package includes more than a designer label for its owners. Many factors help create a stable business support system.*

Identity is more than slapping a moniker on uniforms and painting trucks in company colors. Consumers trust brand names, often associating logos with quality, consistency and professionalism. Comfort often dictates decisions customers make, which is why many will choose a service provider with an established reputation.

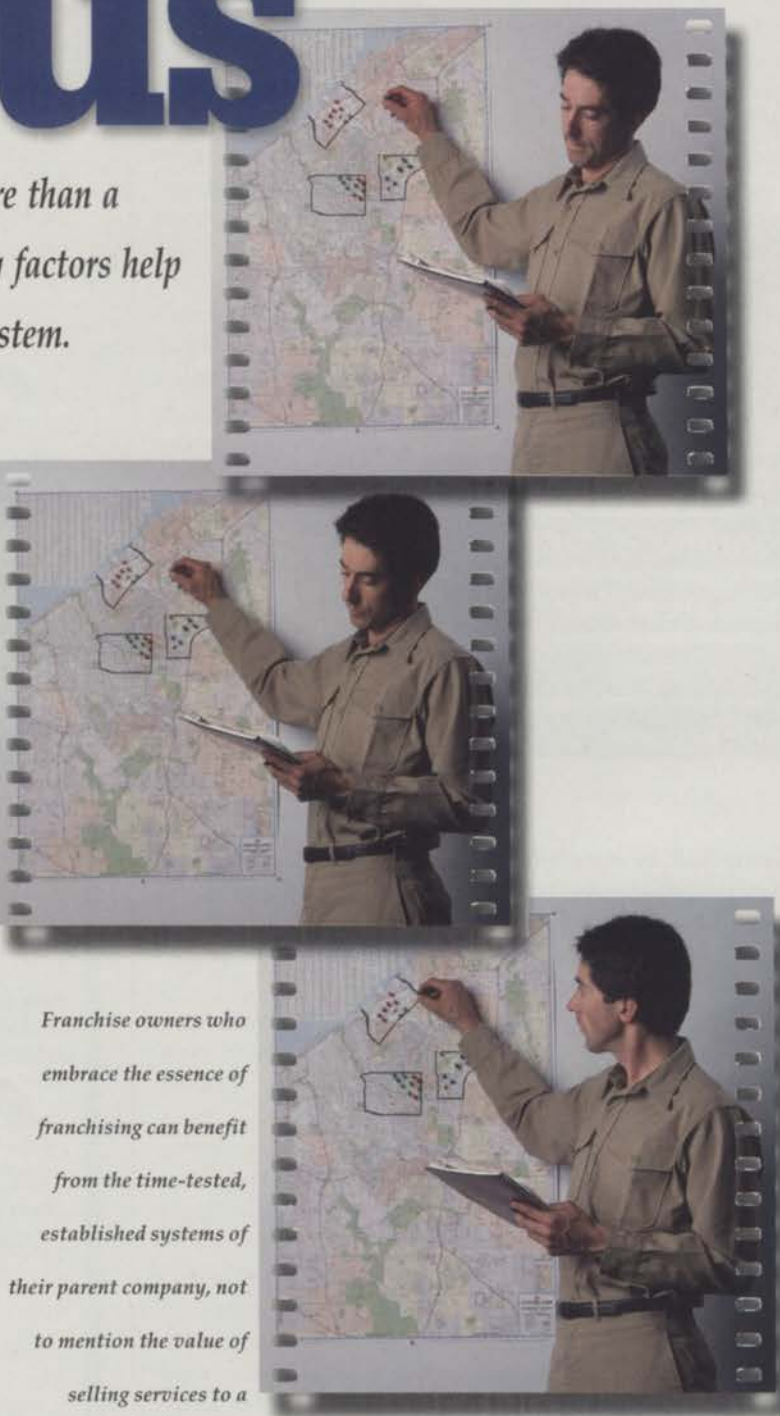
Franchises wear this trademark.

With a franchise, entrepreneurs purchase a package deal – a business kit stocked with the tools necessary to assemble successful operations positioned to grow. Nuts and bolts like marketing plans, operational strategies, purchasing perks, technological systems and support networks, serve as a model for start-up companies.

The essential start-up ingredients are already measured and the recipe is tested by the parent company to please the palate of owners and customers, alike. That is, if potential owners are willing to follow the franchiser's systems cookbook.

**A MIX FOR THE MATCH.** Franchising allows aspiring business owners to run their own company and tackle entrepreneurial challenges with the helping hand of a parent corpo-

*(continued on page 88)*



*Franchise owners who embrace the essence of franchising can benefit from the time-tested, established systems of their parent company, not to mention the value of selling services to a specific territory.*

*Photo: Barney Taxel*



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USE READER SERVICE #138

## Franchises

(continued from page 86)

ration. The lawn and landscape industry is a lucrative market for franchisers, noted Don DeBolt, president, International Franchise Association, Washington, D.C. "Franchising really provides the market power for a franchisee to get the best prices on the products they need to buy and the guidance on how to

**"Franchising just helps someone avoid reinventing the wheel."**

**- Don DeBolt**

run equipment," he added.

A new franchise opens every two minutes in the United States, and franchises represent 50 percent of all U.S. retail operations. Though a thriving economy generally doesn't feed franchising efforts, which depend on out-of-work management-level employees to sprout new operations, multiplying green industry franchises validate the popularity

of this business model, especially when you considering the popularity of the holiday-decorating franchises recently introduced to the industry.

"When I got into the industry there were about 3,000 different franchise organizations overall - now there are close to 6,000," added Randy Loeb, vice president of franchise development and international licensing, NaturaLawn of America, Frederick, Md. "There are individuals out there who have always wanted to run their own businesses, be their own bosses and control their own destinies, but they have an uneasiness in terms of doing this alone."

There are clear advantages to buying into a franchise system, however certain personalities simply will not mesh with the requirements franchisers set for their operations. Mainly, franchisees must be willing to conform to a pre-set business model. Some entrepreneurs find this stifling, Loeb noted.

Ideal franchisees are self-starters with a competitive streak. Industry background, however, doesn't necessarily result in success, Loeb said. Individuals from Fortune 500 companies along with former landscape owner/operators apply for franchises at NaturaLawn - neither candidate is a step ahead in the training process, he said.

"We try to prop up what appears to be the weakness in owners to make a strong franchise," he said, explaining that owners with technical lawn expertise need business management support, while former executives require field training. The key is attitude.

"When we find a person who takes guidance and directions well and has a willingness to follow the franchise system, it's almost a guarantee that they will be successful," Loeb predicted.

"The consolidations and acquisitions have provided fertile [conversion] ground for us to work in and a tremendous amount of

(continued on page 90)

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## Franchises

(continued from page 88)

growth has occurred in the last two to three years," noted Ken Hutcheson, vice president, U.S. Lawns, Orlando, Fla., stressing the distinct difference between consolidation and franchising. "We allow an owner to remain an owner. Franchisees still get their operation, but they have access to our tools and resources."

**A PERSONAL INVESTMENT.** When an entrepreneur purchases a franchise, the transaction binds an owner both personally and legally. The business owner commits to a system – a roadmap to build their company. At the same time, franchisees pay a royalty to the parent corporation. Franchise contracts generally last between five to 15 years and royalty payments range from 4 to 7 percent of the franchisee's annual revenue. An initial franchise fee, generally not exceeding \$40,000, precedes the start-up, and covers training, equipment, materials and uniforms – the brand name.

In return, franchise owners receive a support system. "Franchising allows owners to achieve their goals faster, safer and with less uncertainty," Hutcheson added.

Jeff Dajani, president, U.S. Lawns of Ashburn, Va., said his contract has been worthwhile so far. After working 14 years for a lawn maintenance company that grew from five to 50 employees, he decided to start a company targeting the commercial market, he explained.

"I knew 'A' and 'B,' but I needed the big picture – how to grow a business," Dajani said. "I'm getting the expertise of more than 60 franchisees that have done it before me, so they know where the mistakes are."

Dajani figured the franchise fees compensate for mistakes he would make without U.S. Lawn's assistance, and the 4 percent annual royalty fee is only a small piece of his profit, he said.

Starting up a company is risky business, Loeb recognized. Locating resources, financ-

ing equipment, paying employees – every component costs time and money. "We've accumulated a great deal of experience opening franchises, which allows us to take the experience and transfer that to new people and reduce timely and costly mistakes."

Before owners sign the dotted line, however, they must be confident that the match will produce a successful business relationship. A mutual selection process allows both parties to determine whether or not their goals coincide, DeBolt noted.

"Our basic message is investigate before you invest," he said. "Potential owners need to take a personal inventory to make sure the franchise system is a good place for them to be. If you're overly entrepreneurial, it might not be too wise."

Loeb said most mismatches occur due to false expectations. In response, the company instituted an intricate application process.

"We look at potential franchisees as

(continued on page 92)

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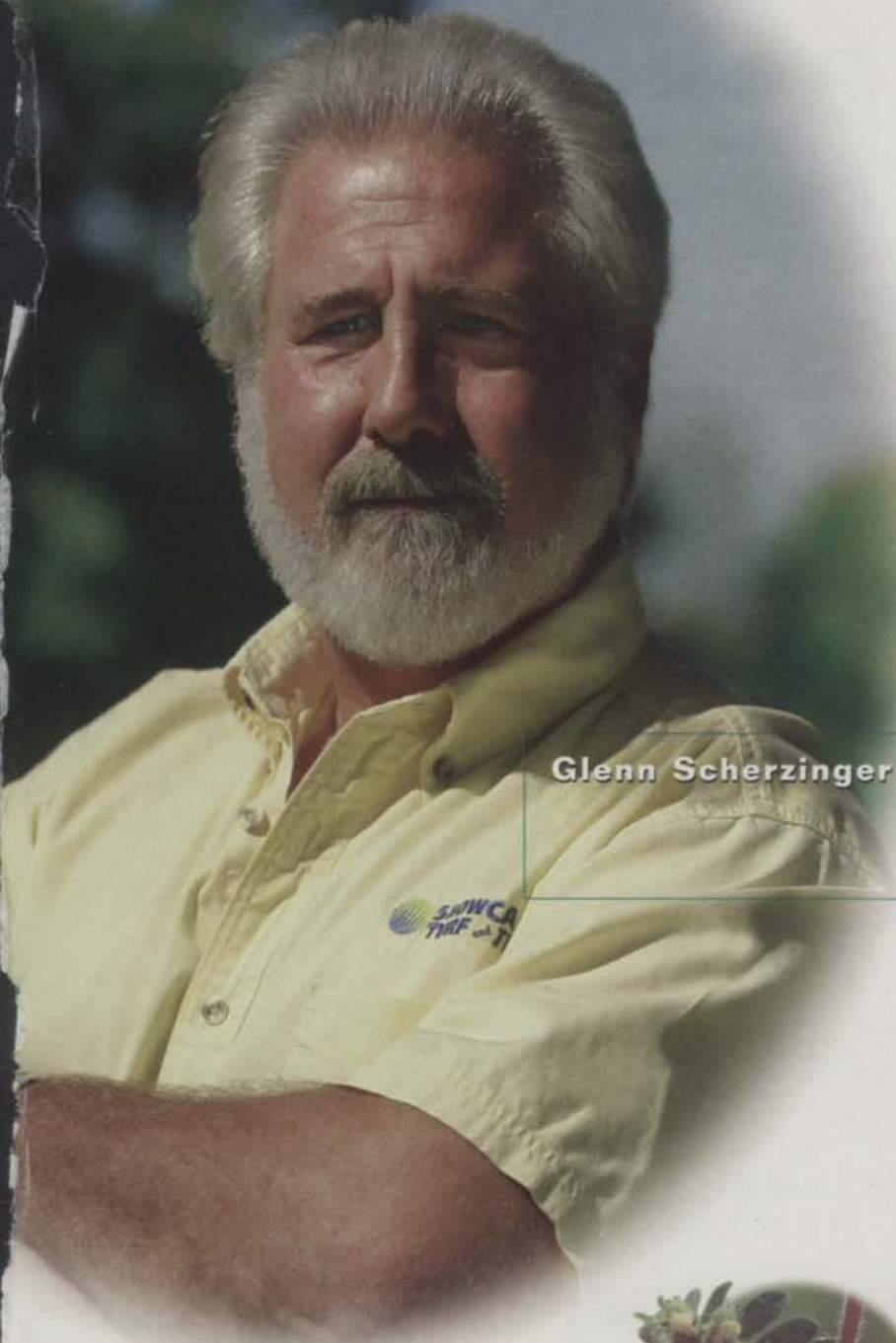
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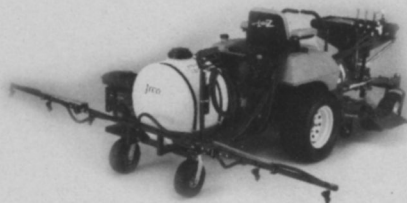
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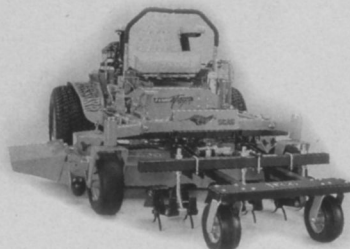
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## Franchises

(continued from page 90)

closely as they look at us," Loeb noted. "We want them to believe in what we are doing, the methodology, where they can head with the franchise opportunity and what we can do for them."

**A SUPPORT SYSTEM.** Owners need various modes of support to bolster their businesses. The advantage of being a member of a franchise family is the support program that buttresses weaknesses, polishes strengths and provides upgrades to ensure a cutting-edge operation.

"Franchising is like hiring a personal trainer at a health club," compared Roger Albrecht, franchise sales, NitroGreen, Atlanta, Ga. "Franchisers will tell you they want one more set of this or that, and then the franchisee shows growth and improvement."

A regional facilitator serves as personal trainer and mentor, having previous field experience, Hutcheson explained of U.S. Lawn's model. Score cards categorize companies based on their phase in the business model, from start-ups to mature operations, and facilitators assess owners on standards from field quality to financial management.

Caldararo recounted an instance when a marketing boost reaped rewards for a franchisee who was frustrated with his stagnating business. The franchisee's sales doubled the last three years after implementing a prescribed plan to remedy an ineffective advertising approach, he boasted.

"The company was not having fun doing what it was doing, and it was able to turn that around based on some very specific marketing and business planning," he said.

The business plan – facts and figures that lead to a company's bottom line – is another ingredient franchisees receive from the parent company. Through consultations, franchisees establish a sense of direction and outline realistic goals.

Loeb said NaturaLawn customizes business plans for each franchise – a first step toward growing a successful operation. "Without a business plan, a franchise owner has no idea when they'll make money or how they'll make money," he stressed.

This tactic is especially helpful for Jerry Stadstad and Steven Vierzba, two NaturaLawn franchise owners from St. Cloud, Minn., who are now in the planning and training phase.

(continued on page 93)

NOVEMBER 2000

# SNOW BUSINESS

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# November 2000

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

## **S8** Serious About Snow

*With plenty of hustle and high-end clients, Chris Frederick has built a thriving snow operation.*

## **S16** Crews Control

*Boost your sidewalk snow removal productivity by forming solid crews.*

## **S22** ICE I.Q.

*It pays to analyze your ice control strategies.*

## **S27** Snow Equipment Buyers' Guide

*This issue features a comprehensive listing of hopper spreader and tailgate spreader manufacturers and their products.*

## **S31** New Products

*The latest offerings in snow and ice removal products.*

### **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...**

**S4** SIMA Says

**S6** SIMA News



Chris Frederick,  
Frederick Corporation

Photo:  
Sierra Studio

## Industry Stature, Professionalism Growing

As we all await that first snow or ice event, we begin to second-guess ourselves as to whether or not we are really prepared. That anxiety level increases as we get closer and closer to the first "event" of the season. Are you ready? Are we ever really ready? We prepare as much as we can for anything that might come along, yet we always wonder if something will come up that we cannot foresee and haven't planned for in advance.

Planning is one of those tasks that the true professional recognizes as a never-ending chore. It is one of the things that sets us apart from the fellow that is just trying to put a little extra money in his pocket by plowing a couple of the neighbors' driveways on his way to work.

Recently, I have been privileged to work with some SIMA members from different parts of the country that are planning on growing their snow management operations into bonafide profit centers. This is quite fulfilling to me personally as I have, for years now, preached that snow is a viable profit center for any company that wishes to be successful in our industry. One individual told me several years ago that his company approached snow as a "necessary evil." Recently, this same individual signed up a large snow and ice customer, resulting in several hundred thousand dollars in additional revenue.

His eyes have been opened to the point where I hear from him that he now sees "snow revenue" all over his market and has to decide just how quickly he will grow. I should like to think that his involvement in SIMA is a major reason for this change in philosophy about the snow and ice industry. Certainly, his company has benefited from his association with SIMA members as he has been able to gain valuable knowledge in how to grow his winter business.

Also, I have recently begun interacting with peers on an Internet chat room specifically geared towards those in the snow and ice management business. I am amazed at the intelligence of those that are going back and forth on that site. For years, I have been told that people in our industry are those that cannot find real jobs, but the snow and ice

chat room convinced me that this is not the case (although I have suspected that we are all intelligent anyway - these people have just confirmed that notion).

Our industry is growing in professionalism and stature. Let's continue on this path together. And, good luck this winter. Think snow!



**John Allin,**  
Board President, SIMA

### Snow & Ice Management Association

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## Member- Get-A-Member Campaign

The 2000/2001 Member-Get-A-Member campaign began Aug. 1 with a number of our members working towards increasing SIMA membership.

As you may recall, the program involves current SIMA members telling others about the association and why they should be a part of it. For each new member recruited, the referring person gets an entry into prize drawings that will be held at next year's membership meeting.

So far, SIMA has received lists of prospects from some, requests for a supply of applications from others and phone calls letting us know that a SIMA member referred them. Why all of the excitement? Much of it has to do with the number of great prizes available including the grand prize, an Avalanche unit donated by Ledex Industries.

If you would like to participate in the Member-Get-A-Member Campaign, give us a call at 814/835-3577 and we'll get you on the right path!

## Snow Plowing Video Available

Have you ordered your copy yet? Many of you requested that SIMA produce training videos to help train your employees. In June, SIMA responded by introducing the Basic Snow Plowing Training Video. This 30-minute presentation comes complete with video, workbooks, training assessments, answer key, instructor guidelines and a sign off sheet. The video features the following topics:

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SIMA Members can purchase a copy of the video package for \$99.95 (plus S&H). Non-member price is \$129.95 (plus S&H). To place your order call 814/835-3577 today.



## Denver To Host Snow & Ice Symposium

Denver, Colo., will be home to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Snow & Ice Symposium, June 7 - 9, 2001. Denver offers many things to do. For example, whether you are traveling alone or with your family, you are sure to find Colorado's Ocean Journey a must see. Ocean Journey is a combination of an aquarium and a sea life park. One journey takes you through waterfalls and trout streams, while the other takes you through the rainforests, a coral lagoon and into the ocean where you'll see a variety of sharks and colorful tropical fish. And, of course, there are plenty of sports, shopping and culture. The Denver Marriott Southeast will host the symposium, which, for the first time, will include a trade show.

**ATTENTION EXHIBITORS.** Exhibit space is filling fast. Be sure to send in your application for exhibit space today! Extended hours ensure the traffic you deserve. Furthermore, education sessions do not conflict with show hours. Our welcome reception will be held on the show floor to give you an additional two hours with your customers.

**ATTENTION ATTENDEES.** Mark your calendars now so as not to miss the annual symposium. Additional information will be mailed shortly. Make your hotel and air reservations early by calling Travel Worldwide Network at 800/631-9675.

**SUGGEST SPEAKERS, TOPICS.** The purpose of our annual symposium is to educate you on a variety of topics. What topics and speakers would you like to see offered in Denver? Perhaps you would like to speak in Denver next year. We are currently looking for speakers, so let us know that you have an interest. All suggestions can be faxed to SIMA at 814/835-0527 or emailed to [sima@erie.net](mailto:sima@erie.net). All questions can be addressed by calling the SIMA office at 814/835-3577.

SB

## Website DEVELOPMENT

Our website is in the process of being completely redesigned!

The first phases of the design are already underway and before you know it we will have a friendly, interactive site.

Changes include the addition of a searchable database of mem-

bers, an updated bulletin board and a "What's New" section that will allow SIMA to let members know of current events or sales. The site will also allow SIMA to have an on-line store, allowing members and non-members to purchase products, join the association or register for the annual symposium. We'll keep you abreast of our progress and hope that you will enjoy the new site.



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USE READER SERVICE #27

## COVER STORY

BY STEVE SMITH

*With plenty  
of hustle and  
high-end clients,  
Chris Frederick  
has built a thriving  
snow operation.*



# Serious ABOUT SNOW

## VITAL STATISTICS...

### FREDERICK CORPORATION

**HEADQUARTERS:** Blue Island, Ill.

**FOUNDED:** 1991


**PRIMARY SERVICES:** 65 percent snow and ice control, 25 percent landscape installation, 10 percent landscape maintenance

**1999 REVENUE GROWTH:** 25 percent increase

**PROJECTED GROWTH:** 25 percent increase

**SNOW SETUP:** Operates with 90 snow plows, 90 trucks, 12 snow throwers, 10 tailgate spreaders and 6 hopper spreaders

**COMPANY HISTORY:** A self-made entrepreneur since the age of 12, Chris Frederick maintained a landscape/snow business through college. After graduation, Frederick worked in an downtown office job long enough to know it wasn't for him. After a 3-month stint, Frederick left his "corporate" job and dedicated all his time to building Frederick Corporation.



Growing up on the south side of Chicago, Chris Frederick was the kind of kid you see less and less of these days. The kid selling candy bars door to door. The kid waking at 5 a.m. to deliver your paper. Or, in Frederick's case, the kid dragging around a lawn mower searching for gold mines in the shaggy, uncut yards of suburbia. A grade-school entrepreneur, Frederick was contributing to his net worth, while most kids were busy contributing to their video-game prowess.

"I've always been a hustler, even as a little guy. I've always had a little business since I was 12 years old, pushing a mower around," Frederick says.

In high school, Frederick supported a budding Motocross (off-road motorcycling) career by forming his own lawn maintenance company. In college at Bradley University, Peoria, Ill., Frederick put himself through school by snow and ice management. "The storms usually hit Peoria first, so I'd watch the radar and drive back to Chicago (a 2.5-hour drive) to beat the storm. I'd get to Chicago, plow snow and then drive back to Peoria for my 8 a.m. class," Frederick recalls.

Even in college, Frederick had an operation to envy, with an arsenal of four plow-equipped jeeps and a client

base of 150 homes, restaurants and gas stations. A testament to his hard work, Frederick received Bradley University's Entrepreneur of the Year award in 1990.

Upon graduation in 1991, Frederick was well equipped for a high-flying career in the hustle and bustle of Chicago's thriving corporate downtown. But it didn't last long. "I worked downtown with a suit on and I hated it. The job market was terrible and I was making more money from lawn and snow anyway. So, I hung up the suit and dedicated all my time to my business. I still have five or six suits hanging in the closet today," Frederick jokes.

**A BUSINESS BORN.** Convinced that the constraints of a corporate job weren't for him, Frederick applied his youthful hustle to growing his own enterprise. Nine years later, Frederick Corporation is a booming, 50-employee (30 year-round, 20 seasonal) landscape construction and snow services company. With help from Lynn Booe, snow service operations manager, and Michael Busin, vice president and director of operations, Frederick grew the company by 25 percent last year. Much of that growth has, and will, come through snow removal services. "We take the snow business very seriously year

Chris Frederick (left), owner, and Lynn Booe (right), snow service operations manager, have collaborated on building a snow division that contributes 65 percent of overall revenues to Frederick Corporation, Blue Island, Ill.

Photo: Sierra Studio

## A SELF-CONTAINED SNOW CITY

round. We have three employees that all they do, year round, is snow removal selling, contracts and collections. Their division is responsible for probably 65 percent of our company's revenue," Frederick says.

**AIMING HIGH.** Frederick has found particular success targeting high-end commercial/industrial clients. "My ideal client is one where there is limited liability of damages, limited pedestrian traffic and a client who needs 24-hour service." Some of those clients include Pepsi-Cola, ATA Airlines at Midway Airport, Wrigley Gum Corporation, UPS and FedEx.

"If FedEx shuts down, it costs them \$90,000 a day. So it is a very feasible decision for them to contract with a professional service like ours," Frederick says. And as a result, he can charge appropriately for the job and protect a healthy profit margin. "In FedEx's mind it is, 'we

If there's any doubt about Frederick Corporation's commitment to snow operations, one need look no further than its new \$1-million facility, built on seven acres in the outskirts of suburban Chicago.

Built with snow in mind, the new headquarters is virtually a self-sufficient city.



**Frederick Corporation's new \$1-million headquarters in Blue, Island, Ill.**

hired Joe Blow Snow Plow for \$5,000, he dropped the ball and it cost us two days and \$180,000. So we'll hire Frederick. It is going to cost us more, but the job will be done professionally," Frederick says. Tar-

There's a generator powerful enough to keep the building up and running in the event of power failure. There are sleeping quarters, a shower and a fully stocked kitchen in the event that snow personnel must stay overnight. In addition to these creature comforts, there is ample storage space for the company's growing fleet of equipment.

The company moved to the new facility in early October, just in time for this year's snow

season. It's a major step for Chris Frederick, but one he feels is vital to continued success. "You have to reinvest in the business to make the business grow," Frederick says. — *Steve Smith*

getting such high-end clients, however, means Frederick Corporation must be prepared to deliver high-level, 24-hour service. "We really foster a one-to-one rela-

*(continued on page 12)*

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USE READER SERVICE #10

# COVER STORY

(continued from page 10)

tionship with these clients. They have our cell numbers and we have a 24-hour dispatch center. We also monitor our weather service and call the client when a storm is on the way so that we can be proactive rather than reactive."

Frederick will also set up a satellite office right on the client's grounds during snow season. "We bring in a semi trailer and park tractors and equipment inside, as well as bringing salt and loaders on site," Frederick says. "The guys get there

before the storm and sit idle inside the trailer waiting for the storm to get going. That's the kind of premium service we provide these clients," Frederick says.

For smaller scale snow customers, Frederick focuses on tightening routes and working with reliable subcontractors.

"If we have an account in a business park, we will go knocking on the closest 10 other businesses. And we ask our salespeople to come back with three leads that our call center can follow up with," Frederick says. Frederick offers customers price breaks if they are in proximity to existing customers and he rewards salespeople with financial incentives when they sell clients close to one another.

**STRONG SUBCONTRACTORS.** Focusing much of his internal resources on selling new accounts and servicing high-maintenance commercial clients means Frederick must rely on subcontractors for his less finicky accounts. Last winter Frederick used approximately 40 subcontractors, most of which were hired on a contract, rather than hourly basis. "I try to avoid hourly, because it requires more monitoring. With a percentage-based contract you can simply say, 'Here's the job, if you have it complete by 7 a.m., this is the percentage you get,'" Frederick says.

The contracts Frederick provides are often lucrative, as he has found that paying well is a sure-fire way to accumulate a group of reliable, high-performing subcontractors. "Typically people in snow subcontracting are hungry for business, so pay your subcontractors well and on time and they will take care of you," Frederick says.

Gathering a strong assembly of satisfied subcontractors can also have power in the form of business referrals. Frederick says his subcontractors often refer customers and he, in turn, refers customers to their individual, non-snow businesses.

"Our philosophy is to focus on our forte — landscape installation and snow and ice removal — and refer other work," Frederick says. For example, Frederick often steers his organization away from lawn maintenance work because it can prove detrimental to other more profitable services. "We can ac-

(continued on page 14)

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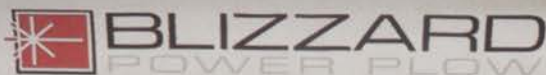
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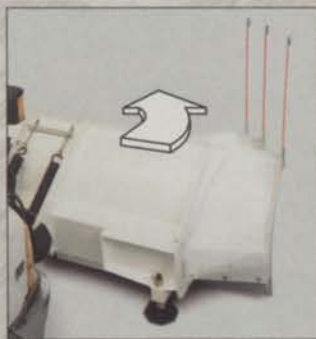
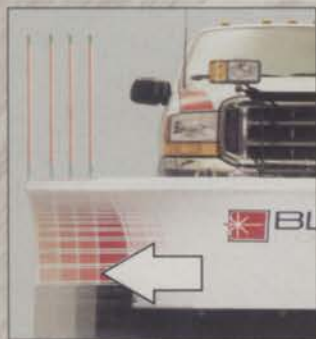
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USE READER SERVICE #20

## COVER STORY

(continued from page 12)

tually tarnish snow accounts over lawn maintenance, which is far less profitable. It seems like people are never satisfied with any level of lawn maintenance and there's a lot of low-cost competition," Frederick says.

**SHARE THE WEALTH.** Though he is focused on pursuing only the most profitable services, Frederick isn't afraid to share those profits. Frederick has developed performance-based financial incentives for employees and created a professional, but fun, workplace. "I haven't always had that philosophy, but I have learned it over the past 12 years. If people are happy and making good money, you can create a great environment."

Last year, when the company met its 25 percent growth goal, Frederick flew all employees to Las Vegas. Further, Frederick is implementing a company-wide profit sharing plan to go with an existing 401K program. "I am very big on sharing the

## WILD WEATHER

Having reliable subcontractors to call upon and strong internal organization is particularly important for Frederick Corporation in order to cope with Chicago's notoriously unpredictable weather. Last year, the Chicago area experienced just five plowable snowfalls, but more than 30 instances of difficult ice and sleet events.

The effect of Lake Michigan is another variable that can cause operational challenges. "It can be sunny where we are and snowing 6 inches near the lake," Frederick says.

To avoid being caught off guard, Frederick uses a telephone weather forecasting service, whereby he can talk directly with a meteorologist. Frederick says in the snow season, his company also routinely monitors the Internet for instant radar.

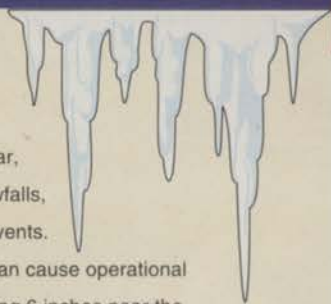
The Chicago area averages 27 inches of snow per year and has an average winter temperature (December, January, February) of 34.6 F (high) and 21.2 F (low), not to mention Chicago's blustery winds. — **Steve Smith**

company's success with employees. The better the company performs, the better an individual's pay can be," Frederick says.

This year Frederick has high expectations for his snow division, setting a goal of 25 percent growth. "I think it is very doable. It's not something we can do every year, but

I think there's a lot of opportunity for us in snow this year," Frederick says. "It's a tricky game, but if you get the right accounts, snow business is very profitable." **SB**

*Steve Smith is managing editor of Snow Business magazine.*



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USE READER SERVICE #17

# SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL

BY JOHN ALLIN

*Boost your sidewalk  
snow removal productivity  
by forming solid crews.*

**M**anaging performance in snow and ice management organizations is a complex issue. In most organizations, people are hard working, or at least they believe they are. When you announce a productivity increase, it will most likely be interpreted as a demand that front-line workers extend more effort. This is not true. We want them to work more effectively and be more accountable for the results of their efforts.

A solid strategy in boosting efficiency in sidewalk snow removal operations is finding the right people — both crew leaders and front-line labor — and then ensuring the formation of a solid crew size. Master this management skill and you'll be cruising in no time.

**FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE.** Sidewalk snow work is a people intensive activity. Most payroll dollars go to production people as a percentage of the whole labor dollar outlay. The labor intensity of sidewalk snow removal has improved in the past, and the percentages may change in the future, but people power will be the heart of the business for years to come. We have not been able to substantially reduce the man-hours per lineal foot of walk, even in light of improved ice control materials and more sophisticated, state-of-the-art equipment.

Confounding productivity challenges is a shrinking labor pool. The U.S. Department of Labor has confirmed our fear that the pool of available workers is shrinking and will get even smaller in the future.

The fact that it is more difficult to find new employees makes it vital to get the most from our existing staff. A production unit for sidewalk snow removal is a crew that includes labor, equipment, material and transportation. The labor for one production unit usually consists of one crew leader (or working foreman) and one or more crew members.

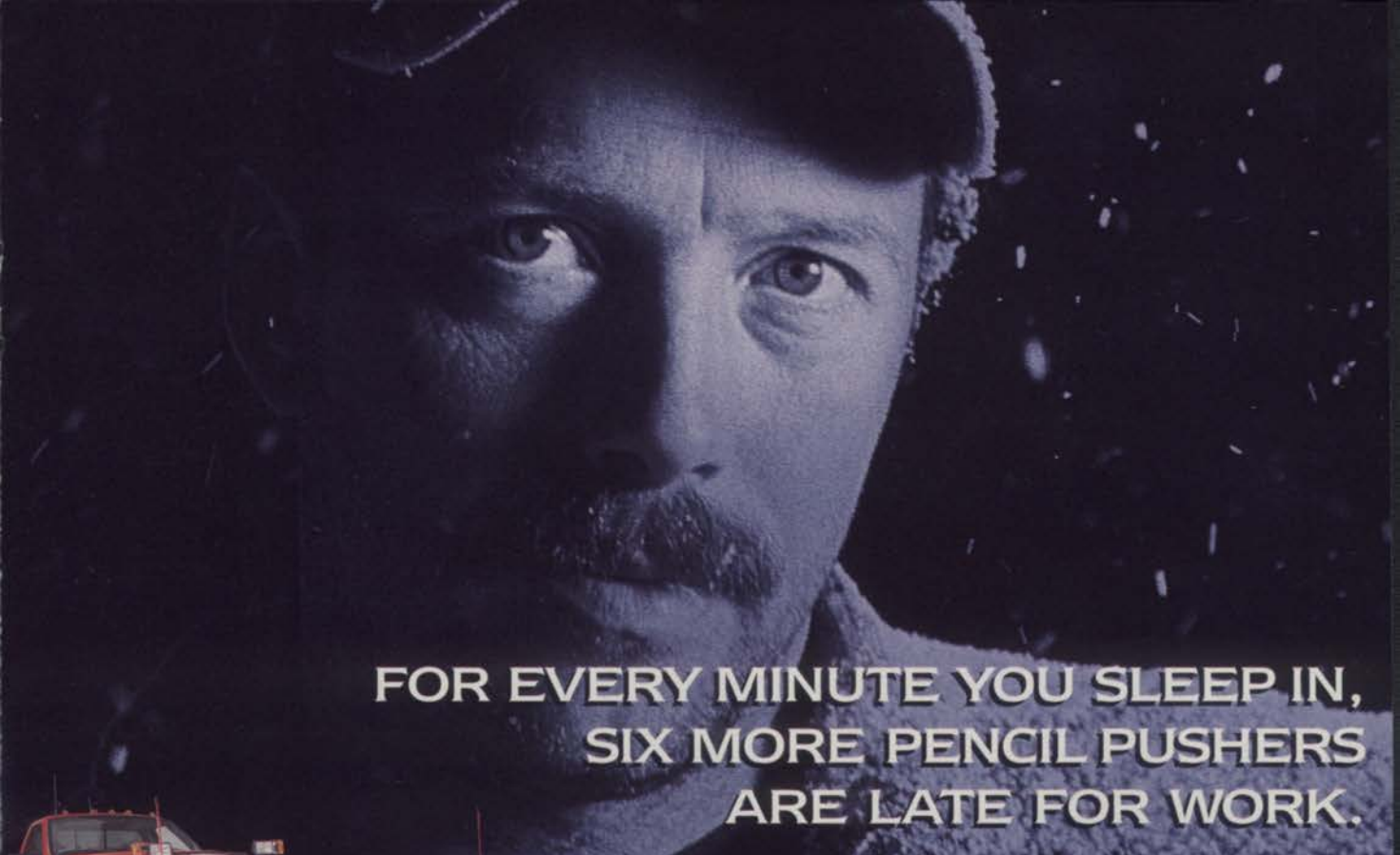
The crew leader has emerged with an expanded role in managing snow and ice services on any specific site. Multiple

*(continued on page 18)*



# Crews Control

Photo: Walker Manufacturing Co.



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# SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL

(continued from page 16)



Photo: Deere & Co.

**ENSURING MAXIMUM  
PRODUCTIVITY FROM EACH  
CREW MEMBER IS ESPECIALLY  
IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF THE  
TIGHT LABOR MARKET.**

factors have reshaped the value and job description of a traditional crew leader including the difficulty and expense of communication links, direct supervision of mobile service crews and the need to have an experienced, knowledgeable employee on the property at all times. Organizations that recognize this expanded role for the crew leader will streamline their operation by eliminating the middle managers and production supervisors. They will redistribute these assets, all the while upgrading the role of the modern day crew leader.

What specific traits should we look for when hiring a production person to work under an experienced crew leader? After the basic requirements have been met, look for the person that needs to be active at all times and who appears to be bursting with energy. The production worker we look for usually has little regard for

detail and is difficult to train in the classroom. They learn by doing and are good candidates for on-the-job training, provided the objective is getting them to take action, not improving their knowledge.

The sad reality is that most production people on sidewalk snow removal crews leave our industry because we do not see ourselves as managing a production operation. This is true even in landscape management operations, as well as snow removal operations.

A production organization should be staffed and organized so the entire operation is a support system for the production workers and production units. Sidewalk snow removal should be viewed as a production-oriented task.

The functioning production organization should be structured so that management will not interfere with production. Production workers perform best when

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they are managed as team members, or athletes, rather than laborers. They need specific goals set for each production period (or snow event). The company standard (either the contractor's standard or the customer's standard) for performance must be demonstrated by the crew leader.

The procedures leading to the standards must be taught while a snow event is taking place, thus putting even more pressure on the crew leader and production workers. Unfortunately, snow events in some areas of the country are few and far between, thus making retention of the production principles even harder.

Not to mention that most people want more than a paycheck for a day's work. Part of management's responsibility in a production organization is to help each player on the team to build self-esteem. And production-focused managers should regularly recognize employees' efforts.

**SMALL CREWS.** Once you've found the right production personnel, the next challenge is finding the best way to group them. The most efficient crew size for performing sidewalk snow removal activities has been discussed, argued and subjected to trial-and-error testing.

When sidewalk snow removal emerged as a separate (or specialty) business the issue became more important. By adding mobile crews, we discovered the importance of correct crew sizing. In today's competitive labor environment, the need for higher productivity and increased quality suggests a "new look" at sizing sidewalk snow removal crews.

Let's look back at our non-snow-related experience with small crews. Most of us at some time in our careers have worked as a one-person crew. Remember how much you could accomplish in one long day? Remember the first really good

helper, the one who read your mind and did what you wanted him to do? You increased your production when you added the helper, but you probably didn't double it.

Sidewalk snow removal (and snowplowing too, for that matter) is a series of solo, one-person tasks. Unlike landscape installation or construction, sidewalk maintenance crews do not handle heavy or awkward materials or equipment requiring more than one person to improve efficiency. This lack of synergistic benefit on a per-task basis encourages us to think of our crews as combinations of one-person crews.

Loading heavy sheets of 4-foot by 8-foot plywood is a good example. One person can load 30 sheets per hour by himself, but a crew of two can load 75 sheets an hour. The difference is called synergy — which means that the whole is

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## SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL

greater than the sum of its parts. By working together, the plywood loading crew actually increased the output per person from 30 sheets per hour to 37.5 sheets per hour. What would the effect be if you added a third person to the plywood loading crew? It would actually be detrimental to the overall production synergy.

Sidewalk snow removal activities do not offer opportunity for positive synergistic effect. In fact, we have the opposite. When we increase the crew size, we lose efficiency. For example, send one person to do a job that takes four hours of elapsed time. Now, send two people with the same equipment the same distance to clear the same area, and it takes two and a half hours of elapsed time (4.8 man-hours).

The two-person crew did it much more quickly, but more time was spent in man-hours and, therefore, the crew became less efficient.

In many cases, clearing a sidewalk in a little more than two hours rather than half a day is a worthwhile tradeoff for the inefficiency — especially during periods of heavy accumulation. However, the important issue is to recognize that the more people we send to do the job, the faster it is completed, but it is also less efficient in total man-hours spent. And your cost is proportionate to man-hours spent, not elapsed crew time. The small two- or three-person crew may not effectively clear snow quickly enough at all sized properties.

**LARGE CREWS.** One drawback of small crews on large properties is they cannot complete the work fast enough. They spend too much time on-site or do not get the job done on time. One answer to that problem is increasing the crew size. All that is needed is a crew-cab truck and a few more snow pushers. You should be able to send

as many as six people to one property and "knock it out," then move on to the next site.

Large crews appeal to the social side of our nature, making it easy to build enthusiasm. Large crews also make the team members feel safe and secure — they feel as though there are enough of "us" to get it done.

Production managers and snow removal customers like large crews because absenteeism does not cripple the production effort. Supervisors (especially non-producing supervisors) like the challenge of managing larger crews. Crew members prefer large crews because of the team atmosphere. Property owners/managers love big crews because they equate it with better service. In fact, sometimes property managers demand contractors "get more people" on the job and "get it done"!

Despite these perceived positives about large crews, they often have signifi-

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cant disadvantages. Although crews working a specific route are often sized to fit the largest property, crews seem to grow almost by themselves. Supervisors and production managers often add one member as "insurance" against anything going wrong. This is a sure sign of mismanagement, not efficiency.

Everyone likes large crews except the person responsible for profit—the owner. In some cases, he (or she) does not know that large crews (with more than three people) are the problem rather than the solution. Snow business owners are often more apt to blame employees, the pricing system or the weather for the production crisis that is reducing profits.

A false belief that increased crew size increases man-hour efficiency is only one of the many myths about large crews.

Another popular myth is that large crews ensure quality work. This was born

in the belief that quality work takes more time than non-quality work does. This is not true. Quality is the result of a process that includes trained people operating the correct equipment according to a set procedure. In large crews where accountability is minimal, quality is often sacrificed.

**THE BEST SOLUTION.** As you can see, there are benefits and detriments to both large and small crews. The combination that seems to work best is a full-time working foreman with one or perhaps two crew members trained to require very little direct supervision.

Divide large crews into smaller two- and three-man crews and teach them to function as separate work units. When large properties require more man-hours than a three-man crew can generate, divide the property into two zones and send two crews to produce the work. It will be

much cheaper for the customer in the long run and the contractor will look much better at budget review time.

Each two- or three-person crew should have separate production and quality goals for the specific snow event they are working. Even though separate crews may be working on the same property, each crew should be evaluated on individual performance within its particular area of responsibility.

Though not always easy, having the discipline to find the right type of crew member and then including him or her in a small, foreman-directed crew can pay significant dividends for your operation. Further, in light of increasing challenges finding new labor, ensuring optimum production is vital to success. **SB**

*John Allin is board president of SIMA and owner of Allin Companies, Erie, Pa.*

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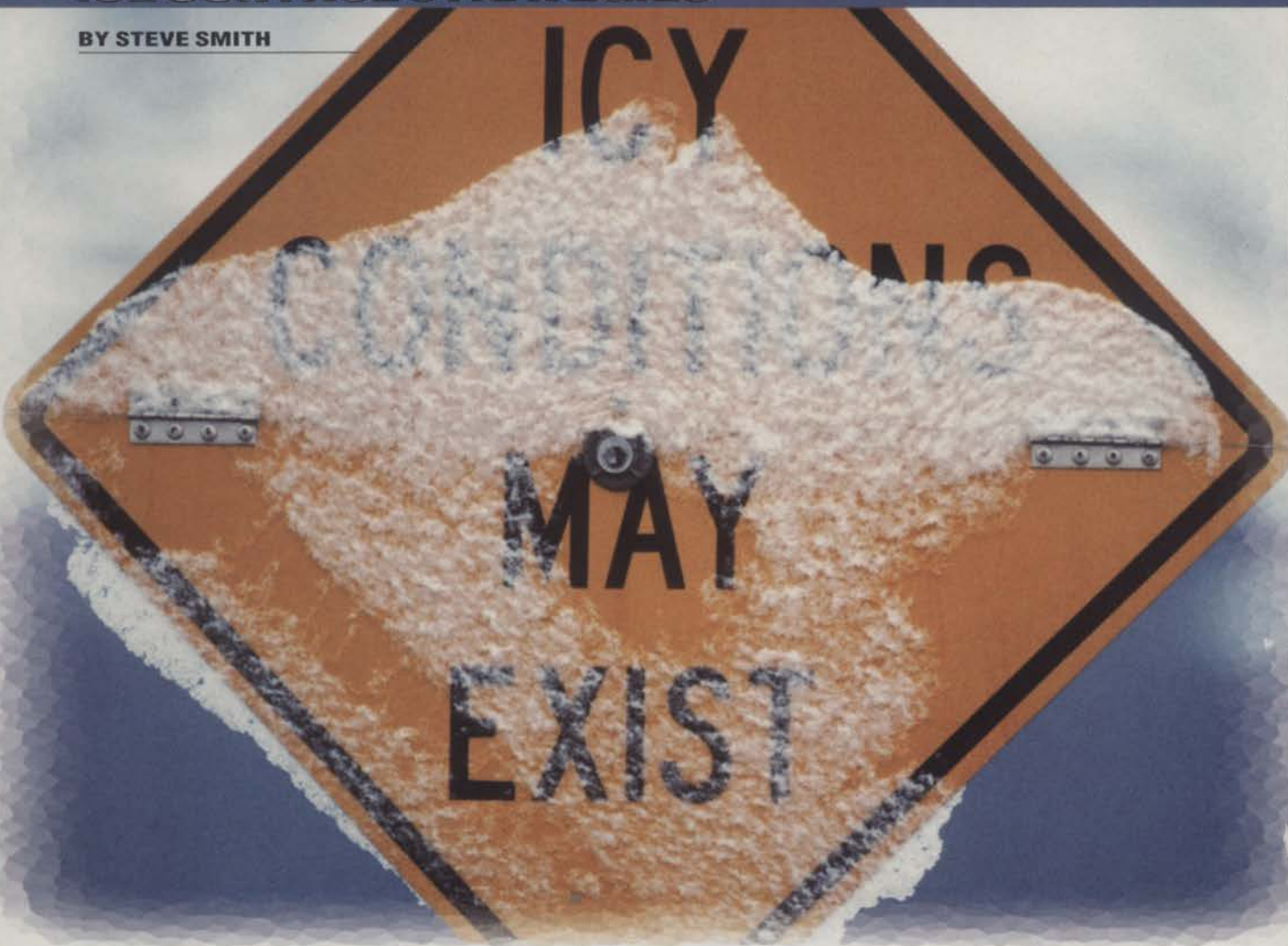
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## ICE CONTROL STRATEGIES

BY STEVE SMITH



*It pays to analyze your ice control strategies.*

Snow contractors often rely on tried and true methods like plowing and sanding to solve their customers' ice problems. But with liability and material costs on the line, giving their ice control strategies a second look may pay off for contractors.

That's not to say that tried and true methods don't work well. But don't be complacent, warns Dale Keep, a respected consultant and owner, Snow & Ice Technologies, LLC, Walla Walla, Wash.

"No matter what product you use and whatever results you get, ask 'Why?'" Understand the results, and why they happened. There is always something to be learned," Keep says.

This kind of analysis can improve your knowledge of ice control strategies and your success level in a variety of situations. "Every tool has its place. You should match the product to the area you will be working in. Set out your unique guidelines and then find the best control strategy that fits that criteria," Keep explains.

**ICE CONTROL OPTIONS.** Today, a variety of ice control products are available.

*Sodium chloride:* By far the most common ice melting product because of its low purchase price. The commonly used effective melting temperature is 20 F and warmer at a 23 percent concentration. The eutectic temperature is -6 F.

*Calcium chloride/Magnesium chloride:* Both are exothermic, which simply  
*(continued on page 24)*

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# ICE CONTROL STRATEGIES

(continued from page 22)

means they release heat as they dissolve, which helps melt ice quickly. Effective melting temperature of these two products depends on the concentration being used. Calcium chloride at 30 percent concentration has a eutectic temperature of -52 F, while magnesium chloride at 30 percent has a freeze point of 3 F, with the eutectic temperature being -27 F at 22 percent.

**Urea:** A common fertilizer nutrient (48-0-0-0), but less common in modern ice control due to high nitrogen levels.

**Ethylene glycol:** A liquid deicer, commonly mixed with liquid urea and applied using bulk sprayers and tanker trucks. Applied primarily at airports.

**Potassium acetate:** Biodegradable liquid deicer primarily used for airports, but beginning to be used in other markets such as highways and parking garages. Because potassium is corrosive, it is often mixed with a corrosion inhibitor. Eutectic tem-

perature is approximately -76 F at 50 percent concentration, so it can effectively be used in colder temperatures.

**Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA):** Developed as an environmentally friendly alternative to road salt, it is generally non-damaging to vegetation and concrete. However, the purchase price of CMA is roughly 30 times more expensive than rock salt. Effective melting temperature is approximately 20 F. Dry CMA is typically used to produce a 25 percent concentration brine.

**TIPS AND TRICKS.** While the above materials are considered the most common, there are many beneficial variations. "One tip I have for contractors is that if they are primarily a sodium chloride user, they can jump start their salt with calcium chloride. You can add five to 15 percent of calcium," says Larry Williams, business manager, Tetra Chemicals, The Woodlands, Texas.

Williams further adds that while calcium chloride costs more than sodium up front, contractors should consider the price-to-performance ratio. "You should look at how much more bang for the buck you get for the higher price," Williams says.

Paul Schipper, president, Evergreen Lawn Care, Grand Rapids, Mich., says his company primarily uses sodium chloride on parking lots and switches to calcium chloride on pedestrian areas because calcium's lower melting temperature provides a reduction of liability.

John Parker, owner, New York Snow Pros, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., says he sees more and more contractors experimenting with liquid and non-traditional ice control products. "Liquid products have not been real popular with private contractors. But that mindset is changing as of late," Parker says. Two years ago, after searching for new ice control products, Parker discovered a liq-

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uid material composed of distilled solids from a brewery mixed with magnesium chloride. He began using the material, called Magic Minus Zero, in his own operation and now distributes it to other contractors on the East Coast. The product can be used as a stand-alone or can be used with salt. When sprayed on salt, the material brings the effective melting temperature to -25 F and greatly reduces salt's corrosiveness.

Though Parker's experience with liquids has made him a firm believer in these newer technologies, he cautions that they require added skills on the part of the contractor. "Chemicals are definitely the next step in efficient, advanced ice control, but they should not be looked at as something that can just be sprayed out and down the road you go. There is a definite educational process that needs to be followed. Liquids can backfire if you don't know what you are doing," Parker says.

Like Parker, Richard Pearce says he sees more and more contractors investigating new ice control strategies. Pearce, president and founder, ThermaProducts, Aurora, Colo., manufacturers roll-out rubber mats which are warmed by electricity and thus keep walkways, steps, etc. free of snow and ice. The normal operating temperature of the mats is 40 to 50 F when the air temperature is 20 F, and Pearce has seen them work at as low as -8 F with 7 inches of snowfall.

Contractors, Pearce says, have found

success using the product in areas where an ice melter may not be the best option because of sensitivity of the surface. The product, for instance, can be placed over wood, grass and landscape blocks, or used on wheel chair ramps.

Ultimately, the best strategy is to learn as much as possible about ice control products and apply them in the best-suited situation. "It comes down to looking at meeting a high level of service, with a minimal amount of chemical and/or assets," Keep says.

**PREVENTING DAMAGE.** One way to reduce expense and deliver high-level service is to prevent damage associated with chemical ice control efforts. Most damage results not from the product itself, but quite often from misapplication or improper use. "Most products are only a problem when misused," Keep says. The most common problem is applying too much material or applying it in the wrong area.

Stephen Hewgill, national sales manager, Pursell Vigoro Canada, Inc., Tillsonburg, Ontario, says damage to vegetation usually results from shoveling snow that is laden with ice melter onto vegetation. Most vegetative damage is usually not evident until spring. To prevent vegetation damage Pursell Vigoro recommends that contractors:

- Apply product at label rates;
- Disperse snow/slush over a wide area;

## ICE CONTROL VOCABULARY

A variety of terms are used to describe ice control methods and products. The following are a few key terms:

**Anti-Icing:** Strategy that prevents a strong bond between frozen precipitation and a pavement surface by application of a chemical product that reduces the freezing point.

**Deicing:** Strategy whereby a product is applied to the top of an accumulation of snow and ice to melt the accumulation that has already bonded to the pavement.

**Effective Melting Temperature:** Defines the lowest temperature at which an ice control product will melt ice in "real world" conditions in the field.

**Eutectic temperature:** The lowest temperature at which the product will work in laboratory conditions.

**Endothermic:** Product that requires heat to generate deicing action. Product sucks in heat out of the environment and lowers the freezing point of water.

**Exothermic:** Product that produces its own heat as it mixes with water to form a brine solution.

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## ICE CONTROL STRATEGIES

- Apply ice melter early to reduce the amount needed;
- In areas that will be exposed to ice melters, install tolerant plant species.

In addition to damaging vegetation, concrete damage caused by ice melters can be costly for snow contractors. According to Hewgill, most concrete damage is not the result of chemical attack, but by the effects of thawing and freezing. Moisture seeps into cracks in the concrete and as it changes to ice it expands and puts pressure on the concrete, causing weaker areas to crack or deteriorate. Use of ice control products increases the frequency of this process.

So-called "air-entrained" concrete that is designed for cold weather is most resistant to freeze-thaw cycles because it has a network of tiny air pockets. To prevent damage to concrete, Pursell Vigoro recommends contractors:

- Apply ice melter at recommended rate;
- Remove slush and water from melting ice and snow before re-freezing occurs;
- Avoid use on non-air-entrained concrete or other weak surfaces;
- Avoid use on new concrete, concrete with exposed aggregate, brick, masonry, stone or unsealed asphalt, all of which are particularly vulnerable to damage.

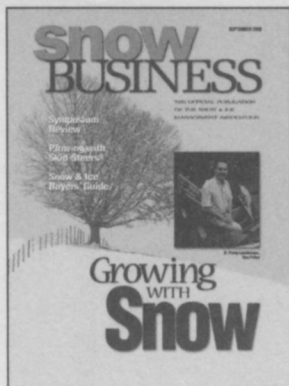
**LIMITING LIABILITY.** Much of the reason ice control services have become popular is the reduction of liability they afford property owners. One study from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center revealed that 27 percent of patients admitted to three Buffalo, N.Y.-area hospitals for pedestrian-related accidents were injured on icy surfaces. "Ice control products are like liability insurance in a bag, and that's why so many companies are looking for the service," Hewgill says.

And while contractors are reducing liability for their customers, they, too, need to protect their own liability by ensuring they have investigated a variety of ice control strategies and have the expertise to apply them in the right situation. **SB**

The author is managing editor of Snow Business magazine.



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www.ez-dumper.com

**Fisher Engineering**

PO Box 529  
Rockland, ME 04841  
207/594-4446  
www.fisherplows.com

**Flink Company**

502 N. Vermillion  
Streator, IL 61364  
815/673-4321  
www.flinkco.com

**Henderson  
Manufacturing**

PO Box 40  
Manchester, IA 52057  
800/359-4970  
www.henderson-mfg.com

**Highway Equipment  
Company**

616 D Ave., NW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405  
800/363-1771  
www.highwayequipment.com

**Hiniker Company**

PO Box 3407  
Mankato, MN 56002  
507/625-6621  
www.hiniker.com

**Meyer Products**

18513 Euclid Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44112  
216/486-1313  
www.meyerproducts.com

**Snow-Way  
International**

844 West State St.  
Hartford, WI 53027  
262/673-7200  
www.snowway.com

**Southford Truck Equipppers**

PO Box 174  
Southbury, CT 06488  
203/267-6337  
www.southford.com

**Swede-Attach**

PO Box 732  
Harwich, MA 02645  
508/430-8079

**Swenson Spreader**

PO Box 127  
Lindenwood, IL 61049  
888/825-7323  
www.swensonspreader.com

**TruckCraft**

5751 Molly Pitcher Hwy S.  
Chambersburg, PA 17201  
800/755-3867  
www.truckcraft.com

**TrynEx  
International**

23455 Regency Park Dr.  
Warren, MI 48089  
800/725-8377

**Western Products**

7777 N. 73rd. St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53223  
414/354-2310  
www.westernplows.com

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Snow Business attempted to contact and include all manufacturers of hopper spreaders and tailgate spreaders. A company's inclusion or exclusion in this guide should not be viewed as a comment on its products. Industry products such as snow throwers and ice melters will be featured in upcoming issues.

## HOPPER SPREADERS

| MODEL                                 | MOUNTS ON:                             | MADE OF:   | DESIGNED FOR:                      | CONVEYOR      | SPINNER     |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b>BOSS</b>                           |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| 7 ft.                                 | 3/4- or 1-ton pickup                   | 12-gauge steel                                       | Sand and salt                      | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| 8 ft.                                 | 1-ton pickup, flatbed or dump          | 12-gauge steel                                       | Sand and salt                      | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| 10 ft.                                | 15,000 GVW truck                       | 12-gauge steel                                       | Sand and salt                      | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| <b>CURTIS TRACTOR CAB, INC.</b>       |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| TS-17                                 | Pickup                                 | N/A  | N/A                                | 13 inches     | N/A         |
| <b>DOWNEASTER (COASTAL METAL FAB)</b> |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| 2 ft. Electric                        | N/A                                    | 16-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel        | Sand and salt                      | 12 inches     | N/A         |
| 4 ft. Electric                        | N/A                                    | 16-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel        | Sand and salt                      | 12 inches     | N/A         |
| 8 ft. Electric                        | N/A                                    | 14-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel        | Sand and salt                      | 12 inches     | N/A         |
| 8 ft. (gas & hyd)                     | N/A                                    | 12-gauge steel or<br>14- or 16-gauge stainless steel | Sand and salt                      | 14 inches     | N/A         |
| 9 ft. (gas & hyd)                     | N/A                                    | 12-gauge steel or<br>14-gauge stainless steel        | Sand and salt                      | 14 inches     | N/A         |
| 10 ft. (gas & hyd)                    | N/A                                    | 12- or 13-gauge steel or<br>14-gauge stainless steel | Sand and salt                      | 14 inches     | N/A         |
| 10 ft. Hydraulic                      | N/A                                    | 10-gauge steel or<br>12-gauge stainless steel        | Sand and salt                      | 24 inches     | N/A         |
| <b>FISHER ENGINEERING</b>             |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| 7 ft.                                 | 3/4- and 1-ton pickup                  | 12-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel        | N/A                                | 12 inches     | 12 inches   |
| 8 ft.                                 | 3/4- and 1-ton pickup                  | 12-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel        | N/A                                | 12 inches     | 12 inches   |
| 8 ft. HC                              | Dump, platform                         | 12-gauge steel or stainless                          | N/A                                | 16 inches     | 14.5 inches |
| 10 ft. HC                             | Dump, platform                         | 12-gauge steel or stainless                          | N/A                                | 16 inches     | 14.5 inches |
| <b>FLINK COMPANY</b>                  |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| LMC 5 Series,                         | Chassis or dump                        | Stainless steel & steel                              | N/A                                | 24 inches     | 20 inches   |
| LMC 5H Series                         | Chassis or dump                        | Stainless steel & steel                              | N/A                                | 24 inches     | 20 inches   |
| FM                                    | Pickup, 1-ton, super duty              | Stainless steel & steel                              | N/A                                | 16.5 inches   | 14 inches   |
| 8609, 8610                            | Dump body                              | Stainless steel & steel                              | N/A                                | 19 inches     | 18 inches   |
| <b>HENDERSON MANUFACTURING</b>        |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| FSH-I, FSH-II,<br>FSH-III             | Chassis, dump                          | 10-gauge steel                                       | Sand and salt                      | Chain         | 20 inches   |
| FSP                                   | Pickup and utility duty<br>dump trucks | 14-gauge steel                                       | Sand and salt                      | Chain         | 12 inches   |
| <b>HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT COMPANY</b>      |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| E2020XT                               | Dump body, truck chassis               | Steel, carbon steel,<br>304 or 409 stainless steel   | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| E3020                                 | Dump body, truck chassis               | Steel, carbon steel,<br>304 or 409 stainless steel   | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| 500 Series                            | Dump body, truck chassis               | N/A  | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| Model P                               | 3/4-ton or larger pickup               | Stainless steel                                      | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| Super P                               | Flatbed truck                          | N/A  | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| Do-AI                                 | Dump body, truck chassis               | Steel  | Sand and salt                      | N/A           | N/A         |
| <b>HINKER COMPANY</b>                 |  |  |                                    |               |             |
| 810, 850                              | Full-size & 1-ton pickup               | 12-gauge mild steel                                  | Sand, salt and<br>granular deicers | 14-inch chain | 12 inches   |

| MODEL  | MOUNTS ON:         | MADE OF:                                      | DESIGNED FOR:     | CONVEYOR      | SPINNER     |
|--|--------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b>MEYER PRODUCTS</b>                        |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| Insert 1.8 & 2.0                             | Pickup             | 12-gauge steel, or<br>304 stainless steel     | Sand and salt     | Chain         | N/A         |
| MDV  | 1-ton dump         | 12-gauge steel, or<br>304 stainless steel     | Sand and salt     | N/A           | N/A         |
| <b>SNOW-WAY INTERNATIONAL</b>                |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| 5 ft., 6ft. and 8 ft.                        | Pickup             | Steel or stainless steel                      | Sand and salt     | Chain         | N/A         |
| 8 ft. Dump Truck                             | Dump, platform     | Steel or stainless steel                      | Sand and salt     | Chain         | N/A         |
| <b>SOUTHFORD TRUCK EQUIPPERS (ICE-O-WAY)</b> |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| PS8014                                       | Pickup             | Steel   | Sand and salt     | Chain         | 14 inches   |
| TS0927                                       | 1-ton truck        | Steel   | Sand and salt     | Chain         | 14 inches   |
| TS1030                                       | 2-ton truck        | Steel   | Sand and salt     | Chain         | 14 inches   |
| <b>SWEDE-ATTACH</b>                          |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| DS-110                                       | 3 pt. tractor      | Galvanized steel                              | Sand, topdressing | Drop spreader | N/A         |
| DS-130/150                                   | Skidsteer          | Galvanized steel                              | Sand, topdressing | Drop spreader | N/A         |
| DS-1304                                      | Rear 3 pt. tractor | Galvanized steel                              | Sand, topdressing | Drop spreader | N/A         |
| <b>SWENSON SPREADER</b>                      |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| PV Series (7-10 ft.)                         | Pickup             | 12-gauge steel                                | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| MDV-840 (8 ft.)                              | Pickup             | 12-gauge steel                                | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| MDV-940 (9ft.)                               | 15,000 GVW         | 12-gauge steel                                | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| MDV-1040 (10ft.)                             | 20,000 GVW         | 12-gauge steel                                | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 13 inches   |
| <b>WESTERN PRODUCTS</b>                      |                    |   |                   |               |             |
| 7 ft.  | Pickup             | 12-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel | Sand and salt     | N/A           | N/A         |
| 8 ft. (gas & hyd)                            | Pickup             | 12-gauge steel or<br>16-gauge stainless steel | Sand and salt     | 12 inches     | 12 inches   |
| 8 ft. HC (gas & hyd)                         | Dump, platform     | 12-gauge steel                                | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 14.5 inches |
| 10 ft. (gas & hyd)                           | Dump, platform     | 12-gauge steel or<br>12-gauge stainless steel | Sand and salt     | 16 inches     | 14.5 inches |

## TAILGATE SPREADERS

|                                 |                     |                                |  |       |             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------|-------------|
| <b>CURTIS TRACTOR CAB, INC.</b> |                     |                                |  |       |             |
| Fast-Cast 2000                  | Pickup              | Steel frame,<br>polymer hopper | Salt, deicers and<br>free flowing material | N/A   | N/A         |
| Fast-Cast 3000                  | Pickup              | Steel frame,<br>polymer hopper | Salt, deicers and<br>free flowing material | N/A   | N/A         |
| Fast-Cast 4000                  | Pickup              | Steel frame,<br>polymer hopper | Sand or salt/sand mix                      | N/A   | N/A         |
| <b>E-Z DUMPER</b>               |                     |                                |  |       |             |
| E-Z Dumper                      | Pickup              | 12-gauge steel                 | Sand and salt                              | Auger | N/A         |
| <b>FISHER ENGINEERING</b>       |                     |                                |  |       |             |
| Speedcaster                     | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                   | Salt                                       | N/A   | 15 inches   |
| Speedcaster 2                   | ¾-ton, 1-ton trucks | Polyethylene                   | Sand and salt                              | N/A   | 14.5 inches |
| Low Profile 1000                | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                   | Salt                                       | N/A   | 10 inches   |
| Low Profile 2000                | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                   | Salt                                       | N/A   | 10 inches   |

# BUYERS' GUIDE

| MODEL                            | MOUNTS ON:  | MADE OF:                            | DESIGNED FOR:                          | CONVEYOR                       | SPINNER                     |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>FLINK COMPANY</b>             |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| VCT 11 & 12                      | Dump body   | 7-gauge steel                       | Sand and salt                          | 6-inch auger                   | 18-inch poly                |
| VCT 13                           | Dump body   | 7-gauge steel                       | Salt, chloride, cinders                | Twin 4-inch augers             | 18-inch poly                |
| VCT 20                           | 1-ton dump body   | 7-gauge steel                       | Sand and salt                          | 6-inch auger                   | 18-inch poly                |
| VCT 90                           | Dump body   | 7-gauge steel                       | Granular material                      | 9-inch auger                   | 18-inch poly                |
| RF 8, RFH 8                      | Dump body   | 7-gauge steel                       | Granular material                      | 96-inch roll spreader          | 96-inch roll                |
| HD-6                             | Dump body tailgate  | Various steel                       | Ice control, seal coat                 | Full-width agitator            | Full-width agitator         |
| <b>HENDERSON MANUFACTURING</b>   |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| TGS 6 ft.                        | Dump  | Mild or stainless steel             | Sand and salt                          | Hydraulic 6-inch driven augers | 18-inch hydraulic spinners  |
| TGS 9 ft.                        | Dump  | Mild or stainless steel             | Sand and salt                          | Hydraulic 9-inch driven augers | 18-inch hydraulic spinners  |
| <b>HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT COMPANY</b> |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| SA-6, SA-9                       | Dump  | N/A                                 | Sand and salt                          | 9-inch auger                   | 18-inch poly                |
| <b>HINIKER COMPANY</b>           |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| 236                              | 8-foot wide dump body   | Mild steel                          | Salt, sand and other granular deicers  | Cross auger                    | 18-inch poly, steel         |
| <b>MEYER PRODUCTS</b>            |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| Mini & Mini Jr.                  | Pickup  | Thermoplastic                       | N/A                                    | N/A                            | N/A                         |
| EZ-Flow                          | Pickup  | N/A                                 | N/A                                    | N/A                            | N/A                         |
| Under Tailgate                   | Dump  | Stainless steel                     | Sand, salt or free flowing material    | 6-inch auger                   | 18-inch poly                |
| <b>SNO-WAY INTERNATIONAL</b>     |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| Opta-Flow                        | Pickup  | Poly hopper                         | Salt                                   | Drop, with gates               | Stainless steel             |
| <b>SWENSON SPREADER</b>          |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| S Series                         | 1-ton and large dump trucks                                   | 304 stainless steel or carbon steel | Sand and salt                          | 4-, 6- and 9-inch augers       | 18-inch poly                |
| STCC                             | 1-ton and large   | 304 stainless steel                 | Sand and salt                          | 18 inches                      | N/A                         |
| QTJ                              | 1-ton   | 304 stainless steel or carbon steel | Sand and salt                          | Auger                          | 18-inch poly                |
| <b>TRUCKCRAFT</b>                |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| TC-130                           | Pickup dumpers  | Aluminum                            | Sand and salt                          | 6-inch stainless steel auger   | 12-inch stainless           |
| TC-140                           | 1-ton dumps   | Aluminum                            | Sand and salt                          | 6-inch stainless steel auger   | 12-inch stainless           |
| <b>TRYNEX INTERNATIONAL</b>      |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| SnowEx Mini (Pro SP-575)         | Standard receiver hitch, utility mount and three-point hitch  | Polymer                             | Sand, salt and other deicing materials | Flighted auger                 | 10-inch steel               |
| SnowEx Pivot (Pro SP-1075)       | ¾- to 1-ton pickups, 1-ton stake trucks, dump trucks and SUVs | Polymer                             | Sand, salt and other deicing materials | Flighted auger                 | 10-inch steel               |
| SnowEx Sand (Pro SP-1875)        | Trucks and SUVs   | Polymer                             | Sand, salt and other deicing materials | 2-stage auger                  | 12-inch powder-coated steel |
| <b>WESTERN PRODUCTS</b>          |   |                                     |  |                                |                             |
| Pro-Flo                          | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                        | Salt                                   | N/A                            | 15 inches                   |
| Pro-Flo 2                        | ¾-ton, 1-ton  | Polyethylene                        | Sand and salt                          | N/A                            | 14.5 inches                 |
| Low Profile 1000                 | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                        | Salt                                   | N/A                            | 10 inches                   |
| Low Profile 2000                 | Full-size pickups   | Polyethylene                        | Salt                                   | N/A                            | 10 inches                   |

## NEW POWER ANGLE SUV PLOW FROM SNOWMAN

- Sport utility pull plow for sport utility vehicle, downsize to full size, 2/4 WD trucks
- Power angle for positioning the snow without a front-mounted snow plow
- Easy on/off hook-up to the vehicle's 2-inch square receiver hitch
- Dual spring down pressure for a cleaner surface
- Trip springs to protect vehicle and plow
- Built with six reinforcing steel ribs welded to 12-gauge steel moldboard
- Moldboard height is 23 inches for larger capacity plowing and comes in 6½- and 7½-foot blade widths



- High lift for effectiveness in deep snow
- Available in red or yellow

Circle 1 on reader service card

## JOHN DEERE WALK-BEHIND SNOW BLOWERS

- New 2000/2001 walk-behind line up features four new dual-stage models (924DE, 1128DE, 1128DDE and 1332DDE)



- Features a Tecumseh overhead-valve engine that improves fuel economy by 30 percent
- Standard electric start, primer-assist carburetor and a premium ignition that gives hotter spark at low rpm
- Backup recoil starter with large mitten grip handle
- Each model fit with muffler guard and reversible skid shoes

Circle 2 on reader service card

## SWEEPSTER AH MODEL HYDRAULIC POWER SWEEPER

- Comes equipped with a 6-foot-wide, 32-inch diameter sectional brush
- Polypropylene, crimped wire or poly/wire combination bristles available
- Powered by single or dual motor hydraulic system controlled from operator's seat
- Features hydraulic angle change of 30 degrees left or right
- Options include a 7-foot brush, dirt deflector, storage stands, sprinkler system and sight indicators

Circle 3 on reader service card



# NOVEMBER PRODUCTS



## PRO Ice-melter for professionals...

- Safe, quick acting, long lasting
- Effective to -12° F
- Smaller, consistent particle sizing for superior coverage and safety
- Safer for children, pets, concrete, lawns, plants, carpet and the environment

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## MONROE SNOW BULLY LOADER BUCKET

- Designed to clamp onto an existing articulated loader, backhoe or skid-steer loader bucket with standard, customer-supplied chain binders
  - Sizes available range from 10 feet to 30 feet wide
  - Adjustable rubber cutting edge, which provides a road cleaning "squeegee effect," particularly under slushy or melting conditions
  - Features replaceable endgate skid shoes, gusseted endgates, full continuous welding and electrostatically applied powder coat yellow paint
- Circle 4 on reader service card**

## SNOW WOLF SKID STEER SNOW PLOW ATTACHMENT

- Seven widths from 6 to 9 feet
  - Dual pivot, A-frame construction
  - Full down pressure
  - Spring-loaded trip edge
  - Blade angled to scoop snow rather than push it
  - Soft touch cutting edge can be used for sensitive areas, such as paving stones
- Circle 5 on reader service card**



## WOODS NEW SNOWSHOOTER SNOWBLOWERS

- New Snowshooter line (SS52, SS60 and SS74) features improved throwing and flow capacity
  - Three-blade, fan paddle design
  - Diameter of 23 inches and 1/4-inch thick blades
  - Powerful 1:1 input/output gearbox
  - Height of 30 inches
  - Heavy ribbon-type feeder augers ensure high performance in various snow types
- Circle 6 on reader service card**



# ICE BAN<sup>®</sup>

## De-icing & Anti-icing Products are Environmentally Friendly



**Biodegradable**



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**Non-Toxic**



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## LESCO INTRODUCES ICE-MELT PRODUCT

- Effective to 0 F
- Formulated to minimize damage to plant material and paved surfaces



- Packaged in 50-pound containers, offers quick action combined with extended effectiveness
- Melting capabilities allows use for a wide variety of winter applications.

Circle 7 on reader service card

## NEW SNOWEX MICRO PRO 375 SPREADER

- Heavy duty material flow gate
- Standard with 10-foot control cable and optional 20-foot cable



- Maximum torque transmission and low-maintenance engineering

- Low-maintenance, 12-volt DC direct-drive system with minimal moving parts and no belts, pulleys or chains

Circle 8 on reader service card

## KUBOTA TG FRONT BLADE SNOW PLOW

- Compatible with all TG Series tractors
- Quick attach design compatible with TG2746 using TG2739Q quick hitch
- Cutting width of 54 inches, 18½ inches high
- Manual blade angle adjustment, 0 to 30 degrees left and right
- Standard trip spring
- Replaceable skid shoe/cutting edge

Circle 9 on reader service card

# SIMA

Snow & Ice Management Association, Inc.

- Looking for information on improving your snow and ice control business?
- Looking to network with contractors dealing with the same winter challenges as you?

The Snow & Ice Management Association is the group for you.

*SIMA's mission is to provide a network of resources and information to its members in the snow and ice industry and to promote ethical, efficient and environmentally sound risk management.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

...on joining the association or on its annual Snow & Ice Management Symposium, contact SIMA at 814/456-9550 or check it out on the web at <http://www.sima.org>.

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- Eliminate back dragging & turn around time
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- Power Down - scrapes cleaner
- The industry's only Spring-Trip action pull plow
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## NEW PRODUCTS

### NEW STRAIGHT-BLADE PLOW FROM BOSS

- New 10-foot straight-blade plow designed for medium-duty trucks
- The 34½-inch high moldboard is made of 7-gauge steel
- More pronounced blade curl promotes improved snow-rolling capability
- Plow blade features full moldboard trip design with two shock absorbers to stabilize forward and reverse movement
- Diagonal cross bracing and a boxed-in moldboard added to minimize plow blade twisting
- Comes standard with RT3 quick hitch system for easy attachment
- SmartHitch system available as an option

Circle 10 on reader service card

### MEYER MD II SNOW PLOW MOUNTING SYSTEM

- Both a one- and two-piece unit
- Features dual, independent lift chains
- Adjustable light brackets allow Nite Saber snow plow lights to be raised or lowered
- Standard lift cover to protect hydraulic unit
- Incorporates 1-inch, spring-loaded stainless steel attaching pins with rubber-coated, full-size handles

Circle 11 on reader service card

SB



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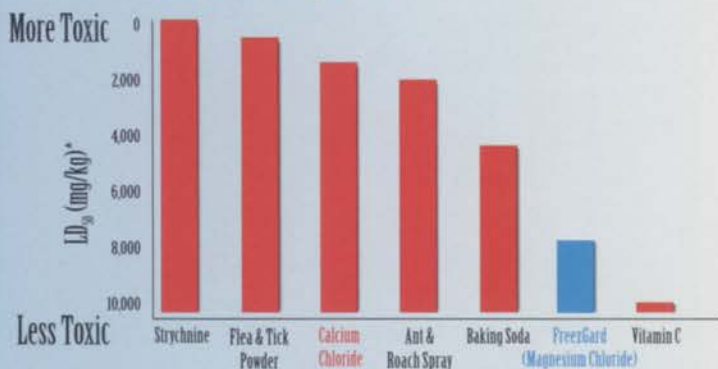
# How Safe Is Your Ice Melter?

Melting the ice. It's your responsibility. So are the side effects. That's why so many people choose FreezGard<sup>®</sup>, a magnesium chloride melter that's tough on ice (melts to -25° F), easy on the environment, and safe around people, pets and wildlife.

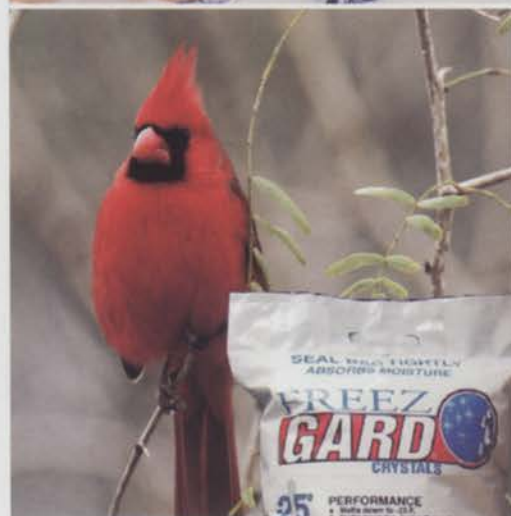
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USE READER SERVICE #12

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LET IT SNOW  
LET IT SNOW  
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USE READER SERVICE #55

## Franchises

(continued from page 92)

Formerly account business managers for a large corporation, both have administrative skills, but neither has experience handling small business-centered issues.

"We're used to following corporate direction and getting that paycheck guaranteed," Stadstad added. "Now, all of a sudden, we're business owners and we have to make that paycheck."

Both men realized that along with a brand name, they purchased peace of mind in knowing a parent company sets up systems and checks on progress, they said. The dotting "parent" also passes on purchasing clout. Franchisers arrange national accounts for items including uniforms, vans, equipment, marketing materials and fertilizer. Also, a central purchasing department eliminates the need for franchises to deal with delivery and price negotiations, Loeb added.

"If you talk to a business owner, he probably spends an enormous amount of time tracking down prices and delivery," he reported. "If we can remove that element of time so that they can concentrate on marketing their business, we position them to maximize their return."

Walter Wright, owner, U.S. Lawns of East Broward, Fla., estimated he saved 15 to 25 percent on equipment due to factory-direct prices he pays. Franchisees then can allot these savings to higher employee pay or improved marketing efforts.

Bulk rates go beyond supplies. Generally, corporate franchisers are affiliated with a financial institution that manages their banking, so franchises can obtain term loans, leases and credit lines, Loeb noted.

Franchise owners also boast the technological benefits including electronic research and training tools that upgrade company efficiency, Albrecht stressed.

Besides the economies franchisers offer, wearing a logo linked to success and consulting a network of non-competing industry members for advice and feedback garnishes a franchise purchase, noted Russell Frith, president, Lawn Doctor, Holmdel, N.J.

"The recognition and identification of a powerful national brand - our logo has been used in McGraw Hill's publication of examples of excellent trademarks," he noted. "Also, franchises provide a forum for people in the same business to talk candidly because

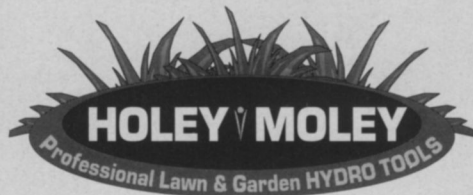
(continued on page 151)



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USE READER SERVICE #102

by Neil Cleveland

*Lawn care operators are controlling insects before they become a problem by using a precautionary approach.*

# Preventive INTERVENTION

**W**hen a pest called the hemlock woolly adelgid began devastating hemlock trees in Northeast states a few years ago, Bob Kandratavich stepped up efforts to sell preventive maintenance to his tree and shrub customers. Kandratavich, sales manager for Tomlinson-Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape, Lancaster, Pa., tells his customers protecting their landscape plantings is far less expensive than replacing them.

"A 60-foot-tall hemlock tree is something you actually cannot replace," Kandratavich said. "Putting in a 20-foot hemlock might cost you \$3,000. Knowing that, are you going to spend \$100 to \$150 to treat the tree? Sure you are. All hemlock trees [in

our area] are susceptible to this pest, and if you don't start treating them now, the trees will die within the next five years."

In his area, borers attack birch and redbud trees, Japanese beetles plague purple leaf plums, lace bugs ravage azaleas and oak trees suffer from an iron deficiency. All require preventive intervention. "We look at the individual plants that make up a landscape and create a program based on them," Kandratavich added. "Preventive treatments start in March and continue on a monthly basis through November."

After Tomlinson-Bomberger completes a landscape installation, the company automatically proposes a preventive maintenance plan. For existing lawn care customers, the company periodically sends flyers offering various landscape maintenance services. "When they respond to the flyer,

*(continued on page 96)*

*Communicating with customers about the benefits of preventive services helps them understand the potential cost savings involved.*

*Photo: L&L staff*

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USE READER SERVICE #57

## Preventive Control

(continued from page 94)

we like to make an appointment to go out and evaluate their property," commented Kandratavich. "Our closure rate is much higher with an appointment. But, either way, we go out to evaluate the property and leave an appropriate estimate."

**PREVENTIVE GRUB CONTROL.** Though preventive maintenance for lawn care customers is fairly standard in terms of preemergence weed-control applications, not all customers sign up for preventive insect control. In central Illinois, Jack Robertson emphasizes preventive grub control as a major part of his turf management program. "We have very high populations of annual white grubs in this area," said the owner of Robertson Lawn Care, Springfield. "It's our primary pest on lawns."

Robertson's standard program includes five visits each year, with an optional grub control application. He recommends the treatment to customers with turf susceptible

*White grubs can cause such significant damage to lawns that many turf professionals focus on getting their customers to subscribe to a preventive approach.*

*Photo: David Shetlar*

to grub infestation – especially those on the outer edges of town, adjacent to agricultural land. Other than thin lawns or those under dense shade, Robertson said most turf in the area is susceptible to grubs.

"The vast majority of our customers choose to take preventive grub control," noted Robertson, whose company services 95 percent residential and 5 percent commercial accounts. "Grubs are our No. 1 reason for an angry customer. A lawn may go through the



whole summer with disease and drought stress, but as soon as they see those grubs in September, everything gets blamed on the insects. A preventive application of a residual grub control product keeps everybody happy."

(continued on page 98)

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**USE READER SERVICE #58**

## Preventive Control

(continued from page 96)

To promote the grub control treatment, Robertson sends out flyers in the spring and fall, attempting to educate customers about grub damage. He doesn't advise clients to adopt a curative approach for grubs. "We cannot inspect every lawn on peak grub-damage day," he explained. "If we did go out and show customers the big, ugly grubs, we'd create a negative situation. Most of our customers are very much aware of the damage grubs can do. We have much better insecticides to use today than we've ever had before. With that in mind, the customers approve of a preventive application."

**VALUE OF EDUCATION.** Munie Outdoor Services, Caseyville, Ill., sells preventive maintenance through newsletters, door hangers and spot evaluations. "Most people will grasp the value of preventive treatments if you can get the information to them," observed Rich Moffitt, vice president of operations. "The idea is to educate them."

By tailoring preventive applications to specific lawns and plants, Munie keeps treatments to a minimum. "We're in the transition zone where weather conditions change on a daily basis," said Moffitt, adding that the company focuses on selling preventive treatments to customers with a history of damage. "We have different levels of programs and our deluxe lawn care program includes preventive grub control."

Mites and scale are a problem on many landscape plants and trees in the St. Louis area. In their preventive applications for scale, Munie sprays most plants, with the exception of maples, depending on the product label. "We try to keep insects in check because they can really do damage when conditions are hot and plants are stressed," Moffitt added. "We use an early dormant oil

Though preventive maintenance for lawn care customers is fairly standard in terms of preemergence weed control applications, not all customers sign up for preventive insect control.

treatment and follow up with combinations of insecticides, fungicides and miticides on trees and shrubs."

**FASTEST-GROWING PROGRAM.** According to Kandratavich, his company's tree and shrub maintenance program is its fastest growing area. Recent innovations in pesticide chemistry and changes in application

(continued on page 98)

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## Preventive Control

(continued from page 98)

technology simplify fall preventive treatment applications that will protect the tree throughout the growing season. For his company, soil injection is quickly becoming the new standard for preventive maintenance, Kandratavich added.

"Now, instead of having to work within

a narrow application window, we can treat the tree at our convenience," Kandratavich related. "This creates new opportunities for us. We're not bothering people during the season, and we can make the treatment when it fits our schedule. That's a big benefit for us. Take the hemlock woolly adelgid prob-


lem, for example. Previously, we would have had to carry a lot of pesticide because we are treating very large trees. Now, we can treat the pest with soil injection. This gives us two advantages – we don't have to worry about pesticide drift, and we don't have to carry as much material."

Preventive maintenance is becoming increasingly common in more temperate areas of the country, as well as eastern and midwestern states. In Florida, Joe Williams observed that more than 50 percent of his customers opt for ornamental and turf maintenance. His company, Lawn Master, based in Pensacola, offers a standard program of three ornamental applications each year. "We don't apply a pesticide unless there's a pest to be managed," he said. "But we know when and where those pests will be a problem, so we treat on a preventive basis."

### PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE MEASURES.

Williams has encountered numerous lace bugs on azaleas lately, which are becoming a key problem in north Florida ornamental plantings. He tries to control them before they hatch. "Preventive treatments help us with our scheduling," he explained. "We know what problems to expect and when we'll be spraying. I think offering preventive applications makes you a better company. You become proactive rather than reactive."

Jim Wanland agrees. As pest control manager at Western Arborists in Pasadena, Calif., Wanland tells his customers he can control their insect problems with two preventive applications each year. The alternative is multiple visits and higher costs. "If the insect is allowed to run rampant for a few years, it takes a while to get it in check," noted Wanland.

Red gum lerp psyllid on red gum eucalyptus trees is a major problem in California. Western Arborists offers a soil injection treatment that protects trees throughout the season. "This is a big enough problem that people can see the damage and know they need help," added Wanland. "With a preventive program, customers see a minimum amount of damage. That way, everybody's happy. The guy paying the bill is happy, and we're happy because we have a repeat customer." 

*The author is turf and ornamental brand manager, Bayer Corp., Kansas City, Mo.*

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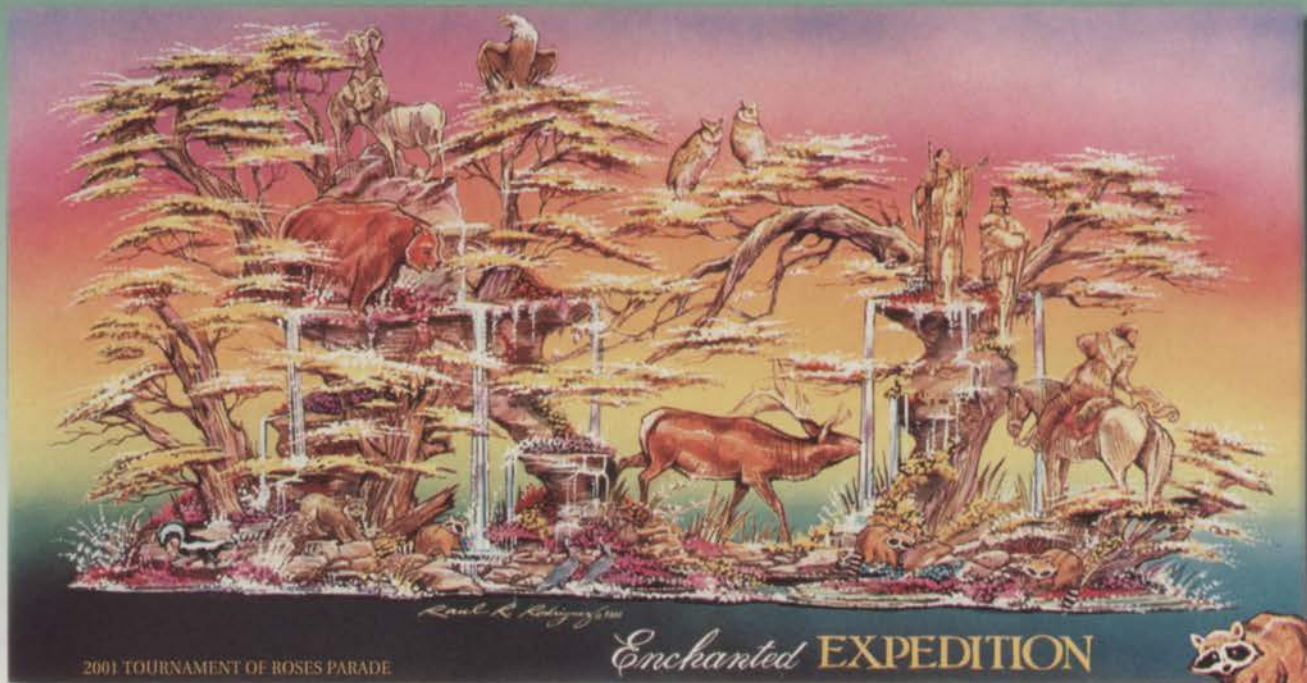
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**USE READER SERVICE #86**

by John C. Fech

# LANDSCAPE Revival

*Altering the aesthetics of a commercial or residential property through renovation can please customers and increase profit.*



**B**elieve it or not, most landscapes require renovation. This may sound drastic, but if you ask your

commercial and residential customers if there are certain aspects they would like to change about their landscapes – at least on some level – you’ll find out it’s true.

So, instead of lamenting over the possible changes, contractors can benefit by turning their project into profit. Every phase of the renovation process has promising potential for income.

**THE AUDIT.** A landscape renovation can be simple or thorough. When all is said and done, the process could simply involve moving a shrub or ornamental grass to another site because it is too tall and blocks a view or it needs more sun. The goal of a renovation is to achieve a sustainable landscape – one that is both aesthetically pleasing and easy to maintain. The first step of a renovation is the landscape audit.

Landscape installation is not the only industry segment that requires an audit prior to renovation. Irrigation contractors do audits on newly installed irrigation systems. Wise customers request audits on aging irrigation systems to increase efficiency and conserve water.

The audit is comprised of two parts: inventory and analysis. The inventory lists the condition of each landscape plant being considered in the project. To calculate inventory, use a map or sketch of the property to facilitate the documentation of the flaws and desirable attributes of each plant. Then, draw a circle or oval for each plant and write simple notes about the condition. Short

*(continued on page 104)*

*A proper site analysis, including identifying the function of the landscape space, needs to be done before a renovation is completed.  
Photo: Mary Buck*

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## Landscape Renovation

(continued from page 102)

phrases such as "thin and leggy" or "heavy scale infestation" will be very useful when deciding whether or not the plant should remain in the landscape. Begin at one end of the landscape, making notes about the size, shape, health, species, color and location of each plant.

Recording notes with a colleague will

*This landscape (right) is a good example of separating ornamentals from turf. When the materials are planted together, their specific needs are compromised. Photo: John C. Fech*



create a more objective assessment. Additional assistance with inventory can generate replacement plant ideas.

An analysis is more subjective – it's the process of actually assigning a value judgment to the plants in the landscape and determining how well they meet the goals outlined by the client and initial landscape designer or architect. When the landscape was originally installed, analysis may not have been done. However, at this point it is not too late to conduct preventative measures to eliminate future problems.

To begin the analysis, lay a sheet of tracing paper or an overhead transparency over the inventory map. Use the information showing through from the inventory to reflect on the purposes of the plants in the landscape. Write a new set of notes on the top sheet relating to the notes underneath. Where the inventory indicates "thin and leggy," the analysis could read, "remove lilacs and replace with bottlebrush buckeye" or "prune overhead trees to allow more light penetration."

An effective site analysis considers soil, wind, sun exposure, water availability, drainage and neighboring landscapes. All of these factors affect the potential success or failure of the project. Also, interviewing your client's neighbors can be helpful. An observant, long-term neighbor can be very helpful in remembering events or situations that the current owner has forgotten. Being told that a fire ravaged the south side of the building 10 years ago, that the third owner of the property had an uncle in the gypsum business and applied it continually to the turf or that the site used to be a gas station, can be helpful when conducting a site analysis.

In the analysis, also consider the landscape's objective. The function of the landscape will affect the renovation process. In many cases, the inventory and analysis indicates a much greater level of traffic flow through the landscape than originally planned for, especially in commercial set-

(continued on page 106)

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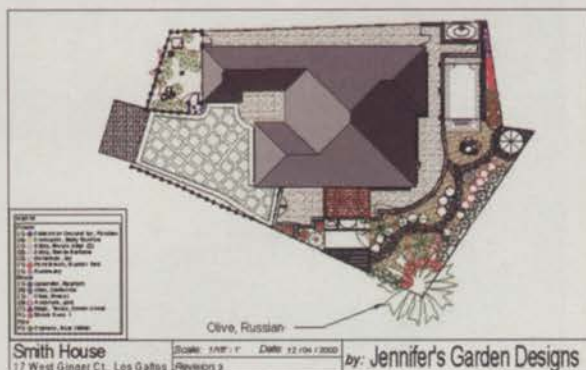


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USE READER SERVICE #132

## Landscape Renovation

(continued from page 104)

tings. Plant material that has grown too large is also a common occurrence.

Work with the client to match the site's level of maintenance to their desire for time and money to be spent. Insurance buildings, professional offices and estates tend to be high maintenance areas, whereas school grounds, commons areas and residential sites are low maintenance. Your job as landscape renovator is to evaluate the owner's needs and suggest maintenance changes. These factors dictate the types of plant material chosen for the project.

Separate ornamentals from turf. One common problem contractors encounter in most landscape renovations is the need to separate these two components. These categories of plant material are very different. In general, turf requires more water, fertilizer and care than ornamentals. When they are collocated, their needs are compromised. When trees are placed in the middle of a thin turf strip, they receive more fertilizer and water

*This landscape (right) is a bad example of merging trees and turf. Turf requires more fertilizer and water, and trees and ornamentals cannot handle that amount.*

*Photo: John C. Fech*



than desirable, leading to rotting roots, oversucculent leaf growth and susceptibility to pest infestations.

Simply remove the trees and draw a new bed line for the ornamental plants. This will create a mass of turf. A large, uninterrupted piece of turf can be a very powerful statement in a landscape, especially when bordered by a clean bedline and well-groomed ornamentals of various levels and heights. This is the classic example of "mass/void," where the ornamentals are the mass and the turf is the void. Such landscapes are attractive because of the sharp contrast drawn by

the two types of plant materials placed next to one another. A landscape utilizing mass/void will be functional as well. Traffic is facilitated easily and routed through the space, as opposed to a mixed landscape where pedestrians can be forced to change course several times.

Replacing the turf growing under the trees with a ground cover or some sort of plant that requires less sun, fertilizer and water creates a less drastic approach. Stepping stones or slate pieces can be installed to allow for movement through the landscape space. Again,

(continued on page 108)

**Ron Sansone knows the value of a Ramrod on his landscaping & contracting crews**

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## Landscape Renovation

(continued from page 106)

the site inventory and analysis can help identify plant material that grows under trees.

**CONSIDER EVENTUAL SIZE.** As simple as it sounds, considering the eventual size – the width and height of the plants – is an important part of landscape renovation. This is a commonly violated principle, either out

of laziness, ignorance or a desire for the landscape contractor or designer to immediately impress the client. Plant material placed too close together on a site is quite attractive for the first two growing seasons, but soon become compressed and develop fungal diseases due to restricted airflow through the leaf canopies.

Every phase of

the renovation

process has promising

potential for income.

Reviewing notes from the audit will indicate potential spacing problems. Adding similar or contrasting plants can provide the property owner with a more finished look. In crowded situations, remove certain plants to allow the landscape to mature.

### CHOOSE REPLACEMENT PLANTS LAST.

In most renovations, plants are selected and installed to replace ailing or overgrown specimens. This is one of the last phases of the renovation project, not the first. Be sure to choose the plants based on the needs of the owner and the conditions of the site. Avoid the temptation to use favorite plant materials or whatever your supplier has in excess at the time. Sure, the price is right, but the plant may be wrong.

To avoid mistakes when choosing plants, refer to the clipboard, and use a transparent third layer over the top of the first two. Start by drawing a basic shape of a plant – a circle, oval or oblong mass – and then define it with a plant category name. Write in “tall upright evergreen” or “mass of three leafy shrubs” to describe the plant shapes. Don’t be afraid to allow some of the plant masses to overlap a bit. After all, in the real landscape, this is the way they will look, especially if the customer desires layered plants.

After the plant masses are sketched, a fourth transparent layer can be used to identify options that will fit the category of plant material outlined. This is the phase of the renovation where “mass of three leafy shrubs with fall color” turns into “juddi viburnum.”

**FINAL PHASE.** As with any project, the final phase is the evaluation. Even the best landscape renovation may need to be reworked, depending on the accuracy of the audit, inventory, analysis and client goals.

Evaluation is key to serving the client’s needs and honing your landscape skills. Learning from your mistakes, communicating with clients and interpreting job sites are essential elements to producing a quality landscape renovation. **LL**

The author is an extension educator with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.



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## Indianapolis Overview

by Patrick McGill

Landscape  
professionals  
in Indiana's  
capitol ride  
the national  
wave of  
prosperity.

"The city is on fire," said Bob Andrews, president of The Greenskeeper, Carmel, Ind. He's referring to Indianapolis, the rapidly growing capital of Indiana.

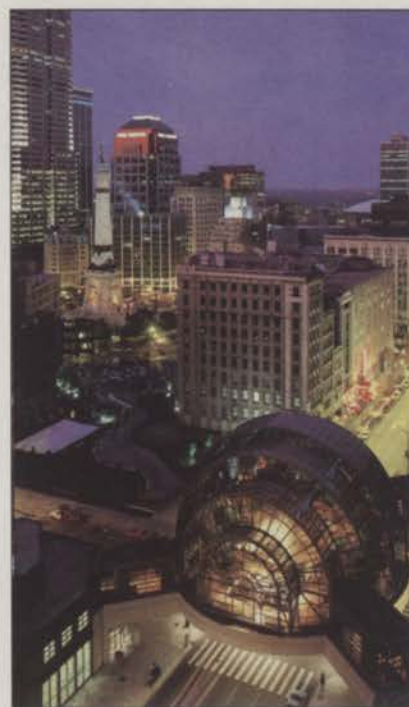
While many people picture racing cars and basketball, the city is more than that. As one of the 15 most populous cities in the country, Indianapolis is home to many high-tech and healthcare concerns, in addition to traditional manufacturing roots. The metropolitan area is home to one of the wealthiest and fastest growing suburban counties in the nation, Hamilton, located on the city's northeast side.

This growth is good news for area landscape contractors. While there are many variables, such as the economic climate, that affect the growth prospects of your business, other considerations include population growth, household and income trends and employment rates. These factors contribute to the overall health and success of a metropolitan area and the ability of its citizens to utilize lawn and landscape services.

**POPULATION TRENDS.** Population growth rate can indicate a city's potential customer base. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is comprised of nine counties in the center of Indiana. Marion County, with about half of the population of the MSA, serves as the hub from which the eight remaining counties in the region radiate: Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Morgan and Shelby.

From 1990 to 1999, the Indianapolis MSA population grew 10 percent enveloping more than 1.5 million people. This growth outpaced other large metropolitan regions in the Midwest - matched only by Columbus, Ohio.

The MSA population growth masks impressive growth in individual counties. Hamilton County has grown nearly 40 percent since 1990. In fact, the city of



Photos: Indianapolis  
Convention and  
Visitors Bureau

(continued on page 112)

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## Indianapolis Overview

(continued from page 110)

Fishers is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, rising from just 2,000 citizens in 1980 to an estimated 40,000 citizens today. Other counties experiencing significant population expansion since 1990 are Hendricks (24 percent), Johnson (22 percent), and Morgan and Hancock (both at 18 percent).

According to census projections, these

population trends are expected to continue over the next decade.

**HOUSING TRENDS.** Housing unit increases also can indicate a location's potential customer base. The number of households and home ownership rates also influence the demand for landscape services.

*Residential housing starts in Indianapolis have increased dramatically over the past decade.*

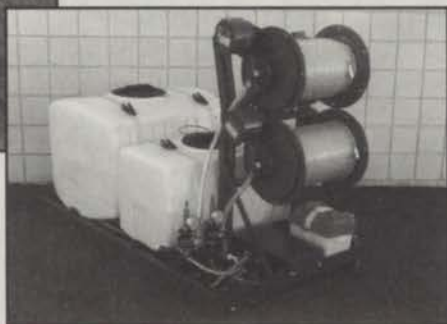


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Though national 2000 housing starts show signs of slowing, residential starts have increased dramatically in the last decade, in general. Approximately 8,500 starts were authorized in 1990 vs. more than 16,000 in 1998, nearly 80 percent of which were for single-family homes. The real value (adjusted for inflation) of housing also has risen substantially since 1990, climbing from under \$75,000 to nearly \$120,000 – a 37 percent jump.

Between 60 and 70 percent of housing units were owner-occupied, a percentage that again masks much higher numbers throughout the region. Contractors should consider owner-occupied housing statistics since these homeowners are more likely to use their services. In addition, homeowners tend to use a higher level of professional services to address the needs of their homes.

### **EMPLOYMENT & INCOME TRENDS.**

When more people work, their disposable income increases, making employment trends a key consideration when determining a city's economic health.

Employment is strong in the MSA, where the unemployment rate stood at just 2.7 percent in mid-2000, up from 2.3 percent in mid-1999. However, this rate is lower than the state and much lower than the nation as a whole.

Income also indicates whether people have the available cash to spend on landscape services. Both personal and family incomes have been rising in Indianapolis over the last decade and per capita personal income is roughly \$30,000 today.

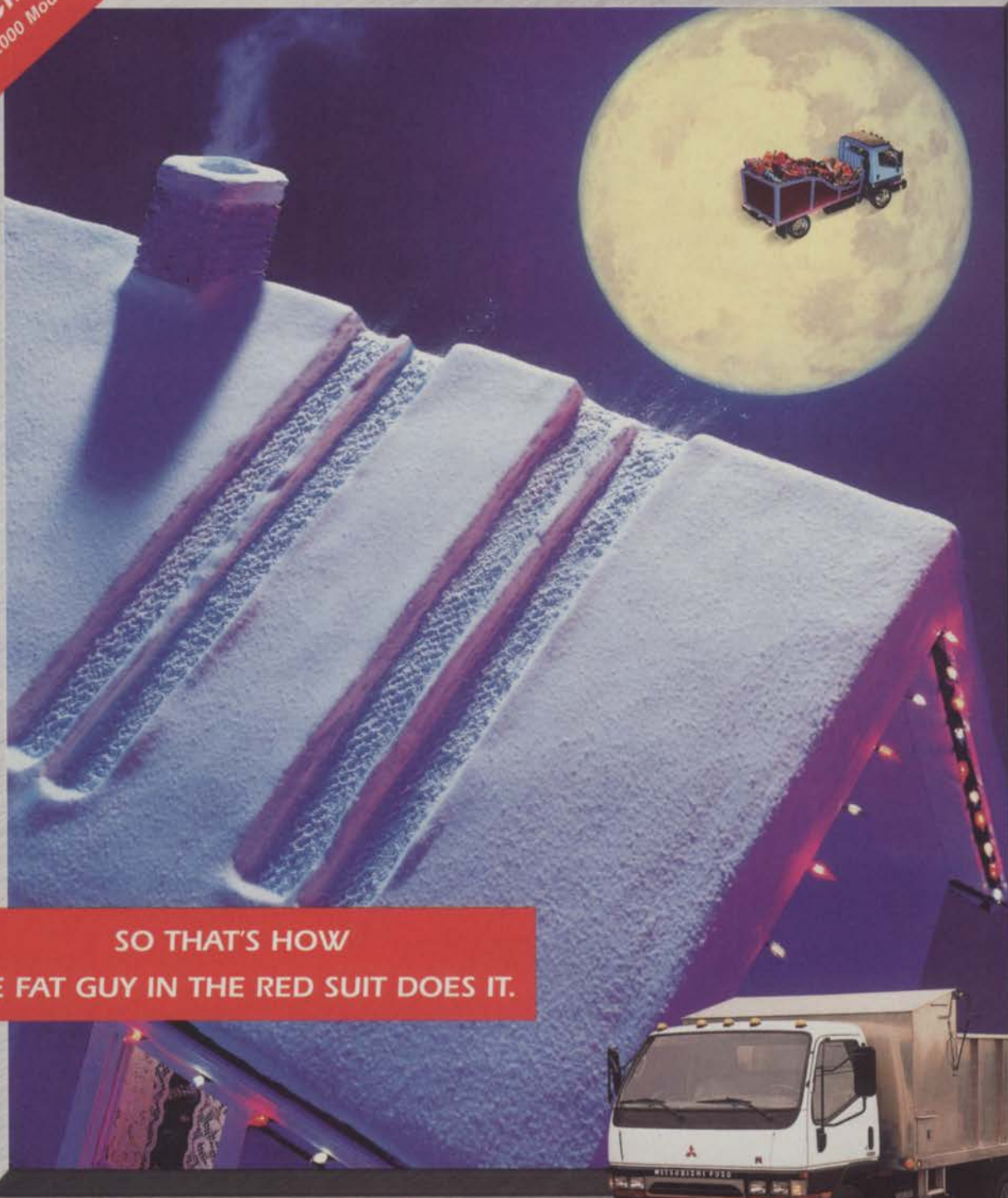
Hamilton County boasts the highest median home income in the region, topping Marion County by approximately \$20,000.

**LANDSCAPE & LABOR.** With low unemployment, there are fewer workers around to fill job vacancies.

(continued on page 114)



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## Indianapolis Overview

(continued from page 112)

"Finding employees is incredibly difficult," said David George, manager, Engledow's exterior division, Carmel, Ind. "We could probably grow faster, but it would be at the expense of quality."

However, since a large working population boosts confidence in the economy, the demand for landscape services should con-

tinue to increase. All of the new office and retail construction being built also will heighten demand for services.

Interestingly, though, the labor shortage had little effect on the number of firms doing business or entering the Indianapolis market. In 1993, there were about 400 companies in metropolitan Indianapolis. Today that

number rounds 575 – an annual average growth rate of more than 5 percent.

Also in the mix of companies in Indianapolis are several of the nation's largest landscape firms: The Davey Tree Expert Co., TruGreen-ChemLawn, The Brickman Group and Scotts Lawn Service, in addition to larger, locally owned firms like Engledow Group and Becker Landscape Contractors.

"I've been here for about 23 years and there used to be about 50 firms, and I knew them all," George said. "Any day now, I can see three companies I've never seen before."

Andrews also has seen the trend: "Five or six years ago when all of the buy-outs [by the larger firms] started, there was a feeling that there would be eight or nine companies left. Now there are a lot of start ups."

With labor strains, most new firms are smaller but pay employees higher wages.

The average pay per employee in the Indianapolis MSA is several thousand dollars higher than the U.S. average (more than \$28,000 in Indianapolis vs. just under \$24,000 nationally). Andrews believes the landscape industry has to re-think the way it compensates its workers. "We've got to quit paying our employees by competing with other landscape firms," he said.

Despite the higher average wages and shorter work season, finding employees still will be difficult. George noted that the energy of his company is focusing more on recruitment and away from business planning.

(continued on page 116)



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- Population of the 9-County Metro Area: 1.5 million
  - Percent of Population Living in Metropolitan Indianapolis: 26 percent
  - Average Annual Growth Rates (1993 to 2000):
    - Population: 1.2 percent
    - Landscape Establishments: 5.8 percent
  - Landscape Payroll: 8.0 percent
  - Unemployment Rate (Metropolitan Indianapolis):
    - August 1999: 2.3 percent
    - August 2000: 2.6 percent
- Patrick McGill

**Indy  
Facts & Figures**

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# Executive Forum

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## Indianapolis Overview

(continued from page 114)

**THE FUTURE.** Business in Indianapolis is booming, construction is up and unemployment is down. And with low unemployment, rising wages, an entrepreneurial spirit and a diversified economic base, the industry seems well-positioned for a positive future despite employee shortage concerns.

There is optimism in the city, and growth has been steady, which creates prime market conditions for landscape companies. **L**

*The author is a Research Associate at GIE Media, Cleveland, Ohio.*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the first in a series of articles profiling the lawn care and landscape market in major metropolitan areas. Look for a discussion of the Atlanta, Ga. market in an upcoming issue of *Lawn & Landscape*. If you would like to see your region profiled in an upcoming issue or have an article idea, please contact Nicole Wisniewski at 800/456-0707 or [nwisniewski@lawnandlandscape.com](mailto:nwisniewski@lawnandlandscape.com).

**T**he Indianapolis market can serve as an example to identify market dynamics in various U.S. cities, including yours.

The U.S. County Business Patterns database at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) can provide a wealth of data about your region. Data are categorized by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes for all years up to 1997, and by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as of 1998, the last year for which data are currently available. A one-on-one relationship for the SIC and NAICS data is not yet available, which makes analyzing historical trends somewhat tricky. Data regarding the landscape industry are classified under SIC code 0780 and NAICS code 56173.

*Other useful sources of information include:*

- The Federal Reserve Bank ([www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov)) offers links to sites with a variety of economical reports from various U.S. regions.
- The Dismal Scientist ([www.dismal.com](http://www.dismal.com)) is a clearinghouse for economic news releases and analysis, government data links and metropolitan area statistical profiles.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)) contains employment and occupational outlook data.

Most of these Web sites also have e-newsletters with economic information that is periodically updated.

Also check with your state's landscape association for more information.

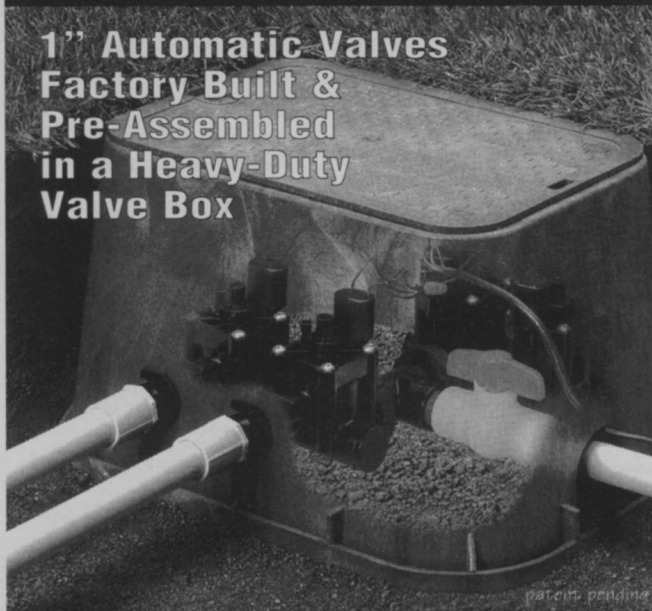
- Patrick McGill

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# Conference Program



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## 2001 SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pre-Conference Workshop  
Managing a Multi-Cultural Workforce  
(Separate admission required)

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

6:45 a.m. School of Management Golf Outing  
Carmel Mountain Ranch Golf Club  
(Bus leaves from lobby promptly at 6:45  
a.m.; shotgun start at 8:00 a.m.)

10:00 – 6:30 p.m. Registration Desk  
Attendee Networking Lounge  
Grounds Tour – Catamaran Resort  
Contractor Workshop  
Determining The Value of Your Business  
(Steve Gaines)  
5:00 – 6:30 PM Keynote Address  
Setting The Vision For Your Company  
Featuring Joe Tye  
6:30 – 8:00 PM Welcome Reception

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk  
7:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. General Session  
The Power of Networking (Jim Paluch)  
9:20 – 10:40 a.m. General Session  
Keys To Effective People Management  
(Charles Vander Kooi)  
10:40 – 11:00 a.m. Refreshment Break  
11:00 – 12:30 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions  
M1 E-Commerce: Is It For You? (Bill Cox)  
M2 Hiring Tomorrow's Leaders Today (Bill Hoopes)  
M3 Understanding Service Agreements (Tom Grandy)  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Networking Lunch  
1:45 – 3:00 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions  
M4 Putting Bite In Your Marketing Strategies (Jim Campanella)  
M5 Effective Crew Management Practices (Tim Lynott)  
M6 A New Approach To Estimating and Bidding (Jim Huston)  
3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break  
3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions  
M7 Using Financial Statements For Effective Management  
(Robert West, Sr.)  
M8 Winning The Recruiting Game (Bill Arman)  
M9 Charging What You're Worth: Tips For Effective Pricing  
(Tom Grandy)  
5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Networking Cocktail Reception

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk  
7:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast  
8:00 – 9:30 a.m. General Session  
How To Get Them To Buy From You (Fred Berns)  
9:30 – 9:50 a.m. Refreshment Break  
9:50 – 11:30 a.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions  
T1 Cutting The Waste Out of Operations (Tim Lynott)  
T2 Winning The Recruiting Game  
(Repeat Session) (Bill Arman)  
T3 Taking Advantage of Tax Planning Opportunities  
(Robert West, Sr.)  
11:30 – 12:30 p.m. Networking Lunch  
12:45 – 2:15 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions  
T4 Putting Bite In Your Marketing Strategies  
(Repeat Session) (Jim Campanella)  
T5 Customer Service Solutions (Bobby Jenkins)  
2:15 – 2:30 PM Refreshment Break  
2:30 – 4:00 PM General Session  
The Power of Networking (Jim Paluch)

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

9:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
Pre-Conference Workshop

### MANAGING A MULTI-CULTURAL WORKFORCE

The topic of how to effectively manage a multi-cultural workforce is one that grows in importance and in difficulty with each passing day. Green industry professionals are expending considerable time and resources to identify solutions to make managing a multi-cultural workforce easier and more effective. The educational program at the Managing A Multi-Cultural Workforce Seminar will include such important topics as employee screening and hiring practices, the H2B program, cultural assimilation, employee motivation, compensation and career path issues, and the legal ramifications of managing a multi-cultural workforce.

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(Separate admission fee required; see page 7 to register)

## What They Say About School of Management

"We had a great time at School of Management and made some excellent contacts. Thanks for doing a great job on the conference."

Scott Fay  
Treasure Coast Irrigation  
Hobe Sound, Fla.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

2:30 – 4:00 PM  
Contractor Workshop

**DETERMINING THE VALUE  
OF YOUR BUSINESS**

If you are preparing to expand your company's business operations through acquisition, thinking about selling your company or just want to better identify your company's actual value, then this session is for you. In this informative session you'll review the many steps that go into determining the value of a business. From identifying your company's financial strengths and weaknesses and developing accurate financial reports to understanding how others value your business, this session will give you the tools to obtain the information that you need.

Speaker: **Steve Gaines**, KPMG,  
Baltimore, MD


5:00 – 6:30 PM  
Opening Keynote Session

**SETTING THE VISION  
FOR YOUR COMPANY**

Joe Tye  
Paradox 21



In this dynamic general session listen as noted author and teacher Joe Tye explains how you can set a vision of success for yourself and for your company. Learn how to take your aspirations for success and turn them into reality. Packed with practical action steps for helping entrepreneurs set and achieve a vision for their company, this session will help you create positive attitudes about change and uncertainty, and cultivate customer service and team leadership within your company. After this session you'll be ready to set the vision that will help your company prosper.

Sponsored by  **Husqvarna**

6:30 – 8:00 PM  
Welcome Reception

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

7:30 – 8:00 AM  
Continental Breakfast  
Sponsored by



8:00 – 9:00 AM  
General Session

**THE POWER  
OF NETWORKING**

Jim Paluch  
JP Horizons



Harness the power of networking and get the most out of the 2001 School of Management! In this interactive, high-energy session you'll play an active role and experience how a team approach to learning can benefit your business. This special session will help you set your learning game plan for the remainder of the conference and will steer you towards valuable industry contacts that you'll use during and after the conference. Arrive ready to learn and ready for some surprises.

Sponsored by **shindaiwa**


9:20 – 10:40 AM  
General Session

**KEYS TO EFFECTIVE  
PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

Charles Vander Kooi  
Vander Kooi & Associates



One of the most used phrases in business speak today is "people management skills." What are people management skills, and how do they impact your business? Find out the answer to this question by attending this informative session lead by noted management expert Charles Vander Kooi. In this session, you'll learn the fundamental qualities of effective people management. Learn how to identify different types of workers and different types of work styles and how they mesh with your management style.

Sponsored by 

10:40 – 11:00 a.m. Refreshment Break

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11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Concurrent Sessions

**M1 E-COMMERCE: IS IT FOR YOU?**

E-commerce and the potential for driving revenue and expanding customer databases are setting the business world on its ear. Is your business prepared to enter into the e-commerce world? Find out the necessary steps you'll need to take if you are to successfully design and market a web site that will steer customers and revenue to your company. This session is designed for those contractors who want to make the web and e-commerce work for their company.

*Speaker: Bill Cox, Cox Consulting, Cleveland, OH*

**M2 HIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY**

You've identified the candidate for the opening you've had for the last six months and you are bringing him or her in for an interview. Do you know exactly what you want from the position or what you are looking for in the candidate? You may have a list of required skills, but skills alone never determine overall job performance. Learn more about discovering the important intangibles – those often overlooked qualities that can make or break a candidate.

*Speaker: Bill Hoopes, Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, OH*

**M3 UNDERSTANDING SERVICE AGREEMENTS**

Because they build vital relationships between contractors and customers, service agreements are the basic building blocks for profitable growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this session, Tom Grandy walks contractors through designing, pricing, and marketing – the essential steps to creating an effective service agreement.

*Speaker: Tom Grandy, Grandy & Associates, Owensboro, KY*

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.  
Networking Lunch

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.  
Concurrent Sessions

**M4 PUTTING BITE IN YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES**

Are you ready to grow your current business operations? Whether you're expanding the services you currently offer or looking to grow established market segments, telemarketing can be a most effective growth tool for your company. Join us for this enlightening "nuts and bolts" session from one of the industry's up and coming entrepreneurs, and learn how you can put bite into your marketing efforts and increase your market share.

*Speaker: Jim Campanella, The Lawn Dawg, Nashua, NH*

**M5 EFFECTIVE CREW MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

Leading an effective lawn or landscape crew is no easy task. Personnel are the all important link in your company's service delivery chain, and you need them to perform consistently and at peak efficiency. This session will discuss a variety of practical, field-tested strategies and systems you can implement with your service crews to improve their overall performance and your company's bottom line.

*Speaker: Tim Lynott, Lynott Landscape Consulting Services, Eldersburg, MD*

**M6 A NEW APPROACH TO ESTIMATING AND BIDDING**

Who says you can't teach an old dog a new trick? In the area of estimating and bidding contractors are always searching for new methods of improving the accuracy and competitiveness of their bids. In this session hear from consultant Jim Huston as he walks you through a different approach to bidding and estimating that will help you write bids that make better economic sense for your company and your customers.

*Speaker: Jim Huston, Smith Huston, Inc., Englewood, CO*

3:00 – 3:30  
Refreshment Break  
Sponsored By





3:30 – 5:00 PM  
Concurrent Sessions

**M7 USING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT**

Your balance sheet and your income statement can tell you a great deal about how efficiently your business is operating. This session will help you understand how you can use these basic financial statements to better manage your business. You will learn the significance of your accounts receivable turnover, debt-to-equity ratio, gross profit margin and other key financial statistics that will tell you more about your operation.

*Speaker: Robert West, Sr., West & Co., Cleveland, OH*

**M8 WINNING THE RECRUITING GAME**

In a marketplace with record low unemployment, one of the greatest keys to successful recruitment is identifying and attracting what talent exists. In this upbeat session, learn how to prevail in today's war for talent by creating and implementing a plan that focuses on "fit" rather than on availability. Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to learn the winning ways of recruiting!

*Speaker: Bill Arman, Environmental Industries, Calabasas, CA*

**M9 CHARGING WHAT YOU'RE WORTH:  
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PRICING**

The phrase "Sales up, profits down," sounds all too familiar to many contractors today. This session deals with the most basic of issues – how much do we have to charge to cover our costs of doing business while still generating a profit? Determine what the *real* cost of doing business is and how to maximize and ensure profitability.

*Speaker: Tom Grandy, Grandy & Associates, Owensboro, KY*

5:00 – 6:30 PM  
Networking Cocktail Reception

## *Did You Hear About School of Management?*

Here is what attendees of the 2000 School of Management in Dallas had to say about their experience at the conference.

"Even in the sessions that didn't apply totally to my situation, there was always something of value I learned. I can think of at least one thing from every session. That's value!"

"I brought employees, and they were able to learn from outside sources which is important to make a business profitable and grow."

"School of Management empowered me and gave me more confidence in putting together my organization."

See what you are missing? Register today for the 2001 School of Management!

Call **800/456-0707**

To Register For The  
2001 SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**REGISTER ONLINE AT**  
**[www.lawnandlandscapeconferences.com](http://www.lawnandlandscapeconferences.com)**

7:30 – 8:00 a.m.  
Continental Breakfast

Sponsored by **GREATDANE**

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.  
General Session

### HOW TO GET THEM TO BUY FROM YOU

**Fred Berns**  
Power Promotion



How to use personal promotion to dramatically increase your sales and profits is the theme of this powerful presentation. The program focuses on how to communicate with confidence, differentiate yourself from competitors and make a maximum impact for a minimal investment of time and money. Included are "how to" steps and insights on polishing your sales presentations, turning contacts into contracts, overcoming procrastination and price objections, closing sales, upselling, and more.

Sponsored by **eXmark**  
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9:30 – 9:50 a.m.  
Refreshment Break

Sponsored by



9:50 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
Concurrent Sessions

### T1 CUTTING THE WASTE OUT OF OPERATIONS

From route scheduling and sales follow-up to equipment and product inventory, keeping tabs on the vital elements of your company's day-to-day operations is essential to building a well-run and profitable organization. Learn how to properly analyze your company's operational structure and spot areas where waste and inefficiency commonly occur.

Speaker: **Tim Lynott**, Lynott Landscape Consulting Services, Eldersburg, MD

T2 WINNING THE RECRUITING GAME  
For session description see Session M4.

### T3 TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TAX PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunity to take advantage of tax savings starts with planning and selecting the best form of organization for your business and, deciding how to withdraw your company's earnings. This session will explain in simple terms how you might reduce payroll and income taxes with timely and continual planning, and potentially save thousands of dollars in payroll tax expenses.

11:30 – 12:30 p.m.  
Networking Lunch  
Sponsored by



12:45 – 2:15 p.m.  
Concurrent Sessions

### T4 PUTTING BITE IN YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES (RS)

For session description see Session M4.

### T5 CUSTOMER SERVICE SOLUTIONS

In this session hear from a veteran of the service industry who has turned his company into a perennial customer service champion who will share his company's recipe for making customer service number one with your employees.

Speaker: **Bobby Jenkins**, ABC Pest & Lawn Care, Austin, TX

2:15 – 2:30  
Refreshment Break

2:30 – 4:00 PM  
Closing General Session

### THE POWER OF NETWORKING

Jim Paluch, JP Horizons

End the 2001 School of Management on a high note and identify how the power of networking benefited you throughout the conference. In this session you'll hear fellow attendees share insights and predict how they will implement the ideas and strategies they learned at the School of Management. Bring your ideas and your notebook as you hear from some of the best business experts in the industry – your fellow contractors.

Sponsored by **shindaiwa**

## 2001 SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT REGISTRATION AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

### Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing

A Fundraiser for the Evergreen Foundation  
Carmel Mountain Ranch Golf Club  
Sunday, February 11  
6:45 a.m.

Spend a morning testing your golf skills at the 3rd<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing. Cost for the outing is \$100 and includes greens fees, cart rental, practice balls, lunch, prizes and transportation to and from the course. A portion of the registration fee will be donated to the Evergreen Foundation, a green industry non-profit organization devoted to promoting the development of public green space. **Advance registration and payment is required.** Registration deadline is **February 3, 2001.**

Sponsored by **WOODS**

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Contractor Registration</b><br>(Includes all educational sessions, conference materials, receptions, lunches, breakfasts, refreshment breaks) | <b>\$245 per person</b> |
| <b>Contractor Group Registration</b><br>(Three or more from the same company)  | <b>\$195 per person</b> |
| <b>Contractor One Day Registration</b>   | <b>\$125 per person</b> |
| <b>Pre-Conference Multi-Cultural Workshop</b><br>(Saturday, February 10, 2001)   | <b>\$95 per person</b>  |
| <b>Supplier Non-Sponsor Registration</b>   | <b>\$495</b>            |

### Special Events

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Tournament of Champions Golf Outing</b><br>Fundraiser for the Evergreen Foundation<br>Sunday, February 11 (Includes greens fees, cart, lunch, prizes and transportation) | <b>\$100 per person</b> |
|---|-------------------------|

### CANCELLATION/SUBSTITUTION/REFUND POLICY

All cancellations must be made in writing. A full refund will be accepted if received before **February 2, 2001.** No refunds will be issued after February 2, 2001. Advancement payment is **required** for the golf tournament and no cancellations after February 7, 2001. *No on-site refunds.* Attendees can notify *Lawn & Landscape* at any time that another individual will attend the conference or social events in their place.

### CONFIRMATIONS

All registrations postmarked by February 2, 2001 will be acknowledged by mail. Registrations received after that date should be picked up at the School of Management Registration Desk at the Catamaran Resort starting Sunday, February 11, 2001 at 10:00 a.m.

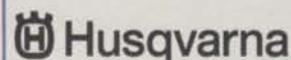
### HOTEL INFORMATION

A block of rooms has been reserved for School of Management attendees at the Catamaran Resort. Located on scenic Mission Bay, the Catamaran Resort is the ideal location for your trip to sunny Southern California. Attendees should make their reservations directly with the hotel on or before **January 17, 2001** to receive the special conference room rate of **\$120** per night (single/double). Please ask for the School of Management Conference rate. For reservations call the Catamaran Resort at **800/422-8386.**

### DISCOUNT TRAVEL INFORMATION

School of Management has arranged for special discount airfares to San Diego for the School of Management. To take advantage of the discount rates, please contact AAA Business Travel at 800/999-0038 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Eastern.

## 2001 SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SPONSOR PARTNERS



# Registration Form



February 11-13, 2001  
 Catamaran Resort • San Diego, California

**PHONE:** Call 800/456-0707 and ask to register for the School of Management (weekdays 9 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST)  
**MAIL:** Conference Registration, School of Management, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113  
**FAX:** Complete form and fax, with credit card information, to 216/961-0364 (24 hours)  
**ON THE WEB:** Register on-line at [www.lawnandlandscapeconferences.com](http://www.lawnandlandscapeconferences.com)  
*(Please print or type. Form may be photocopied for additional registrants; one form per person)*

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name As It Will Appear On Badge \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Checks: Make payable to GIE Media (drawn on a U.S. Bank, in U.S. dollars)

\_\_\_\_\_ I authorize GIE Media to charge my: \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ American Express \_\_\_\_\_ Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name On Card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note:** Registrations **will not** be processed until payment information is received. All faxed and phone registrations **MUST** include credit card information. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks.

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Conference Registration**

|   | Number | = | Total |
|---|--------|---|-------|
| Contractor Registration   | \$245  | = |       |
| Contractor Group Registration (3 or more same company)                                | \$195  | = |       |
| Contractor One-Day Registration (Monday or Tuesday only)                              | \$125  | = |       |
| Pre-Conference Workshop: Managing A Multi-Cultural Workforce (Sat. February 10, 2001) | \$95   | = |       |
| Supplier Non-Sponsor Registration   | \$495  | = |       |

**Special Events**

Golf Outing \$100 =

Fundraiser for the Evergreen Foundation =

**TOTAL** =

*(There is no advance registration for individual educational sessions. Seating for all sessions is on a first come basis. Lawn & Landscape reserves the right to limit the number of attendees per session.)*

For Office Use Only

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Registration # \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Received \_\_\_\_\_ Type \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT  
 REGISTRATION CHECK LIST**

- Completed Registration Form
- Included Method of Payment
- Made Hotel Reservation at the Catamaran Resort
- Called for Discount Travel Information
- Told a Friend To Register For School of Management

## ATTACHMENTS

### BADGER EARTH AUGER

- Augers are equipped with carbide-tipped pilot points available in diameters from 2 to 12 inches
  - Features a positive-bolted auger attachment collar
  - Tool is 36 inches long and ranges in weight from 5 to 11 pounds
  - Attachment is powered by a 2 hp, 49.2 cc Tecumseh two-stroke engine
  - Ideal for use on fencing, signs, trail markers, soil tests, deck installations, tree/shrub planting, bulb planting, support poles and deep-root fertilization
- Circle 200 on reader service card

### PRESEEDER TILLER ATTACHMENT

- Model SS725 attachment for skid-steer loaders allows contractors to finish rough grades into seedbed
- The 72-inch rotor tills attachment to level and



- rake in one operation
- Rotor teeth are mounted in a helical pattern
- Attachment functions while driving in forward or reverse
- Working depth and

- rotor angle adjustable from seat during operation
  - Rotor can be hydraulically angled left, right or straight for versatility
  - Hydraulic motor mounts directly on rotor
  - Designed for skid-steer loaders with 13 to 18 gpm auxiliary hydraulic flow
- Circle 201 on reader service card

### WALKER LOADER BUCKET

- Mower bucket attachment complies with quick-change implement hitch system on the Walker tractor
- Loader bucket pushes, scoops, hauls and grades dirt, gravel and mulch
- Attachment can lift up to 180 pounds and 1¼ cubic feet of material

- Allows 14 inches of ground clearance for transport
- Features a high-strength steel cutting edge
- Tilting action uses a 500-pound electric ram

Circle 202 on reader service card



## HAND-HELD POWER EQUIPMENT

### SOLO BACKPACK BLOWER

- Model 445 Backpack Blower features a 2.1 hp, 36.3 cc two-cycle engine
  - Engine delivers a high air stream, allowing for efficient clean-up jobs
  - Pistol grip control with 90-degree swivel blower tube allows easy direction of air stream
  - Unit weighs 18.26 pounds
  - Meets Category I sound levels of ANSI standards
  - Larger 470 model achieves higher air output than previous models while operating at engine speeds of 4,500 rpm – a 50 percent speed reduction
- Circle 203 on reader service card



### HOLEY MOLEY HYDROPLANTER

- Hydraulic hand-digging tool digs hole, moistens ground and allows water to seep into plant roots in one step
- Hooks up to garden hose and works with as little as 15 pounds per square inch of water pressure
- Water provides digging power and acts as a deep root feeder to ensure an adequate water supply

for newly installed plants

- Other applications for the tool include aeration and transplantation
  - Available in two models: Hp 1000 for homeowners and HP1500 for landscapers and commercial operators
- Circle 204 on reader service card

Companies  
are  
uncovering  
an array of  
head-  
turning  
products  
designed  
for  
landscape  
contractors.

# Product SHOWCASE

## Product Review

### PROBLOW DEBRIS BLOWERS

- Dual action blower is suitable for walk-behind mowers
  - Features full cable control for left or right discharge, an aerodynamic impeller and an anti-clog air intake and guard
  - The high-velocity, high-volume output offers efficient debris removal
  - The blower's self-locking fasteners create a permanent assembly
  - Impeller has an output of 170 mph
  - Quick disconnect taper lock hub allows for balanced mounting and easy service
  - Weighs 200 pounds
  - Available accessories include a leaf pusher and remote wand for blowing out beds
- Circle 205 on reader service card

### AERO-FLEX TRIMMING SYSTEM

- Install system by dropping lines into pre-formed slots to eliminate complex rewinding and threading
- Teardrop airfoil releases power lost to the air, converting it to useful power
- Increased line mass, higher velocities and an increased amount of cutters create more

power in rotating parts

- Flexible line blade requires low centrifugal force
- Low stress design allows absorption of impact and abrasive forces

• Line designed for low-speed cutting  
Circle 206 on reader service card

### INSTALLATION EQUIPMENT FINN BARK BLOWER

- Applications include commercial and residential mulch beds, slopes, public gardens, playgrounds, amusement parks, rooftops and mall interiorscapes
- Blowers can apply standard bark mulch, wood chips, compost, soil amendments and other bulk materials
- Trailer Model 302 features a 1.5 cubic yard hopper capacity and measures 84- by



79- by 74-inches

- Empty weight is 4,000 pounds
  - Powered by a 33.5 hp Kubota V1505 diesel engine with a 15-gallon fuel tank
  - Includes an airlock system through various lengths of 4-inch flexible hose for application distances up to 200 feet
  - Remote controls allow operator to control power and material flow
  - Units include 150 feet of hose
- Circle 207 on reader service card

### TURFCO DIRECT EDGE-R-RITE

- Powered by a 3.5 hp Briggs & Stratton 4-cycle engine
- Tool features an easy-to-reach depth adjusting lever
- Weighs 105 pounds and measures 45-by-20-by-37 inches
- Optional blades include right angle, 30-degree tree ring, V-trencher, circular and 3-inch sod cutter
- Edge-R-Rite blade oscillates back and forth, reversing directions hundreds of times per minute to cut through turf
- Machine does not throw debris

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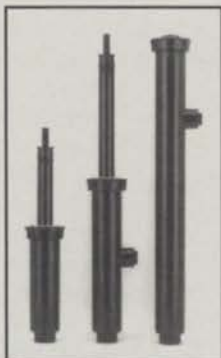
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USE READER SERVICE #120

• Suitable for heavy edging jobs where rotary edgers have difficulty  
*Circle 208 on reader service card*

## IRRIGATION HUNTER MS MICRO-SPRAY NOZZLES

- Low-volume nozzle available in quarter-, half- or full-circle fixed spray
- Covers a 4- to 6-foot radius
- Nozzle attaches directly to Hunter SRS spray head as an extended pop-up, which allows micro-spray to rise above plants and shrubs for efficient irrigation
- Nozzle retracts into the SRS riser when not in use and disappears into ground when irrigation is complete
- Nozzles deliver a fine spray pattern



while operating at a low application rate  
 • Suitable for irrigation of flower beds, planter boxes and shrubs  
*Circle 209 on reader service card*

## LIGHTING ELEGANTE COPPER LIGHTING

- Collection includes more than 20 copper fixtures designed for high-end residential and commercial clients
- Fixtures include halogen lamps
- Pathlights feature choice of solid copper shades and stems or solid copper shades with emerald green stems
- Lighting line includes a selection of uplights, well lights, step lights and pathlights, constructed from copper metal over heavy-gauge die cast aluminum and polished to a copper-bronze finish
- Lighting system includes a 1/2-inch NPT mounting with ground stake that is pre-wired with 3 feet of 18-2 direct burial cable and underground connectors
- Weather resistant  
*Circle 210 on reader service card*

## HANNAY N500 SERIES REELS

- Hannay's high-pressure spring rewind reel is ideal for hose handling in applications such as hydraulics, air/ water and chassis grease
- Reel design is compact, featuring a slim frame and narrow base



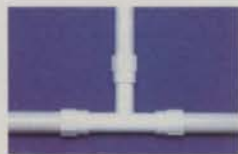
- Reels have ability to manage a single 1/4- or 3/8-inch hose
- Reels offer a heavy-duty spring motor with self-contained rewind power and four-way roller assembly
- Non-sparking ratchet assembly locks the reel at desired length of hose payout – a pull on the hose unlocks reel for spring-motor retraction
- A declutching arbor prevents damage that can occur from reverse winding



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 ELBOWS & TEES  
 1-1/2" & 2" COMING SOON

ORDINARY FITTINGS KWIKREPAIR

|  |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Number of fittings required              | 4               | 1              |
| Number of solvent welds required         | 7               | 3              |
| Pipe movement restraint required         | YES             | NO             |
| Possible O-Ring failure                  | YES             | NO             |
| Minimum space required to install 1" Tee | 21"x5-1/2"      | 9-3/4"x5-1/2"  |
| Approximate minutes to install           | 15 - 45 minutes | 5 - 15 minutes |



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NOVEMBER 2000

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## Product Review

(continued from page 126)

- Standard N500 operates at pressures up to 10,000 psi and can manage product temperatures ranging from -20 to 225 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Standard reel inlets are 90-degree ball bearing swivel joints
- Circle 211 on reader service card

### MOWERS/ACCESSORIES HUSTLER MID-MOUNT Z

- Hustler mid-mount Z-rider is compact, measuring 76 inches
- Frame is composed of 1½-by-3-by-3/16-inch wall rectangular tubing
- The mower's front-caster fork features heavy-duty construction

- 60-inch side-discharge deck is reinforced, constructed from welded steel with formed doublers at key wear points and a 1-by-3/8-inch steel bar to help reinforce impact areas on trim edges
  - Leading edge of the deck features box-section reinforcement
  - 60-inch side discharge deck includes high blade-tip speed, high-lift blades and six anti-scalp wheels
  - Mowing heights range from 1 to 5 inches in ¼-inch increments and can be adjusted by a foot-operated deck lift
  - Integral park-brake system
  - Z-rider's on-board fuel capacity stores up to 12 gallons of gasoline
- Circle 212 on reader service card

# Our Warranty Program Blows the Competition Away

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Fax: 770-381-5150

### EXMARK XP LAZER Z RIDING MOWERS

- Mower offers either a fuel-efficient, 27 hp liquid-cooled diesel or 31 hp liquid-cooled gas engine
  - Models are available with either a 60- or 72-inch UltraCut Deck
  - Ground speeds reach 11 mph
  - Liquid-cooling passages in each cylinder reduce engine noise
  - No engine cooling fins to collect debris reduces maintenance
  - Mower's up-top radiator positioning draws in clean, cool air
  - A DynaFocal engine iso-mount system and unitized, tubular frame design minimizes vibration for a smoother ride
  - Dual mule deck drive system delivers maximum power to cutting deck
  - 200-feet-per-pound clutch assembly provides greater reliability and less maintenance
- Circle 213 on reader service card



### BOB-CAT ZT 100 SERIES

- The series of zero-turn, ride-on rotary mowers recently has been upgraded for increased performance and serviceability
  - Mowers feature either a 42- or 48-inch cutting deck and come with a 20 or 25 hp Kohler Command engine
  - Mowers can potentially reach cutting speeds up to 6 mph
  - Includes choice of side discharge or grass collection and optional armrests
  - Fill indicator allows selection of appropriate features to meet turf needs
- Circle 214 on reader service card

(continued on page 130)

USE READER SERVICE #125



# DESTRUCTIVE TURF INSECTS

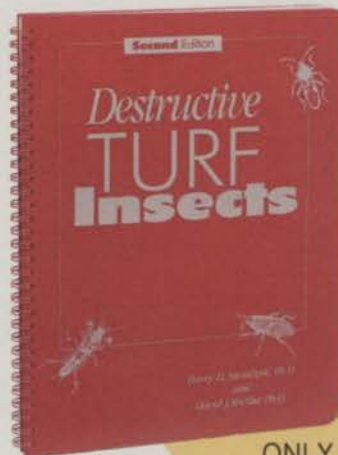


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"Without question, this is the most comprehensive technical and practical insect identification book available for making in-field identifications. At the same time, it provides the Turfgrass Manager with the most updated control measures in which to solve every possible insect problem before serious destructive turf damage occurs."

— RICHARD M. BATOR  
International Golf Course Agronomist  
Lenox, Massachusetts



"The second edition of *Destructive Turf Insects* represents the combined knowledge of two outstanding entomologists who have more than 50 years of scientific and practical experience in the area of turfgrass entomology. The book is a perfect blend of scientific and practical information that should be part of every turfgrass professional's library."

— DR. KEITH J. KARNOK  
Author and Professor  
University of Georgia

DTIAD

## Product Review

(continued from page 128)

### FERRIS MID-MOUNT Z'S INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION

- Mid-mount Z mowers available include the 1000 Z (48 or 52 inches), the IS 3000 Z (61 inches) and the IS 4000 Z (61 or 72 inches)
- Z mowers offer two suspension



- options: four-wheel independent suspension on the IS 4000 Z or two-wheel independent suspension on the IS 3000 Z
  - Two suspension arms attached to each wheel allow front wheels on the IS 4000 Z to move independently
  - Arms are pivotally attached to the frame
  - Movement is controlled by a spring/shock combination
  - Front suspension system combined with independent rear wheel suspension reduces shock to chassis and operator
- Circle 215 on reader service card

### DIXON ZTR 8000 SERIES MOWER

- Dixon ZTR 8025 is powered by a 25 hp Kohler Pro Series engine
  - Dixon ZTR 8026 uses the Briggs & Stratton Daihatsu 26.5 diesel
  - ZTR 8000 Series features "big rig" seat suspensions which can reduce operator stress and fatigue
  - Mowers can be equipped with either a 60- or 72-inch mowing deck
  - Available attachments include a snow blade, broom and grass catcher
  - White wheel motors and Hydro-Gear® BDU pumps provide zero-turning radius maneuverability
- Circle 216 on reader service card



### KOHLER COMMAND PRO

- The Command PRO 26 hp engine now features an electronic fuel injection system on its vertical-shaft models

- The system offers advantages, including fuel efficiency, peak power and torque, easy start in various temperatures and optimum throttle response
  - An electronic control unit monitors equipment's functions
  - With an 83 mm bore and 67 mm stroke, the 725 cc engine produces 41.6 pounds per foot of torque
  - The electronic fuel injection system's overhead valve design and 9-to-1 compression ratio provide clean burning performance
  - Engine also features hydraulic valve lifters, full-pressure lubrication and a large-capacity, spin-on oil filter
  - An oil cooler helps engine maintain low oil temperatures
- Circle 217 on reader service card



(continued on page 132)

## Now there are more reasons to get attached to a Steiner.

What makes the Steiner the hardest working turf tractor you can own? Start with unmatched versatility. With 20 available Quick-Hitch attachments, including a new V-blade and core aerator, the Steiner does the work of up to 20 single-purpose machines. In minutes, it becomes a chipper/shredder, snow blower, lawn sweeper, edger. Whatever the job, the Steiner gets it done.

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CALL TOLL-FREE FAX ON DEMAND

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OR PRE-REGISTER ON-LINE AT

**www.onla.org**

Pre-registration deadline is January 5, 2001. While the "CENTS" Show is free, there is a charge for the short course education series.

## SHOW HOURS

|            |           |                       |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| January 22 | Monday    | 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. |
| January 23 | Tuesday   | 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. |
| January 24 | Wednesday | 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |

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**USE READER SERVICE #34**

## Product Review

(continued from page 130)

### TECUMSEH SILENTRAC TRANSMISSION

- SilentTrac™ 350 variable-speed transmission is suitable for walk-behind rotary mower applications
- Offers the operator advantages of a hydrostatic transmission, with full torque capability at any speed



- Automatic-drive feature
- Can be applied to both front- and rear-drive mowers

Circle 218 on reader service card

### PESTICIDES/FERTILIZERS/ TURF APPLICATIONS

#### CROWN III TURF PROTECTOR

- The rubber-based product prevents wear

from heavy traffic on lawns

- Once settled into grass, it protects the base against heavy wear from people, dogs and sports
- Benefits include reduced soil compaction, reduced watering requirement and protection of grass from severe cold
- Product is recommended for use around high traffic areas, such as fence lines, swing sets, trampolines, volleyball nets and other recreational sites
- Available in 30- or 50-pound bags
- Product is applied during growing season and raked into grass; settles in two to four weeks

Circle 219 on reader service card

### SNOW EQUIPMENT

#### FFC 1500 SERIES SNOW BLADE ATTACHMENT

- Attachment is suitable for New Holland skid-steer loaders
- Blade is available in six widths, ranging from 84 to 44 inches
- Blade and frame are built to withstand heavy-duty seasonal use

- 35-degree hydraulically adjustable angle
  - Spring-loaded safety trip mechanism
- Circle 220 on reader service card

### SPORT UTILITY SNOWMAN SNOWPLOW

- Designed for SUVs, light trucks and full size four-wheel drive trucks
- Cab remote power angle for positioning snow without a front-mounted snowplow
- On/off hook-up to vehicle's 2-inch square receiver hitch
- Dual spring down pressure creates a clean surface
- Trip springs protect vehicle and plow
- 6½ and 7½ 12-gauge blades
- High lift is effective in deep snow
- Available in either a red or yellow color

Circle 221 on reader service card

(continued on page 134)



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- ☛ Easy to attach and detach
- ☛ Three grease points
- ☛ Heavy welded steel construction
- ☛ Large platform with extra foot space
- ☛ 7 day return policy, 1 year warranty
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## Product Review

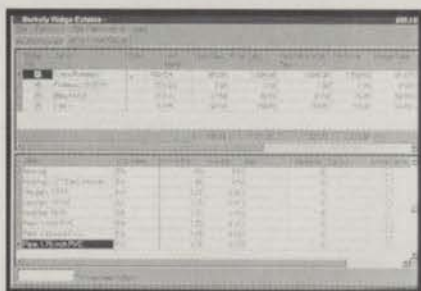
(continued from page 132)

### SOFTWARE/ CATALOGUES BUILDWARE SOFTWARE

- Software program combines estimating and CAD tools
  - On-screen display and digitizer simplify paper prints
  - Users can measure and count e-prints directly on screen and highlight information with colors and symbols
  - CAD drawing tools let user draw and create on-screen layouts and estimate material and labor costs
  - Built-in web browser allows prints and project information to be downloaded and sent over the Internet
  - Software is compliant with all electronic prints, including DODGE PLANS®
  - Open architecture allows Buildware™ to talk to other Windows applications
- Circle 222 on reader service card

### INCLUDE ASSET SOFTWARE

- Include Software's new software integrates accounting, estimating, payroll, inventory and scheduling into one program
- An unlimited database tailored to the



particular business allows user to create estimates quickly

- Include Asset automatically creates purchase orders, materials lists, job schedules and accounts receivable invoices when an estimate becomes a sold job
- Minnow™ portable, hand-held units eliminate time-card entries
- Software updates increase efficiency by allowing users to organize specific tasks for combined crews and jobs

Circle 223 on reader service card

### GROUNDBREAKERS TOOL CATALOG

- V & B Manufacturing features different applications of its garden/landscaping

tool line in its new catalogue

- Includes photos depicting the performance of various jobs
- Notes different tool head configurations and handle sizes available

Circle 224 on reader service card

### VEHICLES/ ACCESSORIES HYDRO TERRA HYDROSEEDER

- Equipment features a 200-gallon capacity and built-in universal quick attachment for skid-steer loaders
- Unit is mounted on a custom-made, heavy-duty channel iron skid
- Tank rests on an iron saddle
- Unit's multiple uses include hydroseeding, watering, fertilizing and washing down sidewalks, driveways and equipment
- Hydroseeder is equipped with quick-disconnect camlock fittings
- Jet Agitation™ system imitates a cyclone effect to facilitate thorough mixing and efficient spraying

Circle 225 on reader service card

(continued on page 136)

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|                     | HS-300-E | HS-500-E | HS-500-XPW | HS-750-XPW | HS-1000-ZK |
|---------------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Mo. Payments        | \$ 99    | \$ 121   | \$ 216     | \$ 248     | \$ 298     |
| Down                | 198      | 242      | 432        | 496        | 596        |
| Sales Price         | 3,995    | 4,795    | 6,695      | 7,995      | 11,895     |
| Horsepower          | 8        | 8        | 16         | 16         | 25         |
| Covering (sq ft)    | 4,000    | 6,600    | 6,600      | 10,000     | 13,000     |
| Spraying Time (min) | 10       | 15       | 13         | 16         | 17         |

\* 60 month lease, first and last payment down, \$1 buy-out.

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## Product Review

(continued from page 134)

### KANGA KID LOADER

- Loader is powered by a 13 hp, electric-start Honda engine
- Available hydraulic attachments create a versatile landscape tool
- Applications include digging, shrub planting, sprinkler trenching, carrying, top soil spreading and snow clearing
- Standard equipment includes self-leveling bucket, greaseable linkages, trailer hitch and quick-fit attachment plate



vers; loader uses hydraulic wheel motors  
Circle 226 on reader service card

### CATERPILLAR MINI HYDRAULIC EXCAVATOR

- The 303.5 model weighs 7,672 pounds



when equipped with a cab

- Features a Cat® 3013 naturally aspirated, water-cooled, 4-stroke, 3-cylinder diesel engine with 27 hp
- Three-pump hydraulic system integrates a pilot control design
- Auxiliary valve allows one- or two-way operation of hydromechanical tools
- Optional hydraulic lines are fitted with quick disconnect couplings
- Maximum digging depth with standard stick is 124 inches, and 140 inches with optional long stick
- Boom swing angles 90 degrees to the left and 50 degrees to the right
- Excavator's tracks are driven by one independent two-speed motor and reaches a

maximum travel speed of 2.8 mph

- The machine's 61-inch blade is sized to match the full width of machine
- Tilt-up engine enclosure allows access to engine components and service points  
Circle 227 on reader service card

### BOBCAT AIR-CONDITIONED CABS

- Air conditioning now is available for enclosed cabs on the Bobcat 864 compact track loader and Model 863, 873 and 963 skid-steer loaders
- This ergonomic option does not add external components to the loader design
- Located in the upper left of cabs, control panel features a temperature control dial and three-speed fan dial, lowering cab temperatures down to 30 degrees Fahrenheit
- Four adjustable air vents direct air according to operator preference
- Panel does not effect loader cab height or operator visibility
- System components are protected within the loader frame

(continued on page 138)

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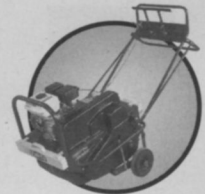
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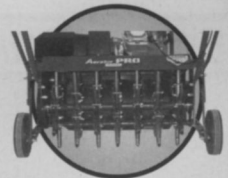
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This month's features plus exclusive online stories, industry databases and more are at [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com).

## Hand-held Training Site Developed

Visit the Lawn & Landscape homepage and link to the Shindaiwa Power Training site, an online bilingual training school that emphasizes hand-held equipment safety, maintenance and operation. Certification is available in each category through the online training program. The site provides information on clothing, fuel, storage and equipment condition to help train workers in proper operating practices. Certification information, buying tips, frequently-asked questions and other training resources also are available in both English and Spanish.



## Weekly Features

**Plant Of The Month** – Learn all about Ipomea, a member of the morning glory family, from author Barbara Ellis.

**Novartis TechNotes** – Find weekly tips, U.S. soil temperatures, bug activity maps, growing degree days and more.

**GreenSearch PeopleSmarts** – This month's GreenSearch feature uncovers the value of the Hispanic and Latino workforce.

**ALCA Driver Safety Toolbox Talks** – Gather clues to avoiding hazards when driving through construction zones.

Find these features at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/weeklyindex.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/weeklyindex.asp).

## Create Your Own Lawn & Landscape Online

Later this month, you'll get a chance to personalize Lawn & Landscape Online. Scheduled for a late November/early December launch, the revamped site will allow you to personalize a page where you can save articles and other links, view your stock prices, access local weather information, change the language of the site and manage the site's content to target your specific interests. Stay tuned to the current site for more details.

## Web Tele-Seminar to Address Industry Trends

Check L&L Online or [www.grubfree.com](http://www.grubfree.com) at 7 p.m. EST on Nov. 13 for a live, interactive online turf managers program sponsored by RohMid. University entomologists David Shetlar and Dan Potter will discuss current trends in grub control. Log on to [www.grubfree.com](http://www.grubfree.com) in advance to send in your questions before the live presentation.

## ONLINE Contents

Check these links to discover the tools available on Lawn & Landscape Online that will help you stay on top of the latest industry news and grow your business:

**Daily News** – Catch breaking industry news. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/news.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/news.asp)

**E-newsletter** – Receive weekly industry news in your e-mail inbox. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/signup.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/signup.asp)

**L&L Online LawnStore** – Locate the best resources to help your business grow. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/lawnstore.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/lawnstore.asp)

**L&L Outfitter** – Dress your employees for success with custom company attire. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/outfitter.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/outfitter.asp)

**Bulletin Boards** – Discuss hot-button issues with fellow industry professionals. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/bullframe.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/bullframe.asp)

**Online Marketplace** – Obtain contact information and the latest products from industry suppliers. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/marketplace.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/marketplace.asp)

**Virtual Training School** – Review training information for landscape professionals. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/virtualschool.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/virtualschool.asp)

**Weekly Poll** – Vote on industry-related topics and compare your answers with others. [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

**Events Calendar** – Locate industry events across the country. [www.lawnandlandscape.com/calendar.asp](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/calendar.asp)

Please e-mail your comments to [shunsberger@lawnandlandscape.com](mailto:shunsberger@lawnandlandscape.com). Lawn & Landscape Online is: Scott Hunsberger, Internet editor ([shunsberger@lawnandlandscape.com](mailto:shunsberger@lawnandlandscape.com)) and Sydney Work, web department manager ([swork@gie.net](mailto:swork@gie.net)). Enjoy your visit to Lawn & Landscape Online!

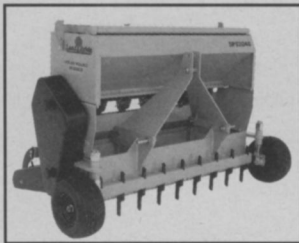
## Product Review

(continued from page 136)

- Air conditioning draws a maximum of 3.5 hp from the engine and uses 25 percent fresh air and 75 percent recirculated air  
*Circle 228 on reader service card*

### LAND PRIDE 3-POINT POWERED RAKES

- PR1572 3-point powered rake is designed for compact tractors with a minimum 25 hp engine



- Rake is 72 inches wide with close couplings to allow unit to work around new housing construction sites, buildings and roadside seeding
- Available with two roller choices, an adjustable material control deflector and 20-degree left and right angling
- In addition to the 3-point rake, a heavy-duty 72- or 96-inch P.T.O.-powered rake

and a 72-inch skid-steer powered rake are also available from Land Pride  
*Circle 229 on reader service card*

### FREEDOM HITCH UTILITY TRAILERS

- Models BK140OU and BK140OU-R feature a 52- by 100-inch deck with  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch treated plywood base
- 1,400-pound carrying capacity
- Trailer includes turf-wide tires, custom molded fenders, powder-coated paint and side rail stake pockets that double as tie-downs to secure gear
- Includes marine-grade spindles and spring-loaded, double-lipped seals with stainless steel sleeves and fine roller bearings
- Available options include front stop kit, ramp kit, spare tire bracket, 800-pound swivel jack, brake kit and motorcycle channel with attaching hardware  
*Circle 230 on reader service card*

### SKI LANDSCAPE MULCH TRUCK

- "The Mulch Truck" features a P.T.O.-

driven, two direction, moving floor and front conveyer

- Vehicle can fill a wheelbarrow in three seconds and quickly dump the load
- Mulch handling system is an alternative to wheelbarrows

*Circle 231 on reader service card*

### ROLL-RITE TARP FOR LIGHT TRUCKS

- 6200 semi-automatic tarp system features window shade-style tarp
- Pulls out manually with double spring power for fast tarp roll up
- Tie-down feature secures tarp behind cab guards to reduce wind interference
- Constructed of polished aluminum and designed for 1-ton applications in landscaping, light-duty construction, municipalities and more
- 0- and 40-degree offsetting options allow trailer arm systems to be tailored to light truck applications

- Uses in-cab switch operation

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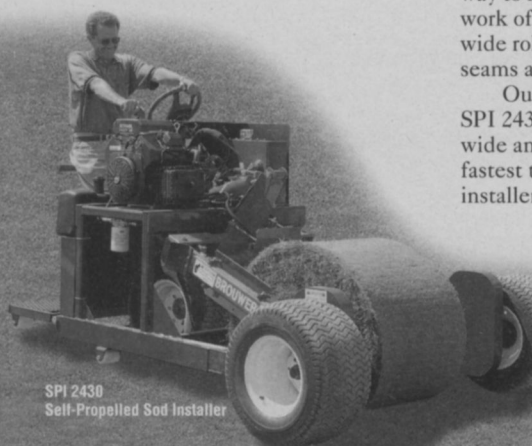
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Rollmate 2430  
Walk-Behind Sod Installer

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## Conversation

by Bob West

*One of the industry's biggest names talks about leadership, success and plans for the future.*

## Conversation

with

# Scott

# BRICKMAN



The Brickman name may be the most well-known name in the industry. Ironically, the people behind the Brickman family haven't traditionally been as identifiable as their name. Over the course of more than 30 years with the company, Dick Brickman built a leading industry company while maintaining a low profile and developing a close-to-the-vest company culture.

Scott Brickman assumed the reins for The Brickman Group from his father in early 1998 when the company took on some financial partners. Part of his plan for the company's future includes a more visible role in the industry, so he sat down with *Lawn & Landscape* Editor Bob West for this conversation.

**BW:** Tell me about your personal background?

**SB:** I'm 38 now, and I really started in the business when I was eight. My brother and I got up at 6 a.m. and went to work in the nursery every morning. I got to go on a crew when I was 13, and then I started running a crew when I was 15 because I had the experience, but they put an intern with me to drive.

I went to Penn State for landscape architecture, and after graduation, I went to Florida for two years because I wanted to work for someone else, so I worked for a landscape architect firm. I worked briefly in our design department when I came back and then I worked in sales.

From there, I got moved to Washington, D.C., because we weren't performing well here at the time, and I became a branch manager running the design/build branch. I did that, got that turned around and I became the regional manager for mid-Atlantic region and Florida. Then I was promoted to take over East

*(continued on page 143)*

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(continued from page 140)

Brickman joined other industry leaders at a Lawn & Landscape Industry Summit. Photo: Roger Mastroiani



Coast operations. That was the way we stayed until we brought in our financial partners, my brother left the business and my father stepped out of his day-to-day role with our business and let me take over.

**BW:** What have been the keys to the company's growth?

**SB:** The keys to our success started with my father's and grandfather's focus on quality. My grandfather wasn't a businessman, but he loved plants.

My dad grew up in the business, went to the University of Illinois to get his landscape architect degree and joined my grandfather as his first full-time employee. They did \$15,000 in gross sales their first year together,

and then they really grew the business in design/build with a focus on pure quality with my father as the architect. My grandfather was a meticulous horticulturist and my father was a landscape architect who was focused on quality design and installation, and that has carried through into the business today.

People who have been around here awhile will tell stories about Dad coming out to a job and moving every plant on the job after they had been planted because it wasn't quite right. His quality ran into making sure we ran the operations so well, and that's why our operations are so strong. It's the commitment to taking out waste and rework, the

quality of our processes and the quality of our work that drives our success and our profitability, and that's what drove Dad.

I think a secondary key is that we've done a good job focusing on the business end of things. We've studied Dr. Deming and his total quality improvement. That was very progressive at the time because that was the mid-1980s when Deming was just getting popular with the Japanese automotive manufacturers. We had to look at setting up divisions that compete with each other and how we would structure our compensation.

Another key has been striving for constant improvement. We're fortunate that we are being very successful from a financial standpoint, but when I go into management meetings all people talk about are the problems. And that never changes because there's this need to constantly improve and we're never satisfied.

**BW:** How has that drive to improve im-

(continued on page 146)

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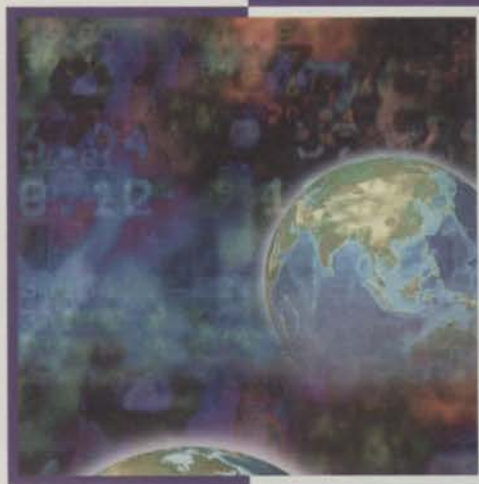
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# PERSONALIZATION

## Conversation

(continued from page 143)

pacted the company?

**SB:** What has resulted is a standard model that we're constantly looking to improve. We have people out there looking at how we mow grass and how to improve it, what are the best practices and how we can apply them to all of our branches.

We're also looking at the big picture of how a job cost management system should work. We have nine full-time information technology people, so we're getting the information we need and we're getting it faster.

That way we can plan better because the thing about the maintenance business is that it's all about planning. The better you plan, the better you perform, and that's true for any business.

It's true on a smaller degree - when the crew leaves in the morning does it have what it needs? Does it know what it needs to accomplish? Does it have the resources and equipment every day?

Part of that planning is keeping statistics on key areas. For example, we have statistics that show that the turnover is much higher with employees you hire in the spring and throw into the fire of your peak season compared with hiring someone in the fall, training them through the fall and winter and then sending them out in the spring.

That's the difference between success and failure when it comes to customer service and effi-

ciency, so we had our executive committee and regional manager meetings [in September] and preparing for next year was the whole focus of the meetings besides the 15 minutes talking about our financial performance for the rest of the year.

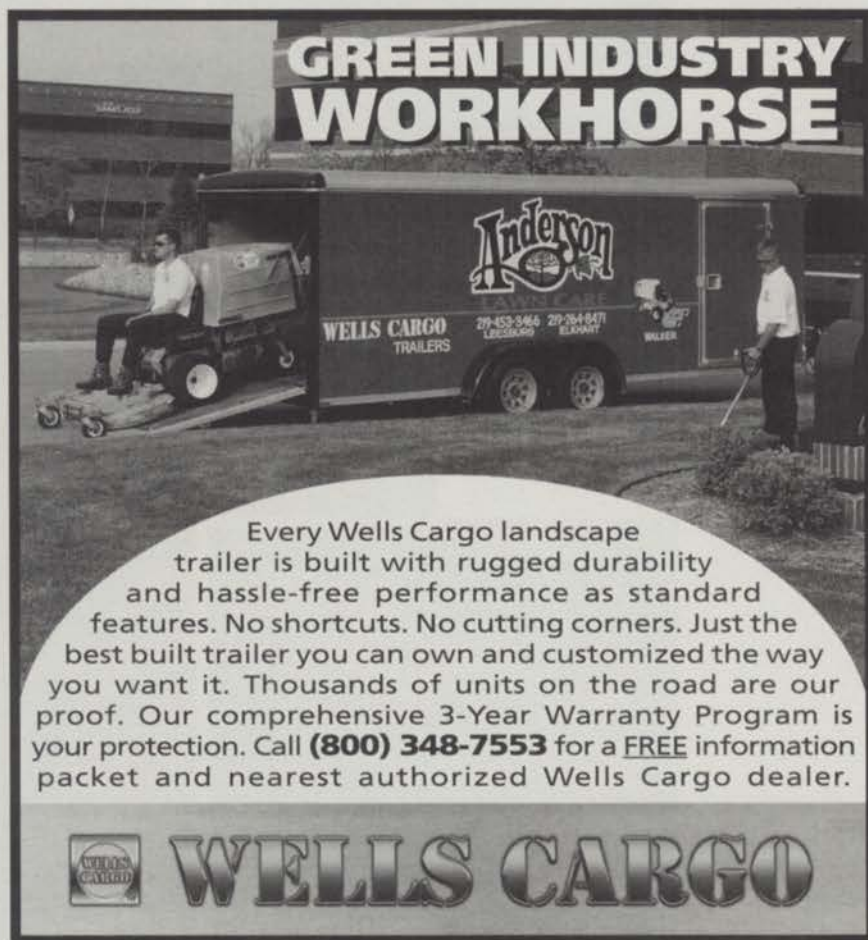
What I want my guys in branches to be thinking about is one month from now. You have to have your plans set to start with, and then you can adjust as you need to. Our poorer performing branches don't have that in place, and they aren't following core processes to get them in place. Then they're reacting, they don't perform as well financially, their customers aren't as happy and their employees aren't as happy.

**BW:** The Brickman Group started in design/build. What triggered the company's move into maintenance?

**SB:** Taking care of your employees and making long-term commitments to them was always important here, which is ultimately what drove us into the landscape maintenance

## On... **FAMILY**

**'I don't think it's a big issue in this company because we're growing so fast and I'm the only family member involved. Plus, they all have real ownership in the business.'** - Scott Brickman



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nance business. The construction cycle that the design/build business followed had some big ups and some big downs, and as we got bigger it got hard not to have to lay off some people during that cycle.

But it wasn't until probably 1990 that we started focusing on maintenance. At that time, 85 percent of our business was design/build, and we were doing \$35 million in annual sales. By 1997, we did \$100 million in sales with 85 percent maintenance.

**BW:** Can you tell us about the decision to bring on the venture capital partners?

**SB:** We hired an investment banking firm in August 1997 to talk to potential partners, and we had two options. The first was an outright sale of the business to a strategic buyer, which no one in the family wanted to do. But how much money was my family willing to leave on the table so I could continue to run this business?

Our other option was a financial buyer, at which point we could continue to own a

significant part of the business. While we were going through that process, these rumors got out that there was this roll-up getting started called LandCare. TruGreen always had been interested in acquiring our business, and it had a strategic plan that got it in the landscape business in late 1999 and early 2000. But we didn't want to be bought by ServiceMaster. Their culture didn't match with our culture, and that was more important than their offer.

So we have two financial partners along with myself and my wife. Our move happened to coincide with LandCare, and we got TruGreen to start buying, who thought LandCare would buy a bunch of companies and that our strategy would be to get venture capital and do our own buying.

That was never our strategy, and for good reason as we can see now. We did more acquisitions than we were doing, but we're not an acquisition company. We were always very conservative, and we wouldn't

take on debt. We were basically a \$100-million company with no debt.

**BW:** Has it been difficult for you to take over the company at a relatively young age since some people will just think you got the job because of your name?

**SB:** I did get this position because my name is Brickman, but the people that gave me this position aren't named Brickman - they're named Bank One and Bank America. Now, they believed I could do the job, and I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity if my name wasn't Brickman. So I'm fortunate, and now I've got the chance to prove I can do this.

I think thus far I've proven myself to them, and that was important to me and is part of what drives me. I don't do this for the money. I do this because it's a challenge and I like to do this. But the dynamics of a family business are very challenging, and I'm very fortunate, as my brother and sister were when they were in the business, to have a father who was very forward thinking and

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gave us incredible opportunities.

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He sent me here when I was 27 years old to run a region, and I was fortunate that it was very unsuccessful when I came here and it was turned into a success. He was willing to give up control to us and the managers before him. But he made us do everything and more that every other employee did. When I was 13 years old and on a crew I was expected to work every bit as hard as the laborer next to me, so I got up at 6 in the morning and got home at 7 in the evening seven days a week. If the crew was working, I was working, and I loved that. I took great pride in being part of a crew.

**BW:** What do you think are some of the upsides and downsides to the size of the company?

**SB:** The upside is that the opportunity out there is tremendous. We were at \$100 million

# On... INCENTIVES

**'Philosophically, I don't think you can have incentives for different employees. We incent employees on the total company performance so they're all pulling the rope in the same direction. Our branches are right next to each other and they share customers, equipment and employees, so if they're measured on their own performance then they're not going to be interested in helping out the branches around them.'** - Scott Brickman

in annual sales in 1997, and we'll do about \$230 million in 2000. I think we can keep this growth rate with the same amount of effort that it has taken us. So, look at that and say four years from now we'll be \$460 million, six years \$920 million.

The upside is that we can continue the culture. What's important to me is how we take care of our customers and the difference that makes for people. Besides, on the most basic level, when you have someone who treats you really well and gives you great service, whether it's a waiter at a restaurant

or someone going out of their way to help you, it makes the world a better place.

I think we as a company can set that standard where we treat people fairly. We give them extraordinary service, great quality and we can improve the world we live in and take care of how it looks. That excites me.

The other thing that excites me is that right now we have close to 4,000 employees, and they spend the majority of their waking hours working at this company. If we can create an environment where people treat each other with trust, honesty and respect,

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and they can find joy in their work, then that's a great opportunity. Those things make a difference and leave a legacy. If we do better at those things than others, the growth rate will be better because people will come to us and customers will come to us.

The downside is that we are a business, and the bigger you get the more challenging it becomes to buffer the difference between a focus on dollars and a focus on doing the right thing.

Eventually, and we're looking five years out with our partners, we're going to have a new capital structure, and the bigger you get, the more public the markets are likely to become. That means there's less tolerance for a variation of numbers, which means more focus on managing the numbers for me. To me, that's the challenge. Ultimately, as a leader, I think that will be my challenge because I'm the buffer.

**BW:** How would you compete against The Brickman Group?

**SB:** The way we look at it, The Brickman Group is 70 small businesses. We do that because as a small business you can serve your customers better. We want to stay close to the customer with the guy making the decisions leading the branch, talking to customers and the people serving the customers every day. That's our success. The smaller operator is doing that. And if I wasn't doing this job, I would be running a small landscape company because the most enjoyable part is dealing with and serving the customers.

A lot of small landscape companies measure success by how much business they have. But they don't realize that equipment is waste unless it's productive. Figure out how to better manage, how to streamline, how to take out waste and rework, work more efficiently and, at the same time, build relationships with your customers. It's all about relationships.

We see it all the time when we'll have a site that looks wonderful, and the property next door looks horrible. We go to that property manager and say, 'Look at what we're doing next door. We can help you.' And he says, 'What do you mean? My property looks great. I get the best service. I love Johnny.'

Johnny has made a friend out of this property manager, so he overlooks all of the weeds and the poor performance. If you can build those relationships, and at same time

do great work, Brickman won't touch you.

**BW:** Are there companies out there that you measure your company against?

**SB:** It's not this industry because I feel we set all the standards, and I want to set the standards for our industry. I look at companies like Nordstrom, Home Depot, and companies like GE for how they grow leadership. I look at companies like MBNA for how they create loyalty with their customers.

**BW:** There is a common conception that The Brickman Group wins a lot of jobs on a low price and then makes the money back by selling more enhancements than most other companies can sell. Is that accurate?

**SB:** And I think our price on add-ons is usually competitive or lower than other companies' because we work very hard at looking at our profits. These are \$2,000 to \$30,000 jobs. But our focus is not selling add-ons. Our focus is listening to our customers and providing good service.

We do lots of customer surveys, and the No. 1 thing every year, for every branch, far and away is 'I wish you people were more proactive. Tell me how I can improve my site. What I can do to make it better? Communicate with me.'

What does it mean to be proactive? It means offering them opportunities. Show them ways they can do more, which means sell add-ons or enhancements. So, we do not begin to meet the customers' desire to be proactive on their site, yet we sell a lot of add-ons. Part of what they want is for us to tell them ideas even though they're not sure they can buy them, but they want the idea.

People negotiate hard with people on a contract, and contractors make the assumption that because customers negotiate hard on a contract they don't have money to spend. Actually, they negotiate hard on a contract because they want to make sure they're buying right. They might have three times the amount of the contract to spend on additional things. People are stupid in making the assumption these customers don't have money, and the customer sees that as not being proactive. If the site looks bad because the customer should do replanting, we should be telling them this even if it's not in the contract. That's what can set you apart.

**BW:** What are your thoughts about consolidation in the future?

**SB:** It's here. Where it goes from here, who

## Conversation

(continued from page 149)

knows? We'll continue to grow and we'll continue to acquire companies that fit our model on a conservative basis. It has to do with the people, customers and their culture.

It wouldn't surprise me to see others get into it. People will be conservative when consolidating because the financial world sees what has happened to TruGreen. But I think there's tremendous opportunity, and I think there's tremendous opportunity for that. So I see that continuing, and that's the opposite of consolidation.

I don't think consolidation is going to happen nearly as fast as everyone thought it would or as fast as the people at ServiceMaster said it would. They are not going to do in this business what they did in the lawn care business – I think that's obvious. This is a much bigger business, first of all, and lawn care is lawn care while there are so many variations in landscape from residential de-

sign/build to residential build to bid to maintenance to irrigation to tree to commercial.

That's why we'll never consolidate the landscape construction business, and that's a whole market we're never going to touch. We don't know how to do that work, and I don't want to know how. We're very focused on the landscape maintenance industry, and only certain segments of that market. So, I think it will be hard for someone to ever consolidate most of this business. Look at TruGreen, Brickman and Environmental Industries combined – what do we have? Maybe \$1.5 billion, at the most. That's less than 2 percent of the whole industry.

**BW:** How would you describe your management style?

**SB:** My approach is probably a lot driven by personality, theory and philosophy. Then there's the company management style, which I hope goes hand-in-hand with my style, but I think we take a long-term approach with our leadership style. My goal is to present a vision for the company. My full-time job is telling our people exactly what I've been telling you about – customers, service, people, quality, teams, process. It's an easy message.

Basically, we've got to create a great service level. We've got to thrill our customers. We've got to produce great quality on the jobs. We've got to build teams and treat people with trust, honesty and respect. We've got to focus on the process that run our business and reduce waste and re-work. That's our management message.

I still get involved in sales, finances, human resource issues and so on, but I try to delegate that stuff and focus on delivering that message and making sure everyone else is focused on it, because that is our challenge. It's that simple.

I'm working to get more removed from the operations so I can spend more time in meetings sharing the vision. The only way I think you can share the vision is with stories. I can go in there and talk about customer service or talk about building teams and treating people with trust, honesty and respect, but if I can illustrate with a story, it's so much more powerful, so I try to make that a big part of my leadership style.

A big part of my job, and one of the huge advantages we have over our competitors, is that when you have 70 branches you have 70

laboratories. If all of the landscapers in the Washington, D.C., area were willing to share everything they knew with each other, they could teach each other a tremendous amount. Well, we've got 70 branches who do that, and if one branch makes an improvement it may improve its business by .5 percent in labor, but multiply that by 70 and the numbers get huge. So our job is to share that and get the standard improvement.

**BW:** How do you accomplish that?

**SB:** The challenge there is to create an environment where people are open to criticism and a new way of doing things, where they always want to figure out a better way to do something. People who fear for their job and how well they're doing are defensive, they close down, they show you what you want to see. If people trust you, know that you believe they're doing best they can do and it's the process that doesn't allow them to do any better and what we have to work on is improving the process, then they're open to it.

We do a lot of management and leadership training. We're spending a lot of time on emotional intelligence right now. Basically, Daniel Goldman wrote the book on this, and he did a tremendous amount of research by the Hay Group. I was fortunate enough to meet with the people who did the research, which shows that the No. 1 factor influencing an organization's success is the environment people work in and their attitude. That's a 30 percent determinant on an organization's success, which is far and away the biggest leverage point. Seventy percent of what determines the environment is the leadership, so that's enlightening to me.

Now, when I go to a branch and I think that we're not getting the results that we want, I look at the environment. What is the environment and what is the leadership since that is what is probably creating the environment? So, we're educating our leaders on different leadership styles and what makes a good environment and what doesn't. The biggest challenge we have with our leaders is that they are doers who came up through the field and want to be out doing the work, meeting with the clients, looking at work orders or else they feel like they aren't doing things. What they need to be doing is meeting with their people, sharing the vision and giving them feedback.

(continued on page 157)

### Statement of Ownership

Statement required by the act of October 23, 1962. Section 4369, title 39, United States Code, showing the ownership of Lawn & Landscape published monthly at 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399 Cuyahoga County.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete

Jami Childs, Director, Operations

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they're assured the people they are talking with are not competitors."

**WHAT'S IN A NAME.** The lawn and landscape industry's stiffening competition induces an entrepreneurial headache for some business owners who struggle with regulatory legislation, advertising competition and labor issues.

However, the "mom and pop" operations still thrive, DeBolt said. Trademarks and designer labels do not sway some clients, Wright added.

"People buy from those that they feel comfortable dealing with," Wright observed.

Franchises, however, enter the game with an established market position.

"The most valid comparison between a franchise and an independently owned business would be Don's Hamburger stand vs. McDonald's, in terms of attracting people to your business," DeBolt related. "There are some terrific brand names out there that people see on the side of a truck and in advertising all over the country that establish a position in the marketplace."

Being a part of the brand name is a sort of security blanket for franchises, and some entrepreneurs today would not want to be in the industry without one, DeBolt added. Perhaps this is why he indicated that franchise purchases are on the rise.

Frith also predicted a growing future for franchises, especially for services like lawn care that allow customers to eliminate time-consuming tasks from their busy schedules.

"I would think that we're looking at the business to grow significantly because you have a desire for single-family dwellings and the demand for both husband and wife to work, which creates a tremendous premium on leisure time," he said.

Entrepreneurs capitalizing on these trends can do so in a network-supportive environment with franchises, DeBolt concluded.

"For businesspeople who have an existing lawn care business and see a future of challenges associated with running an independent small business but want to continue to run their own business, they don't have to be by themselves if they invest in a franchise," he noted. **LL**

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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## ARBORIST

Hawks is a well known Garden Center, Landscape design/build and Landscape Management firm in the Milwaukee area. We are looking to vastly expand our Landscape Management division and are looking for an Arborist to join our team. Candidate must be certified arborist familiar with the latest techniques and have at least 3 years experience. Please fax (414)258-9739 or send your resume to:

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## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT MANAGER

Hawks is a well known Garden Center, Landscape design/build and Landscape Management firm in the Milwaukee area. We are looking to vastly expand our Landscape Management division and are looking for a manager with a proven track record of increasing both sales and productivity. This is an excellent opportunity for someone with ambition and the desire for a challenge. Please fax (414)258-9739 or send your resume to:

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Western States Reclamation, Inc. (WSRI) is an 18 year old company with unique clientele and projects. Services and projects include land restoration, large landscape/irrigation construction, minor earthwork, and light civil engineering. Present project size ranges from \$1K to \$4M. WSRI seeks an individual with 10 plus years of experience to handle project management and estimating.

- PM Position requires a minimum of 5 years experience in a recognized construction company. Position involves supervision of multiple projects and intense scheduling of materials, manpower and machinery. Ideal candidate will have experience in revegetation, erosion control, urban park construction, and civil/earthwork. Degree preferred in civil engineering, construction management, landscape architecture or equivalent. Computer literacy a must.

- Estimator - Entry Level/Mid Level/ & Senior Level

- Upper level positions require previous construction estimating experience up to \$5M single project. Must be computer literate and have experience with CADD and estimating software. Degree in related field preferred.

- Entry level position requires computer knowledge, good math skills, and 2 years experience in related field - degree helpful.

Above average salary, benefits, incentive program, 401K plan and company vehicle. Send salary history and requirements to WSRI, 11730 Wadsworth Blvd, Broomfield, CO 80020, fax 303-465-2478,

email [wsridrc@aol.com](mailto:wsridrc@aol.com)

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## CAREER OPPORTUNITY



All Pro Landscaping, Inc. is hiring Managers, Superintendents and Supervisors looking for an excellent career opportunity. All Pro seeks energetic, team oriented candidates with proven leadership, communication and interpersonal skills who wish to take on an exciting entrepreneurial job with one of South Jersey's highest quality, fastest growing full service landscape companies.

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- Irrigation Superintendent

Experienced leaders with strong management and communications skills and a desire to do quality work should apply. Complete compensation package includes excellent base salary, bonus opportunity, company vehicle, medical, dental, vision and 401k retirement plan, sick and personal time. Please call Avi at 609-261-1655 for more information on position requirements or fax resumes and salary requirements to 609-261-1624. E-mail: [ayalon@allpro-land.com](mailto:ayalon@allpro-land.com). EOE

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(continued from page 150)

They do this work because they love the work, not because they love to communicate. We're teaching them how to communicate, and we're putting processes in place to improve the communication, which improves the leadership, which improves the business. We spend a tremendous amount of time and money on training and education. I would bet we spend four to five times what our competition spends, and that's overhead, but it comes back to you in spades. And that's why we can run that much more efficiently.

**BW:** Where do you see The Brickman Group five years from now?

**SB:** I see the growth continuing. I see us continuing to focus on the core because we have such an incredibly small percentage of the market. All I see when I look at the business are our deficiencies. I can be real negative and tell you how bad we're doing—I can tell you about unhappy customers, I can tell you about unhappy teams, I can tell you about people who aren't being treated fairly, and those are all the opportunities. I can tell you about people who aren't getting good leadership, which kills me, but that's partially my responsibility. But you know, I'm

young, I'm still new to this job, I've got a lot of improvement to do. We're a young team that is growing very fast and learning to improve and focus on that.

One of the things we need to focus on is balancing our lives and getting more balance in our people's lives. It's easy to get so driven on growing fast that people aren't spending time they should with their families, so we have to build processes in there to allow that to happen. That goes for me personally and everyone else because when it's all said and done the time you spent doing other things is more important than how successful you were at business. That's part of leadership—saying, 'We all know what we have to achieve. How do we do it in 45 to 50 hours a week?'

**BW:** What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the industry?

**SB:** I think government regulation when it comes to labor is far and away the biggest issue we're dealing with. And I don't think we have an effective way to address that. We're just going with the tide responding to what happens to us. All we have for an industry lobbying effort is one person, part time, and that's not enough for this industry.

But this is an industry of little companies

who are at the end of the tail who get whipped around by what the bigger body does, and most of them probably aren't following the regulations. They're just hoping and praying every day that they don't get caught. Then, if they get caught, all heck breaks loose, and we've seen that when the INS raids some of these companies and they're just devastated. They work too hard to have that happen, so we have to work to get systems in place that they could follow to take away that risk.

With the risk out there you're looking at a business equation of what sort of return can I get for the risk I've got? The returns most landscapers are getting don't justify a lot of risk, so we have to figure out how to minimize that risk. **LL**

*The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.*

**TO READ MORE of  
Lawn & Landscape's  
interview with Scott  
Brickman,** *visit*  
[www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

(continued from page 56)

States. A location like Erie sees in excess of approximately 260 inches of snow in some areas annually, so Allin has had plenty of opportunities to hone his craft. At the same time, he has developed one of the leading landscape companies in the market.

But Allin's real industry influence shined when, in 1996, he helped found the Snow & Ice Management Association, a group established in part to "promote ethical, efficient and environmentally sound" operations in an area of business that had been largely ignored. The association, which Allin has served as president of since its inception, now encompasses nearly 400 members and is aiding in the advancement of this landscape industry segment.

"We used to think of snow and ice management as a necessary evil," Gaumer said. "John is teaching us that it is a legitimate profit center if run properly. And he has

shown an unselfish dedication and willingness to share his knowledge."

**THE STANDARD.** *Dick Brickman, retired president, The Brickman Group, Langhorne, Pa.*

As a 1957 landscape architect graduate, Theodore "Dick" Brickman, Jr. joined his father's landscape business and launched its design/build services, which continue to represent a profitable company facet.

The new service and Brickman's intense focus on quality (the entire Brickman team is trained in the philosophy of W. Edwards Deming, the internationally renowned authority on quality performance) appealed to Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, who in 1971 selected The Brickman Group to design his corporate headquarters. Kroc, impressed with the work, then insisted that the company "maintain his landscape forever,"

which served as a precursor to the company's landscape maintenance service offering.

Today, besides serving customers in 17 states, The Brickman Group still maintains the McDonald's Plaza.

"Size isn't what motivated my dad; quality is what mattered to him most," explained Scott Brickman, Dick's son and current president of The Brickman Group. "People who have been here a long time will tell stories about dad coming out to a job and moving plants after they've already been planted because they weren't quite right. His insistence on quality is why our operations are so strong. The quality of taking out waste and rework, the quality of our processes and our work drives our success and our profitability, and that's what drove dad." **LL**

*The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.*

## Cover Story

## How We Do It

# Designing Irrigation Systems at Morrell Group

Designing an irrigation system is done through a detailed and well-thought-out process at The Morrell Group, a division of OMNI Facility Resources, Atlanta, Ga.

The main focus in designing an irrigation system is separating the zones based on the water requirements of each particular landscape area. Plant material, turf and seasonal color beds should all have their own individual zones to provide flexibility for property maintenance.

Zone separation by water requirements is also the most efficient form of water conservation. Installing systems that water everything at the same time is a lot less expensive, but it could prove more costly in the long run (increased water costs, disease and fungus problems, nutrient problems, potential plant material loss, etc.).

Contractors should use a controller with multiple programming features for zone separation. Electromechanical clocks are great for durability, but pointless if you do not have the ability to run different zones at different times.

No more than one type of head should be installed on a zone. Too many times we see contractors install one lone gear head on a spray head zone because the radius on a spray head doesn't quite cover all of the landscape in that area. Zones with spray heads should be all spray heads, zones with gear heads should be all gear heads and zones with drip should be all drip – no exceptions. The amount of water dispersed from a spray head is significantly higher than from a gear head or drip.

**MAINTENANCE MATTERS.** Many irrigation contractors install systems and don't concern themselves with what happens after the job is complete. Some of the prac-

tices that facilitate future systems maintenance are more costly but give customers huge long-term savings.

One such practice is to install at least one extra control wire for each control valve that is installed. This is not a costly or time-consuming practice, and it allows for easier system upgrades in the future.

Isolation valves are also an under-utilized component. We install an isolation valve in front of every control wire. This greatly expedites future valve service and reduces overall system downtime in the event of valve failure. Also, spacing isolation valves periodically throughout the main line network reduces system downtime in the event of a main line failure. Control valves, as well as any other valve, should be installed in a properly-sized valve box, easily accessible for future maintenance. Plenty of excess control wire should be coiled inside the control valve box.

When designing a system, it is important to keep the velocity of water moving through the pipes less than 5 feet per second (FPS). In most manufacturers' catalogs, there is reference data that guides the designer on how many gallons per minute (GPM) is allowed through various pipe diameters. Generally, for 1-inch Class 200 PVC pipe, no more than 16 GPM should be travelling through the pipe in order to stay below 5 FPS. The higher the velocity, the more wear and tear you may experience in your pipe and fittings.

No more than three pipes should be placed in any trench. Many contractors like to have the control valves in one central location. This creates a mess of pipe and wires – a maintenance nightmare. If there is ever a leak within the manifold area, plan on having to redo the entire manifold. Another problem with manifolds is that control valves should be located near the zone center to allow for more even flow and pressure distribution.

Finally, size the main line to allow for a shorter watering window. Some counties in our area can only water for seven hours every other day. Many of the systems we manage cannot water in less than seven hours during a cycle. The best-looking properties have smaller systems or the main line is sized to allow for the shorter window of time.

– Bert Wood and Jess Harlor

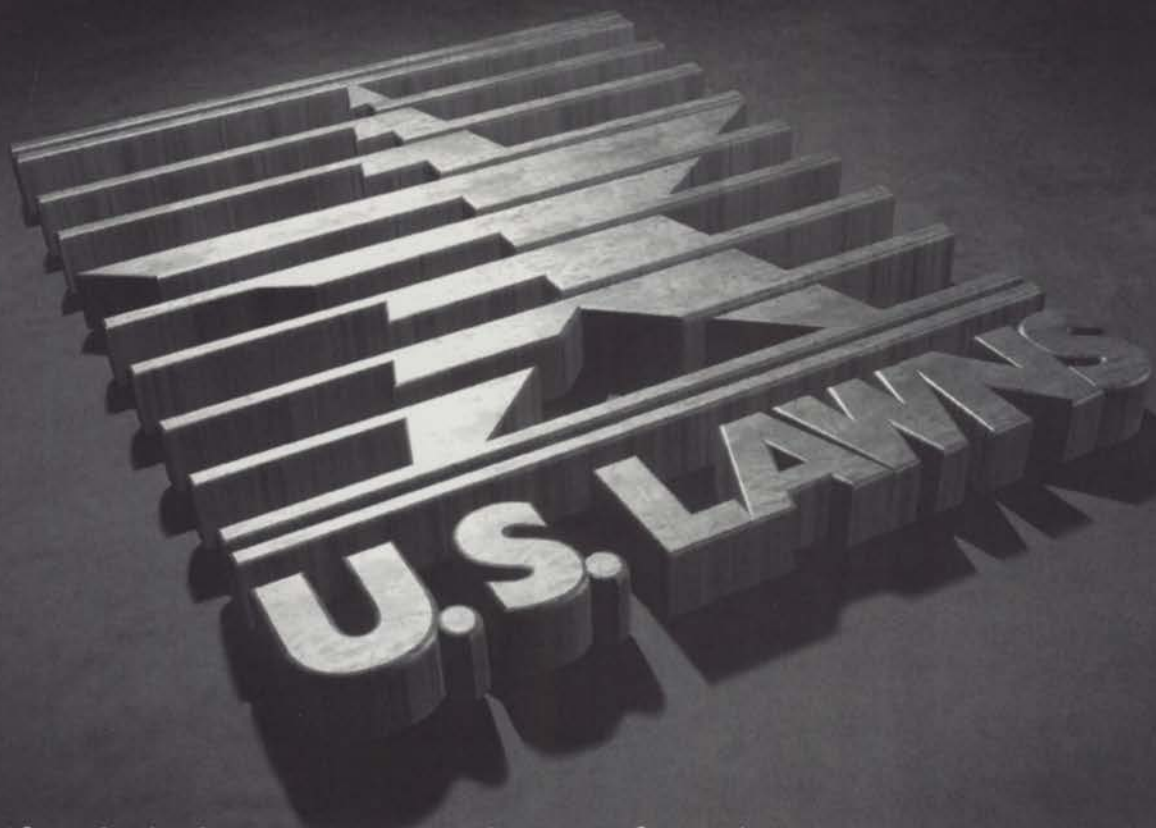


*The authors work in the irrigation division at The Morrell Group, a division of ONMI Facility Resources, Atlanta, Ga.*

## **FIVE** *Keys to Irrigation Design*

1. Separate zones by the different water requirements the plants need.
2. Use a controller with multiple programming features.
3. Only use one type of irrigation head per zone.
4. Install extra control wire throughout the system for future upgrades.
5. Limit the number of pipes in any trench to three or fewer.

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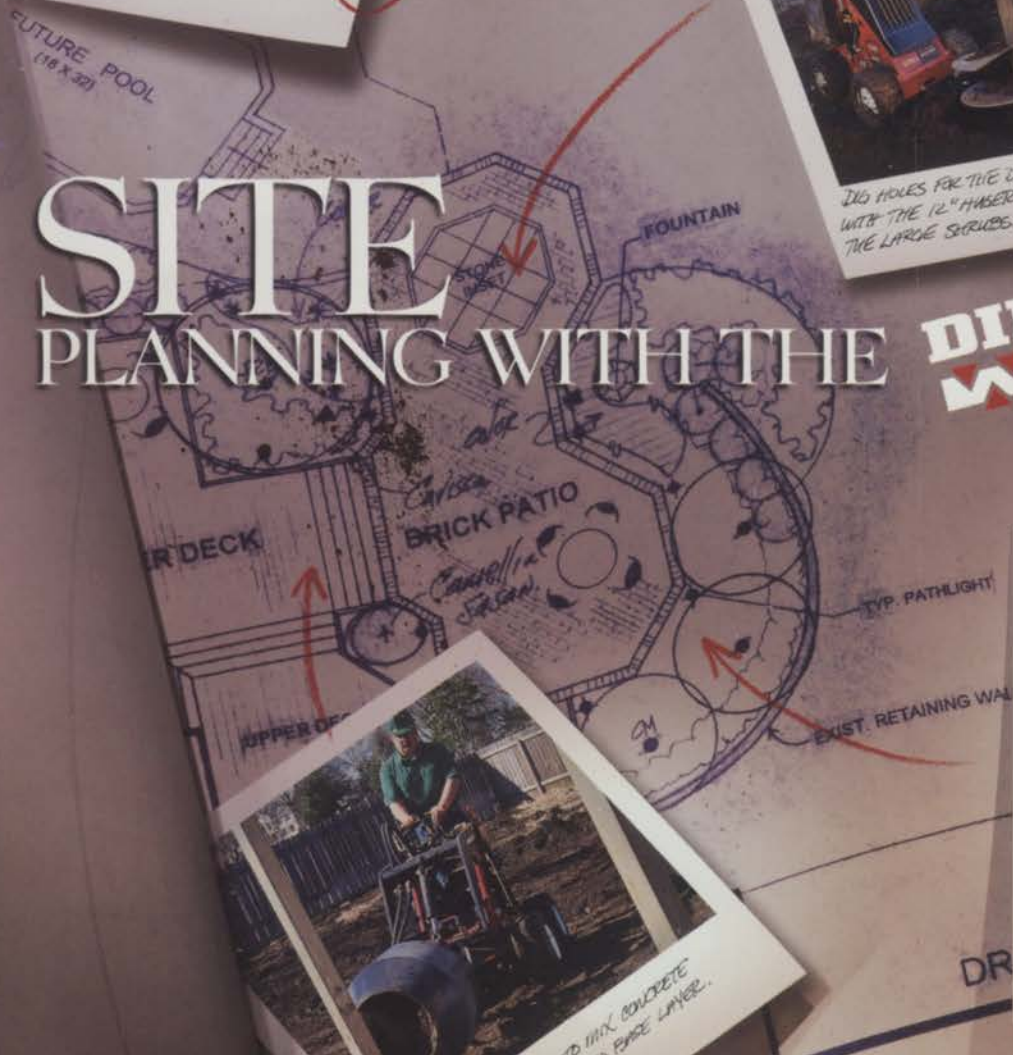
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