

James R. Burdett

Grounds Maintenance Supplies

The seed of a new enterprise, founded upon tried and proved methods, is sure to grow. This it was in late 1983 when Jim Burdett founded his new business.

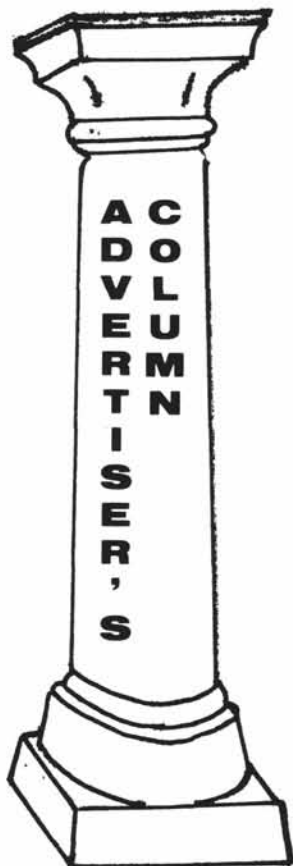
Jim had a history of over 30 years in golf course experience, from caddying at Glen Oak Country Club while in grade school, through his lawn mowing business to working on the grounds at Medinah Country Club while in college at the University of Illinois. After graduation, he entered the family business of golf course distribution when his brother, Paul, was drafted. In 1972, Jim took over Burdett's, Inc. and ran it until some mistakes overtook the business and it was closed in late 1976. Armed with the background of the golf course distribution business, he and his wife, Marilyn, decided to get back into it in 1983.

Within a radius of 35 miles from Lombard, Illinois, the home of this new business, are more than 175 golf courses. This seemed to allow a proper customer base and radius of delivery to feel comfortable. Delivery time is not as important these days of bids and the golf courses' ability to stock sufficient supplies, yet when the customer is looking for additional products, they would need it in 24 to 36 hours, just as in the days that Jim was brought up into.

The background that Jim brought into the new business had given him a knowledge of many products which were well proven in the market. Some of these products have been discontinued by manufacturers because of a high cost factor of insufficient sales of a product. Several superintendents have asked Jim if he had a source for various older products. In certain cases, he has located a manufacturer who will make some of these products or has found some of these products in inventory with another distributor, but forgotten since their volume of that product was low. Two products which fit into this category are the heavy duty 3/8" ROPE'R STAKES with step down design and SEAT 'N BENCH ENDS which utilize extra sturdy strap steel.

A phone call came in this spring which alerted Jim to the availability of a sprinkler head which hadn't been manufactured for some time. Within the 35 mile radius, there are few courses that haven't converted to automatic watering, yet still some have a manual system on fairways. To those superintendents, this sprinkler head met a need.

One measurement of success, keeping solvent, is close to the top. This means keeping sales up and costs down. The new business required a delivery vehicle as well as a unit to use while making sales calls. Either unit needn't be large. In early 1984, the mini-van concept was being introduced and it was decided



to use a mini-van as both a sales and delivery vehicle. Certain lines of merchandise were available directly to the Burdett organization and these lines would fit into a mini-van. Costs were cut by selling and delivering at the same time and, with Jim having an evening job, the business stayed "in the black" from the beginning, the fruition of a proper seedbed.

At present, this business is unique in the territory served — being the only sole proprietor-sales-delivery person in one. New lines are being added annually so, in 1985, Jim's wife, Marilyn, joined the crew. Marilyn does telephone answering and book work for three hours a day during the season. She gets to the office in Burdett's garage at 7 a.m.

The wide support received by this new business is most gratifying and will ensure a continuing competitive distributorship.

Dr. Jack Butler Receives Award

Dr. Jack Butler, Extension horticulturist and turfgrass specialist at Colorado State University, was named the recipient of the 1986 F. A. Anderson Distinguished Service Award by the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Dr. Butler was presented with this prestigious award at the Annual Cooperative Extension Awards Banquet in Fort Collins on October 2, 1986. This award, sponsored by the Colorado Cooperative Council, is given in recognition of meritorious service to the people of Colorado through Extension education.

Dr. Butler was honored for his excellence in Extension education and service programs for the turfgrass professionals and industries in Colorado and Rocky Mountain region.

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