

syngenta Business Tip of the Month

RISE Helps Historic New Orleans Landmark Transcend

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) held its annual meeting in New Orleans last month. Twenty members of the national trade association for specialty pesticide and fertilizer manufacturers, formulators and distributors made it a priority to help the city ravaged by Hurricane Katrina two years ago with their own working hands. They worked to restore one of New Orleans' most unique green spaces, Longue Vue House and Gardens, which was severely damaged during the storm.

"We serve the lawn and garden industries every day, but usually we go about it in a much different way," said Josh Weeks, chairman of the RISE Governing Board and vice president of Bayer CropScience. "Putting on the gloves and boots and grabbing a shovel is a little different than what we normally do at RISE — but it's been fun and our industry will leave a lasting mark here at Longue Vue as part of New Orleans' restoration."

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Syngenta's Austen Sutton (left), Jose Milan and John Hott weed and wrestle stalks of golden rod in Longue Vue Gardens.



Rewarding Loyal Customers

From "frequent shopper cards" at the grocery store to punch cards at your local coffee house, retailers have found countless ways to recognize and reward customers for repeat purchases. Airlines and hotel chains are widely considered pioneers when it comes to rewarding customer loyalty, and they have offered such programs as a way to reward repeat customers and add value to their companies' products and services.

Your golf course might even have a program in place as a way to increase player satisfaction and ensure their continued patronage. Within the past 10 years, course maintenance manufacturers have created ways to reward superintendents for their loyalty as well.

The Syngenta GreenPartners program is a good example of the new generation of loyalty programs for course operators. Superintendents making Syngenta purchases accrue points automatically. The points can be redeemed for new course equipment or used to provide promotional rewards for employees.

"Loyalty programs offered by golf course equipment and supply companies are a relatively new phenomenon," notes Syngenta Loyalty Marketing Manager Norman Barclift. Syngenta started its program for golf courses in 1999 and "the program has been very well received," Barclift adds. Other chemical companies also offer loyalty programs, such as the Bayer Accolades program, which was introduced in 2000.

"Our program offers great flexibility," Barclift says. "Points can be used to reward employees. Courses can redeem points for supplies to run their course operations or to help pay for employee trips to national and regional conferences.

"Courses can even donate points to professional associations, such as the GCSAA or a specific local chapter," Barclift adds. "It is a great way to help local associations and has proven very popular."

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A national historic landmark, Longue Vue is located near the 17th Street Canal and is slowly working its way back to normalcy with the help of volunteers.

"After the storm, about 80 percent of our grounds were under 2 feet of water," said Amy Graham, head gardener at Longue Vue. "There was a small portion up near the house that wasn't submerged, but we also suffered severe wind damage and lost a number of trees along with a significant portion of our tree canopy."

After Katrina, 60 percent of Longue Vue's plants were lost to flooding and wind damage, and Graham, the only one of five gardeners to return to make her home in New Orleans, was left to tackle a six-month clean-up process. RISE volunteers worked under Graham's guidance during an afternoon of weeding, replanting, raking, maintaining and restoring the gardens according to the original 1934 plan.

One day and one plant at a time, Longue Vue is beginning to resemble the garden it was in its heyday, but full restoration is a goal still set in the distant future. ■

a pump station to integrate all water sources and efficiently operate within specific watering windows.

Next was a complete overhaul of the sprinkler design — realigning sprinklers and adding zones designed to address wind and sun exposures and runoff through aggressive programming based on real-time weather inputs. Sprinkler zones were designed specifically to interact with on-site wind and rain sensors to improve performance.

According to Scott, the final key to this project's success was to pull local talent into the project early.

"The system is unique, so we

Quotable

"At least 36 states will be experiencing water shortages by 2013."
— Wayne Nastri, Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's Southwest Region.

"He was one of a kind as a person."
— Steve Forrest, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), on the death of Ed Seay, who was Arnold Palmer's longtime golf course design partner and a popular man in industry circles.

"Karen 'Kick the Activists in the' Reardon."
— ESPN's Chris Berman-ism given to Karen Reardon, communications director for the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, an association that represents pesticide and fertilizer companies.

wanted local crews to be fully trained in operations and maintenance," he says. "Those who use it need to feel in possession of it. Most of the locals are little older and consider themselves true craftsmen, so there was a lot of pride in system performance."

Belmont Hills Golf Club's irrigation system design and operation has proven so successful that Scott and ICS received an ASIC National Excellence in Irrigation Merit Award. ■

Frank is the communications manager of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants.

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— Lessley Boyd
Carter Plantation
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