

VIEWPOINT

Bruce F. Shank, Editor

When we decided last summer to explore the various markets of the Green Industry and publish our findings this year, we didn't realize the significance of what the profiles might uncover. We do now.

We stumbled upon areas of great potential, such as design/build in landscaping, revegetation in mine reclamation, interior landscaping, hydraulic seeding and mulching for erosion control, lawn care, and containerization in the nursery industry.

This month we report on the area of athletic field management. I am amazed at how many people are involved in the field and at the potential that exists, if they were only organized.

Grounds managers for parks are organized to a degree. As Dr. Roy Goss of Washington State University pointed out in the Letters section of the May issue, park administrators are relatively organized, but maintenance supervisors are not. Goss encouraged maintenance supervisors of parks to get organized and ask for help. It's there for the asking.

Public school and municipal managers of grounds appear even less organized. They have not convinced taxpayers of the need for proper maintenance of turf areas. Or perhaps more accurately, they have not sold the school boards and government councils that money should be spent for care of grounds other than mowing.

These government bodies can be sold. Contra Costa Landscaping Inc. in Martinez, Ca., has proven it (see profile in April issue). Ken Gerlack at Contra Costa first studies the individual school district for the proper contact, and then approaches that contact with evidence that proper grounds care goes beyond mowing.

For small school districts, a maintenance contract with a reputable contractor will provide the best results for the money spent. For larger districts, one individual trained in agronomy should be placed in charge of maintenance for the whole system. Leaving the care of acres of public real estate up to the janitorial staff or to a seasonal physical education teacher makes no sense to me.

Often, the decision making of turf care is given to a committee that meets once a month. Their decision is carried out by individuals basically untrained in turf care.

There is a strong case here for organization of individuals trained in turf care to manage the millions of acres of public grounds in the U.S. School districts should structure their maintenance programs such that one person can keep abreast with the latest technology in turf care and implement it for the public good.

These individuals should organize an association just for their needs and compile technical information to be used. It's easy to say but hard to do, right?

Nevertheless, Weeds Trees & Turf is going to make an attempt to locate skilled turf managers in public positions and encourage them

to organize. We will also try to serve their needs better with technical information and industry data. We want to support them in their efforts to obtain adequate budgets for turf care of public grounds. **WTT**



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