

OUTLOOK

By Bruce F. Shank, Executive Editor



The time is now to coordinate educators with our industry

The landscape business and the U.S. political machine have simultaneously recognized a need to improve our educational system.

In his State of the Union Address, President Reagan proposed a four-part package of educational incentives. The two parts of importance to the landscape and golf market are a program to improve math and science training and an Internal Revenue Service income deduction for educational savings accounts.

At the same time, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America has created a \$25,000 fund to help two- and four-year colleges establish landscape curricula. The program will build from a successful program in existence at Mississippi State University. The program will extend to high schools to show students the opportunities in landscape contracting.

A third consideration might be increased recognition of the needs of agriculture. Most horticulture programs fall into the agricultural curricula of colleges and Land Grant universities. Agricultural colleges may benefit from this new awareness.

The stage is set for a major improvement in educational channels for the landscape and golf industries. Industry should coordinate its needs with current educators to take maximum advantage of this unique opportunity.

Agricultural extension agents have an association, but horticulture and agronomy for turf and landscape play a minor role in it. An organization of educators and extension agents in horticulture and agronomy for turf and landscape would be very helpful, not only to the programs run by the educators, but to the industry as it tries to coordinate with educators.

If the major industry associations worked together with a new association of turf and landscape educators, the full potential of educational support programs could be realized.

To this end, *Weeds Trees & Turf* offers to act as a communications center to help educators and industry associations coordinate their efforts. I invite turf and landscape educators and extension agents interested in this plan to contact me at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. In turn, I will try to find and contact you and work with principals at our industry associations.

The opportunity exists. We have to make sure we take advantage of it now.

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