

Storr Tractor scores with dealers

Landscape contractors are not as easy to find as many people think. It takes extra leg work to find them, and when you do, they are often using homeowner or agricultural equipment.

But, they are out there and Storr Tractor of New Jersey and the manufacturers it represents (Toro, Smithco, etc.) wanted to find them.

The assignment was handed to Harold Block two years ago. The answer turned out to be self-employed dealers instead of more distributor salesmen. Storr set up 35 small dealerships in the New York metropolitan area, backed them up with direct mail and mini-shows, and is now reaping business it wasn't getting before. Storr's manufacturers are happy with the results and are encouraging other distributors to do the same.

"It's hard to tell your distributors his salesmen are missing accounts," says Toro's Jim Link. "Distributors have become order takers," exclaims Locke's Kevin McGrath. "The responsibility for finding incremental business is the distributor's," Ted Smith of Smithco points out.

Block said one of the advantages of dealers is you supply them the equipment boxed up. There is no set-up.

One thing is clear to both manufacturers and distributors, high replacement parts should be provided in a package to the customer. Depending upon the distributor or dealer for all service is not reasonable, as lawn care operators have been saying for years.

LESCO adds wholesale outlets

Frank Kollath has taken on the biggest challenge of his career, setting up a chain of wholesale outlets in key cities for LESCO, based in Rocky River, OH. The first two stores should open their doors this month in Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale. Scott Sincerbeau and Mont Mottice have been named regional managers for LESCO's new operation.

"We are looking for incremental business missed by our truck salesmen and mail order business," Sincerbeau said. "We are not competing with the trucks. The stores will be in areas of known high landscape business. We will have inventories of product for immediate pickup."

Lofts builds new base in Phoenix

The overseeding business is greener than ever in Phoenix and Lofts Seed has set up a new distributor there to capture its share. Dave Schneider, formerly with Valley Seed, is now on his own offering the Loft's line to Phoenix seed buyers. Dave's new number is (602) 996-8981.

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Barney Barron, superintendent of parks in San Francisco, and Dick Erickson of the Minneapolis Metrodome among others.

Highlight of the conference was the presentation of the "Lone Ranger" award to Steve Wightman, grounds superintendent at Mile High Stadium in Denver. Wightman was honored for his dedication to the Mile High playing surface in spite of a schedule consisting of two professional football teams, a professional baseball team, concerts, and the annual "Rumble on the Rockies" Drum and Bugle Corps Competition.

Past recipients of the award include Milwaukee County Stadium Superintendent Harry Gill and PAT co-inventor Dr. Daniel.

The new address of the STMA is: STMA, c/o Don Marshall, 2000 S. State College, Anaheim, CA 92806.

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PLCAA are Vice President Jim Marria, Boise, ID, and Secretary-Treasurer Keith Weidler, Omaha, NB. New board members are Dr. Paul Schnare, Cape Girardeau, MO, Paul Moore, Las Vegas, NV, and Jerry Garnett, Monmouth Junction, NJ.

Next year's convention will again be in Tampa from Nov. 17-21.

In related conference news, Greg Bushman, marketing manager for Stauffer's special products, announced a joint publicity campaign to promote the lawn care industry. Funded by Stauffer and sponsored jointly by Stauffer and the PLCAA, the campaign is targeted for national, regional, and local publications.

"This program is designed to heighten the public's awareness of their lawns, inform them of the complexity of maintaining a quality lawn, and educate them as to the services offered by the lawn care industry," Bushman says. Stauffer will be providing the media with a series of articles.

Of particular note is an article entitled, "Lawn Chemicals—Safer than You Think." Bushman notes, "this story will strive to negate some of the perceived fears surrounding chemicals in general, and lawn chemicals in particular."