At the opening ceremonies, Lawn Care Industry magazine publisher Jon Miducki presented its “Man of the Year” award to James I. FitzGibbon, CEO of Lesco, Inc., in Rocky River, Ohio.

“Many names crossed our minds in trying to decide what one person made the most significant contribution to the industry,” Miducki said. “(We found) one person who consistently went the extra mile. FitzGibbon had the foresight to recognize lawn care as a separate industry from landscape, and has been instrumental in developing marketing programs and distribution systems to benefit the LCO.”

LEGISLATION

Drug testing is here, now, for lawn, landscape drivers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Drivers of trucks carrying commonly-used lawn care chemicals will be required to be tested for drugs under new federal regulations that begin this month.

Lawn and landscape companies which employ 50 or more drivers must comply by Dec. 21 with new sections of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. Those with fewer than 50 drivers have until Dec. 21, 1990 to begin a drug testing program.

“The problem with these rules is enforcement,” says Paul Skorupa, assistant director of the Pesticide Public Policy Foundation.

“People could probably get away with it (failure to do drug tests) for years and years,” he says, just as they now skirt DOT regulations on packaging and shipping hazardous materials.

However, enforcement is likely to occur if a vehicle is involved in a traffic accident. The U.S. Department of Transportation may then find cause to audit the company headquarters and the entire operation, Skorupa warns.

A number of consulting firms will provide drug testing along with the required notification and documentation.

Drivers are to be tested for the presence of marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines and phencyclidine (PCP).

If test results indicate that a driver has used drugs, the new rules do not mandate that the person be fired. Each company, though, must have a written policy on how such an offense would be dealt with.

GOLF

Groundwater may remain nitrate-free

ITHACA, N.Y. — With good management practices, golf courses can protect groundwater from nitrate contamination, according to a recent study by Dr. Martin Petrovic of Cornell University.

Petrovic recommends applying frequent, light rates of nitrogen, or using slow-release nitrogen resources, even though they may be more costly. Superintendents also should avoid fertilizing when turfgrass is naturally slow growing, especially in cool weather.

Managers, Petrovic adds, should conservatively irrigate the golf course to both save water and reduce leaching. They also can reduce the scope of “heavily-managed” areas and use fewer energy-demanding plants where possible.

Petrovic adds that research on greens-type sites (high sand content) does not support the conclusion that golf courses are prone to heavy nitrate leaching, especially with today’s trend toward lower nitrogen rates and slow-release sources.