



Dr. Ray Dickens, of Auburn University, has been instrumental in Alabama's roadside management.

responsible for the state eliminating tall weeds and grass in favor of bermudagrass during the summer. Winter weeds are controlled by herbicide applications during bermudagrass dormancy.

Dickens' 1978 study of several roadside mulch materials showed that seedling establishment is increased by adding cellulose, excelsior, or other mulch materials to erosion control nettings. He also showed that incorporating plant nutrients into the adhesive appears to be an acceptable method of applying fertilizers to mulched areas.

Dr. Dickens also aids in writing and interpreting construction specifications and arbitrating conflicts between contractors and the state highway department.

## Orange County Weed Busters

by Terry McIver, associate editor

**B**ill Tidwell, winner in the county category, is the supervisor for EMA/Public Works for Orange County, Anaheim, Calif. Originally a park ranger, Tidwell has steadily progressed up the educa-

tional and professional ladder. He earned his masters degree in environmental studies, and holds lifetime teaching credentials in ecology and agriculture.

Tidwell's division is responsible



for managing all vegetation, including trees, brush, noxious weeds, grass and litter on all county-owned land. This includes 813 miles of county-owned roadway; 303 miles of flood control channels, basins and drains; 15,000 acres of park land and a few hundred thousand landscape trees. The total area adds up to 26,000 acres.

Aesthetically, Tidwell's "Weed Busters" crew has kept up with county development and growth. The unit has managed to keep the areas under its jurisdiction attractive despite the hazards of a roadway system which operates at near rush hour volume all day long.

"The road shoulders are kept free of weeds with a program of tank-mixing a post-emergence and pre-emergence herbicide to keep weed seeds from germinating while controlling existing weeds," says Tidwell. "The county is using low maintenance landscaping instead of high maintenance exotic plants which require constant care, minimizing the time the crews must spend on the well-traveled highways."

Tidwell says Orange County's pesticide section excels in the areas of application and applicator safety. Pesticide use is regulated by agri-



**Bill Tidwell: Dealing with Proposition 65 positively.**

cultural commissioners in the state, however, because the county is a public agency, the management has directed the group to comply with all Cal-OSHA safety requirements as well, says Tidwell. Notable is the fact that all personnel in the section have a state applicator's license, and all suspected groundwater contaminants were removed three years before the passage of Proposition 65.

For extra added innovation, Orange County uses a high-line boom for certain applications. The unit's

spray crew can treat a 14-mile long, 300-foot wide stretch of flood control channel in 12 hours. On-board computers are also used in the trucks to track scheduling and progress.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of Tidwell's operation is the use of computerized herbicide recommendation inventories which include roadways, flood control channels and parks. These recommendations are used to schedule activities, document use and order materials. It is combined with the vegetation section of a Maintenance Management Plan that is used for all the county's public works operations. This information allows the manager of public works to determine that all functions are staying on course and on time while staying within the budget for that activity. "Research of this current information allows excellent forecasting for future budgets," Tidwell explains.

*ED. NOTE: Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, Ky. and the city of Boca Raton, Fla. tied for the NRVMA award in the municipal category. They were not included in this installment because of space considerations, but will be noted in future issues of LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT. LM*

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