

TOP 50 LANDSCAPERS

THE WATER'S FINE!

Many companies responding to our annual survey have discovered that irrigation services are a great way to compete.

by Terry McIver, associate editor



Many landscaping companies ventured further into the realm of full-service by adding irrigation installation to their arsenals during 1989. Benefits cited by company spokespersons responding to LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT's fourth annual survey of contractors include more income and less of the hassles often associated with subcontracting.

A full-time irrigation technician post was added to Four Seasons Landscape in Sacramento, Ca. Pete Bowman, operations manager, says the extra expertise generated revenue and helped improve maintenance.

"His duties include all irrigation troubleshooting, such as a valve that doesn't work, or a clock in need of

repair or replacement."

Mark Cetnor of Scandia Landscaping, Livonia, Ill.: "We added an irrigation service a year ago. This year it was fully operational, and it went smoother. It complements our work when we're doing landscape construction; the service can be operated independently (of other services)."

Who they are

The following are the Top 50 landscape contractors in the U.S., based on gross sales of those companies which responded to our survey:

1. Tropical Plant Lenders, Riverwoods, Ill., reported gross sales of \$40 million. That's a \$5 million increase for Tropical, thanks to the efforts of 900 yearly employees stationed at 10 branch offices. Tropical's maintenance con-

tracts for 1989 surpassed the 10,000 mark.

(Last year's top company, **Environmental Industries**, of Calabasas, Calif., failed to respond to this year's survey.)

2. Carlacio Landscape, Inc., Fullerton, Calif., had \$22 million in gross sales. Carlacio's gross sales were \$4 million higher than they were in 1988. The company employed 240 peak season employees at four branch offices. They worked on three design/build jobs and six maintenance contracts.

3. Landscape Specialists, Inc., of El Toro, Calif. takes the number three position in its first year in the survey. The company recorded gross sales of \$18 million for landscape design, build and maintenance. It completed 90 design/build jobs and fulfilled 61 maintenance contracts.

MANPOWER CONCERNS REMAIN

Finding qualified labor was the biggest concern of the large landscaping companies we surveyed.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents have trouble finding and keeping people who are willing to work.

"We get people who work for a few days, and you never see them again," says one landscaper. "And salary-wise, we're a little bit higher than others around here. We start a guy at \$18,500. In my opinion, people don't want to do this work."

Scott Plein, president of KT Enterprises, is concerned about "the environment, and what type of approach our industry takes toward our interaction with and ability to affect our natural surroundings. Hopefully," says Plein, "we will be pro-active in dealing with such issues and be at the forefront of developing more logical, sensitive controls and more responsible methods for solid waste disposal."

Other respondent concerns included the high cost of health insurance and workmen's compensation, softness in the construction industry, and dangerously low bids by some contractors.

Most vocal about the issue of undercutting was Mark Yahn, president of Ground Control Landscaping, in the "fiercely competitive market" of Orlando, Fla.

"Contractors must learn to bid responsibly for their own financial well-being as well as that of the industry," warns Yahn. "It does little good to take premium jobs out of the market if the final result is conflict with the owner and no profit; or, in some cases, red ink. Wake up, guys!"

Regarding another key financial development originating from the nation's capitol, James H. Taylor, president of Taylor Made Landscaping, Farmingdale, N.J. relates that, "Most of us landscape contractors work with builders, and builders account for a substantial part of our volume, especially as it relates to design/build. During the last couple of months, due to the new laws affecting banks, we have found that our largest customers have been unable to make payments as it relates to their balances. This is apparently because of the banks' new guidelines. They have not advanced monies that had previously been permitted.

"The new laws as they relate to banking and the reevaluation of the real estate market," says Taylor, "have created a situation in which a lot of trades are looking at very bleak conditions as they start the 1990 season. I don't know who to blame: the banks, the builders, or both."

—Terry McIver □

4. American Landscape, Inc., of Canoga Park, Calif., had gross sales of \$13.5 million, an increase of \$1.9 million from 1988. The company has one branch office, and employs 250 peak season workers. The company completed 106 design/build jobs and 178 maintenance contracts.

5. The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin, Inc., Middleton, Wisc., posted gross sales of \$13.2 million, a \$2.2 million gain over 1988. Its 370 peak season/210 yearly workers completed 500 design/build jobs and 50 maintenance contracts.

6. ISS Landscape Management Services, Tampa, Fla., and **Lancaster Landscapes**, Alexandria, Va. recorded gross sales of \$13 million. Landscape Management services completed 10 design/build jobs and 250 maintenance contracts. The company operates 9 satellite offices and employs 325 yearly/425 peak season workers.

Lancaster employs 650 peak/325 yearly workers. Design/build jobs totaled 45; maintenance contracts totaled 280.

8. Landscape Contractors of Illinois, Inc., Bartlett, Ill., tallied \$12.5 million in gross sales, a \$2.5 increase. The company employs 320 peak and 40 yearly employees. Design/build jobs totaled 100; maintenance contracts totaled 48 in 1988.

9. De Laurentis Construction Co., Mamaroneck, N.Y. reported gross sales of \$12 million. De Laurentis Construction Co. employs 120 peak employees, doing site work as diverse as excavating, blasting, grating and landscaping.

10. Chapel Valley Landscape Company of Woodbine, Md. and **Ruppert Landscape Co.** of Ashton, Md. (tie). Both had gross sales revenue of \$10.5 million. Chapel Valley employs 150 peak and 100 annual employees for 115 design/build jobs and 60 maintenance contracts. It has two branch offices. Ruppert Landscape Co. completed approximately 100 design/build jobs and about 100 maintenance contracts, with 215 peak/175 year-round workers out of one satellite office.

12. Big Pine Farm, Marietta, Geo. grossed \$10.3 million in sales for the year. The company operates two branch offices and employs 96 yearly workers.

13. Green Thumb Enterprises, Inc. of Sterling, Va. and **Randall & Blake, Inc.** of Littleton, Colo. (tie), each with \$10 million. Green Thumb completed 50 design/build and 180 maintenance contracts with 250 peak and 150 yearly employees. It was also ranked 316 in the Inc. magazine Top 500 list of national companies. Randall & Blake, Inc. has two satellite offices. It employs 150 peak and 100 annual workers. Design/build jobs totaled 150; maintenance contracts totaled 35.

15. Greenleaves, of Chamblee, Geo. had estimated gross sales of \$9 million. The company operates two satellite offices, employing 325 peak and 200 year-round people. It predicted completing 130 design/build and 90 maintenance contracts by year's end.

16. KT Enterprises, Inc., Chantilly, Va., \$9.4 million on 194 design/build and 396 maintenance contracts. KT em-

ploy 350 peak and 120 yearly workers. The company has two satellite offices.

17. Johnson Hydro Seeding Corp., Rockville, Md. Johnson tallied \$7.713 million throughout seven satellite offices. The company completed 160 design/build projects during 1989, and fulfilled 320 maintenance contracts. Johnson employs 140 peak employees, 40 year-round.

18. Edmund M. Hayden, Inc. of Woodstock, Ill. estimated gross sales for landscape design, build and maintenance in 1989 at \$7.5 million. Hayden employs 30 year-round and 125 peak season workers.

19. Southern Tree & Landscape Companies, Charlotte, N.C. Southern Tree earned \$7.4 million on 325 design/build jobs and 65 maintenance contracts. The company operates three satellite offices and employs 110 employees year-round.

20. Hawkins Landscape Co., Dallas, Texas, and **Heyser Landscaping, Inc.** of Norristown, Pa. (tie) with gross sales of \$7.3 million. Hawkins completed 15 design/build jobs and six maintenance contracts. It employs 165 peak season workers, and 115 year-round. Heyser completed 13 design/build jobs and 164 maintenance contracts. Heyser employs 237 peak, and 83 yearly workers.

22. Four Seasons Landscape and Maintenance, Inc. of San Jose, Calif., and **Maintain, Inc.** of Dallas, Texas (tie) with estimated gross sales of \$7 million. Four Seasons derived its sales from more than 300 maintenance contracts. It em-

employs 230 workers at peak season, and 210 year-round employees, from a main office and three satellite offices. Maintain, Inc. completed 20 design/build jobs and fulfilled 300 maintenance contracts in 1989. The company has one satellite office, but employs 285 peak and 170 yearly workers.

24. Gibbs of Smyrna, Geo. estimated gross sales for landscape design build and maintenance at \$6.7 million. Design/build jobs totaled 150. Maintenance contracts numbered an impressive 500. The company employs 105 peak and 125 yearly workers.

25. Rood Landscape Co., Inc., Tequesta, Fla. totaled \$6.6 million in gross sales from 260 design/build jobs and 164 maintenance contracts. The company's 160 peak season and 140 yearly employees operate out of one main office.

26. Alfred L. Simpson & Co., Inc., Atlanta, Ga. had gross sales of \$6.5 million from 25 design/build jobs and 150 maintenance contracts. A main office and three satellite offices employ 150 peak and 130 year-round workers.

27. Chalet Nursery & Garden Shop, Wilmette, Ill. earned \$6.3 million in gross sales from an impressive 1,470 design/build jobs and 300 maintenance contracts. That work is performed by 135 peak-season and 50 year-round employees.

28. Larchwood Construction Corp., Holtsville, N.Y. posted gross sales of \$5.5 million with 55 design/build projects and 6 maintenance contracts. It employs 70 peak-season workers and 15 year-round.

29. Clarence Davids & Sons, Inc. of Blue Island, Ill. posted gross sales of \$5.26 million from 250 design/build projects and 150 maintenance contracts. The company's staff totals 130 during peak season and 35 all year long.

30. AAA Landscaping of Tucson, Ariz. completed 67 design/build projects and 265 maintenance contracts in 1989, for total gross sales of \$5.2 million.

31. Hillenmeyer Nurseries of Lexington, Ky. boosted sales by \$1.5 million to \$5 million, from more than 50 maintenance contracts. The company employs 150 peak-season and 100 annual workers.

32. Designs by Lee, Inc. of Stamford, Conn. and **Scapes, Inc.** of Marietta, Ga. (tie) with \$5 million in estimated gross sales. Designs by Lee completed about 200 design/build projects and 25 maintenance contracts. Scapes completed 42 design/build projects and 37 maintenance contracts.

34. AAA Lawn Industries, Inc. of Tucker, Ga. posted sales of \$4.9 million from 30 design/build projects and 140 maintenance contracts. The company employs 120 peak and 80 yearly workers.

35. Torre & Bruglio Landscape, Mt. Clemens, Mich. estimates gross sales at \$4.7 million. Ninety peak-season and 20 yearly employees completed 150 design/build jobs and 80 maintenance contracts in 1989.

36. J. Farmer & Co., Inc. of Middleton, Mass.; **Dennis' 7 Dee's Landscaping** of Portland, Ore.; **Ground Control Landscaping, Inc.** of Orlando, Fla.; **Davis Landscape Contractors** of Harrisburg, Pa. (Tie).

Farmer & Co. completed 67 design/build projects. Dennis' 7 Dee's somehow managed to complete 2500 design/build projects and 385 maintenance contracts. Ground Control completed 33 design/build jobs and 72 maintenance contracts. Davis completed 20 design/build and 60 maintenance projects.

40. Varsity Sodding Service of Swoyersville, Pa. and **Landscape Technologies** of Clearwater, Fla. (tie)

with \$4.3 million in estimated gross sales. Varsity completed 10 design/build projects and 70 maintenance contracts. Landscape Technologies completed 100 design/build jobs and 14 maintenance contracts.

42. Amlings Landscape Co., Hinsdale, Ill., grossed \$4.2 million from 168 design/build jobs and 628 maintenance contracts.

43. Robert W. Childs Landscape Contractors, Inc., of Arnold, Md. recorded gross sales of \$4.1 million via 165 design/build jobs and 35 maintenance contracts.

44. Doerler Landscapes of Lawrenceville, N.J., **North Haven Gardens** of Dallas, Texas and **Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.** of Denver, Colo. (tie) each did \$4 million worth of business.

47. Batista Landscape Service, Inc. of Redwood City, Calif., **New England Horticultural Services** of Milford, Conn., and **McDugald-Steele** of Houston, Texas (tie) all grossed \$3.5 million for 1989. Batista's streamlined operation employs 6 yearly workers and about 30 during peak season. They completed 6 design/build jobs and 15 maintenance contracts.

New England Horticultural Services completed 48 design/build jobs and 337 maintenance contracts. Its total work force during peak season is about 150; annually, the company employs between 40 and 60 workers. McDugald-Steele completed 120 design/build jobs and 65 maintenance contracts. It employs 75 peak-season workers and 55 throughout the year.

50. Outside, Unlimited, Inc., Lutherville, Md., recorded estimated gross sales of \$3.2 million on 60 design/build projects and 12 maintenance contracts. Thirty-two peak-season and 24 year-round employees are headquartered in one main office. **LM**

THE BEST OF THE REST

The following is a list of companies surveyed with estimated gross sales between \$1 million and \$3.2 million:

Acres Enterprises, Wauconda, Ill.
Arbor Heights Nursery, Inc., Webster, N.Y.
Bland Bros., Inc., West Jordan, Utah
BGT Landscape Co., Inc., Mundelein, Ill.
Bregenzer's, Inc., Alpharetta, Ga.
Control Environmental, Somerset, N.J.
ChemTurf/Astin-Russell, Inc., Norcross, Ga.
Clean Cut, Inc., Austin, Texas
Earth Tone Development, Houston, Texas
Evergreen Services Corp., Bellevue, Wash.
Four Seasons Lawn & Landscape, Parkville, Mo.
Greater Detroit Landscape Co., Warren, Mich.
Greathouse Landscape Co., Inc., Nashville, Tenn.
Green Carpet Landscape, Inc., Worcester, Mass.
Greenland Landscaping Co., Inc., Paramus, N.J.
Hively Farm & Nursery, Inc., Dover, Pa.

Hunt & Hulteen, Inc., Brockton, Mass.
JBK Landscape, Inc., Aurora, Colo.
L&L Landscape Services, Inc., Santa Clara, Calif.
Marvin's Garden & Landscape Service, Inc., Sarasota, Fla.
Mill Bros. Landscape & Nursery, Inc., Fort Collins, Colo.
Pennink Arrimour, Bryn Athyn, Pa.
R.M. Landscape Industries, Inc., Hilton, N.Y.
Scenic Landscaping, Inc., Hohokus, N.J.
Scian's Landscaping, Inc., Berlin, N.J.
Skandia Landscaping, Inc., Livonia, Mich.
Smallwood Landscaping, Inc., Naples, Fla.
SKB Lawn Industries, Inc., Clarkston, Ga.
Starwood, Inc., Darlington, S.C.,
Suburban Landscape Associates, Inc., Davenport, Iowa
TerraScaping, Inc., Birch Run, Mich.
Virginia Turf Management Assoc., Inc., Norfolk, Va. □