

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Andrews: PLCAA healthy, growing and looking to broaden its scope

In-coming association president seeks more members, stronger presence in D.C., more educational offerings and stronger links between PLCAA and state associations.

■ It's possible to describe Robert E. Andrews' philosophy in a single word: involvement.

Almost 20 years of involvement in green industry associations climax as Andrews steps in as the 1992 president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

He brings to PLCAA's top post, colleagues agree, considerable and hard-earned talents as a facilitator and organizer, and more than a measure of persistence.

He's also coming into the post at a full gallop.

By late this summer he'd already developed committee assignments and by mid-fall conducted an exhaustive PLCAA strategic planning review. Next month he's conducting a workshop focusing on state association development.

Somewhere in the middle of all of this, Andrews, 45, sat down with *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* to preview his 1992 PLCAA plans.

Andrews says he will seek:

● **More members.** Andrews says PLCAA must broaden its definition of the industry. "It's not that chemical lawn care is any more or less important, but our members and our potential members offer more diversified services now," he says. "We have to recognize there's a big, broad industry out there."

Beyond that, PLCAA must do a better job of



Robert E. Andrews will step aside for new leadership after his year as PLCAA president is over.

"closing the sale." He said about 900 companies inquired about PLCAA membership through September but only about 90 joined.

● **Stronger federal issues support.** The push to increase the lawn care industry's presence in Washington D.C. began this past spring when about 10 of the PLCAA's largest members contributed money (in some instances manpower) in response to the 1991 Senate "victim hearings." PLCAA set up a separate issues management fund and agreed to serve as umbrella organization for the effort. Andrews says PLCAA will intensify its efforts to get more member companies contributing to the fund, and offering in-person support.

● **More training and education.** "We've got to get back into the business of offering on-going education for our members, particularly technical education," says Andrews. "At some point we've got to bring someone back onto our staff that's technically oriented."

● **PLCAA/state association alliance.** "I'm really pleased to see PLCAA recognize

these state lawn care groups as allies," says Andrews. "They both have to exist. PLCAA can deal with issues on the federal level, the state associations can handle state and local issues."

PLCAA, he insists, is—after several years of sometimes painful but essential re-organization—a stable and growing national trade association again.

"We've come from a position of almost financial desperation to one where we're now able to breath a little easier," he says. "We're in the black and we can begin building our financial stability over the long haul."

Also, he points out, PLCAA membership—which dropped dramatically after hefty 1989 dues increases—is climbing again.

These two inter-related events (financial health and more members) couldn't take place, explains Andrews, if PLCAA's officers and board of directors hadn't made difficult decisions the past two years; first, overhauling PLCAA's staff (and staff expenses) and second, reducing dues for smaller, independent lawn care companies.

Equally encouraging, believes Andrews, is the long-term agreement PLCAA worked out with the the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and the Professional Grounds Management Society concerning the Green Industry Expo (GIE).

"Having our three associations together for an annual exposition is good for all of our members, good for our suppliers and, ultimately, good for the entire green industry," says Andrews, PLCAA's negotiator in the 11th-hour agreement reached this past spring in Cleveland.

That meeting outlined the involvement of the three trade associations in GIE into the mid-1990s.

—Ron Hall

INSIDE

Lawn pros seeing red, page 39

Farmers, LCOs unite in Indiana, page 39

Compromise key in N.J., page 40

Pesticide bill hits Missoula, page 42