

# HOT TOPICS

## The Missoula vote: How public opinion was changed

**For a classic case of manipulating the public opinion, the industry needs look no further back than last November's election.**

**WASHINGTON**—When the college town of Missoula, Mont. defeated a local lawn pesticide bill 57 to 43 percent last November, it became a classic case of how public opinion can be changed through an informational, educational campaign.

Initial pre-vote research indicated that the townspeople were inclined to pass the measure, which would have made the homeowner responsible for posting after pesticide applications. The odds favored the ordinance 58 to 37 percent, with 5 percent undecided.

Prior to the election, a public education program was instituted by a coalition that consisted of the Coalition for a Sensible Pesticide Policy (CSPP), Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) and a local yard and garden group.

**The campaign**—Here are the components of that campaign:

✓ **Television spots:** A 30-second television commercial featured an elderly neighbor-type receiving a citation from a police officer. It brought home the "Big Brother is watching" concept used in other campaign components.

✓ **Radio spots:** Three radio spots were aired. One called the measure unnecessary and expensive; another said that neighbors don't have to be forced to communicate; and the third said that Missoulians "need a greener, friendlier Missoula, not more Big Brother."

### Missoula voters polled:

What was the main reason for your vote against the local pesticide law?

too much govt. control.....	23%
unnecessary.....	16%

What was the main reason for your vote for the local pesticide law?

to notify people with kids & pets.....	17%
community right-to-know.....	14%
reasonable request.....	11%

Were you aware of the ad/publicity campaign against the local pesticide law?

yes.....	81%
no.....	17%
not sure.....	2%

What type of advertising do you remember?

television.....	63%
newspaper.....	9%
direct mail.....	7%
radio.....	3%

✓ **Newspaper:** An advertising insert featured a quote from former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, explaining that pesticides are heavily tested and are of low risk when used as labels direct.

✓ **Direct mail:** Lawn care customers, who are generally aware of the benefits of lawn care pesticides, received a flyer discussing the ordinance's various defects.

✓ **Tele-solicitation:** A phone bank placed calls to voters for the two days prior to the election, reminding them of the information they had seen and heard, and urging them to get out and vote the measure down.

✓ **Corporate:** Washington Corporations, one of the area's largest employers, routed a memo to its employees informing them of the ordinance's shortcomings and urging them to vote against it.

**Final results**—The ordinance's defeat reflected a nearly 20 percent turnaround in voters' views.

A post-election survey (see chart) indicated that many voters were confused by the ordinance. Although ordinance supporters complained that advertising led people to believe the measure would ban pesticide use, the survey found that most were aware this was not the case.

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## Environmental restrictions put damper on golf

**CHICAGO, Ill.**—The president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects blames "excessive environmental restrictions" for delays in the opening of new golf courses.

"Myriad federal, state and local agencies all intertwine to make today's application for the construction of a golf course an endless quagmire of delays and revisions," according to Tom Clark.

"Architects have been able to meet these challenges, but it's getting more difficult every day," says Clark, who suggests the delays might dissuade potential developers from entering the golf market.

Clark has no quarrel with environmental awareness, but says the duplication of

government restrictions is not productive.

"We've shown that golf courses can coexist with nature, serve the needs of a growing population and preserve open, green space," says Clark. "Furthermore, architects have shown the utmost respect for the environment and that we can govern ourselves in this area."

Clark compares a Georgia golf course built in 1985-86 with a mere five permits, to a current project in the Washington, D.C. area, which has so far required 52 permits and engineering expenditures of more than \$300,000.

But Clark tempers his complaints with a solution: an upcoming ASGCA publication which will address key environmental issues. "The book will be distributed to state, federal and local agencies so questions concerning key issues are addressed prior to submitting for environmental permits," says Clark.

## Builder has environmental commitment

**WASHINGTON**—Winchester Homes, Inc. recently planted 100 trees near a Washington, D.C., highway intersection in an effort to emphasize the company's commitment to environmental responsibility.

"Our commitment to create and ensure a quality lifestyle for Winchester homeowners and prospective home buyers extends beyond the design and construction of quality homes," says Christopher Zell, Winchester vice president of marketing. Winchester's goals, according to Zell, is to encourage and protect the environment and natural resources through afforestation—the establishment of new forest lands—and reforestation activities.

Fifty volunteers—including company employees and their families, homeowners and other community members—showed up for the tree planting. Volunteers were assisted by the Forestry Division of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

The Cloverleaf Planting is part of Maryland's "TreeMendous" program, begun in 1989 by Gov. William Schaefer, to assist in the reforestation of state highways and major intersections.

"The cloverleaf planting at this intersection will help to achieve good air quality, increase water filtration in the soil and increase the aesthetic value of the highway by providing a view of mature, green forests," says Zell.

## College requesting sites for training

**LAKE CITY, Fla.**—Lake City Community College is looking for co-op training sites for its summer landscape program.

All of the college's courses in golf course operations, landscape technology and turf equipment management require co-op sponsorship.

John Piersol, chairman of the golf course operations at the college, says quality sites that will provide meaningful training for the students are needed.

Piersol also notes that the school will graduate more than 20 golf course mechanics in May of 1992.

Contact Piersol at Lake City Community College, Landscape Operations, Rt. 3, Box 7, Lake City, FL 32055.

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## HOT STUFF

### ALCA now manages exams

**FALLS CHURCH, Va.**—ALCA is now managing the National Council for Interior Horticultural Certification. It took over that certification from the Ohio Florist Association (OFA) on Sept. 1, 1991.

ALCA says interior landscape contractors can now be recognized through its Certified Landscape Technician and a Certified Landscape Professional designations.

ALCA interior certification exams: the OFA short course July 11-15, 1992 in Cincinnati, the ALCA Interior Plantscape Division Conference Oct. 2-5, 1991, in Columbus. For more information, contact: Elise Lindsey, ALCA, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046; (703) 241-4004.

### 8 bentgrass varieties on tap

**STATE COLLEGE, Pa.**—Penn State University researchers are developing eight advanced varieties of bentgrass which could "set new standards for density, quality and performance," according to Dr. Joe Duich, director of Penn State's turf research program.

"The increased use and extraordinary agronomic demands on creeping bent have led to the development of new varieties," says Duich, who was to retire from Penn State at the end of 1991.

Duich says "more and more golf courses" are using creeping bent for tees, fairways and greens.

### Home builders landscape, too

**DES PLAINES, Ill.**—A recent survey of 1500 home builders and remodelers found that the bigger the builder, the more likely it will also offer landscaping services.

According to the survey, 20.3 percent of builders with annual sales of less than \$500,000 offer the service. Landscaping is done by 36.4 percent of builders with sales of more than \$5 million.

The builder/remodeler survey was conducted by *Professional Builder & Remodeler* magazine.

### Landscaping for value

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.**—A well-developed and well-maintained landscape improves home property values in California by an average of 7-1/2 percent, according to a survey of real estate agents, brokers and landscape appraisers.

The California Association of Nurserymen (CAN) surveyed 184 professionals. According to the respondents, quality landscaping can speed a home's rate of sale by five to six weeks. Thus, two-thirds of the real estate agents recommend improving their client's landscape to help sell the home.

"First impressions can sell a home," says Tom Carnahan, past president of the San Fernando Valley Board of Realtors. "Landscaping is an integral part of that first impression."

Adds CAN president Ralph Klages: "According to *Money* magazine report, a new landscape has a recovery value of 100 to 200 percent."