

# Getting customer feedback



**Robertson: 'potentially dangerous'**

■ Jack Robertson of Robertson Lawn Care, Springfield, Ill. has a unique comment card that helps his customers relay their satisfaction or dissatisfaction directly to him.

"This isn't just to get a pat on the back," Robertson says. "We did it at a potentially dangerous time of the year. We prefer getting customer comments *this way*; *another way* they can tell you is to cancel and go tell somebody else their problems."

Hey Jack!

- I'M IMPRESSED
- I'M PLEASANTLY SURPRISED
- I'M SATISFIED
- I'M A BIT ANNOYED

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dear ROBERTSON LAWN CARE Customer:

We pledge our total commitment to your service. We need the benefit of your viewpoint, needs, observations and impressions. Your opinion is of great value to me, as owner of ROBERTSON LAWN CARE, in setting policy, designing services and updating our commitment to you.

If we have let you down, please tell us about it. If you are pleased with us, we would like to hear that too. If you have special needs or would like us to modify any of our services, let us know.

We are proud to have you as a customer — and — we care.

Sincerely,

Jack



YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE — THANKS

The card is simple and direct. It features four boxes: "I'm impressed," "I'm pleasantly surprised," "I'm satisfied," and "I'm a bit annoyed," plus room for writing comments (see above).

The cards were dropped off with each summer application, and more than 100 have been returned so far. Ultimately, Robertson expects to get 1,000 back.

An earlier customer reply card that was mailed along with a postage-paid return envelope garnered a 72 percent response rate, and 93 percent of Robertson's customers rated the company at "satisfactory" or above.

"The players are going to be the companies that go that extra mile for the customer," Robertson says.

## LM GRAPEVINE

Still no word from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) as to who its new CEO, Deputy CEO and Financial Director will be. Via the phone as this issue hit an early deadline (Nov. 12), **Scott Smith** of the GCSAA Communications Department said selection of the three key people were imminent, but still pending. We should have an update for **LM's** January issue, which is—coincidentally—our Golf Course Show issue. We'll keep you informed.

Congratulations to **John Prusa**, who purchased the Lawnmark operations in Youngstown, Ohio, and Erie, Pa. Prusa, who has been with Lawnmark since its inception, maintains an ongoing contractual relationship with the parent company, located in Peninsula, Ohio, just a few miles from **LM's** offices. Lawnmark owner **Marty Erbaugh** is a past president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

There has been a lot of coming and going in **LM's** hometown of Cleveland, what with the departure of Browns quarterback Bernie Kosar and Cleveland Stadium groundskeeper **David Frey**, who is now in business for himself. The former president of the Sports Turf Managers

Association now operates Field Specialties out of his office in Chardon, Ohio. He is an athletic field design consultant and also hawking two of his inventions, a tarp roller and the "Mound Meter." For more info, call Frey at (216) 635-0282.

The New York Turf and Landscape Association has named **Frank Claps** its Man-of-the-Year, according to a press release received by **LM**. Claps, a past president of the organization, has been a landscape contractor for 48 years, devoting much of his time to industry education. He will be honored with a dinner/dance in Scarsdale on Dec. 12.

You'll be seeing **Arnold Palmer's** face in **LM** for another three years, according to Lofts Seed. Palmer's contract with the marketer of "Palmer" perennial ryegrass has been extended for another three years, says Lofts director of research **Dr. Richard Hurley**.

**READERS!** Got an item for "LM Grapevine?" Call us at (216) 826-2830 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time.