

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

is a proud member of these
green industry professional
organizations:



Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 12200 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 150, Reston, VA; (703) 620-6363.

American Sod Producers Association, 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (708) 705-9898.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.

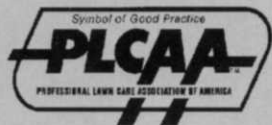
National Arborist Association, The Meeting Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



Professional Grounds Management Society, 10402 Ridgland Rd., Suite 4, Hunt Valley, MD 21030; (301) 667-1833.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, 1155 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 296-6085.



Sports Turf Managers Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267; (312) 644-6610.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, 8400 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 500, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 832-5000.

AS WE SEE IT

TERRY McIVER, MANAGING EDITOR



A lesson from the President: always keep your promises

In his State of the Union speech of February 17, President Clinton made it official: he was to move ahead with a plan to raise income taxes and implement new levies, most notably an energy tax.

If this troubles you, there is a way to salve your disappointment: always keep your promises.

Private enterprise and government are both sustained by the promises made to customers and voters, respectively.

You campaign for employees, suppliers, customers and perhaps sub-contractors as a politician campaigns for votes. (In what is a bold rhetorical move, President Clinton says the American people are also "customers" of the government. Unfortunately, it would take this entire March issue to expose the faults of that analogy. For one thing, the Better Business Bureau would never be able to handle all the complaints!)

As a businessman, you promise prospective employees a specified salary, periodic raises, excellent working conditions, well-tuned equipment and support.

You promise suppliers on-time payment; you might even promise them your loyalty.

Your advertising is truthful. You promise service to your customers, pricing that matches quality work, and advice on how best to satisfy their landscaping or lawn care needs.

Certainly, any of those three groups may themselves prove untrustworthy, in which case the contract is null and void, and you're left a bit wiser. But in the best of times, when *they* play it straight, *you* do the same.

And forget about making excuses. The only one they're likely to accept is, "the weather made me do it." But when the birds sing and the sky is blue and cloudless, your course is clear.

Compare the relative consequences of a broken promise, to you as a business owner, and to your customers:

An energy tax, if passed, will mean an estimated seven-and-a-half cent per gallon gouge by 1996. If you own a fleet of 20 vehicles, and each one averages 15 gallons a week, that's \$1170 per year *extra* in gasoline tax. And don't forget mower fuel.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are new homeowners, excited about the prospects of a well-designed, properly-built landscape, followed up by dependable maintenance.

But your estimate proves impossible to meet. You promised a certain price to get the job, rather than stress to them the cost of quality. You cut corners on equipment and training. The post-emergence weed control is late, and their yard looks like hell, just in time for their daughter's wedding party.

I wouldn't want to be there when Mr. Jones calls.

Planning is essential in the prevention of broken promises. Clinton, if we're to believe his claim that he "imagined" the deficit to be lower, could be called guilty of poor planning, although I believe he knew what would happen, especially with a Democratic Congress by his side. Rather than say what he planned to do, he lied to the people rather than tell the truth during the campaign.

The best and the bravest among us, regardless of profession, are those who keep their promises, especially when compelled to renege.

Plan ahead. Know your company's limitations. Know your market, and be careful of what you say.

And no matter how much it hurts, never, ever break a promise.