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gram promotes wildlife habitat enhancement on golf courses. More than 1,000 course superintendents are participating in it. The Backyard Sanctuary program has attracted far fewer cooperators, said Audubon's President Ron Dodson, mostly because homeowners don't know about it.

Dodson spoke at the PLCAA Conference this past fall. He said Audubon would cooperate with PLCAA in supplying PLCAA members with Backyard Sanctuary material. He described the collaboration as a win-win-win situation. PLCAA provides its member companies with more consumer-friendly information, lawn care pros gain stature for helping enhance the environment, and ASNYS's sanctuary program reaches homeowners.

"I think it makes perfect sense for lots of different reasons for us to partner on this," Dodson told *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* magazine.

**Certification gains steam**—About 600 people are registered in the University of Georgia-PLCAA turf certification program. There are now at least 45 Certified Turfgrass

Professionals (CTPs), those that have successfully completed the course. Dr. Helen Mills, department head, U. of Ga.'s Community Learning Resources, said the correspondence course had attracted participants from as far away as Singapore and Israel. It covers such topics as mowing, soils, irrigation, pesticides, customer relations and more.

"We're exceptionally pleased with the response," said Mills. The program is in its second year.

"The UGA-PLCAA course is a must for someone entering the business and a great refresher for experienced LCOs," said Lou Wierichs, Jr., Pro-X Systems, Fox Cities and Green Bay, Wis. Wierichs was the first CTP.

**Legislative Day**—More than 80 lawn care professionals from 27 states attended PLCAA's sixth Legislative Day on the Hill this past Feb. 27-28. They met with former Republican Congressman Fred Grandy from Iowa before meeting with their own lawmakers. Grandy, still well-known for his role on the TV series *Love Boat*, told the LCOs to keep in close touch with their legislators.

"Americans are not sure what they're

looking for in the next generation of leadership, but they are reasonably certain that they haven't found it yet," Grandy said. "Don't be convinced that the hurricane is over."

**A Texas theme**—New Frontiers in Lawn Care is the theme of 1995 PLCAA conference in Fort Worth this autumn. This is PLCAA's 16 conference. It runs in conjunction with the Green Industry Expo Nov. 12-16.

"For this year's conference in the Lone Star state, we've developed a frontier theme and agenda reflecting rapid changes and expanding growth in our industry," said Conference Chairman Bill Hoopes, Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Worthington, Ohio.

Subjects covered in this year's conference include: IPM, employee considerations, the fate of pesticides, biological weed controls, environmental stewardship, understanding epidemiology and others.

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## Predicting your financial future

by Dan Sautner

■ Throughout the life of your lawn or landscape company, you are continually asked to predict the future. Your banker wants to know how you will repay loans. You hire new employees when you expect more business. You purchase a new truck because you expect to need it in the future.

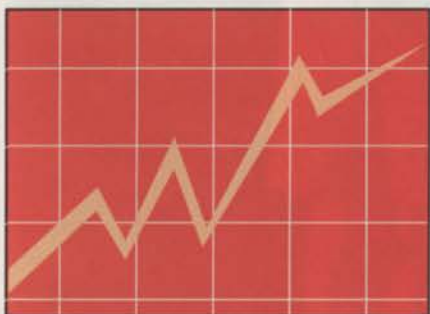
We often predict the future by relying on our intuition or gut feeling about the business. We consider the past, make adjustments for the new environment the future always brings, and then take a stand on where sales will be.

Something you can use as a tool to make your future predictions are cash flow projections. They are estimations of where cash will come from and where it will go.

These projections take a number of forms and have a number of uses:

□ Projections that can be broken down into three-month periods and cover up to five years are often used in major capital acquisitions (such as a new building).

□ Projections by the month for periods of two or three years are most commonly used when raising debt at a bank. The pri-



mary focus of these types of projections is when and how much excess cash will be generated. The lender will then use these to help him or her determine your ability to repay a loan.

□ The simplest forms of projections are those related to a single project, event or season. Time frames are contracted and often the information is restricted to only those elements affected. An example might be the decision to purchase a display booth at a trade show. Here the event and costs have a limited, easily-definable life.

Let's use this last type as an example to develop a cash flow projection.

First, determine what costs will be needed to undertake the project. List these on a page, left-hand side, about a third of the

way down the page. Label the column "Uses," and then make another set of columns ("Weeks") to cover the time frame. In this instance, since the trade show begins in eight weeks, use eight columns—one for each week—plus one for "Total."

Using the list of expenses, first work out the total money you'll need and record it in the "Total" column. You'll allocate it by "Weeks" later. If the total is realistic and obtainable, you can go to the next step.

On the top third of the page, on the far left, list the "Sources" of cash for this project. It may include immediate sales at the trade show or costs avoided while at the show. Then place the total in the "Total" column. Now add a final line in the sources, called "Contributions." Use this line to balance the sources of cash to the uses of cash. In a perfect world, sources will be higher than uses and no amount will be required here. In many cases, however, you will have to put cash into the venture, after determining, of course, if this type of contribution is possible.

Now, you break the total sources of

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cash and uses of funds up among the eight weekly columns. Remember to figure when the cash will actually move, as opposed to when you incur the liability. Once these have been distributed, determine the totals for each weekly column.

You will now be able to schedule your contributions so each week is balanced in its source of cash use. In all likelihood, you'll find your contributions reach a high water mark early in the project. This

amount may even exceed the total requirement. The accumulated contribution is the most cash you will need to undertake the project.

Now you can juggle the numbers if necessary. Remember that many projects, in and of themselves, are not positive cash-flow generators. The reason they're undertaken is that they assist the company in its total operation and are an investment.

Cash flow projections can be valuable because they highlight the financial

aspects of a new idea or venture. You, then, must balance the investment with intangible benefits.

Once the project is under way, track the actual against the projection to help you budget and/or understand the effect of cost overruns.

For larger projects, of course, you'll want to get the help of your accountant.

—The author is chairman of Padgett Business Services, with more than 250 offices in North America.

## Show and sell

By James E. Guyette,  
Contributing editor

■ Photographs of past and present pruning projects can help you sell the service to new clients, says the author of a newly published book on tree care.

This is especially true when large amounts of plant material need to be trimmed, according to Kris Medic, city landscape manager and arborist in Columbus, Ind. "That's a pretty scary thing to a property owner, to see that much coming off," she observes.

"Show them some before and after photos of pruning you have done. It makes a big difference for people to see what the results are because 'renovation pruning' is a big leap of faith."

Communicating with the customer remains crucial, and of course the landscape manager needs to have confidence. "Make sure they know what to expect," says Medic, who is author of the newly published *Rodale's Successful Organic Gardening Pruning* (1995, Rodale Press; \$24.95 hard cover; \$14.95 paperback).

According to Medic, organic pruning techniques tend to be no different than standard pruning techniques; the book's title reflects a series of Rodale publications targeted at organics.

The 160-page book is crammed with reader-friendly instructions of proper pruning and beautifully illustrated with 250 color photos and 50 drawings. Its thoroughness compliments nicely with the works produced by Alex Shigo in regard to tree care.

Medic's book belongs on the dashboard of any professional landscape manager



**Restoration of Mill Race Park included planting 686 new trees in the 2½- to 3-inch caliper range.**

who offers pruning services.

"Many of the pruning techniques allow you to reduce your liability for disease and insect problems," Medic explains. "Good pruning is good business, and you can't go wrong when you do appropriate pruning. It will help you improve your bottom line."

In addition to containing advice of great use to landscape managers and arborists serving residential and commercial accounts, Medic's project can benefit those involved with government and institutional work.

The book provides practical selection techniques to use when choosing plant

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## Safety is still first



■ Author Kris Medic says tree pruning safety must be clearly communicated to workers.

"It's important to have a safety program," she says, "and make sure the employees know that safety is a primary concern."

Supervisors can set examples by adhering closely to safety standards. Using the correct equipment and wearing the right clothing is essential.

Something as seemingly simple as donning a pair of gloves can be critical. "I've seen—and had it happen to myself—a lot of sliced gloves," Medic recalls. "A sliced glove saves a trip to the emergency room."

Medic notes that many landscape managers tend to disdain proper handgear, and then injury strikes.

"I've seen it happen dozens of times over the years," she says, in reference to cut hands. "Some people are too proud to wear gloves," Medic observes. "It's not rocket science, but it does make a difference."

—J.G.