

PLCAA to offer free seminar at Expo 96

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) will officially participate in the 13th annual International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo (Expo 96).



"We are happy to have the PLCAA aboard," says Dennis Dix, CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, which sponsors Expo 96. "About 22 percent of the Expo visitors are lawn and landscape professionals. It is hoped that PLCAA's partici-

pation will bring an increase in this percentage. Expo brings PLCAA members an excellent market with 87 percent of the exhibiting companies being manufacturers of commercial equipment. So this is an ideal fit for PLCAA and for Expo."

Ann McClure, executive vice president of the PLCAA, says her association is inviting Expo attendees to a free seminar on Monday, July 29, 8-10:30 a.m. during the show. Titled "High-Powered Hiring—Tools of Success," the session will feature Tom Diederich, vice president of government relations for Orkin Lawn Care. He will explain how to slash employee turnover costs through dynamic hiring strategies.

"This seminar is for anyone responsible for hiring good workers, especially in the lawn and landscape industry," says McClure.

Six hundred top manufacturers and suppliers will introduce more new products than ever. Indoor exhibits will cover 240,000 net sq. ft.

in the Kentucky Exposition Center's East Wing, East Hall and South Wing.

Again this year, 560,000 net sq. ft. outdoors will be used for hands-on demonstrations.

About 25,000 dealers, retailers, commercial end-users, rental equipment dealers, distributors, mass merchants, manufacturers' reps and exhibitors are expected to visit.

Lawn and landscape professionals who attend the event will have the option of attending a series of Professional Landscape Seminary (PLUS seminars) designed especially for them:

SUNDAY, JULY 28

2-4 p.m. Landscaper Panel Discussion: "Ask the Pros." Attendees will benefit from a diverse panel of landscapers and cutters at different stages of business development.

5 p.m. Networking Reception sponsored by *Pro* magazine.

MONDAY, JULY 29

2-4 p.m. "Growing People Who Grow Your Business." Tom Winner, Winner Resource Group, will teach management techniques with a common sense approach. This is an intensive seminar on the art of building a more productive self-sufficient team.

TUESDAY, JULY 30

7:30-8 a.m. Continental Breakfast sponsored by *Pro* magazine.

8-10:30 a.m. "Tech Tools: Technology You Can Use to Grow Your Business." Technology expert Steve Epner,

B.S.W. Consulting, will give advice on making the most of today's technology—voice mail, fax on demand, and more. He'll also make recommendations of sophisticated software developments for bidding and planning.

Also, Chuck Daly, former head coach of the NBA's Detroit Pistons, will talk at an Early Bird Buffet Saturday, July 27 at 6 p.m. The Outdoor Power Equipment Aftermarket Association will sponsor the function, which will include a cash bar and buffet dinner. Tickets can be purchased for \$28.50 each. To order, call (202) 775-8605.

Special reduced air fares, discount hotel rates and free shuttles are being offered.

LCI Travel, Expo's official travel agency, has pre-negotiated special airfares. Travelers will get 5 percent off the lowest published airfare, even during fare wars... plus a chance to win two free tickets anywhere United flies in the continental U.S. Questions and reservations can be directed to LCI Travel, (800) 381-2453 or (714) 680-6375 between 8 am and 5 pm Pacific Standard Time.

Expo 96 is free to those who pre-register. To receive an Expo 96 brochure, which includes PLUS seminar registration information, contact Expo 96, 550 S. Fourth Avenue, Suite 200, Louisville, KY 40202; call (800) 558-8767 or fax (502) 562-1970. In Kentucky or outside the U.S. call (502) 562-1962. □

Dr. Bill Knoop joins LM team as technical editor

Dr. William E. Knoop, extension turfgrass specialist at Texas A&M University for more than 16 years, is *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*'s new contributing technical editor.

Knoop, a resident of Mt. Vernon, Texas, is a nationally-known speaker, author and turfgrass expert. Last year, he received the Texas Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. He also received a Special Citation from the Professional Lawn Care Association of America in 1985, and a Superior Service Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1991.

A Certified Professional Agronomist, Knoop will advise the magazine's staff on agronomic matters. He will be responsible for writing monthly articles, including the popular spring

"Guide" series to fertilization and weed, insect and disease control. Dr. Knoop will also represent the magazine at trade shows and will work on custom publishing projects.

"It's an honor to serve as a technical resource, for both the sales and editorial staff of *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*," says Knoop. "I also want to be available as a technical resource to all our readers. It's our intention to provide more useful educational materials to the industry as a whole in the future."



A new guide series and annual digest, coordinated through *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*'s parent company, Advanstar Communications, is also in the works.

"Dr. Knoop is going to be a wonderful addition to our already-experienced editorial staff," notes LM Editor-in-Chief Jerry Roche. "He provides that special turfgrass expertise that can only help our product, especially on a technical level."

Knoop is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire (Ph.D.), the University of Florida (M.S.A.) and Iowa State University (B.S.). □

L.A. Council, actors help ban blowers

Los Angeles City Council voted 9-4 on May 14th to draft an ordinance to ban gas-powered leaf blowers from residential areas. The actual vote on the ordinance is due this month.

The law would effectively ban backpack, gas-powered blowers within 500 feet of residential properties.

This was the third attempt in the last 10 years by L.A. to legislate against the blowers commonly used by landscapers.

The two previous attempts in 1986 and 1991 failed outright.

But anti-power blower interests brought out the "heavy hitters" this time: actor Peter Graves (of TV's "Mission: Impossible") and actress Meredith Baxter (of TV's "Family Ties").

"Leaf blowers are bad. They blow other things around," Graves was quoted as saying in a Los Angeles *Times* front-page article May 15th. "Are we going to put masks on our kids?"

Baxter told the council that using power blowers "flies in the face of all rational thinking." She cited what she considered the dangers of gas-powered blowers before being cut off by Council President John

Ferraro.

"The implications of this are apparent to the entire industry," says Robin Pendergrast of International



Marketing Exchange, who has been carefully monitoring the situation for Echo, Inc., a major manufacturer of power blowers. "While this ordinance was actually a modification of the original, there appears to be an attempt to legislate all lawn and garden equipment."

After the council meeting ended, a lengthy discussion initiated by Councilman Marvin Braude followed. "Both proponents and opponents [of the law] cited what appeared to be fabricated health issues and undocumented numbers of cities that apparently had legislated the product," observes Pendergrast. □

Wage hike will 'ripple' into green industry

The "ripple effect" is alive and on the prowl. The green industry should feel higher labor costs, maybe as early as next season.

That's Ben Bolusky's read on Pres. Bill Clinton's push, and the decision of Congress to raise the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 starting in 1997, a 21 percent jump.

"There are those who believe that because their firms'

pay scales are above the minimum, a minimum wage hike

will not impact their business operations. I believe they're wrong," says Bolusky, director of government affairs for the American Association of Nurserymen and its 2,300 members.

Blame the so-called ripple effect.

Bolusky, shown above, explained that green industry businesses generally pay their newly-hired employees at a scale starting a dollar or more above the minimum wages in their markets. That difference gives them a hiring advantage over minimum-wage employers.

"If the starting wages are increased at the bottom by 21 percent, then there is often an expectation by other workers that their wages should be similarly increased," says Bolusky.

Even without the federal wage hike, higher labor costs seem inevitable. As of mid-May, at least 29 states were considering ballot initiatives or legislation to raise the minimum wages within their boundaries.

"In order to attract qualified workers, the green industry needs to do a better job of offering attractive wages and benefits. It is really that simple," says Bolusky, who spoke at the annual meeting of the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association in Washington D.C. recently. □



Industry swallows fuel hikes

When gasoline and diesel prices jumped 15 to 20 cents a gallon across the nation early this spring, the green industry was hardly affected.

Golf course superintendents and grounds managers paid little attention because fuel is such a small part of their overall budgets. And—apparently—few lawn/landscape service providers raised prices because of it.

But the extra cost is not insignificant. A quick calculation shows about \$70 in extra fuel costs per vehicle for each 10-cent jump in fuel prices; that's for a service vehicle averaging 15 miles per gallon, driven 10,000 miles in a season.

Bill Clutter says that none of his lawn care customers "are running out and offering to make up the difference." Nor did he ask or expect them to.

The owner and operator of the Turfguard Company in Dayton, Ohio, points out that when fuel prices took a similar climb several winters ago he took that into consideration when he raised prices.

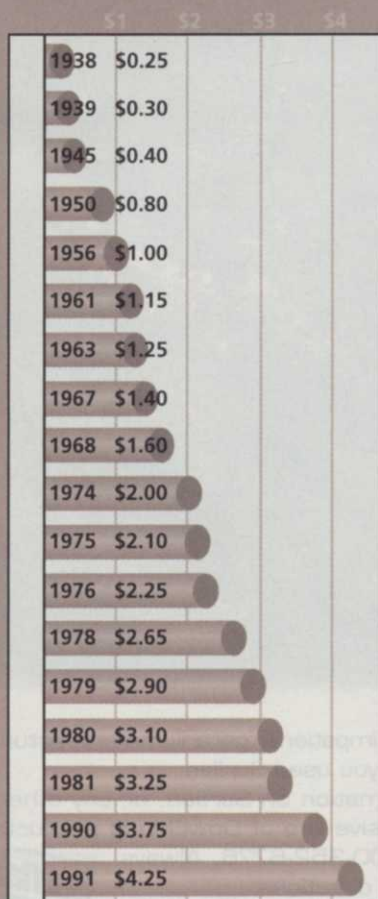
"Of course, we didn't refund the surplus to our customers when the prices came back down," points out Clutter.

The timing of this recent fuel price rise kept lawn and landscape service deliverers from adjusting prices.

"We sign people to our service at the beginning of the year, and we can't go in and raise the price," says David Harris, Liqui-Green Lawn & Tree Care in Bloomington, Ill. □

Maxxing out the minimum

The federal minimum wage has grown steadily since it was first established in 1938. It was last raised in 1991 to \$4.25 per hour. President Clinton proposes another increase, possibly as high as \$5.15.



Correction

The photo on page 21 of our may issue was not that of Ewald Astaltdt. LANDSCAPE MANGEMENT apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused.