

# Mainscape keeps itself 'commercially' focused

*Dave Mazanowski's education at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., included the start of a lawn care business that grew to a company with sales nearing \$9 million.*

**D**ave Mazanowski never dreamed the campus business he started as a student in 1981 would evolve into a satisfying career.

A business major at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Mazanowski began a lawn care service with a partner to defray college expenses. By the time he graduated in 1983, Brothers Lawn Service had become his full-time occupation.

Mazanowski's Mainscape now has branches in Ft. Wayne and Cincinnati, in addition to its Indianapolis headquarters. It offers total landscape management, including irrigation, mowing, fertilization, tree & shrub, mulching, landscape installation, and aquatic care for commercial clients. It has annual sales of "roughly" \$9 million. Dave Mazanowski and his brother, Zyg-



mund, bought out their other partner in 1992 and recently brought their father into the business.

#### **Emphasis on total care**

"We put the emphasis on total maintenance with our customers, instead of focusing on things like mowing where we can't be as competitive," says Mazanowski. "We try to be as full service as possible to the point that we visit some properties on a daily basis, doing whatever is needed on a given day. Our basic program includes three to five applications of fertilizer and weed control per year, but most of our customers sign up for much more than that."

#### **Curb appeal vital**

With accounts such as hospitals, banks, industrial parks, schools, and apartment/condo complexes, Mainscape looks to provide "curb appeal" for its customers. Its mulch bed maintenance program is an essential component to this aspect

**Dave Mazanowski, right, owner of Mainscape, a \$9 million lawn care company based in Indianapolis, and Jeff Lefton, director of marketing.**

**Mainscape serves commercial properties including condos and apartment complexes. The company offers total landscape service.**

of the business, generally requiring weekly visits to each property.

#### **Quick response**

"In these situations, you want a product that responds quickly, preferably in a couple of days," says Mazanowski. "We had some problems a few years ago with our previous product. We'd spray and the customer would still see green a few days later. We'd get called back to spray it again and it would still be green."

Two years ago, Mazanowski tried Finale herbicide on a limited basis. He was impressed. "Finale gave us a very quick kill. We saw results within 24 hours," he says. Last year, Mainscape used Finale almost exclusively for post-emergence nonselective weed control.

In its attempt to offer more services to its customers, Mainscape has expanded into erosion control. Many of its customers have ponds with eroding banks. Mainscape offers standard rip-wrap stones for restoring pond banks, also a more natural bio-log method. The company's aquatics program, which is growing at 20 percent annually, provides weed control and fountain maintenance.



With 60 full-time employees at Main-scape headquarters and another 120 part-timers added during the season, Mazanowski faces his biggest challenge in labor management. "Development of hourly workers in addition to management level employees is one of my major concerns," he says. "Giving people responsibility and accountability is a challenge that's easier said than done. We will be focusing more and more on labor issues in the next few years."

Though his company has experienced some growing pains since the early years on campus, Mazanowski plans to expand into even more areas in the future. He recently began selling and installing play structures in city parks and private enterprises. "We hope to continue attracting more upscale customers who look to us for quality service," he adds. "Our biggest market is companies who don't have time to take care of their own properties." **LM**

## ALCA Foundation up and running

The Board of Directors for the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) approved the formation of the ALCA Educational Foundation as a 501(c)3 organization. Its purpose is to award scholarships and to fund educational programming for the landscape industry.

The board allocated an initial \$25,000 to the Foundation, and expects the amount to reach \$100,000 in the first six months. The goal is \$500,000. A campaign is underway to solicit corporate contributions as well as individual donations.

President of the Foundation is Chris Kujawa, Kujawa Enterprises, Inc.; Vice President is Drew St. John, St. John and Associates; Treasurer, Karen Corcoran, The Benchmark Group; Secretary, Debra Atkins, ALCA; and Director, Steven Glover, L&L Landscape Services.

ALCA also announced a pilot program for both interior and exterior contractors planned for August 21-24 at the Fairmont Hotel, Dallas. The program will focus on the mid-level and foreman-level employee. Also, ALCA CLP and CLT exams will be offered then. Contact Bob Drury at ALCA at (800) 394-2522. □

## PGMS expands membership

Membership in The Professional Grounds Management Society now extends to physical plant administrators and property managers with grounds care responsibilities.

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