

How tiny Beatrice, Neb., became a big player in the commercial turf mower marketplace.

By W. H. "DICK" TEGTMEIER

After high school I didn't have the financial ability to go to college and, therefore, at the age of 17 ventured into the construction field for four years. At the time I moved to and settled in Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1960, where I was able to find a position in the Engineering Department at Dempster Industry.

In 1966 I was employed with F.D. Kees and continued working there for 17 years. In 1976 I drew up their first entry into the commercial mower market on a contract basis. They have now merged with Yazoo Mfg. Co.

Due to personal reasons and opportunities I co-

'Mower city' U.S.A.

founded Exmark Manufacturing in 1982. I again developed a line of commercial equipment. Exmark grew to approximately \$50 million sales in 1997 and sold to Toro in 1997.

In 1988 I saw an open door or I felt an opportunity to start another company in the commercial mowing market and started Encore Manufacturing Company. Next spring we will celebrate our 10th anniversary. So now we at Encore are the only privately held lawnmower company in Beatrice, NE.

The positive impact to the Beatrice, NE, community (a community with approximately 13,000 residents) is significant as approximately \$70 million dollars worth of mowers have been shipped collectively from the three companies.

The first eight years of Encore our average growth was 22 percent annually. However, we showed a 49 percent growth this past fiscal that ended June 30, 1997.

—Dick Tegtmeier is founder and president of Encore Manufacturing, Inc.

1965:

The Lawn Institute, directed by Dr. Robert Schery, is 10 years old.

1966:

O.J. Noer, respected golf course consultant, and one of the developers of Milorganite fertilizer, dies at 76. ("If the greens turn yellow and the chairman is sore, what is the remedy? Ask O.J. Noer.") Michigan State offers 18-month course in Turf Management. ALCA moves headquarters from Berkeley, CA, to Washington D.C.

1967:

California boasts 665 golf courses, up from 234 just a decade earlier. American Sod Producers Association forms. Anthony Giordano and Robert Magda begin franchising Lawn Doctor, founded several years earlier in Wickatunck, NJ. About 2,200 people attend 37th annual GCSSA Turfgrass Conference and Show in Kansas City, MO.