

**L**ike locomotives steaming towards each other on the same track, the Green Industry is on a collision course with consolidation. It'll change the industry, first one segment then another like nothing before it.

This is no secret to anybody familiar with the industry. But the speed that it's happening; that's surprising; and it's likely to accelerate.

An obvious example is giant TruGreen/Chem-Lawn/Barefoot Grass absorbing more established lawn care companies and increasing its share of the application market each season. TG/CL has no competition, not beyond local or, in some cases, isolated regional markets. TG/CL has been on a tear throughout the 1990s, and it shows no signs of slowing down.

The consolidation of chemical lawn care businesses is not necessarily a model for the consolidation for any other segment of the Green Industry. Each segment will be represented by a national presence, or perhaps several. But these mega-presences will develop in their own unique ways.

The process is already well under way:

- ▶ in the golf market with the continued growth of large golf course management companies,
- ▶ in institutional grounds care with organizations like Marriott and ServiceMaster,
- ▶ and now in the fragmented, and still relatively young, landscape services market.

One of the most eagerly awaited events at the recent ALCA Executive Forum was an afternoon reception sponsored by a new landscape services company known as LandCare USA (see article on page 26L).

About 100 people attended the reception, most of them independent landscape company owners. They learned at the reception that six of

**[LANDSCAPE/GROUNDS]**

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Profiles in irrigation contracting

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Computer imaging, picture perfect

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Build your workers to keep them

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National landscape firm is born

# Consolidation is in green industry's future



*Ron Hall*

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Managing Editor

their colleagues had joined forces to launch a national landscape operation.

While the purpose of the reception was strictly informational, it's message seemed to be: *we're just getting started and we're looking for like-minded companies, maybe like yours, to become a part of us.* Some of the company owners at the reception will join.

Others, those who want to remain independent, surely left wondering what consolidation means to them and their companies. **LM**

**[PEOPLE & PROJECTS]**

## Ruppert promotes two

Ruppert Landscape Co., Ashton, MD, promoted Chris Davitt to senior vice president/director of operations. He's been with Ruppert 17 years. Bill Meissner, with the company five years, succeeds Davitt as director of landscape installation. Ruppert has 800 employees in 13 branch offices on the East Coast.

## Miraval project on time

The Groundskeeper hustled to finish the Miraval resort community project in the Catalina Mountains. The Tucson-based company, working with the landscape architect and general contractor, planted nearly 13,000 trees, shrubs and groundcovers and laid 11 1/2 miles of irrigation line to finish the installation at the same time other trades were completed. The project earned an award from The Arizona Landscape Contractors Association.