

Another LM exclusive: PLCAA takes fresh approach to education



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Barring any trademark disputes, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's Education and Research Foundation will be hereafter known as the Evergreen Foundation.

Dale Amstutz of Northern Lawns, Inc., Omaha, NE, is a PLCAA past president who now serves as president of the Foundation. Its stated mission is to "marshal the resources of the Green Industry and others to promote the development and maintenance of trails, greenways and other green spaces to improve the quality of life in America."

The theme of the Foundation is, "We improve the quality of life through green spaces."

Amstutz, in an exclusive interview with LM, says that in June of 1997, PLCAA took a hard look at what the original Foundation had accomplished, and saw room for improvement.

Now, says Amstutz, those who are on the current Foundation board know what's expected of them and are ready to work.

"It's a whole new fresh start," insists Amstutz. "We're going to evaluate ourselves regularly. And maybe each one of us will fill out a personal evaluation each year."

"We're doing a long-range plan, with specific goals," says Amstutz, who for years has been a dedicated member of PLCAA.

Helping with those goals are co-director Jim Brooks, lately with the Lawn Institute, and long before that PLCAA, and secretary Bob Tracinski of John Deere company.

Amstutz told LM that a committee would put together a philanthropic plan during the last week in April, to address questions of fund raising and staffing. Co-directors Dave Hanson of Envi-

ronmental Care and Ron Johnson of Novartis are working on a stewardship committee to set some guidelines for board member accountability, which include attendance at meetings and possibly fund raising assistance.

PLCAA also decided to inject some new blood into the Foundation by having PLCAA immediate past-presidents serve on the Foundation board," says Amstutz. Service on the Foundation board, "had been almost an honorary position; that's probably why nothing happened."

Another caution which Amstutz says sparked the Foundation to rethink its efforts, is that it had become too much of a self-serving entity, something which could have caused legal problems under its 501(c)3 classification. Lobbying on behalf of itself, for example, is not permitted.

Lou Wierichs, Jr., Pro-X Systems, Appleton, WI, serves as Foundation vice president. PLCAA executive vp Tom Delaney is treasurer.

Other changes at PLCAA include an upgrade to Windows 95 software, and a new health care provider, which according to Delaney, will save the association \$7900. A new long distance telephone service is also saving the association about \$500 per month. And, the PLCAA website will soon include a "members only" section.

In other big news, **The Lawn Institute** has agreed to let **Turfgrass Producers International** be the Institute's "green knight." TPI was in the running to merge with the LI, as was PLCAA.

Says TPI's Doug Fender, "The Institute invited TPI to pick up the mission of the Lawn Institute and let [the Institute] dissolve. We're very excited. We can integrate the Lawn Institute's mission (to proclaim the benefits of turfgrass) into the TPI Turf Resource Center. In the future there may be an opportunity to revitalize the Lawn Institute as a separate entity." **LM**

One final exclusive: my wife Terrie and I were blessed with a beautiful baby girl on April 9th. Her name is Hannah Marie. God is faithful!