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## >HOT TOPICS

### Forget the gasoline, filler' up with zinc?

**CARLSBAD, CA** — Electric mowers and other large maintenance equipment for the landscape industry are increasingly likely thanks to advances in fuel cell technology.

Toro is assessing fuel cell power for greens mowers, and Textron for its Cushman and E-Z-GO utility vehicles. Both are collaborating with San Diego-based Metallic Power, the developer of the fuel cells.

Dr. Jeff Colborn, CEO of Metallic Power, tells *Landscape Management* that his company's zinc/air fuel cells produce several times more energy than comparably sized lead/acid batteries. This means that fuel cell-powered equipment, including mowers, can work longer between recharges. Equally important, says Colborn, the fuel cells can be refueled (recharged) in less than 15 minutes. Equipment powered by traditional bat-

teries usually needs an overnight recharge.

While it's unlikely that fuel cells will replace gasoline- or diesel-powered mowers and other equipment in the foreseeable future, they do offer advantages such as reduced noise and virtually no emissions, which landscapers would find attractive in some situations.

Colborn describes his company's zinc/air technology as a closed loop system. Fresh zinc pellets constitute the fuel. When it reacts with air it creates energy. The resulting by-product is zinc oxide which, when the equipment is attached to an electrically powered "refueling station," is reconverted to zinc, which can be used again, and air.

Colborn says Metallic Power will have prototype greens mowers to demonstrate to Toro, and also utility vehicles for Textron's evaluation late this year.

### Lawmakers mull notification in NY

**ALBANY, NY** — The New York State Senate passed S-2543 in June, a bill requiring that neighbors be advised 48 hours in advance of an application of pesticides to a property. But, whether the bill will actually be enacted into law is uncertain. The bill needs the okay of the NY Assembly, too.

How likely is this? Not very, at least not without substantial compromises. The NY Assembly passed its own notification bill this past February and there appears to be big differences between the supporters of the two bills.

Even so, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver on June 18 called upon the Senate to join the Assembly in immediately establishing a conference committee to reach a consensus on pesticide notification legislation.

Green industry and ag-related groups are fighting provisions of the two bills, which they claim are unneeded and just plain unjust. In May, the New York State Turfgrass Association — and other pesticide-using groups — asked members to let their state legislators know that they opposed the notification proposal.

These and other actions spurred last minute changes to S-2543, including restricting the provisions of the bill to New York City and three NY counties — Suffolk, Westchester and Nassau. If enacted, the bill would allow these areas to establish local laws requiring notification.

With budget talks expected to take up much of the NY Senate's time when it returns in mid-July, it's uncertain how far the notification legislation will get in 1999.