

## Act now for labor in 2000

**I**f you need more good employees, you're going to have to seek them out and recruit them. In fact, you may have to find these employees in Mexico.

Don't wait until winter to start rebuilding your crews for next spring. Start now, particularly if you plan to use the government's H-2B program to hire Hispanic laborers (most come from Mexico) for the 2000 season. A lot of U.S. landscape companies use H-2B to fill out their seasonal workforce each year. The program is specifically for seasonal, nonagricultural work. Landscape laborer — mowing, pruning, construction — qualifies.

Getting legal seasonal help from Mexico isn't an easy task, but it's doable despite the expense and time involved. If all goes well, it will take about 100 days from the start of the process until the alien workers arrive at your business. Give yourself more time than that. Start the process 120 days prior to needing workers at your doorstep.

Getting workers through H-2B involves two big steps: 1) finding and recruiting the workers and 2) completing the paperwork to allow them to come to the United States and work for you. You'll likely need professional help for both, but here's an outline of process you'll need to follow.

Apply to the State Employment Security Agency (SESA) in your area for a "labor certification" for the job description that you need filled. The application must include evidence that you tried to recruit U.S. workers for the job, but couldn't. You'll also be required to advertise the job to U.S. workers in your area.

The SESA will forward the application and your

documentation to the regional office of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) which will review the application. After the DOL determines that the Mexican workers won't be taking jobs away from U.S. workers, then you may petition the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for admission of foreign workers. There is no limit on the number of workers you recruit for a occupation. You must be specific about defining the occupation.

Then it's up to you to recruit the workers. The workers, in turn, must apply for visas to enter the United States at a consulate in their country. Once they get the visas, they go to a port of entry for admission into the United States and, finally, to your business where they must work for the job description that you provided the INS — and only for you.

You probably have more questions about H-2B and how to use it to get workers. Here are some services that help U.S. landscape employers recruit Hispanic workers and complete the necessary paperwork:

▶ Angelo H. Miño, Summit Professional Network for Your Hispanic Workforce Needs, Olathe, KS; 913/438-3364.

▶ Jeff West, GTO International, Rochester, MI; 248/608-1827; fax 248/608-1829.

▶ Robert Wingfield, Amigos Labor Solutions, Dallas; 214/634-0500; fax 214/634-1001; [www.amigos-inc.com](http://www.amigos-inc.com).

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Start gathering your manpower now, particularly if you plan to use the H-2B program to hire Mexican laborers for the 2000 season —RH

