

LM100

10 Noteworthy Newsmakers

Flash! These guys made a splash on the news scene. Consolidation, Web development, leadership changes, and pesticide regulation all got attention.

Greentrac.com running strong

Early this year, Greentrac.com splashed onto the e-commerce scene, calling itself a one-source demand-and-supply Web site for the Green Industry. By the end of June, Greentrac's gross transaction volume grew to \$12 million, with over 1,000 registered members. Rhonda Knipp, vice president of sales, explains:



"We have a nice mix of buyers — golf courses, nurseries — and the vendors complement the buyers nicely. We would love to see actual revenue ramping up more quickly — we have people who are still experimenting and are hesitant to pull the trigger. They need a lot of hand holding."

Turfco Direct gaining popularity

It has been almost a full year since Turfco Mfg. started a direct purchase program to fight the loss of dealers and get products out to end users more rapidly, and sales manager Bob Brophy says things are going better than expected. While he won't discuss sales figures, he did say that the company is approaching a record year.

One of the primary benefits of the new system, Brophy said, is quicker information flow. "There's no two-step filtration of information from factory to customer any more."

Response time to customers for new, whole goods has decreased as well. "We've trimmed 1 1/2 to 2 weeks down to 3 days," Brophy said.

The Anderson's Ohio deal changes distribution landscape

Acquisitions and new strategies are the name of the game. That's why The Andersons' purchase of The Scotts Company's U.S. Professional Turf Business makes so much sense for the Maumee, Ohio, firm. Both Ohio-based companies have compatible product lines and markets, as well as complementary offerings. According to Rick Anderson, president of the Processing Group, the purchase gives The Andersons



new heft as one of the big turf industry distributors, adding to the company's ability to research, develop and market landscape products on a wider geographical basis. The Andersons' executives see this as a perfect opportunity to enhance their already strong, traditional presence on the landscape side.

New PGMS exec steps up to bat

Members of the Professional Grounds Management Society already are noticing changes in the organization just a few months after new Executive Director Tom Shaner took charge. Expect more to come. Shaner is a Certified Association Executive and president of a 25-year-old association management company in Baltimore. Expect Shaner to start nudging the group into new directions, such as positioning PGMS as an authority in grounds management practices and standardizing many practices and policies. "I like what I see about the industry but I'm just learning," he says.

Centex forges into green markets

Under the stewardship of Dave Armitage, a former regional general manager with TruGreen-LandCare, Centex Home Team Lawn Care, a division of the \$5-billion Centex Corp., is fast becoming a major player in lawn, tree and shrub care. Revenues are expected to hit \$12 million in 2000, with a strategy focused on aggressive acquisitions and growth developed by telemarketing and outside sales.



"We don't have a limit on acquisitions," Armitage said. "We're interested in quality

companies with quality employees and good managers." He adds Centex Lawn Care's five-year goal is to reach \$75 million in revenues. "There's a point at which acquiring doesn't make sense if you're just acquiring for the sake of acquiring."



Weed Man's bandwagon keeps rolling

The 1999 United States lawn care market looked ripe to the executives of Weed Man, Canada's largest lawn care franchise company. Their priorities, says Roger Mongeon, president of the U.S.

subsidiary Turf Holdings Inc., was to get key players on board and establish a foothold in the U.S. market. From there, Weed Man could grow new franchises. But the U.S. lawn care market responded with much more enthusiasm than expected. Several well known LCOs are now area franchisors and are busy building interest within their territories. Watch for more rapid growth to come.

Kenneth Budd runs Lofts Seed again

Kenneth Budd is directing the fortunes of Lofts Seed again. In July, he purchased those assets from Nevada-based AgriBioTech which filed for bankruptcy last February and was sold in parts in July. He had been named president in June 1999, at the time of the bankruptcy. He became involved with the seed business in 1984 when he was hired by his uncle, Richard Budd, owner of Budd Services, to run Budd Seed Co. In June 1996, the Budds bought Lofts Seed and its headquarters were transferred from Somerset, NJ, to Winston-Salem, NC.

Karnes returns to spark TruGreen-LandCare

Donald K. Karnes has come a long way since his days in west Michigan with TruGreen. For years TruGreen, founded in Michigan, was like a dog snapping for market share at the heels of industry-leading ChemLawn. After TruGreen was acquired by ServiceMaster, things changed. TruGreen acquired the much larger ChemLawn in the early 1990s. Karnes, who had moved up the ranks, spearheaded that successful integration and was at the helm as TGCL became SM's most profitable operation. He was rewarded with promotion to Group President ServiceMaster Consumer and Commercial Services Co. Recently, Karnes returned to the front lines to energize the TruGreen-LandCare landscape operations.

Harley takes OPEI helm

Landscape industry equipment suppliers who belong to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute may have wondered how they would replace the likes of Dennis Dix, long-time OPEI president and CEO. But the selection of Bill Harley to the post signals the start of a new and exciting era for the organization. Harley's experience with contracting and equipment-heavy industries, his political savvy and his quick mastery of Green Industry particulars seem to be just what this quickly consolidating industry needs.

Dursban ban point man

Anyone who knows how the U.S. EPA regulates Green Industry pesticides should know the key role that Allen James plays. As executive director of RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), James brings a skilled lobbyist's sense of realism to the table. As a very visible participant in this year's Dursban review process, James spoke out often and eloquently (and in vain) for the use of "sound science" in the Agency's evaluations. "Regulatory decisions based on sound scientific principles and data will provide the best protection for human health and the environment," he maintains.