

industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Greenzebras.com eyes merger

MAYNARD, MA - Greenzebras.com, an e-commerce company that debuted at the Green Industry Expo last November, is seeking to merge with another Green Industry dot-com company. The reason for the merger is largely financial, since one of the company's investors, eColony, dropped its commitment to fund them.

Ward named CEO of ServiceMaster

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Jonathon P. Ward takes over as president and CEO of ServiceMaster (NYSE: SVM) on Feb. 12. Ward, 46, comes to ServiceMaster from R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., where he was president and CEO. He succeeds C. William Pollard, 62, who served as ServiceMaster CEO from 1983-1993. Pollard will continue to serve as chairman of the board. Servicemaster is the parent company of TruGreen-ChemLawn and TruGreen Land-care.

TopPro has new product line

MEMPHIS, TN — TopPro Specialties, a unit of BASF Corp. and Micro Flo Co., has a new product line of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides for the turf and ornamental industry. The product expansion, which includes Amdro Pro, is a result of BASF's acquisition of American Cyanamid.

Lawn pros unite to contain NY law

ALBANY, NY — Beginning March 1, landscape/lawn contractors in Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties in New York State must comply with a new "Pesticide Neighbor Notification Law." As *LM* went to press, other counties were studying the law, but only Albany County appeared to be close to adopting it.

State lawmakers approved and Gov. George Pataki signed the measure last summer. Green Industry observers described it as an election year compromise, a concession to intense lobbying by a coalition of consumer advocacy groups bent on dramatically reducing pesticide use in the state. They specifically targeted chemical use in residential settings and public areas.

While the new law mandates pre-notification for schools and day care centers, it's the requirement of 48-hour advance pre-notification that rankles the application community and, particularly, professional lawn care companies. Application companies that deliver service in counties that have approved the law must provide written notice to abutting properties located within 150 feet of any lawn pesticide application. The notice will include the location and date (including two rain dates) of application, the pesticide to be used, the company making the application and how to get more information.

This particular provision of the law is not statewide, unlike the pre-notification of schools and day care centers. The state legislature left it up to each county to adopt the 48-hour neighbor pre-notification portion of the law.

A costly law?

Members of the New York State Lawn Care Association (NYSLCA) are attempt-

GREEN ISSUES



ing to keep that measure from spreading. They've been meeting with their respective county lawmakers, explaining why the law is unnecessary and how it will raise customers' prices and the cost of doing business. They've also been pointing out that the majority of lawn care customers don't want it.

"That old statement about all politics being local has never been so true," says Robert E. Ottley, One-Step Tree & Lawn-care, N. Chili, NY. "This pre-notification law has become a local issue and the local legislators have to look at its implications."

While the lawn care industry in the state is small compared to other industries, it can count on strong public support if it gets its message out, says Kevin Petrinec, Funk Lawn Care, Tonawanda, NY. Petrinec has participated in radio call-in

CLIPPINGS



Kevin Petrinec

shows, appeared on local television and been quoted in newspapers on behalf of professional lawn care.

"We have our backs against the wall," he says. "We've had to be-

come media savvy in a hurry and, obviously, we have to continue to be politically active."

Ahead of the game

In this light, NYSLCA initiated its own citizen pre-notification registry last fall, something members had unsuccessfully asked state lawmakers to consider implementing in previous terms. Eleven other states have established similar registries that seem to be working well, Petrinec points out.

"We've been doing a voluntary pre-notification of our customers anyway," says Donald Potentz, Lushlawn, Inc., Buffalo, NY, echoing several other lawn care managers in the state. "The way the new law is

written, I don't know how I could do it if it passed in our county. We would probably go to all granular and do spot spraying where we needed it. Two of our applications are liquid. All granular would be okay, but the results would not be as good." There are several exemptions in the



Donald Potentz

law — for application of granular pesticides and for small spot applications.

Also, homeowners treating more than 100 sq. ft. of lawn area with pesticides must post markers on the day of application, as commercial lawn applicators already do.

It appears unlikely that many county governments will adopt the new law, the cost of enforcement being one sticking point. But even if most don't, lawn care professionals feel political pressure on professional pesticide users will continue.

With that in mind, about 75 representatives met with state lawmakers in Albany

on Feb. 6. The meetings were arranged as part of the New York State Turfgrass Association's second annual Turfgrass Advocacy Day.

—Ron Hall



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People & companies

Landscapers Supply

Corp. appointed **James Kelley** district sales manager.



Pennington Seed

named **Charles W. Lohse** western territory manager for the Profes-

sional Turfgrass Group.

Simplot Partners appointed **Nick Spardy** vice president and general manager, **David Schermerhorn** director of sales and **John Maggiore** national operations manager.

Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products

named **Gregory E. Hyland** chairman and CEO.

Environmental Care named **Thane Issacs**



manager of its Memphis, TN branch.

A time to grow

Troubled boys learn love and responsibility through work at greenhouse

BY JASON STAHL

DENVER, CO — The parallels between life and gardening are endless. To be successful at both, one has to learn how to nurture, care and love. Growth only happens through learning. The more you dedicate yourself to it, the better you get at it.

The connection between growing in life and growing plants wasn't missed by the staff at Colorado Boys Ranch, La Junta, CO, who last year constructed an on-campus green-

house with funding from the Wallace Genetic Foundation. The idea was to teach the residential treatment and education facility's troubled boys the fundamentals of horticulture, not to mention a few life lessons about love, responsibility and commitment.

Rodger Harris, the chaplain at Colorado Boys Ranch and former agricultural business executive, oversees all the love poured into the flowers, vegetables and fruits. In his program, which consists of four classes a day, the



Colorado Boys Ranch chaplain Rodger Harris inspects plants in the new greenhouse while a youth repots a seedling.

boys learn everything from planting and harvesting to putting soil to bed in winter and

harvesting and replanting seeds in winter.

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"There's something about boys and playing in the dirt. It's therapeutic and relaxing," Harris says. "The greenhouse offers a respite to the boys. They always want to pick the fruit before it ripens, but I tell them to just wait a little longer."

One boy in particular seemed to find his calling on a field trip to Hollar Seeds, a nearby international seed producer and distributor. "He was so impressed by what goes on there that he said he wanted to pursue a career in seeds," Harris recalls. "Up until that time, he hadn't shown much interest in anything. Now, he retains information quite well. He'll go to the greenhouse and say, 'Oh, this is what you talked about yesterday.'"

It turns out that Hollar Seeds is donating

a portion of the sale of its Prairie Fire pepper plant seeds to the program.

"We see this as a perfect relationship," says Charles Thompson, president of Colorado Boys Ranch. "The proceeds of this venture go directly towards helping us maintain our highly successful horticulture program."

Thompson says the boys have already grown some of the Prairie Fire pepper plants, and, given that they're hot, showy ornamentals that contain capsaicin, a hot pepper ingredient that serves as a natural insect repellent, they're finding them the perfect addition to display beds around the ranch.

Through the Colorado Boys Ranch, young men are not only learning more about themselves but learning a trade. Some are being taught how to operate the ranch's big



Boys at the greenhouse learn how to properly care for plants.

John Deere skid steer loader. Others are tasting homegrown vegetables for the first time as a result of their efforts at the greenhouse. Undoubtedly, some will become productive members of the Green Industry.

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Deere adds McGinnis Farms; buys Great Dane

MOLINE, IL — Deere & Company (NYSE: DE) announced Jan. 4 that it acquired McGinnis Farms Inc., headquartered in Alpharetta, GA. The company — a full-line supplier of nursery stock, landscape supplies and irrigation products throughout the Southeast — recorded sales of \$150 million in 2000. Founded in 1987 by Stan Walker, McGinnis Farms has locations in 10 states.

FdG Associates, a New York-based investment firm, and a group of McGinnis managers are the current company owners selling the company to John Deere.

“Our customers benefit as we further extend our reach to landscape and irrigation professionals in the \$100 billion market known as the Green Industry,” said John Jenkins, president of Deere’s Worldwide Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division.

David Werning, a 24-year veteran of Deere and president of McGinnis Farms, told LM that the acquisition shows Deere’s commitment to providing “additional services” to the professional landscape market.

“Certainly, this is a new direction for John Deere,” said Werning, “but there is a lot of synergy in this decision and there’s a lot of expertise in the management at McGinnis.” He said the McGinnis management will stay in place, and that Deere looks forward to partnering with other manufacturers, like irrigation companies.

More mowers

On Dec. 18, 2000, Deere announced the purchase of the Great Dane Power Equipment Company. The mower manufacturer is headquartered in Jeffersonville, IN, and will become part of Deere’s Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division.

“Great Dane gives us the opportunity to go after the commercial mower segment that we traditionally have not been strong in,” says Greg Doherty, general manager of Turf Care Facilities for John Deere.

Great Dane, which was incorporated in 1996 by Dane Scag, had nearly \$23 million in sales in 1999. Scag will remain with the company and will focus on research and de-

velopment of new commercial mowers, says a release from Deere. The company will continue to manufacture and distribute equipment under the Great Dane brand.

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