

industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Langley retires after 34 years with RISE

VISTA, CA — After 34 years of service, Fred Langley, Manager of State and Government Relations for RISE, will retire Aug. 31. Frank Gasperini, formerly of Vopak (Van Waters & Rogers), will take over as a consultant July 1, then as a full-time staff member Sept. 1 (the start of RISE's fiscal year).

Woods Equipment reports sales drop

ROCKFORD, IL — Woods Equipment Company reported that first quarter net sales were down 19.5% compared to last year. Woods said the drop in sales was due to unfavorable weather conditions, increased competition on selected construction attachments, a slowing of the general economy, the realignment of sales territories and changes in internal management responsibilities.

Vermeer, Sherrill sign deal

PELLA, IA — Sherrill, Inc., a supplier of arborist equipment, entered into an exclusive alliance with Vermeer Manufacturing Co. to jointly distribute environmental materials through the Vermeer worldwide dealerships.

Win a truck at Expo

LOUISVILLE, KY — Attend the International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo July 20-22 and you could win \$25,000 toward the purchase of a truck in the Trucks of the Industry Give-away. Admission is free to those who register before July 16. For info call Sellers Expositions, 800/558-8767.

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CLIPPINGS

More deals for Deere

President says latest acquisitions are "customer-based"

BY JASON STAHL

CLEVELAND — When Deere & Company acquired Great Dane Power Equipment Company in December of last year, the deal made sense to Green Industry insiders. Deere was obviously trying to strengthen its footing in the commercial mower segment.

The company's latest acquisitions, however, have made everyone scratch their heads.

The acquisitions themselves were not such a mystery, at least to those who knew of Deere's ambitious "6 by 6" goal, or \$6 billion in revenues by the year 2006. Acquisitions, as the Green Industry saw last year, are one of the fastest ways to grow a business. But it was the kind of businesses that Deere acquired that confused people.

First, it was McGinnis Farms Inc., Alpharetta, GA, a full-line supplier of nursery stock, landscape supplies and irrigation products. Then, it was Richton International and its irrigation equipment business, Century Supply Corp., which it intends to combine with McGinnis Farms under the name John Deere Landscapes.

The question people are asking now is, "What does John Deere know about the irrigation and nursery business?" The answer is not much, and that's why these particular acquisitions were so perfect, says John Deere Landscape President Dave Werning.

"These acquisitions had existing industry-recognized management and personnel in place, so we didn't have to try to develop the expertise of running these businesses. That's part of what we acquired," Werning says. "We could have gone out and built physical locations for these businesses, but what we didn't have was management personnel."

"With the existing consumer-only business, the areas we're entering are part of the Green Industry, and that's the industry we're in."

— Dave Werning,
President of John
Deere Landscapes

And even though these businesses are not ones that Deere had been involved with previously, Werning feels there is a connection. "With the existing consumer-only business, the areas we're getting into are part of the Green Industry, and that's the industry we're in," he says. "We have been serving some of the same customers that nursery and irrigation businesses have been serving, so I guess the connection point is customer-based."

Future acquisitions?

John Deere's latest buying spree has caused much speculation among industry insiders as to which company it will buy next. TruGreen LandCare has been mentioned, but analysts say it's not likely because Deere would then be competing for contracts against the very contractors who buy their products. Rain Bird and Hunter have also been listed as possible future acquisitions for Deere.

Landscape Management partners with ASIC

CLEVELAND — The American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) has selected *Landscape Management* as the professional organization's "Official Publication" for the landscape industry.

According to Landscape Management's associate publisher/executive editor Sue Gibson, ASIC will work in partnership with *Landscape Management* and its sister publications, *Golfdom* and *Athletic Turf*, to "ensure that we offer

professionals and others and build an appreciation for the critical role that profes-

sional irrigation consultants play in the success of their projects."

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landscape professionals and other readers the finest possible coverage" of irrigation issues. "Effective irrigation design and performance is probably one of the major critical issues faced by landscape professionals in this country," said Gibson. "We're thrilled that we now have the expertise of ASIC's membership on our side."

ASIC president Brian Vinchesi said the relationship will "allow us to reach out to landscape, lawn care and grounds

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Sprouts acquires TNT Enterprises

NAPERVILLE, IL — Sprouts Landscape, Inc. acquired TNT Enterprises, Wheaton, IL, and changed its name to Great Impressions, Inc. Last September, Sprouts acquired Planters Pride, Wheaton, IL. Sprouts plans to hit \$1.5 million in revenues in 2001.

DIG acquires LEIT product line

VISTA, CA — DIG Corp. purchased the LEIT product line from ALTEC Irrigation, Inc. The purchase makes DIG the largest provider of alternative power controllers in the irrigation industry.

Riverdale relocates headquarters

BURR RIDGE, IL — Riverdale, a subsidiary of international chemical company Nufarm, relocated its corporate headquarters from Glenwood, IL to Burr Ridge, IL and invested \$5 million in upgrades to its Chicago Heights, IL manufacturing plant.

CLIPPINGS

People & companies

The J.R. Simplot Company named **Don Johnson** vice president and general manager of the fertilizer division of its Turf & Horticulture Group.

Seed Research of Oregon added **Bryan Muntz** to its sales staff.



He will focus his efforts on the West Coast and the Plains

states from Kansas north to Canada.

Environmental Industries placed **Kenneth Hutcheson** into the leadership role at U.S. Lawns, its franchise division.

The RBI Companies appointed **Chris Graeber**

vice president of landscape construction.

Bayer Corp. named **Michael Daly** turf and ornamental brand manager, **Cathy Fuhrman** commercial market manager and **Jennifer Remsberg** residential market manager. Field sales representative **Jeff Vannoy** has become a Home Health Brand representative, and **Steve Ehart** changed from market manager to brand manager for all Bayer pest management products. Communications manager **Renee Holmes** was appointed Accolades program director, a position formerly held by **Neil Cleveland**, who is now the Eastern Area sales manager.

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America welcomed the return of **Heath Moore** to his new role as sales and marketing manager of the Green Industry Expo. Moore had been PLCAA's membership and education manager for five years.



Signature Control Systems named **Paul Lat-**

shaw director of agronomics.

Rain Bird promoted **Ken Mills** to vice president of its Turf Division, **Janet Reilly** to vice president of its Contractor Division and **Karl Altergott** to director of its Commercial Division.

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