

## Always new peaks to climb

**D**avid Luse has traveled to faraway lands to scale some of the world's tallest peaks. Apparently, he still has mountains to climb — both the white-capped kind and other varieties, judging by the lofty goals he's set for himself since selling his landscape company, Arteka Corp., several years ago.

What next? Luse has had to grapple with that question, along with more than 100 of his former colleagues in the lawn/landscape contracting industry.

These former industry leaders either joined or sold their operations at the height of consolidation fever. They struck the best deals they could, perhaps worked for a while with the new owners, and are now on their own. Most are still young and energetic, if not in age, then certainly in spirit. Most, it seems, left the industry with cash, connections and time to do some of the things they'd been putting off or, perhaps, dreaming about.

We were curious, and we think you'll get a kick out of what your former colleagues and friends are up to. You may even feel a pang of jealousy, as we did, in learning about the fascinating projects they're now involved with.

Luse's company was one of the founding members of LandCare USA, which went public in 1998 and, a little over a year later, was acquired by ServiceMaster and became a part of the TruGreen group.

Although he's not building a landscape company anymore, his efforts remain, at least tangentially, tied to the Green Industry. These include

Andreas Development Co., a property development firm he and associates founded in Eden Prairie, MN. Recently, Luse told us his firm had about 330,000 sq. ft. of property (commercial, office, industrial) under



David Luse

development. Not surprisingly, one of the company's goals is to enhance the properties with trees.

But when Luse started talking about his newest venture, helping an international non-profit organization provide solar ovens to residents of Third World countries, his voice became animated. Families living in tropical or subtropical parts of the world are using the ovens to cook food or pasteurize water instead of gathering brush or chopping down trees for fuel, back-breaking tasks almost always done by women. Luse said the goal is to distribute 1 million or more solar ovens within the next five years.

"We all have our careers, our families and our friends, and I've been very fortunate," he told us. "I began wondering what I could do to give back some of what I've been given."

Now that you have an idea of what Luse has been involved with since leaving the landscape industry, turn to page 30 in our special LM 100 report to find out what some of your other former colleagues and friends are up to. You might be surprised.

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