



# More flexibility

BY VICKY POULSEN

**These grounds professionals discuss why utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity**

**S**mall enough to get into tight spaces but tough enough to do the job of their big truck counterparts, today's utility vehicles have greater power, payload and traction abilities that give landscape professionals more flexibility in their day-to-day operations.

An increasing number of landscape professionals are finding that utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity, especially in areas like university campuses where parking is a problem. We talked to university grounds managers and others to find out just how useful these utility vehicles are, and here is what they had to say:

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## MEDIUM PROPERTY

Name: Greg Burriss

Title: Grounds manager

Company: Furman University

Location: Greenville, SC

2000 budget: \$1 million

Company profile: "We have 80 acres of turf on the athletic grounds and 80 acres on campus grounds. The total acreage we maintain is 400 acres. We have nine grounds workers for the athletic areas, 12 with campus grounds and two on the



Burriss

Many grounds operations have Club Car's Carryall, which is adaptable to light and heavy work.

PHOTO COURTESY CLUB CAR



nine-acre president's estate. We perform total grounds maintenance care and landscape implementation.

**Equipment arsenal:** "We have 10 half-ton Chevy trucks, a one-ton Ford dump truck, two five-ton Ford dumptrucks, seven golf cars, one Cushman sprayer, one kromer painter, one 4x4 Club car, and three John Deere Gators.

**Purchasing decisions:** "We buy new except for the golf cars."

**Dream vehicle:** "A three-quarter ton 4x4 with turf tires, heavy duty dumpbed, winch and weather band radio — and 40 miles to the gallon!"

## SMALL PROPERTY

**Name:** Chris Fay

**Title:** Grounds manager

**Company:** University of North Carolina at Greensboro

**Location:** Greensboro, NC

**2000 budget:** \$873,400

**Company profile:** The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is located on a 197-acre campus in the Piedmont Triad Region with 3.1 million gross sq. ft. of building space. The grounds department performs services such as maintenance of the golf course and soccer stadium, moving, commencement decoration and set-up, placement and collection of extra trash receptacles for outdoor events, preparation of athletic fields for major events, coordination of utility excavations and special landscape design, excavation and installation. The grounds division also houses the Solid Waste Management Division. One supervisor, three full-time and seven part-time laborers care for the athletic fields.

**Equipment arsenal:** "Ten pickups (Dodge/Ford half-ton), three two-ton dump trucks and two Cushman trucksters (gas) with spray tanks. We also use a John Deere Gator (gas) to haul and dump clay and mulch to sand fields/golf course and a John Deere (gas) infield Groomer. We drag baseball and softball infields and groom sand traps with a Tenant litter vacuum unit (gas). We have three used golf-type Club cars (electric) and one used six-passenger Club car (electric) to give tours of campus grounds and transport seasonal workers across campus."

**Purchasing decisions:** "We buy new units based on a bid process because we're a state institution. We've had good luck with used units from golf courses, too."

Chris Fay drives one of his Cushman trucksters.



PHOTO COURTESY BERT VANDERVEEN

## LARGE PROPERTY

**Name:** Michael Lynch

**Title:** Account manager

**Company:** Environmental Management Services, Inc.

**Location:** Columbus, OH

**2000 revenue:** \$10.8 million

**Business mix:** Mostly commercial

**Company profile:** Mark Wehinger started Environmental Management Services, Inc. in 1992 as a commercial landscaping company. Installation services were added to complement maintenance contracts. "Since that time, we have grown into a full-service landscape contracting company that performs such services as design build, installation, irrigation, seasonal color, bird aversion and snow removal. We have 160 employees, and our business mix now consists of 70% commercial maintenance and 30% installation."

**Equipment arsenal:** "The utility vehicle we get the most use out of is the Exmark Lazer converted turf tractor, a zero-turn tractor with a dry fertilizer hopper added to the front and liquid tanks added to the back with both hand wand and boom spray applicators."

**Purchasing decisions:** "We have three of these Exmark vehicles in our fleet. Two were purchased new in 1998 and one in 1999. We plan to purchase another next year."

**Dream vehicle:** "These machines take care of our needs, but we're going to have a large boom added to our next purchase."