

industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Harper Industries acquires Goossen

HARPER, KS — Harper Industries, Inc., acquired Goossen Industries, Beatrice, NE, and its product line of straw blowers, chippers/shredders and power plate skid-steer adaptors.

Drew St. John joins Symbiot

SALT LAKE CITY, UT — Symbiot Business Group has added Drew St. John to its management team as vice president. St. John, immediate past president of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), joins Steven Glover, Symbiot president, and board members John Allin, Rod Bailey, William Braid and Bruce Wilson.

Shindaiwa awards Challenge groups

TUALATIN, OR — Shindaiwa awarded prizes to Beautiful Landscapes, Issaquah, WA, Houston Landscapes Unlimited, Sugarland, TX, and Lawn South, Roswell, GA, for completing their first 52 weeks of consistent training in Round 1 and 2 of The Training Challenge, a training program created by JP Horizons Inc.

Rockscapes moves headquarters

CHATSWORTH, CA — Rockscapes, LLC has completed the move of its commercial and residential landscape lighting manufacturing and headquarters operations to an expanded facility in Chatsworth, CA.

Minnesota limits phosphorus fertilizers

Adios phosphorus. Hello weaker turf, uglier lawns and more pollution. That will be the payoff if Minnesota legislators keep picking on the chemical lawn care industry, says Jim Skillen of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), the Washington-based lobbying group that represents fertilizer and specialty chemical users.

On April 3, the Minnesota House passed (116-16) a bill to restrict the use of phosphorus in turf fertilizers applied to lawns. The bill would allow no phosphorus-containing fertilizer to be used on home lawns, commercial properties or public properties in the seven-county Twin Cities area, and no more than 3% phosphate in fertilizer (0.3 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.) used on lawns elsewhere in the state.

The bill exempts agriculture, sod farms golf courses, and starter fertilizer use in the first year of a seeded or sodded grow-in.

Taking action

The House took the action to slow the decline of the state's lakes and ponds, their reasoning being that phosphorus stimulates blue-green algae growth, reducing oxygen for fish and more desirable aquatic plants.

"The purpose of this bill is to bring some uniformity across the state in the use of phosphorus and to provide educational information so that consumers can know when they ought to be using it and when they shouldn't be," said Rep. Peggy Leppik, the bill's sponsor. She said testing has shown that soils in many parts of the state have enough phosphorus, and that additional phosphorus would only end up in lakes and streams.

RISE's Skillen, however, disputes that

lawn care chemicals, including phosphate, are the bad guys in the water quality issue. "There is absolutely no scientific foundation for this legislation," he claims, adding that research has shown just the opposite — that healthy and well-maintained turfgrass prevents runoff and reduces pollution into lakes and streams.

"The legislatures don't have science to support the position they have taken," echoes Christiane Schmenk, director of environmental stewardship, The Scotts Co., a supplier of consumer turfgrass fertilizer. One bright note

in the legislation is a clause calling for additional research on the subject, she adds.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, fearful that its agricultural members could be targeted next, lent its weight to RISE and the lawn care industry in opposing the restrictions. However, unless there is a change of heart in the Minnesota legislature, the restrictions will go into effect January 1, 2004.

"There is no scientific foundation for this legislation."

— Jim Skillen, RISE

[CLIPPINGS]

West, South growing most

The 10 states with the largest projected increase in population 1995-2025 (in millions):

State	1995 population	2025 estimated
California	31.5	49.3
Texas	18.7	27.1
Florida	14.2	20.7
Georgia	7.2	9.9
Washington	5.4	7.8
Arizona	4.2	6.4
North Carolina	7.2	9.3
Virginia	6.6	8.4
New York	18.1	19.8
New Jersey	7.9	9.5

New CEO plots LESCO's future

BY RON HALL

NEW YORK — Less than a week after being named Chief Executive Officer of LESCO (NASDAQ: LSCO), Michael DiMino laid out his management team's vision of the company's future.

In a presentation to shareholders and the investment community here on April 9, he described LESCO's new direction as "back to basics," and called on a return to the philosophy of company founders Jim FitzGibbon and Bob Burkhardt.

A vision of the future

DiMino, who spoke for about an hour, said that LESCO, because of new measures to control costs and grow revenues, is on the road to a profitable '02. He also presented a revamped sales and growth strategy that, he said, will boost same-store sales and allow LESCO to compete more effectively.

He stressed the company's person-to-person customer service style won't change.

"One of the things that LESCO is very good at, and is a core competency of our company, is that we deliver agronomic expertise to the experts," said DiMino. "We help them grow grass. We help them keep their jobs. We help them keep their businesses."

LESCO, he said, remains committed to its basic business model that consists of its:

- ▶ drive-thru service centers that offer products and advice for lawn care and landscape pros,

- ▶ unique Stores-on-Wheels (a fleet of tractor-trailers operated by salesmen trained in turf care management) concept for the golf course market, and

- ▶ desire to continue to nurture its Independent Marketing Program in those areas of the country it can't reach with service centers or truck stores. (Its first such partnership with Wilco Farmers in Oregon's Willamette Valley has resulted in sales of \$80,000 in LESCO products, he said, and has enabled Wilco to penetrate the golf market in its region.)

"We want to unleash the value that this model provides," said DiMino.

Realigning sales efforts

Key to that, he said, is the realignment of the company's sales efforts with personnel dedicated solely to selling and facility managers focused on the stores and servicing customers. Both, he stressed, will continue to offer agronomic advice.

"Right now we have a problem where our sales and service people have overlapped," he explained. "They have sort of become one job function."

Another initiative is the development of a "hub and spoke" distribution system to make sure that each store (some will be consolidated into "super stores") has products that customers need when they need them. He said that the company is considering adding more service center stores.



At a glance

Headquarters: Strongsville, OH

2001 sales: \$504.3 million

Service centers: 227

Stores on Wheels: 77

Founded: 1962 by Jim FitzGibbon and Robert Burkhardt as the Lake Shore Equipment & Supply Co. Entered Lawn Care Market in 1974 and went public in 1984, changing name to LESCO, Inc.

Markets served: Professional landscape/lawn care, golf course maintenance, pest control

Primary competitors (chemicals, fertilizers, seed): Anderson's, Simplot Partners, Lebanon, Scotts, ProSource One and United Horticultural Supply

Primary competitors (equipment): John Deere, Textron, Toro, Scag, others

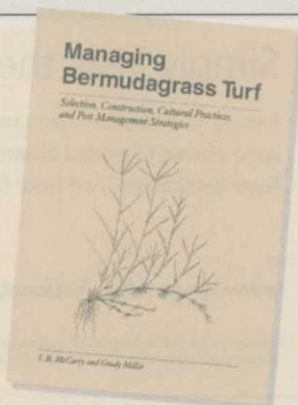
In line with that, the company is upgrading its store systems, he said, taking advantage of software to precisely track the flow of products from manufacturers to customers and gauge customer satisfaction.

"We have to go real time with that transaction so that we know instantaneously that we just sold something and what inventory has been dedicated to what customers," he said, adding that program should be in place by year's end.

"We're going to focus on customer loyalty and satisfaction," added DiMino. "We want to build shareholder value. We want to improve profits. . . This really is a new day at LESCO."

New bermudagrass book

Anybody serious about managing warm-season turfgrass should check out a new book by L. B. "Bert" McCarty, Clemson University, and Grady Miller, University of Florida. "Managing Bermudagrass Turf" is a 220-page hardcover book devoted to the selection, cultural practices and pest management strategies of bermudagrass. For more information call 800/487-2323 or visit the Web site www.sleepingbearpress.com.



Scotts asks for science in FQPA

BOWLING GREEN, OH — Christiane W. Schmenk of The Scotts Company asked U.S. Rep. Paul Gillmor (R-OH) to urge the U.S. EPA to use “accurate, real-world data and sound science” in implementing the next phase of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).

The FQPA, passed by Congress in 1996, regulates the nation’s use of pesticides. Schmenk was one of several people representing professional pesticide users before the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials here on March 28. Rep. Gillmor is chairman of the subcommittee.

“Scotts is concerned that the impending August 3, 2002 deadline for the cumulative risk assessment of organophosphates may not allow the Agency (EPA) to fully utilize all available data in decisions and that we will lose the use of important pest management tools,” she told Rep. Gillmor and other staffers.

She pointed out that the voluntary cancellation of residential uses of chlorpyrifos and diazinon harmed Scotts, both financially and in terms of customer perception. The cancellations were caused by registrants’ fears that they couldn’t meet “incredibly high theoretical hurdles set by EPA” when faced with impending deadlines, she said. “These were broad-spectrum pest controls for which

there were no good substitutes available,” she continued. “More applications of more varieties of pesticides are necessary to achieve control, which costs 25 to 50% more.”

She added The Scotts Company remains concerned that, in recent years, decisions about registered pesticide uses of pest control products may not have been based entirely on science.

“Anti-chemical emotions seem to have caused science to be disregarded in certain instances,” said Schmenk. “We ask for your help in ensuring that approved uses of safe and reliable pest management tools are not lost, and that all

decisions made are based on scientific evidence. “Consider and incorporate all available data into the tolerance reassessment process, even though there is an August 3 deadline.”

Bailey Wood, in Rep. Gillmor’s Washington D.C. office, said the hearing’s purpose was to inform the Congressman of the issues surrounding FQPA. “There hasn’t been any oversight on the bill as a whole,” said Wood. “We wanted to make

“We ask...that all decisions made are based on scientific evidence.”

— Christiane Schmenk,
The Scotts Co.

sure the issues are out in the open. Rep. Gillmor said he realized FQPA “is not a perfect bill” but that it does give the public confidence the government is monitoring the quality and safety of its food supply.

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WHAT'S NEW ON-LINE

- “Ask the Expert” section coming soon — review previously submitted questions and answers, and submit new ones!
- Features from the May issue of LM
- LM Week in Review — Sign up today!
- Green Industry news
- Link to BASF’s “Growing Trends” newsletter
- Link to Turfgrass Trends articles — coming soon!



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Optimism prevails at '02 ALCA Student Career Days

BY JASON STAHL

PEORIA, IL — The Associated Landscape Contractors of America's (ALCA) 26th Annual Student Career Days went off without a hitch here in late March with over 1,100 students, faculty and industry representatives gathering to discuss Green Industry career opportunities.

Optimism abounded among the 78 companies present regarding the current job market and business prospects for 2002.



J. Landon Reeve (left) and Jeff Korhan both seem to think the job market is turning around.

"The job market has definitely improved in that it's not hard to get people," said William Dickerson, owner of Dickerson Landscaping, Tallahassee, FL. "If you're on top of things, you're trying to get in early while a pool of good people is still there. You want to hire now before the job market returns to where it was two years ago, and it will return there. There's too much money being spent in this industry for it not to."

J. Landon Reeve, president of Chapel Valley Landscape Company, Woodbine, MD, said 2001 was his company's best year ever, and 2002 looks "pretty steady." His company is currently hiring, although he said they're being very selective.

"Despite what the economy is going through right now, it's still a matter of finding the right people for the right situation in any market," Reeve said.

Some people have positions open not because employees left but certain areas of their business are experiencing strong growth.

"We're ahead of last year with sales of

design/build work, so we're looking for a couple landscape architects and a production supervisor," said Jeff Korhan, president of Tremendous Landscape Com-

pany, Plainfield, IL. "We're not in a hurry, but if we see the right person, whether they're experienced or right out of school, we'll take a hard look at them."

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—Jim Ziegler, President, Rental City, Boulder, CO

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Circle 116

PLCAA adds football star Theismann to conference lineup

NASHVILLE, TN—Two-time Pro Bowl NFL player Joe Theismann recently joined the lineup of speakers at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's Green Industry Conference held in conjunction with the Green Industry Expo Nov. 13-16.

Theismann, quarterback great of the Washington Redskins, will open the industry's top landscape and lawn show for PLCAA at its grand opening session sponsored by Syngenta on Thursday, Nov. 14 at 8:30 a.m. at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center.

After a 12-year NFL career, Theismann left the Redskins in 1985 due to a severe leg injury. His career highlights include a 27-17 Redskins victory over the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl XVII. In 1983, he was voted the NFL's Most Valuable Player and Pro Bowl's Most Valuable Player. He's a native of South River, NJ, and a 1971 University of Notre Dame graduate and All-American athlete.



NFL great Joe Theismann

Now a football analyst for ESPN and author of *"The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Football Like a Pro,"* Theismann shares hard-earned lessons of life in his presentation, "Managing to Win."

Theismann headlines PLCAA's educational conference program that offers a mix of business, technical and industry topics. PLCAA's conference runs on a new Wednesday

through Saturday schedule this year. PLCAA's pre-conference activities begin Wednesday, Nov. 13 with a golf outing and afternoon pesticide recertification workshops, and the event closes on a high note Saturday evening, Nov. 16 with an optional outing to the Grand Ole Opry. The GIE trade show takes place Friday and Saturday with the product field day on Thursday.

For more information, contact PLCAA at 800/458-3466 or visit www.plcaa.org. For exhibitor information, go to www.gieonline.com.

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People & companies



Valley Crest appointed **Christina Briggs** to vice president/national business development.

Tecumseh named



Jonathan P. Gorman vice president, marketing and product development-

worldwide for its Engine & Transmissions Group.

ProSource One has hired several people as sales representatives. **Mike Bailey**

will manage turf accounts in the Palm Beach Co./Vero Beach area. **Virgil Beaven** will cover Kansas City. **Geer DuBose** will handle the forestry, vegetation management and aquatics markets in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. **Bill Gauwitz** will cover Minnesota. **Dan Jones** will focus on central Florida. **Theresa Luke** will cover the turf and ornamentals market around Savannah, GA and throughout South Carolina. **Brian McGuffin** will cover Chicago. **Bill Plante** will service turf markets in southeast Georgia and north Florida.