

NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

Davey celebrates a century of education and training

In 1909, 20 employees of The Davey Tree Expert Company arrived in Kent, OH, to study at the first Davey Institute of Tree Surgery.

In 2009, 47 Davey employees came to Kent from across North America to participate in the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences (DITS) — and to mark the 100th anniversary of the company's premiere training program. This year's graduates join the nearly 3,000 Davey employees who have taken part in DITS training over the century.

The curriculum has evolved over the years, but the intent is still the same: make sure that Davey employees are the best trained in the business. The early students studied botany, entomology and related sciences, as well as accounting, English and business ethics. Current students dig deep



Proper care of tools was part of the early Davey Institute curriculum.

into the biological sciences, but also sharpen their skills in climbing and safety procedures, tree and plant care, disease diagnosis and management techniques.

Greg Ina, general manager of The Davey Institute, points to DITS and the

continued on page 28

CLIPPINGS

ECHO, Shindaiwa to merge

TOKYO — Yamabiko Corp., the recently formed parent company of Kioritz Corp. and Shindaiwa Corp., announced plans to merge the two companies and operate as Yamabiko. Initially, Yamabiko was created as a holding company to take advantage of management integration, sourcing, engineering, manufacturing and other efficiencies. The new plan is to expand the scope of the merger to include streamlining all functions. All Shindaiwa operations will be merged with ECHO, a subsidiary of Kioritz Corp., in Lake Zurich, IL.

U.S. Lawns nears 200 franchises

ORLANDO, FL — U.S. Lawns added 10 new offices in January, bringing its number of franchised offices to 198 operating in more than 30 states throughout the country. "Our continued growth proves that our affordable franchise model is successful even in a difficult economy," said Paul Wolbert, vice president of U.S. Lawns.

WORD ON THE STREET

How much more percentage-wise are you paying for employees' medical coverage than you were five years ago, and what are you doing to try to offset these soaring costs?



"We review our medical plan each year and research alternative solutions. We face 18% to 22% increases per renewal year, based upon the age and health conditions

of our group. Because of this, we contribute a maximum dollar amount for a single plan, with incremental contributions after five, 10 and 15 years of service. We offer additional contributions for spousal and family plans after five years of service, with incremental increases every five years with the company thereafter."

— **Robert Smart** (CSP, OCNT), president of Smart Scapes Landscaping and Mr. Yard Landscape Supply, both based in Olmsted Falls, OH



"We cover 50% of our year-round, full-time staff's health insurance premiums. Our healthcare costs are running about 2% of our gross revenue. Four years ago, they were 1%. We've

had to change our coverage twice in the past three years because of significant price increases. With the rising costs of healthcare coverage, as well as several other segments of our operations, we have been forced to slow down the growth plan for our benefits package. We had planned to add a new retirement plan to our package last year, but have had to defer that until 2010."

— **Fred Haskett**, U.S. Lawns, West St. Louis, MO
haskettusl@peoplepc.com



"Our medical insurance expenses have increased a minimum of 12% per year each of the past five years. We have cut our company's contribution from 80% to 50% in

the past year, and have scaled back certain areas of medical plan coverage. We shop for and compare several medical plans each year to obtain the best coverage we can for the dollars we invest. And, as always, we openly discuss with our employees the medical coverage choices available so they are part of the decision-making process."

— **Richard Wilbert**, president of Boulder, CO-based Robert Howard Associates, rhainc@msn.com

CLIPPINGS

Gehl celebrates 150th anniversary

WEST BEND, WI — To commemorate its sesquicentennial, Gehl Co. "chromed-out" a Gehl model 7810E. The one-of-a-kind skid loader clocks in at 10,000 lbs. The Gehl Co.'s history began in 1859 in a blacksmith shop located at the westerly bend of the Milwaukee River in a small farming community. Since then, the company has been led by three generations of Gehl family members — and still operates in the same Midwestern town where it began 150 years ago.

ANLA offers expanded industry resources

WASHINGTON — The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) has relaunched www.ANLA.org. "As technology, time and generational change diversify the way our members wish to network, learn and gain knowledge from ANLA, we knew that we needed to broaden the availability of ANLA's resources beyond our traditional base of face-to-face meetings," says Greg Schaan, Imperial Nurseries, Granby, CT.

IA offers show details

FALLS CHURCH, VA — The 2009 Irrigation Show, the annual trade show of the Irrigation Association, will be held Dec. 2-4 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. The show offers irrigation professionals the opportunity to connect with industry peers and learn strategies and skills to improve their bottom line. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the show schedule will vary from years past. Education classes will run from Monday, Dec. 1, to Friday, Dec. 5. Certification exams will be offered from Tuesday, Dec. 2, through Saturday, Dec. 6.

Drought update

It's over.

OK, it's not exactly time to party, but the drought that has kept much of the Southeast drier than a vermouthless martini officially ended when three storms dropped 3 to 6 in. of rain from the Gulf Coast to the Florida Panhandle.

"Marked changes of improvement are noted on the heels of this drought-breaking rain, with removal of D1-D2 in Louisiana, D1 in southern Mississippi and Alabama, and D2 in northeastern Georgia and western North Carolina," according to the March 31 "National Drought Summary" from the National Drought Mitigation Center. (See chart at right for explanations of the drought designations.)

It is the first time since February 2007 that Alabama has been drought-free.

A portion of the Northeast corner of Georgia still suffers from below-normal stream flow and ground

water conditions. The severe drought area in upstate South Carolina remains, though it is smaller, according to the report.

"In addition, D0 was removed from all but extreme northern Louisiana, all of Mississippi, and all but a sliver of extreme east-central Alabama along with the Florida Panhandle, with the potential for more heavy rains over the next week," the report continued. The rest of Florida remains in drought conditions, as does deep Southern Texas.

For more on drought conditions, and to read the National Drought Summary visit: www.drought.unl.edu.

Drought intensity categories

D0 ... Abnormally Dry — used for areas showing dryness but not yet in drought, or for areas recovering from drought.

D1 ... Moderate Drought

D2 ... Severe Drought

D3 ... Extreme Drought

D4 ... Exceptional Drought

Drought or dryness types

A ... Agricultural

H ... Hydrological

Stens donates ambulance

Jasper, IN — It was the spring of 2008 when a vendor approached Stens with a request to donate an ambulance to Mercy & Sharing, an organization dedicated to helping feed, educate and medically care for children and widows in Haiti.

"The request was a bit of a surprise, to be honest," recalls Stens President Peter Ariens. "It's not often that we have vendors approach us for such specific donations."

Mark Salter, the Stens vendor who asked for the donation, has grown used to soliciting for such useful donations. Since his involvement in the Mercy & Sharing organization, he has taken the role of program director and has helped Founder Susie Krabacher foster the children of Haiti.

"I have been to Haiti and seen the dangerous and unhealthy conditions these children live in every day. It's truly heartbreaking," Salter admits.

"As a business owner, my hope is to always change lives in a positive way," says Ariens. "After hearing Mark's stories and getting to know the organization, it was nearly impossible to say no. Especially in this time of economic change, we feel it is particularly important to remember those less fortunate than us."



Mercy & Sharing's Mark Salter (right) thanks Stens President Peter Ariens.

Bucking conventional wisdom

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

With the economy tanking and design/build among the harder hit segments of the Green Industry, it might seem an odd time to develop and promote those services, but that is just what one California company is doing.

Sierra Landscape Co., Palm Desert/San Diego, announced the formation of a full-service landscape design/build division. The company has engaged in a strategic partnership with RGA Landscape Architects Inc. of Palm Desert/San Diego.

"Today's competitive market demands developers and owners to have designs based on realistic budgets, shortened project timelines, clearer and earlier understanding of overall project costs," the company said announcing the partnership. "By organizing a collaborative approach, Sierra Landscape is filling a growing customer need that has never been available in the past."

LM spoke with Randy E. Mitchell, vice president of Sierra's new division, to find out what was behind the company's thinking.

Randy E. Mitchell

Q Given the economy, is this really the time to be pushing/promoting design/build work?

We have found there are an increasing number of owners with major projects who are faced with serious budget challenges. We are able to minimize these problems very early in the design stage to maximize the outcome of the owner's budget. This process can only be accomplished when a team schooled in both design and construction are collaborating as a single unit and are key shareholders from the beginning.

Q How does this change what Sierra Landscape was already offering in terms of design/build work?

Our core business has always been driven by our landscape construction and landscape maintenance services. What design/build does is enhance our offerings — and provide an ideal series of professional landscape services offered by one source, from the early conception of the design stage to long-term maintenance.

Q Why RGA?

The two firms have successfully worked together for 29 years on a wide variety of projects, but as independent participants. Teaming our expertise and creating an informal alliance between both companies permits both RGA and Sierra Landscape to offer our customers the resources of both businesses under one contract.

Q Is this more or less a referral system, where you push your design/build clients to them for their expertise and vice versa?

Both companies maintain very effective business development departments, which reach out to many regions of Southern California. All inquiries will be shared between the two companies, with Sierra Landscape handling the leadership and coordination of all potential work.

Q Does this change your staffing in any way?

Very little staffing adjustments are required.

CLIPPINGS

Quali-Pro shows its 'passion'

RALEIGH, NC — Quali-Pro will award annual \$1,000 scholarships to college students through its newly created Passion for Turf Scholarship program. The program encourages and assists students who are interested in careers in the turfgrass industry. It will provide annual financial assistance to full-time college students who are studying in the turf sciences or related agronomy disciplines. Each participating university will be awarded two \$1,000 scholarships per year.

Treker acquisition expands Ariens' UTV offerings

BRILLION, WI — Ariens Co. has acquired the Treker line of utility vehicles (UTVs), attachments and accessories from Land Pride, a Division of Great Plains Mfg. Inc. Ariens will continue to sell the UTVs through Land Pride retailers, as well as select power equipment retailers under the Gravely brand name. The Treker line includes two- and four-wheel drive UTVs. Multiple attachments and accessories are available for each mode. The UTV will also be sold through Gravely Turf retailers who serve the sports field management segment, according to Ariens.

Bartlett Tree Experts opens new branches

STAMFORD, CT — As part of its continuing growth efforts, Bartlett Tree Experts has established new offices in two locations. Bartlett added these offices after the acquisition of Empire Tree and Turf in Augusta, GA, and Top Notch Treecare in Plymouth, MN. The company has nearly 100 offices providing scientific tree and shrub care to customers in 27 states, as well as Canada, Great Britain and Ireland.

Girard Environmental donates landscaping services

Sanford, FL — Girard Environmental Services — a full-service landscaping company based in Seminole County, FL — recently donated more than \$5,000 worth of landscaping services to Midway Safe Harbor Center, an after-school program in Sanford. The Girard team installed irrigation and stone pavers, and provided arbor and landscaping care to the community center's 10,000-sq.-ft. outdoor garden classroom.

"The landscaping infrastructure that Girard Environmental donated is priceless because it helps us maintain our garden project, which functions as a learning tool to help teach kids about horticulture," says Pat Cucci, executive director of the Midway Safe Harbor Center, which also serves as a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Seminole County.

Nearly 180 students work on Midway Safe Harbor Center's garden throughout the year — and grow everything from onions and corn to pineapples and red peppers.

"We are happy to help give Midway Safe Harbor Center's garden classroom a much-needed landscape facelift," says Alan Wing, vice president of operations at Girard Environmental Services. "Most of our employees live in Sanford, and we take great pride in this community."



Alan Wirtg helped coordinate the project with Pat Cucci (right).

BELIEVE IT

OR NOT ...

LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS

Rick Popp, owner of Ozark Outdoors in Springfield, MO, is featured as part of the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform's "I Am Lawsuit Abuse" national awareness campaign.

Popp's company sold a riding lawnmower to a customer who used it all spring and summer, then sued the firm to get his money back once the mowing season was over. To hear Popp's story, check out www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxegWf-FWWw.



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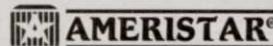
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Catalpa Landscape donates services to Angel's House

Newnan, GA — Catalpa Landscape Management has signed on to donate full landscaping services to Angel's House, an emergency shelter for

children of Newnan and Coweta counties. The landscape company is volunteering a full year's worth of landscape maintenance services valued at



\$5,000 to the children's shelter.

"As a small business operator in Coweta County, Catalpa Landscape Management is always looking for ways to help out and give back to the local community," says Owner Rod Smith. "We think that supporting vital not-for-profit organizations in our area, such as Angel's House, is one way we can do that."

Angel's House provides children a comfortable place to stay and be nurtured and cared for until a permanent foster home can be found for them. It is supported with the help of corporations, foundations, churches, community groups and concerned individuals locally and throughout the state. In other words, it's not the kind of place that prefers to spend its limited funds on maintenance services.

"Our maintenance crew will visit Angel's House on a weekly basis," says Catalpa's new-business manager, Casey Child. "The shelter provides such a valuable service to the community, and we are extremely proud to help them in every way possible."

PHOTOS COURTESY: CATALPA LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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Bobcat helps defend Fargo-Moorhead community from flooding

Residents of North Dakota, home of Bobcat Co., prepared for major flooding in the eastern part of the state and battled flood conditions in the west and

central areas in late March. Early on March 28, the Red River hit a record stage of 40.82 ft. Efforts then switched from fighting the flood to monitoring



Bobcat donated staff and equipment to aid in flood relief efforts.



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the river and returning the communities back to normal.

In response to the flood threat in the Fargo, ND, area, near the company's world headquarters, more than 100 Bobcat employees volunteered around the clock to help fill and place sandbags, build flood walls along the water's edges, provide meals and answer phones at the volunteer center. Bobcat's donation of more than 40 machines and 40 volunteer operators helped accelerate National Guard efforts to efficiently fill a portable floodwall system throughout the city. Management at Bobcat recognized the need for volunteers, especially operators, and encouraged all employees to leave their positions that week to help with the protection efforts.

Bismarck and Gwinner, ND — both homes to Bobcat factories — and their neighboring communities were hit with overland flooding, washed-out roads and near-blizzard conditions. Gwinner employees ramped up volunteer efforts to support neighboring communities, while other employees volunteered around Gwinner and in the Red River Valley, operating equipment, participating in sandbagging, and providing food and support to community members. In Bismarck, where the Missouri River had ice jams that led to unexpected flooding, employees offered assistance to community members and neighbors in sandbagging and evacuation efforts along the river.

Bobcat dealers around North Dakota stepped up to help their communities as well by supplying equipment and resources toward flood fighting. Another reason Bobcat equipment was highly visible in the Fargo-Moorhead areas was that many customers were both working and volunteering their time and equipment to help protect the communities.

Watering do's and don'ts for Dallas residents

The Dallas Water Utilities are taking their slogan "Save water — nothing can replace it" pretty seriously. The organization put out a list of do's and don'ts for those responsible for irrigating properties. Those violating the outdoor

watering guidelines can result in fines of \$250 to \$2,000 per incident. First offenses will be issued a warning. While the fines might only apply to residents of Dallas, the principles stress good water management no matter your locale.



Do

- › Hand water or use a soaker hose. They're permitted at any time.
- › Maintain your sprinkler system. Repair any broken, missing or misdirected sprinkler heads.
- › Install rain and freeze sensors on your sprinkler system.
- › Monitor your total water usage. If you use more than 15,000 gallons a month, you'll pay a surcharge on the amount above 15,000.



Don't

- › Don't water during any form of precipitation.
- › Don't allow your sprinkler system to water driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- › Don't waste water by allowing runoff onto a street or other drainage area when you're watering.
- › Don't water your yard between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. between April 1 and October 31.



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Reclaimed water use gains steam

Whether they are motivated by drought conditions or environmental concern, many cities around the country are turning to reclaimed water. Treatment facilities create reclaimed water by taking wastewater (sewage), treating it to remove the solids and

impurities, and making it available for non-drinking purposes. A quick Internet news search provides a list of stories discussing the various cities — mostly across the South — that are using or exploring the possibility of using reclaimed water.

A recent story in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* reports how residents of Southern California cities are “wasting 45 million gallons of usable water every day.” According to the article, the three treatment plants in the San Gabriel Valley process 87 million gallons a day, but only 42 million gallons are actually reused — enough for about 5,000 families a year. The goal is to increase that figure.

According to an article in *The Tampa Tribune*, Tampa city officials are considering giving away reclaimed water for lawn use to help ease the city’s drought problem: “They are contacting landscapers and utility contractors to determine whether it’s feasible to fill watering trucks with reclaimed water that, in turn, would be sprayed onto lawns.”

The *Naples Daily News* reported a change in a ruling that “discouraged homeowners from using reclaimed water to irrigate their lawns.” The ruling required those using reclaimed water to sign an agreement that held the city blameless if the reclaimed water damaged their landscaping.

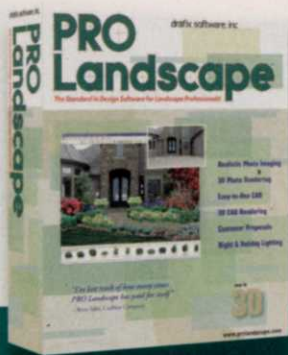


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Entrepreneur wins KIOTI's 2008 success story contest

Wendell, NC — KIOTI Tractor named Richard Vega of Lake George, NY, the winner of the 2008 National Success Stories contest. Entrants were required to submit a KIOTI tractor serial number, the dealer name and date they purchased the tractor, a description of how they use their tractor and a photograph of themselves with the tractor. One winner was selected each month, with the monthly winners becoming eligible for the grand prize.

Vega uses his DK45SE HST tractor for a variety of tasks from landscaping, to tree cutting and hauling, to snow removal and lifting. To accomplish this diversity of tasks, he equipped the tractor with a number of implements, including a loader, landscape rake, blade and pallet forks.

A picture is worth a thousand words,” states Ron Parrish, KIOTI market development manager. “The photos sent with Vega’s entry really made it apparent how much work he has done with his tractor.”

As the national grand prize winner of this year-long contest, Vega received a \$1,500 gift card.

PEOPLE
ON THE MOVE

Precision Laboratories added **David Keating** to its Turf and Ornamental sales team. Keating assumes the role of district manager for the northeastern United States, where he is responsible for professional turf sales and customer relationship management.



Charles Granger joins **Austin Outdoor's** Business Development Department as business development manager – government services. Granger is responsible for focusing on developing relationships with city, county, state and federal government entities in the geographic areas served by the company in Florida.

The ServiceMaster Co. announced that **Stephen M. Donly** is the new president and chief operating officer of **TruGreen LawnCare**. Prior to joining TruGreen, Donly was president and chief executive officer of Enterprise Media Networks Inc., a San Diego-based technology company that specializes in cutting edge high-tech solutions for the entertainment and restaurant industries



Phoenix Environmental Care welcomes **Mike Layel** as national accounts manager. Layel is working to develop and implement sales and marketing programs.

Gary Watschke and **Phil Spitz** have been named territory managers for the Lawn & Garden sales team at **Syngenta Professional Products**. In their new positions, they work directly with golf course superintendents, lawn care operators and other turf professionals to help meet product and sales consultative support needs.

President and Chief Executive Officer **Douglas W. York** has announced a reorganization of **Ewing Irrigation Products'** executive board as part of a plan to prepare the company for continued growth and efficiency. As vice president of sustainability and conservation, newly appointed **Warren S. Gorowitz** will spearhead future sustainability and conservation initiatives both internally and externally for Ewing. The company says this reorganization will foster collaboration and improve Ewing's ability to serve internal departments, Green Industry professionals and industry partners.



Stantec recently hired **Keith Wilson** as Senior Landscape Architect. In his new role, Wilson, a former president of the California Sierra chapter of the **American Society of Landscape Architects**, provides project management and supports business development from Stantec's office in Sacramento, CA.

John F. Brailsford, Jr., of Orangeburg, SC, assumed the presidency of the **Horticultural Research Institute** in January. Brailsford is the president of **Shady Grove Plantation and Nursery**, which was established by **John F. Brailsford, Sr.** in 1939.

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continued from page 8

other training programs as a distinguishing feature of the Davey Co.

"The Davey Co. recognized long ago the value of investing in our employees through extensive education and training opportunities," Ina says. "The DITS tradition is unique in our industry; we were proud to celebrate our 100-year anniversary this winter."

Early DITS students participated in a variety of intramural athletic activities, including tug of war.

RJ Laverne, manager of education and training, calls DITS a foremost example of the company's commitment to and investment in its employees.

"I think this group can make a positive difference in our company, in the profitability and the way we conduct business and the way we're honored within the industry," Laverne says. "There is great potential with this group to sustain us as a great company and take us into important places."

Although DITS was established 100

years ago, the program was interrupted by the Depression and World War II.

In 1946, DITS was re-established with a refresher course for employees returning from military service. The course's duration was reduced from three months to six weeks. In the early 1950s, the program was reduced to five weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Service.

In 1976, the program was condensed to four weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences, as it is currently known.



PHOTO COURTESY: THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT CO.



Bruce Wilson



Tom Oyler

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The Wilson-Oyler Group understands that sustainable profits and long-term growth evolve around four elements: financial performance, social architecture, market positioning and operational best practices.

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Wilson-Oyler's systems provide methods to help you expand from your current base toward a more balanced business with a "margin of excellence." The consultancy also helps you plan and implement training programs that focus on leadership development, core competencies and organizational productivity.

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