



**Michael Kravitsky IV**, along with his brother Shawn, run the company their father helped start 45 years ago. The elder Kravitsky was in the aluminum awning business when his supplier convinced him to get into the lawn business. The Kravitsky family has been providing residents in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania with lawn care services ever since.

**You and your brother Shawn are co-owners, along with your father Michael Kravitsky, III, who founded the company 45 years ago. You two brothers are also co-operators. How do you divide responsibility in the business.**

I'm the older brother. I'm 46 and he's 42. I've been in this business since I graduated from high school in 1980. Shawn joined later. Shawn's on the other end of the building from my office. He's where the guys come in and where he schedules the routes and takes care of operations. I'm more of the HR guy. We go to the trade shows and attend industry events together, and our interests are very much alike.

**What changes have you made to keep your company up with the times?** We computerized our book-keeping. In fact, everything is computerized. Even our technicians use handheld units to record their work in the field. We modernized our fleet of trucks, use GPS for routing, and we also bought a forklift to unload

supplies. We also instituted several HR improvements, such as an employee handbook and a Real-Time clock. We believe in having systems in place so that everything runs smoothly.

**In light of the recession, how are you approaching this season?** We're continuing to advertise and get our name out just like any other year. You can't just give up. There are still clients out there who want our services, although we're just going to have to look harder for them.

**We understand you're really big into snowmobiling.**

We love it. Last winter we spent five weeks in Canada. This year I was up there twice. We drive there, to about 100 miles above Montreal. Then we take the sleds and go straight up to around Chibougamau and

around Lac St. Jean in Quebec. It's the top of the world up there. Quebec is awesome and we've made some good friends there.

Last year we went to a wedding up there. We were the only Americans invited. It was an outdoor wedding — on Jan. 10. All of us were on top of Devil's Mountain, and the only way to get there is by snowmobile or four-wheeler.

The wedding was outside, and the band was playing outside and it was just a blast. But it was over kind of quick, because it was very cold and windy.

**In addition to a traditional weed-and-feed lawn care program, what other services do you offer?** Twelve years ago we added Christmas Décor to level out seasonality of our business and give our employees something to do during the off season.

## AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** Grasshopper Lawns Inc., Larksville, PA

**FOUNDED:** 1964

**NUMBER OF OUTLETS:** 1

**PRINCIPALS:** Co-owners Michael Kravitsky III (retired), Michael Kravitsky IV and Shawn Kravitsky

**EMPLOYEES:** 20

### INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:

Former president of LCAP and still serves on the board, served on PLCAA board, participants in Day-on-the-Hill and Arlington National Cemetery Renewal and Remembrance since its inception. PLANET Trailblazer, participates in PLANET's Lawn Care Specialty Group and the Public Relations Committee

**BUSINESS OUTLOOK:** "It's going to be a flat year for us because of the economy. But we feel people are still going to see our service as necessary because they're going to cut back on those big vacations and spend more time at home."

**FAMILY:** Michael and his wife, Suzanne, have two children, Kristy and Michael V. Shawn and his wife, Mary Ruth, also have two children, Katie and Sam.

**WEB SITE:** grasshopper-lawns.com

**BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE LAWN BUSINESS"** — Michael Kravitsky III's initial response to a supplier who ultimately convinced him to start his lawn care company.