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CONTENTS >> OCTOBER 2009 VOL 48, ISSUE 10



54 It's grow or go time

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

PEOPLE POWER

56 With a little help from my friends

A peer group forces Green Industry business owners to take a hard look at their operations and own up to tough decisions.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

64 Reach customers with low-tech, too

Direct mail can still be a viable way to connect with current and prospective accounts, even in the Internet age. BY JOE SHOONER

68 Nail the sale

Successfully selling lawn service requires the process be well thought out. Then, an appropriate strategy must be crafted and executed rigorously every day.

BY BILL HOOPES

ON THE COVER

Illustration by: Istock International Inc.

74 Realize your goals in the Working Smarter Cycle

If your people are happy and productive, your business will experience success. BY JIM PALUCH

78 Take 9 steps to get managers to think like owners

Training managers to make decisions like a business owner is easy, essential and can provide more benefits than you think.
BY JONATHAN GOLDHILL

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

82 Apples and oranges

Sell value, not price, to grow profitably in any economy—even this 'Great Recession.'

BY MARTY WHITFORD

87 Position for success

At the end of the day, will you be a survivor or just another failed business blaming it all on the economy? BY WAYNE VOLZ

continued on page 4 >> >>

FEATURE

45 Save a horse, kill a fire ant

Fire ants meet their match in North Florida horse country.

BY LEE BLOOMCAMP

DEPARTMENTS

10 News & Views

Changes at RISE; Word on The Street; Believe It or Not; Mail; The Andersons; Rain Bird films.

30 Lawn Care Pro

Lou Wierichs, Pro-X Lawn Care, Appleton, WI BY RON HALL

COLUMNS

8 The Hall Mark

BY RON HALL

160 Whit's World

BY MARTY WHITFORD

IN EVERY ISSUE

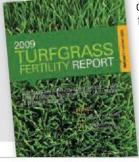
158 Classifieds 159 Resources

SPECIAL REPORT

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CONTENTS

continued from page 2

90 Outlook for 2010

Why it will be a challenging year — and how to respond. BY KEVIN KEHOE

92 When going gets tough ...

... The tough look for ways to stay competitive. BY HARVEY E. GOLDGLANTZ

94 How to conduct successful walk-throughs

Be better prepared by doing your homework before *and* after visits. BY BRUCE WILSON

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

95 Lease or buy?

Short-term and long-term equipment investments each have their benefits and drawbacks. BY CURT HARLER

99 It's a wide, wide World Wide Web

Whether it's creating a site to share your company with clients or figuring out the best browser to surf through cyberspace, the Internet is ripe with opportunity.

BY TYLER WHITAKER

102 Products

RESOURCE PROFILES

108 Resource Guide112 Resource Profiles

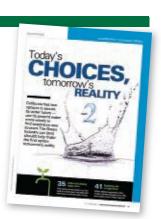
156 Business Planner Index

SPECIAL REPORT

33

WATER WISE, PART 2

California's limited water options and learning to speak with a single voice.



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READERS RESPOND

Which of the following best reflects your game plan for 2010?

add staff

new equipment

bolster marketing

9% Further cut staffing and other costs, as well as pricing.

9% Buy one or more other companies.

0%Sell the business.

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The word "green" is being used against us by environmental extremists. Truth be told, we are the original Green Industry. We must speak loudly and singularly to regain control of our destiny and the perceptions "green" conjures up in consumers' minds.

Athletic Turf News

Even with installs well north of 3,000 this past decade, the total number of synthetic turf fields remains tiny compared to the number of natural grass fields.

LD/B Solutions

Fire destroys hundreds of homes each year, often burning thousands of acres of land. The California Landscape Contractors Association offers tips to help you recover clients' landscapes.

Get Growing

The Dutch know how to launch a new flower. Princess Maxima of the Netherlands, wife of Willem-Alexander, Crown Prince of Orange, baptized Holland's newest tulip recently at a ceremony in Manhattan's Battery Park.



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RON HALL EDITOR-AT-LARGE Contact Ron via e-mail at rhall@questex.com.

Sustainability's truest meaning

hat does sustainability mean for us? Perhaps you're wondering that in light of the growing popularity, use and misuse of the word within our society and within our industry.

We can start with the obvious, of course. We can tick off a list of environmentally friendly landscape practices — providing our customers' properties with the right plants in the right places, irrigating efficiently, not bagging grass clipping and so forth. That's just part of being sustainable. Its meaning also includes the survival, health and growth of our companies, and ultimately our industry.

Sustainability means combining environmental with business best practices, the two being different sides of the same coin. Let's not confine our understanding of the term sustainability exclusively to what's "green."

Here are some time-tested strategies for building sustainability into our companies. Think expansively.

- > Have a kickoff meeting with those you're counting on to help define your company's new sustainable initiatives. You need a clear understanding of what they mean to you before you begin your journey. In addition to focusing on environmental services you might build into your company or add as services, consider programs to increase the wellbeing and skills of your team. This will increase the value of your company and its services.
- The owner and key managers must embrace sustainable goals as a genuine business opportunities

rather than as a public relations. Employees (and customers) will not buy into any program that they perceive to be insincere or half-hearted.

- > Set realistic goals. Incorporate one new green or sustainable component into your company at a time. Start with the easiest changes that will deliver the most immediate results. Rather than installing solar panels, which may have a long or uncertain return on investment (ROI), start by replacing energy-leaking windows and doors. Rather than switching your fleet to biofuels, in light of their fluctuating price, consider a fleet "no-idling" rule, explaining to your employees what it means in terms of fuel cost savings. On the people side, strengthen your company's employee training or institute wellness or smoking cessation programs.
- > Find champions to lead, monitor and measure your company's efforts. Align these new duties with their business and compensation objectives.
- > Share what's working and what's not working with your team — why your first initiatives should return quick, measurable wins. Sharing the results of these first successes will build support and enthusiasm within your company to meet bigger future goals.
- > Fold each new innovation as seamlessly as you can into your company's operations. Every change should offer business, environmental or customer benefits, and not just "feel-good" benefits. Each effort should offer returns comparable to those achievable through other business-critical enterprises if you want it to provide a positive effect on your operation.

It might seem that I've given short shrift to environmental considerations, or what most of us would consider the "green" aspects of sustainability. But if you run a truly professional Green Industry service shop you should already be using horticultural best practices; you're already preserving and enhancing your clients' outdoor environments.

That's what being a true pro in this industry means, after all.

If you're a true pro you should already be using horticultural bmps



NEWSWEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

Moving forward

RISE President Allen James announces his pending retirement and unveils the organization's 'Debugging the myth' Web site.

BY MARTY WHITFORD EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

igh hopes and low overhead" was the mantra at RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) when the organization was founded in 1991. Manning the helm for RISE since then, Allen James recalls navigating choppy regulatory waters that year with no staff, 12 RISE members and an annual budget of about \$40,000.

What a difference 18 years makes. Since then, environmental extremists and local, state and federal governments and agencies have turned up the heat on RISE members — pesticide, herbicide, fungicide and fertilizer manufacturers, formulators and distributors behind the technologies that protect our plants and public health. But at least today, thanks partly to James' helmsmanship, RISE has five full-time staffers,

RISE President Allen James will step down in August 2010. an annual budget of nearly \$3 million and more than 200 members that account for more than 90% of the nation's specialty pesticide production.

At RISE's Sept. 27-30 annual meeting, held jointly in Orlando, FL, with CropLife America, an emotional James announced he will step down in August 2010, and move back to his home state, North Carolina, with his wife Ann. James noted he and his good friends at RISE are far from done. They've increased annual contributions by nearly \$1 million since 2008 (almost 50%), helping fund a new "Debugging the myth" RISE Web site and an integrated, comprehensive digital advocacy campaign.

James, RISE's first (and only, to date) executive director, has served as president of the organization and vice president of CropLife America since 2000. A search committee consisting of members of the RISE Governing Board will begin the task of finding James' successor in late 2009.

Before ending his last RISE President's Address, James thanked the room full of industry leaders for their continued support, and said he was honored to collaborate with such innovators who typically invest \$256 million to develop and launch a single successful active ingredient.

"Together, we will reframe the debate," James proclaimed. "We will reclaim the high-ground. We know there is a majority of people who understand how and why technology advances. When explained, they can understand the value of pest management and plant health technology, just as they understand other cutting-edge industrial technology advancements."

To assure forward movement, RISE has

E. ALLEN JAMES AWARD

RISE has created an E. Allen James Award, which will be given annually, beginning in 2010, to honor an individual who makes outstanding contributions to the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry, epitomizing the essence of RISE's first president.

"This award is a lasting tribute to Allen James and will be given for years to come to recognize others who build upon his legacy," said Josh Weeks, outgoing chairman of RISE's Governing Board and Bayer Environmental Science's vice president of professional products, North America.

The relationship between agriculture and specialty would not be as strong and as productive as it is if James had not been chosen to lead RISE, said Jay Vroom, CropLife America president and CEO. "The extraordinary value this relationship brings to our advocacy, regulatory and communications endeavors cannot be overstated." Vroom added.

Dan Rosenbaum, incoming chair of the RISE Governing Board and director of FMC Corp.'s specialty products business concurred: "Allen has been constant in his service and vision, and has made great strides in providing a strong, unified voice for the specialty pesticide industry." — MW

bolstered its grassroots advocates to more than 1,000 members from just 400 three years ago, and its new consumer-facing Web site will be coupled with proactive blogging, engaging advocates in online pesticide, herbicide, fungicide and fertilizer discussions.

"Finally, to assure industry and association progress, our board will hire a great new President with creative and progressive ideas and leadership," James said. "This industry will move from the shadow of the past and current challenges ... to the bright light of the future."



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NEWS+VIEWS



Beyond your Web site, what digital marketing tactics have you taken with what results?



"There are endless methods of marketing your services to existing and potential clients. What works and what doesn't seem to be based upon the preferences

of each individual you are reaching out to. Digital marketing vehicles I use to promote my water resource consultancy include one-to-one emails, blogs, online groups, eBooks, online articles and e-newsletters. Our fast-paced, no-time business world requires we invest countless hours deploying various electronic marketing strategies to win new clients and keep current customers. Beyond that, the old-fashioned word of mouth has always worked the best when compared to more-conventional Yellow Pages ads and direct mail campaigns."

— Lorne Haveruk, principal with DH Water Management Services, with offices in

San Clemente, CA, and Toronto



"We put a together four-page Word doc e-newsletter for our customers every month. Most of the e-news content is tips on maintaining their yards and

landscapes in-between our services. We don't push discounted pricing, but we do remind them of all of our service offerings — particularly if it's 'that time of the year' — like snow clearing, spring clean-up and aeration. We started the e-newsletter a year ago, and it's been a great success. It doesn't take much time or work. It's free to send. And, most importantly, our customers love it. The e-newsletter helps us build stronger relationships and revenues."

— **Frank Roberts**, owner of Eco Green in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

BELIEVE IT OR NOT ...

MAYOR CUTTING COSTS ... AND PUBLIC GREEN SPACES

Toledo, OH, Mayor Carty Finkbeiner earlier this year declared the City of Toldeo was in a financial crisis and unable to continue paying its regular lawn maintenance crew. The mayor pledged that he and other city directors and commissioners would moonlight as landscapers, and asked locals to join them in helping maintain public parks and cemeteries.

Last year, Toledo hired about 80 seasonal employees to maintain its parks and cemeteries, but that crew was halved because of a significant budget deficit.

"I think they are trying to make a good effort. But I see them using city equipment and I saw a guy come down the whole side of the park — and he never mowed a blade of grass because he didn't know how to use a tractor," remarked Toledo resident Todd Reimond in a Toledo On The Move online news report.



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Rare read

Your September 2009 Whit's World column, "Got gratitude — for The Gift of today?," and The Weaver poem you included in it, grabbed me from the get-go and touched me very deeply.

You never know when your words and actions might touch another. Your column reached out like it was written for me.

My burdens haven't been as heavy as yours, but I'm the mother of four children, ages 5 to 16, and a huge worry wart. I'm a Christian woman who has faith, but at

times, I loose sight of it because of my worries. Thanks for your beautifully written column and sharing The Weaver. I needed to read all of those words.

- Kristyn Rohde, Controller, Turf Masters

Simple truth

Marty Whitford's recent column was encouraging to me as a believer in the Lord: "No one having lit a lamp sets it secret, nor under the corn measure but on the lamp stand, that they who enter in may see the light." — Luke 11, v33.

Your willingness to testify the simple truth might well bring another person into the knowledge of the One whom we can cast our cares upon for He cares about each of us. If He can care for the great matter of our sins, He can care for life's little details.

- Earl Gracey, President, B&E Landscape

Thanks for the perspective

Thank you for writing your September column, "Got gratitude — for The Gift of today?" It's one of the most touching

columns I've read in a long time.

I'm sorry for your family's recent losses, but thanks for your powerful reminder.

With the trials and tribulations of our daily lives and businesses in this trying economy, it's easy to overlook what's important. Your column helps remind us all to keep the truly important things in focus.

— Christine Daniels, Office Manager,

Pellettieri Associates

Pass it on

I enjoyed your September column. I read it and then asked my wife to read it, and she loved it, too. Also, thanks for sharing The Weaver prayer.

I reflected on your column for the rest of the day and thought about it the following morning when I saw it sitting on my kitchen counter.

It's another great reminder of how short life is and to continue my personal quest to enjoy the moment.

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift.

- Rob Garpiel II, President, Garpiel Landscaping



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Andersons Golf Products announces new management positions

Maumee, OH — Andersons Golf Products announces two significant changes in its regulatory, technical and marketing departments, noting that these changes are being made to better meet its resource needs related to the increasing regulatory scrutiny surrounding the Green Industry, as well as increased activity related to the \$5 million Ohio's Third Frontier Research and Commercialization grant, which was awarded for the advancement of granular technology.

Marketing Manager Mike Bandy will be filling a new role of technical services manager, in charge of product development, regulatory and product management. Tasha Hussain Black will be filling the new marketing development manager position to support the professional turf, consumer, industrial and cob sales units.

Black is currently vice president of technology for the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP), and director of Launch — a business assistance program focused on supporting tech-based start-up companies in Northwest Ohio. In her role at the RGP, Black is responsible for leading efforts to start up more than 25 new companies in 2008, which reported more than \$25 million of economic impact to Northwest Ohio.

Mike Bandy and Tasha Hussain Black will assist with regulatory matters and granular technology advancements, respectively.

Black has a strong background in marketing, strategic planning and product development. Prior to joining the RGP, she held executive-level management positions with Hickory Farms and Craft House International, leading their marketing and product development efforts. Skilled in both domestic and international business, Black also was a partner in Prax International, a start-up company focused on bringing to market products in the highly competitive toy industry. Her responsibilities included product development, liaison with the factories overseas, and business development and account management with Wal-Mart and Target Stores.

Black earned her bachelor's degree from Bowling Green (OH) State University, and her master's of business administration degree from the University of Toledo, where she teaches in the Department of Management at the College of Business. She is also certified by the Kauffman Foundation to teach the Fast Trac Tech Venture course.





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Rain Bird names 3 film winners

Filmmakers take home the top prize with a humorous look at life without water and the "Small Changes" we can make to conserve it for the future.

Azusa, CA — The Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition crowned three short films with top honors at a final screening event held on Sept. 23 at The Getty Center in Los Angeles. The competition encourages amateur and experienced filmmakers to use the power of film to bring about a greater awareness of the need for responsible water use.

Presented by irrigation manufacturer Rain Bird and event partners Questex Media Group and FilmL.A, the 2009 awards were preceded by a final screening of the finalists' films in front of a live audience and a panel of judges.

David Sutera, director of the 2008 Jury Award winning film Glass Half Full, served as the master of ceremonies for the evening's event.

The following films were selected as winners of the 2009 Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition:

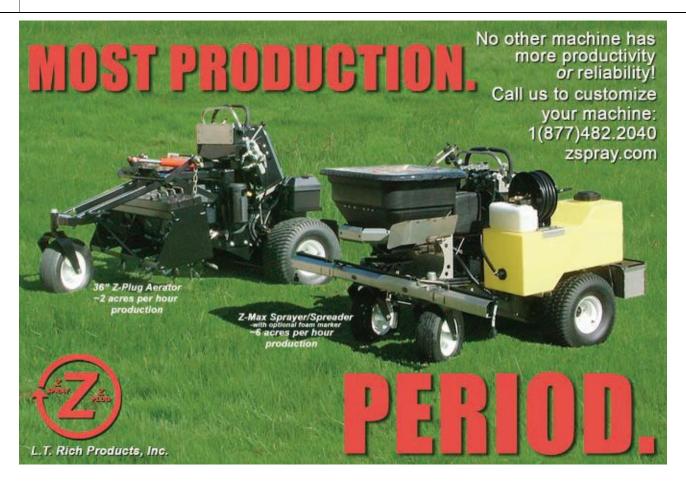
- > 2009 Jury Award Winner: Small Changes by filmmakers Jennifer Christopher Gandin Le of Austin, TX
- **> 2009 Audience Award Winner:** The Saving Water Song by filmmaker Keith Cantrell of McPherson, KS
- **> 2009 Green Industry Award:** More or Less by filmmaker Mark E. Petersen of Boulder, CO.

Rain Bird presented Jury Award winners Jennifer and Christopher Gandin Le with a check for \$6,000, while Audience Choice winner Keith Cantrell received a \$3,000 prize for his short film. Event partner Questex Media Group presented Green Industry Award recipient Mark E. Petersen with a \$6,000 check for his winning film. All of the finalists' films are

available for viewing on the competition's website, www.IUOWFILM.com.

"The filmmakers in this year's competition have genuinely expressed the importance of efficient, effective and responsible use of the Earth's most precious resource by using the creative and personal power of film in an original and compelling way," says Dave Johnson, Rain Bird's corporate marketing director. "Rain Bird strives to deliver an influential platform where filmmakers like these six finalists can raise awareness of the important issues surrounding water conservation so that others will be inspired and take their own personal action."

Prior to naming this year's winners, audience members participated in a question-and-answer session with the filmmakers and the panel of judges.



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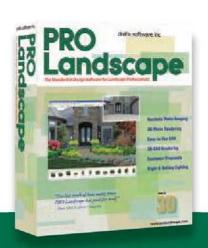


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Kostas Menegakis, Landscapes-R-Us

"I sold two jobs the first week I owned the program."

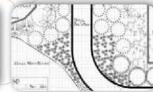
Dustin Leite, Maple Leaf Farms & Nursery



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Increase Profits and Efficiency with Slow- and Controlled-Release Fertilizers

oday, landscape and
lawn care professionals face greater pressures, especially in
financial terms. Rising
fuel, material and labor
costs have dipped into profits and
the slowing economy means some
homeowners and property managers are eliminating services to accommodate their shrinking budgets.

Landscape and lawn care professionals need to make some changes in order to remain competitive.

Re-evaluating fertilization is a good place to start.

When it comes to achieving green, healthy turf and plants, fertilizers represent a necessary and essential investment and a significant time requirement. If those commitments can be reduced, the efficiency and profit potential for the applicator can be considerably greater.

More Weeks of Green Equals More Savings

Nitrogen is essential in all fertilizers, but not all fertilizers that contain Nitrogen are the same. The main difference is how Nitrogen is released, which impacts how often and how much to apply—this varies greatly from fertilizer to fertilizer.

Most traditional fast-release fertilizers are highly water soluble and typically release their Nitrogen quickly and all at one time. When this happens, nutrients may not be available to the plant later on. This means several more applications may be needed to keep the landscape green and healthy.

Slow- and controlled-release fertilizers, on the other hand, are manufactured in a way that prevents water from rapidly dissolving the fertilizer nutrients. Instead, nutrients are gradually and consistently released to the soil to meet plant demands over a longer period of time.

Slow- and controlled-release fertilizers allow landscape and lawn care professionals to increase their productivity and lower overhead costs. And, because nutrients are supplied gradually to plants, slow- and controlled-release fertilizers also minimize the chance of nutrient losses to the environment through leaching or volatilization.

Wasted Applications

Recent survey results show that landscape and lawn care professionals across the country typically average four to six fertilizer applications per year at any given location. That eats up quite a bit of time, energy, labor and fuel. Slow- and controlled-release fertilizers, like Agrium Advanced Technologies' XCU™, DU-

RATION CR®, NITROFORM®, NUTRALENE® and POLYON® brands, allow lawn care professionals to lower annual use rates, make fewer applications and provide a steady supply of nutrients into the soil over many weeks or months. This means customers' lawns will get the nutrients they need to stay healthy and look good, and you'll save money.

It's important for landscape and lawn care professionals to re-examine their approach to fertilization—especially in regard to weeks of green and the cost savings associated with enhanced efficiency fertilizers.

As the leading manufacturer of slow- and controlled-release fertilizers and plant protection products for lawns, landscapes, golf courses, greenhouses, nurseries and agriculture, Agrium Advanced Technologies is at the forefront of economic. environmentally friendly fertilizer technologies. Our company is working hard to provide innovative, cost-saving solutions with slow- and controlled-release technologies and we're committed to helping our customers discover smarter ways to grow. For more information, please visit www.agriumat.com.





SMARTER TURF FERTILITY

ertilization is the best thing landscape contractors can do for turfgrass. It contributes greatly to turf color, density, uniformity and growth. Properly fertilized turf is able to compete with weeds and recover from damage caused by insects, diseases or weather-related stresses better.

But implementing a fertility program that keeps lawns green, healthy and weed free as well as fitting efficiently into a company's service-delivery model, is far from simple.

For one thing, there are many turf fertilizer choices (See Table 1). For another, landscape or lawn care companies that fertilize clients' properties often operate with different business models. On one end of the spectrum are the traditional chemical lawn care companies. They visit customers' properties every six to eight weeks during the growing season to make fertilizer and pest con-

trol applications.

"If we're not out on customers' properties six or seven times a year controlling weeds and solving other problems, we're going to get callbacks," says William Hildebolt, president of Nature's Select Premium Turf Services in Winston-Salem, NC.

SUCCESSFUL LAWN AND LANDSCAPE PROS BASE THEIR FERTILIZER CHOICES ON CUSTOMER-PLEASING, SERVICE-DELIVERY MODELS

BY RON HALL, EDITOR AT LARGE

Because most lawn application companies are treating lawns in markets also served by national service providers, such as TruGreen or Scotts Lawn Service, they feel — from a competitive standpoint — they have to be on customers' properties multiple times each season. Realizing they'll be visiting properties every six weeks colors their fertilizer choices.

Companies that specialize in maintenance/mowing operations comprise another significant but separate

industry segment. Many of these companies offer fertilization and weed control, also. Then there are the landscape companies that provide just about every conceivable outdoor service a property owner might

ill Hildebolt says multiple visits re needed to solve the host of probems that can affect clients' lawns need or want, from multimillion dollar construction projects to turf care.

Selection criteria

Each of these specialized businesses will select and use the type and grade of fertilizer, including treatment regimen, that fits its business needs and delivers results that satisfy its customers. All customers want green weed-free turf.

Kevin Johnson, president and second-generation operator of Des Moines, IA-based All American Turf Beauty, looks at five factors when selecting fertilizer:

- 1) The correct rate of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K)
- **2)** At least 25% of the N available in a slow-release form
- **3)** A quality product with properly sized prills that flow out of the spreaders smoothly and uniformly
- **4)** The effectiveness of the product in combination with a weed or insect control
- 5) Price

2009 TURFGRASS FERTILITY REPORT

All American Turf Beauty offers clients several treatment options, programs that feature four, five or six visits from a technician each season.

By contrast, YardApes, Inc., a 19year-old company founded by Shayne Newman operating out of New Milford, CT, offers lawn care as just one of a full palette of landscape services.

Because of its service mix, Newman approaches lawn care — an important source of revenue for his company — with a different mind-set than most lawn-care-only operations.

"We'd rather mow the lawns we fertilize because homeowners often do

a bad job of mowing," Newman says. "They mow the grass too low, scalp the lawn and use dull blades."

Because YardApes mows and maintains many of the same properties that receive its lawn care services, Newman doesn't want to create unnecessary mowing or bagging because of

over aggressive fertilizing. This is one reason why it applies only two rounds of high-quality fertilizer annually to the lawns his firm maintains.

A justifiable cost

There's an extra cost to using specially formulated, high-quality nitrogen fertilizers. In YardApes' case, the higher cost is more than justified because the product, which releases nutrients for a longer time and at a more controlled rate, fits his company's business strategy and satisfies customers. (See Table 2)

"The fertilizer cost for the two rounds is about the same as three

> rounds we were doing before," Newman says. "Take into account we're eliminating the cost of labor needed for that third round. That frees up our guys to help with mowing and fall cleanup."



[TABLE 1] **COMMON SOURCES OF NITROGEN IN TURFGRASS FERTILIZERS**

SOURCE	CONTENT (% N-P-K)	SALT INDEX PER UNIT a	ACIDIFYING EFFECT b	COLD WATER SOLUBILITY c
Ammonium nitrate	33-0-0	3.2 H	62	14.5
Ammonium sulfate	21-0-0	3.3 H	110	5.7
Calcium nitrate	15-0-0			
IBDU	31-0-0	0.2L		SS
Milorganite	6-4-0	0.7L		SS
Polymer-coated urea	38-0-0			SR
Potassium nitrate	13-0-44	5.3 H	(-23)	1.0
Sulfur-coated urea	32-0-0	0.7 L		SR
Urea	45-0-0	1.7 M	71	6.2
Urea formaldehyde or methylene ureas	38-0-0	0.3L		SS

a Expressed as relative salinity of mineral salts per unit of nutrient compared to sodium nitrate (6.3). High=2.6 or greater; moderate=1.0 to 2.5; and low=less than 1.0 b Units of CaCo3 required to; neutralize 100 unites of fertilizer (by weight) c SS=slow soluble; SR-slow release



YardApes mows more than 250 lawns a week.

Another benefit is that the lawns his company treats and mows don't get an "insane spring flush of growth," Newman says.

When Newman made the decision to change his program, he knew he had to educate customers to see the benefits for themselves, as well. He stressed that his company was using a superior product but the cost to clients would remain the same. They accepted the change because they were satisfied with his company's service, Newman says.

To that end, all the company's employees, not just the managers, are reminded constantly to monitor the

NITROGEN FERTILIZERS

Hrea Ammoniacal forms

Ammonium sulfate

Ammonium nitrate Calcium nitrate

Sulfur-coated urea Plastic-coated urea Natural organic sources Methylene urea sources



In addition to superior service, lawn service companies have to cultivate trust with their clients, says Ken Mays in Baltimore.

condition of the properties they treat and keep customers apprised of what they see.

"Some people really appreciate that, and some don't care," Newman says.

But all customers want to see results — that's what counts, he adds.

Always looking to improve

Landscape contractors can't overestimate the importance of customer education and trust when it comes to providing lawn care services, says Ken Mays, who bought Baltimore-based Scientific Plant Services in 1975. Mays put this personal belief to the test in the fall of 2008 when his company combined its final two lawn applications into one.

"We're always looking to improve our operations and the value of our services, so we started looking at Polyon (a controlled-release fertilizer from Agrium Advanced Technologies), figuring out what it's about and how it can improve our services," he says.

When Mays determined the product could provide customers with the results they had come to expect from his company, while also eliminating labor and windshield time for his operation, he incorporated it into his

continued on page 28

HOW TO READ THE LABEL

To purchase and apply turfgrass fertilizers intelligently, one must be able to read and understand a fertilizer label. Every fertilizer must be labeled stating the guaranteed chemical analysis of the material and, in almost all cases, the following label information:

- > the name or brand;
- > potential acidity;
- > manufacturer's name and address; and
- > net weight of the fertilizer in the bag.

The **guaranteed analysis** is sometimes called the **fertilizer grade**, which is a listing of nutrients contained in the bag by weight. A complete fertilizer contains nitrogen (N), phosphate (P2O5) and potash (K2O), in contrast to an incomplete fertilizer that's missing one of these three key elements.

The **ratio of the fertilizer** is the relationship between N, P2O5 and K2O. A fertilizer with a 20-5-15 ratio contains 20% N, 5% P2O5 and 15% K2O by weight. A 50-lb. bag of 20-5-15 contains:

- $> 0.5 \times 20 = 10$ lbs. N
- $> 0.5 \times 5 = 2.5$ lbs. P2O5
- $> 0.5 \times 15 = 7.5 \text{ lbs. K2O}$

Only nitrogen is expressed as an element, while phosphorus and potassium are present as oxides, meaning the elements are contained in the phosphate and potash compounds, respectively. Phosphate contains 44% phosphorus, and potash contains 83% potassium as expressed in the formulas of their oxide forms, or P2O5 x 0.44 = P and $K2O \times 0.83 = K$.

So, a 50 lb. bag of 20-5-15 would have 10 lbs. of nitrogen but only 1.1 lbs. of phosphorus $(0.5 \times 5 \times 0.44 = 1.1 \text{ lbs. P})$ and 6.2 lbs. of potassium $(0.5 \times 15 \times 0.83 = 6.2 \text{ lbs. of K})$.

WIN and **WSN**, two other terms on a bag of fertilizer, stand for water insoluble nitrogen and water-soluble nitrogen. WSN is quickly available to the turf and provides fast green-up and growth. WIN is slow released by one of several mechanisms, less likely to burn the turf and provides a longer-lasting response than WSN.

Other secondary elements — such as calcium, magnesium and sulfur, along with minute amounts of boron, chlorine, copper, iron and manganese, molybdenum and zinc — are often found in fertilizers and are among the 17 essential nutrients for turfgrass.

TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH FERTILIZER TO APPLY TO AN AREA OF TURFGRASS, ONE MUST KNOW:

- 1 the square footage of the turf to be treated;
- 2 the recommended application rate; and
- 3 the analysis of the fertilizer.

Using the 20-5-15 grade fertilizer with a recommended application rate of 1 lb. N/1,000 sq. ft., one can determine how many pounds of the fertilizer would be needed to treat a 5,000-sq.-ft. lawn. Because 5 lbs. of N is needed and the 50-lb. bag contains 10 lbs. of N, one can fill a spreader with 25 lbs. of the 20-5-15 grade fertilizer for the application, using the formula (5 lbs. N) / (0.20) = 25 lbs. of N needed for the job.



LANDSCAPE AND
LAWN CARE PROS
MUST ADJUST
THEIR APPLICATION
PROGRAMS TO
COMPLY WITH AN
INCREASING NUMBER OF REGULATIONS
AIMED AT REDUCING
NITROGEN AND
PHOSPHORUS IN
STREAMS, LAKES
AND BAYS

BY CURT HARI FR

FERTILITY IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL

mart landscape contractors
making the move to package
billing are finding it pays
to reduce trips and rely on
performance rather than
showing up time and again to do the
same basic job. This is especially true
regarding fertilization because several
states and regional water authorities,
over objections by the industry, have
laws restricting applications.

Those in states where contractors haven't yet been forced to make the change may soon see guidelines or regulations that require them to rethink their fertilizer strategies. Indeed, they may be mandated to apply the required fertilizer to the lawn in fewer trips and within the legal window for the regional authority.

This past summer on the Gulf Coast of Florida, nitrogen fertilizer use was almost completely prohibited. Less is often best, maintains the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The Tampa Bay area moved to follow in those footsteps, with Pinellas County drafting regulations that prohibited fertilizer application in the rainy months and requiring use of slow-release materials.

"Our basic direction to landscape professionals is to get the Florida Best Management Principles certificate," says Mary Beth Henry, commercial horticulture specialist with the Hillsborough County Extension office.

A law passed in June now requires everyone applying fertilizer to pass the

BMP course. The 6-hour program includes a pretest, post-test, and a passing 75% grade. Everyone pushing a spreader, not just supervisory personnel, must pass.

With fertilizer, it's simply sound agronomic practice, whether in the North or the South, to fertilize grass only during the active growing season, which includes root growth in the fall, even when top growth has slowed, claims Henry.

Florida's BMPs limit the use of nitrogen to one pound per 1,000 sq. ft. of slow-release material. If it's not slow release, then the limit is one-half pound. Application timing varies by region of the state, and the local recommendations even vary by grass variety.

Local ordinances might be more stringent than the BMPs. If a contractor is operating in an area, he has to follow the local ordinance, Henry says. Sarasota is one case in which the regulations are quite restrictive to amount applied and timing. The proposed Pinellas County rules, for example, will require 50% slow-release nitrogen by June 2010.

SWFWMD suggests contractors use iron instead of nitrogen if they want to green-up a lawn, a practice that is not universally accepted by university researchers.

In every case, however, agronomists generally agree it's a good idea to post-pone any fertilizer application if a heavy rain is predicted.

AGE

Making it work

The key to reducing the number of fertilizer applications is to use the appropriate material – something with slow release that will last a long time, Henry says. Regulatory agencies favor the use of slow-release fertilizers to make nitrogen and phosphorus available to the turf throughout an extended period. This can include organic fertilizers and composts, neither of which face restrictions on their use. They're kinder to the environment and are usually more cost-effective, according to the SWFWMD.

Everywhere in the state there's a limit of a half-pound of phosphorus per year on established turf. It must be split in two or more applications of a quarter-pound or less. Newly established turf can receive as much as a pound per year. If, however, a contractor has a soil test or leaf tissue test that calls for extra P2O5, it can be applied to invigorate grass growth.

All of this supposedly is better for the environment, but what about business?

Obviously, contractors that have built their operations providing multiple applications of fertilizer to clients' properties, while also delivering other related services, strongly disagree with many of these provisions, especially those limiting the number of applications they can make.

Their contention is that they apply fertilizers and other materials responsibly, and provide a valuable environmental service in doing so.

Policy makers charged with making fertilizer rules respond that by reducing the number of fertilizer applications, a contractor benefits by making fewer trips to each property. Those who market their services intelligently promote the idea their services are green, protect the local watershed, save fuel and keep customers' lawns healthier longer.

This means a contractor has to tweak his sales philosophy, emphasizing packages of aeration, fertilization, pest control, leaf and needle blowing, for example.

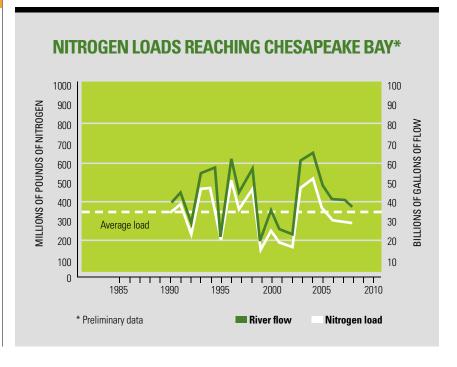
Chesapeake Bay woes

Along with sediments, the Chesapeake Bay area's biggest pollutants are nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, says the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), which has offices in the states of Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

"We have too much nitrogen around here," claims Marcy Damon, grassroots restoration coordinator for the CBF.

Damon suggests starting any fertilizer application two ways: First, with a soil test before applying any materials, and second, reducing the amount of turfgrass on properties.

Measures aimed at reducing the amount of turfgrass, especially where environmental conditions favor its growth, rankle the industry. The landscape industry, with university research





"We have **enough phosphorus** for most turf in the state, anyway."

Pinellas

County will

require 50%

nitrogen by

June 2010.

slow-release

 MARY BETH HENRY, COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE SPECIALIST WITH THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FL, EXTENSION

supporting it, insists that restricting turfgrass is the wrong direction to go in reducing runoff into streams, bays and lakes. Properly fertilized and maintained turfgrass — i. e. healthy turfgrass — captures and mitigates runoff and its associated pollutants, they insist.

Whatever is applied, Damon encourages contractors to refrain from water-soluble synthetics and use slow-release materials. She also recommends contractors avoid combination products that contain fertilizer and pest controls, another sore point with application companies.

Other measures being promoted by the CBF align more closely with the interests and practices of most Green Industry contractors, if not on specifics at least on practices.

'On established turf, raising mower heights will help grass thrive, " Damon says.

"The minimum should be 3-in. tall," she adds. "You'll develop

better roots, and the grass won't brown as quickly. Plus, tall grass shades out weeds."

Another sound practice is not over applying fertilizer. While it may pay off in short-term profits, it'll leave the lawn more susceptible to diseases and won't be good for the landscaping business in the long run.

Client education

It's a good idea to show customers the results of the soil test — most state universities offer an inexpensive service — conducted on their lawns.

"Without that, you have no idea what you are doing," Damon says.

On the days when fertilizer is applied, it's a good idea to sweep or blow any fertilizer on sidewalks or driveways back onto the grass, or put it back in the hopper and use it elsewhere.

Wherever a contractor is working, it's a good idea to leave a 10-foot strip along the margin of a creek, pond or other body of water. This buffer zone keeps fertilizer out of the water.

Florida laws vary on water setbacks. "BMPs say that if you have a deflector on one side of the spreader you can

get as close as three feet from the water — without a shield it's 10 feet," Henry says.

This, too, varies by municipality, even within counties. Some Florida towns recommend a low-maintenance zone of six to 10 feet along any water.

Damon also advocates leaving turf clippings on the lawn. This

recycles some nitrogen back into the turfgrass roots, she says.

All of this will require some change of thinking by contractors and customers, she adds. It likely will have to start with the contractor explaining the benefits of an environmentally sensitive program for a customer's lawn and area watersheds. Odds are most customers never have given a passing thought to the question.

HARLER is an experienced Green Industry editor who lives and works in Strongsville, OH. Contact him at curt@curtharler.com

SMARTER TURF FERTILITY continued from page 25

company's fertility program.

"We told our customers they're getting a better product for the same money," he says. "We explained they're going to get better results because some of the nitrogen in the product is going to be there waiting to go to work for their lawns in the spring. We also explained the beneficial environmental aspects of it, in terms of runoff. That's big here because of the Chesapeake Bay."

By using a fertilizer with a longer release of nutrients, his employees have been able to spend more time monitoring and offering IPM services to property owners rather than returning with a spreader each visit.

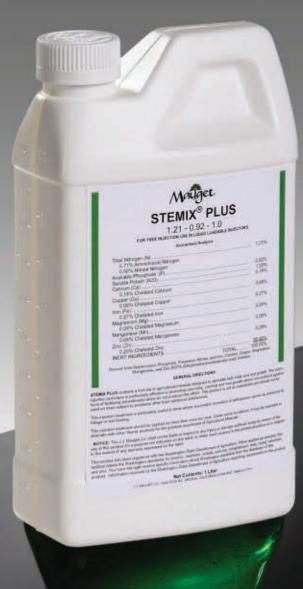
In some cases, Scientific Plant Services makes just a single application of fertilizer plus Barricade pre-emergent herbicide for its larger accounts (commercial properties, college grounds and apartment complexes) and still sees great results.

Mays is able to dial in the nutrient-release capabilities of the polycoated fertilizer he needs for each round by using a special computer program offered by the manufacturer. Heading into the fall, Mays is looking at four different formulations and will select the one he believes will deliver best results as he gets a better read of fall and winter weather conditions.

"Everybody's accepted the changes we made and so far everybody's been happy with the color and the performance of their lawns," he says.

Lawn and landscape contractors agree fertility is the cornerstone and the starting point of what's developed into their robust and profitable service industry. As one grinning lawn service owner said at a recent industry conference: "We get paid to grow it (turfgrass). Then we get paid to mow it. What a great business to be in!"

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LAWNCAREPRO

LM'S OPERATOR OF THE MONTH >>> BY RON HALL



Lou Wierichs followed a twisting career path before starting his lawn care business in 1987. But once he became a part of the industry, he plunged in heart and soul. After earning a degree from the University of Wisconsin at Stout, he worked first as a loan officer and a truck driver delivering furniture in the Midwest before returning to school for his master's degree. It was then that he discovered the lawn care industry through a ServiceMaster franchise. Once he had established his company, he spent the next 10 years immersed in the business and as an officer in industry associations.

Lou, you have been in the lawn care business for 22 years. What keeps you going?

The challenge of each and every day. There's always something different that needs to be done. I have loyal, competent employees, and it's still enjoyable to go to work. The keys to success in my case are common sense and the ability to problemsolve. Meet and succeed in the challenges of everyday business: "Success is a journey, not a destination."

Describe the biggest challenges your company is experiencing this year.

The biggest challenge is still customer education on how to do their part to care for their lawn. In our area this year, the drought has been exceedingly frustrating. We have not seen rain for two months. Much of the grass is dormant. We need Mother Nature to pull us out of this one.

The economy is another big factor this year. People are holding on tight to their money. If you can say "you're holding your own this year," that would be a success.

What changes have you implemented in your company in light of the depressed state of the economy? This economy has made us tighten up on efficiency and routing. Work smarter, you cut costs — including fuel, labor and equipment. It's been a tight hold on the purse strings.

What changes have you seen in customers' attitudes this season? Customers are frustrated with the drought conditions, and fewer people

are watering because of the tight economy. Everyone
— me included — has a hard time parting with cash for the add-on services at this time.
People are holding on tight to their money, and decisions are tough to make.

How do you see the lawn care business changing in the next 10 years? I see the lawn industry promoting itself as environmentalist and hopping on this Green Movement if we're smart as an industry. We are the stewards of the environment. Healthy turf means healthy Earth. Turf provides much-needed oxygen for our planet and our survival. We need to promote the benefits of turf.

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Pro-X Lawn Care, Appleton, WI

FOUNDED: 1987

PRESIDENT/OWNER:

Lou Wierichs

SERVICE AREA: Appleton, Green Bay, Brillion, WI

EMPLOYEES: 7

SERVICES OFFERED: granular fertilization, slit seeding, weed control, shrub replacement and pruning, mulch beds, landscape consulting, lawn aeration, spring/fall cleanups, mowing, Christmas Decor

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:

past president of PLCAAA (now merged with PLANET), Wisconsin Green Industry Federation, GMAW (now Lawns of Wisconsin Network), Green Industry Expo, Evergreen Foundation, also involved in Wisconsin Master Gardener

HOBBIES: golf, deer hunting, pool, comedy

FAMILY: three brothers and two sisters

WEBSITE:

ProXLawnCare.com

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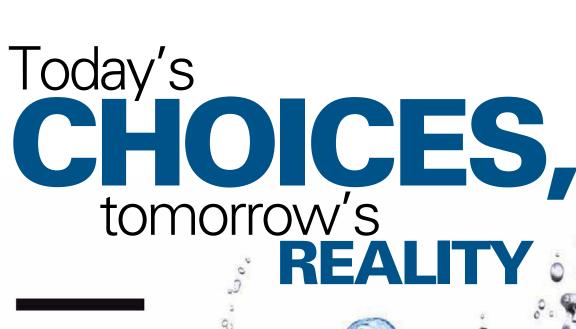
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Why some smart people say our nation's most populous state still has time to save its water future.

41 Speaking with a single voice

When related segments of the Green Industry cooperate to influence policy good things happen.

Rain Bird: Partnering for a Better Environment

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT teamwork divides the task while multiplying its success. When faced with a somewhat daunting task, sharing our visions and aspirations with others can often help us achieve much more than if we try to go it alone.

Collaborating, communicating and building relationships with other likeminded individuals and organizations are key elements of Rain Bird's guiding philosophy, The Intelligent Use of Water. When it comes to safeguarding earth's most precious resource, we are all stakeholders. And as stakeholders, we must communicate with one another—public sector and private sector, individuals and industry, nationally and internationally. That's why Rain Bird continues to partner with irrigation professionals, thought leaders, government and nongovernment organizations and water agencies to raise global consciousness of the need to use water wisely.

Within the irrigation industry, we've developed training programs that give us the opportunity to collaborate with professional contractors and inform them of the latest water-efficient irrigation products, installation methods and maintenance procedures. These contractors are then able to pass on this information to their customers, furthering awareness of the need for and best practices of outdoor water conservation.

Outside the irrigation industry, Rain Bird has partnered with a variety of public and private entities. This year we have expanded our Intelligent Use of Water Award to recognize both local and statewide governments' outdoor



water conservation programs, offering these agencies a platform to share their successes at The Intelligent Use of Water State of the Union Summit in Washington, DC. Rain Bird has also been involved with the Alliance for Water Efficiency and the EPA's WaterSense program, sharing best practices in water efficiency while developing new ones. Meanwhile, our partnership with the American Public Gardens Association and its 500 member gardens is designed to promote awareness of the link between water and plant conservation through National Public Gardens Day.

Rain Bird will remain committed to bringing to market the most water-efficient products and services. Just as importantly, though, we will continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate both within the irrigation industry and beyond it to ensure that the conversations on conservation continue. The task we all face is a significant one, but we're confident that teamwork is the best recipe for success.



With 15 million new residents expected by 2030 and a water crisis looming, the landscape industry is, caught in the middle. But some smart folks claim our nation's bellwether state can still meet its future water needs, maintain a vibrant economy and preserve its environment . . . and they're serious!

BY **RON HALL** EDITOR AT LARGE



ticking water clock

HE BIGGEST and least
expensive new source of
water for California won't
come from building new
dams and reservoirs.

Forget the Colorado River. In fact,
California can expect less water from
the river as the six other states in the
Southwest that rely on it finally begin
taking more of their allocated share.
The Sacramento-San Joaquin Estuary
is out of the question, too, because

of serious environmental concerns. Desalination? Yes, that's a possibility, but an incredibly expensive one, especially in terms of energy use.

The best and cheapest new source of water for California will come from wisely using the water California has already.

That's what Dr. Peter H. Gleick, co-founder and president of the Pacific Institute in Oakland, CA, Heather Cooley and David Groves said in *California Water 2030: An Efficient Future*, a publication they co-authored. The clock is ticking to make that happen though. The longer California takes to implement intelligent water policies — conservation pricing, user incentives, workable model landscape codes, etc. — the less likely the transition to a sustainable water future.

Will Johnson, owner of Seco Landscaping, San Diego, doesn't



think the public is willing to see the state's water crisis for what it is. Not yet anyway.

"The direction we're going in terms of water use is unsustainable," says Johnson. "We're literally the car speeding toward the edge of the cliff. Fortunately, there are some people in this business (landscaping) taking the water issue seriously and getting ahead of it before it comes down on us in a very unpleasant way."

Johnson named his company Seco because it means "dry" in Spanish. He specializes in designing and installing drought-tolerant landscapes, which he says fit San Diego's Mediterranean climate. Nevertheless, customers still ask him for tropical landscapes and large areas of turfgrass. Both require regular irrigation and costly weekly or monthly maintenance, he says.

Gleick and the non-profit Pacific Institute he co-founded in 1987 is recognized internationally as an authority on water and related environmental issues. But is he and his colleagues merely dreaming that policy makers and the state's 37 million people are willing to make wise choices now to ensure California's water future?

No, they're not dreaming. Their 44-page report outlines a high efficiency scenario in which by 2030 water use could be cut 20% (and outdoor water use by 32%) below 2000 levels, and California could still maintain its vibrant economy while protecting its environment.

The biggest savings, the report said, is expected to come from urban rather than agricultural water use, where conservation is well underway.

"Delaying action on water conservation and efficiency increases the pressure to find, build or buy new, expensive and environmentally damaging sources of water supply," Gleick said in the report. "While we don't believe a highly efficient future is necessarily easy to achieve, it'll be easier, faster and cheaper than any other option facing us." Even though a plan prepared by the California Department of Water Resources in 2005 predicted demand for urban water will increase 3 million acre feet (MAF) by 2030, Gleick thinks it can actually be reduced 0.5 MAF from current levels if action is taken now to change how Californians view and use water. (An acre-foot of water is the amount of water needed to cover an acre of surface to a depth of one foot, about 326,000 gallons.)

Green Industry's challenge

Reducing urban water use has profound implications for California's vibrant landscape industry, of course. The effects of the state's water scarcity and the policies implemented by state and regional authorities are already being felt by landscapers. For example, The California Department of Water Resources developed a Model Landscape Ordinance that encourages, among other things, the use of water-efficient plants and irrigation through the development of a water budget for each landscaped site. Several local and regional authorities have adopted similar measures, beating the state-mandated Jan. 1, 2010, deadline when all towns must adopt an ordinance.

The aim of the model ordinance is to move the industry and consumers to reduce outdoor water use and embrace what are being described as California-friendly landscapes.

CLCA is on board

The California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) has made water issues one of its top priorities, and has instituted aggressive programs to educate and drive efficient irrigation practices among its members. For example, its Water Manager Certification Program is becoming increasingly popular among members.

Meanwhile the CLCA approves of many, but not all, of the conservation initiatives being promoted by state and regional policy makers, such as conservation rate structures or tiered rates for water users. (The more you use, the more you pay.)

Curiously, in spite of being in the grips of a severe 3-year drought and being under a water emergency declared by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger this past February, many residents in the Central Valley, including the City of Fresno, don't have meters to measure their water use.

This will change, but surprisingly slowly. All homes must have water meters by 2025, according to a recent state law.

Meanwhile, CLCA opposes efforts by water authorities to limit the number of days property owners may irrigate their properties, which it says actually encourages water waste.

LANDSCAPERS CAN SAVE CLIENTS \$\$

he price of treated water is escalating throughout the United States, often at a double-digit rate. Nowhere is this truer than California.

According to a report issued by the NUS Consulting group in Sept. 2008, the average price of water in the United States increased by 7.3% the preceding year in 2007. It based the figure on a survey of 51 water systems located throughout the country. From 2003 until July 2008, the price of water had risen almost 30% nationwide. More than two-thirds of the surveyed cities had increased their water charges, according to NUS. In some parts of California, that trend is expected to continue, perhaps dramatically.

But, higher water prices, as much as we dislike them, give knowledgeable landscape and irrigation professional another opportunity to provide a resource-conserving service to property owners. Saving water also will save them money. After all, it's estimated landscape irrigation accounts for 20% to 60% of residential water use, depending on regional and climatic differences throughout the country. In California, especially hotter, drier inland areas, the higher percentage is more likely.

Here's what's going on with the price of water in California and elsewhere.

- > This past July, council members in Livingston, CA, split 3-2, but a 40% water-rate hike passed nonetheless.
- > Starting Sept. 1, residents in Garden Grove, CA, began paying 19.7% more for water with more rate increases on the way.
- > Residents of San Diego have absorbed six price jumps since 2007. As 2009 draws to a close, city council members are seeking an additional 7% increase
- Also in San Diego County, the Otay Water District approved an increase of almost 20% and the Helix Water District 21% more for the water it provides customers.

If you think Californians are the only ones taking a hit at their water meters, think again.

- New York City Water Board raised water rates 14.5% in 2008, and tacked on another 12% increase, which went into effect this past July 1.
- → To cover a \$5-million budget shortfall Biloxi, MS, is instituting a 20% flat rate increase.
- > Santa Fe, NM, jumped its water rates 8.2% this past March.
- > Residents in Waterloo, IA, learned in August they're facing 9% water-price increase, the first of several consecutive years of rate jumps.
- The 9% water-rate increase that went into effect for customers in the Raleigh, NC, water system this past summer will be followed by a 6% hike in December.

While most consumers want to do the right thing when it comes to the environment and conserving water, they're more likely to do it when they can see the results in their pocketbooks.

By renovating outdated irrigation systems or installing properly designed systems with smart controllers, rotating nozzles and other watersaving features, landscape pros can save their customers cash, especially if they can match water savings with water agency rebates. — RH

Landscapes need water

George Ash, Jr. of Casa Verde Landscape has seen incredible growth and development in the communities around Alta Loma, where his company is based. Alta Loma is one of dozens of communities located in the Inland Empire, a huge chunk of Southern California located about 35 miles inland of the Pacific Coast and east of Los Angeles.

Growth in the Inland Empire (the largest city is Riverside) kept his company busy designing and installing beautiful landscapes for its first 15 years, and his employees didn't have to travel far to do it. But the local economy headed south in late 2007 ago and construction slowed dramatically. Casa Verde still gets its share of those jobs, but Ash has shifted much of its focus to commercial maintenance. His company strongly promotes using alternative water sources for landscape irrigation.

"People here want their grass green and their trees healthy," Ash says. "And, everything has to be irrigated if you want anything green. You have to bring in water."

The Inland Empire and other non-coastal regions of the state are expected to grow fastest during the next 25 years. In fact, their populations are expected to double. This poses a huge conundrum for water planners. Historically, these regions, some of which extend into desert areas, feature large tracts of single-family homes compared to the multifamily developments more common on the coast. Also, these houses are being built on larger lots, reflecting cheaper land prices in the state's interior. Because the climates of these inland counties are hotter and drier than coastal counties, landscape water needs there are significantly greater than elsewhere in the state.

An incredible system

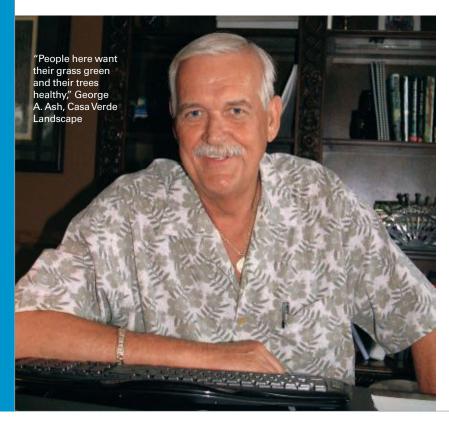
Most of the water for San Diego, indeed all of Southern California must come from elsewhere because little surface water is found in the region naturally.

To provide adequate water for agriculture and cities, federal, state and regional authorities have built the largest water storage, transport and flood management system in the United States.

A marvel of engineering with more than 1,000 federal, state and local reservoirs and conveyances, the system is characterized by three massive water projects that, using enormous amounts of energy, move water over mountains and through valleys to farmers and cities. This is necessary because 75% of the state's water is north of the Sacramento River, but 80% of demand is in the lower two thirds of California. The three largest projects are:

- 1. The Central Valley Project (CVP), built in the 1930s, runs 450 miles through the vast valley that begins with Lake Shasta in the north and ends at Bakersfield in the south. It collects and conveys water from the Sacramento, San Joaquin and several smaller rivers. It delivers water to parts of the San Francisco Bay area and in the Central Valley.
- 2. The State Water Project (SWP), built from 1961 to 1973, delivers water in the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California. It's the nation's largest state-built water and power development and conveyance system. It takes water from areas in Northern California, where water is plentiful, and delivers it to 23 million residents in areas of need in the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California.
- 3. The Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) diverts a share of the water from the Colorado to serve Los Angeles and other communities in Southern California.

Despite the millions of dollars the state and regional water authorities spend on education and outreach, far too many property owners remain



unaware of efficient irrigation, Ash says. He believes that will only change when water rates increase, in some cases dramatically.

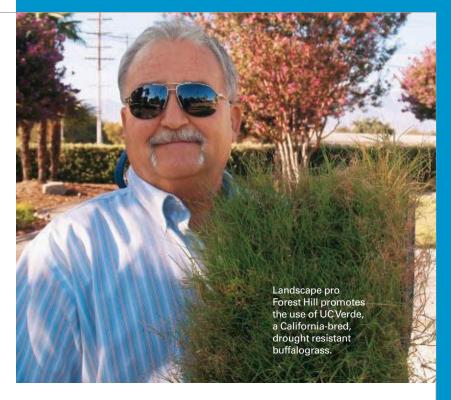
In terms of the services Casa Verde offers, some customers will agree to substantial improvements to their landscapes and their irrigation systems if they can see a return on their investments in 36 months or less, he says.

"This is sometimes possible, especially if the upgrades can be coupled with water agency rebates," says Ash.

Land of rebates

Southern California is ground zero for water agency rebates, the carrot used by water agencies to entice urban water users to conserve treated water. Consumers are offered cash to help pay for the cost of installing agency-approved products or performing specific services to conserve water. Many of the rebates are directed at landscape water use, which is estimated to comprise anywhere from 30% of urban water use in milder, cooler coastal California to 60% or more in drier, hotter inland California.

Water agencies often use "the stick" to drive water conservation, too. The stick used to force conservation in landscapes is typically irrigation restrictions and watering bans. Often, a water agency will use irrigation restrictions and rebates and combine those with an aggressive education campaign to reduce water usage. In other words, many communities and



agencies in California use all three methods — rebates, restrictions and education — to drive conservation.

Here's a list of the landscaperelated rebates offered by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the family of Southern California Water Agencies. These are representative of rebates offered by agencies elsewhere:

- > \$80 per weather-based smart controller for less than one acre of landscape and \$25 per smart controller and central computer irrigation controller systems for more than one acre of landscape;
- > \$4 per nozzle for agency-approved

pop-up, rotating sprinklers;

- > \$13 per set for high efficiency nozzles for large rotary sprinklers;
- > 30 cents per sq. ft. for replacing turfgrass with synthetic turf; and
- > \$1 per sq. ft. of removed turfgrass.

Other cities and water agencies throughout the Southwest, from Colorado Springs, CO, to Chandler, AZ, also offer rebates. Each has a different emphasis from installing rain sensors, rainwater harvesting systems, drip systems or converting areas of turfgrass, including streetscapes, to promoting xeriscaping. The Web sites of each agency outlines conditions for earning the rebates.

California water at a glance

- **> Groundwater** provides 40% of the state's water supply. In dry years, that percentage can increase as high as 60%.
- > Most of the **rain** and **snowfall** in the state occurs between October and April, while water demand is highest during the hot and dry summer months.
- In an average year, about 200 million acre-feet (MAF) of water falls in the form of rain or snow in California. About 82 MAF of usable surface water is captured, of which 48% goes to environmental uses, 41% is used by agriculture and 9% is used by cities and industry.
- > Agriculture uses 80% of the state's **developed water supply**; urban use comprises the remaining 20%.
- > Agriculture provides 1.1 million jobs and generates more than \$30 billion dollars in sales annually.
- > Two-thirds of **urban water use** is residential; the remainder goes to commercial, industrial and institutional customers
- **> Outdoor water use** accounts for 20% in milder coastal California to 70% in drier, hotter inland regions.

DELTA SMELT, NO SMALL FRY

The delta smelt is an unremarkable, slender-bodied fish that typically grows to about three inches in length. Its importance in California's water picture dwarfs even a blue whale.

Found only in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Estuary, the area where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers flow into the San Francisco Bay, the collapsed population of the smelt, which as been identified by environmental experts as an indicator species, prompted U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Wanger on Oct. 31, 2007 to order a significant reduction of the amount of water taken from the Bay-Delta estuary. The ruling applies to the time of the year when smelt are spawning and when juveniles are present.

The judge found that when too much water is taken from California's largest estuary, it causes reverse flows that kill the smelt, provide conditions favorable to invasive species and damage vital wildlife habitat.

Much of this estuary water, moved by massive pumps, is sent to the

Bay Area, California's agricultural Central Valley and dry Southern California. It ultimately provides water for about 25 million residents.

Judge Wanger's ruling resulted in an approximate 25% reduction of water exports from the estuary. In December 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service laid out rules for protecting the tiny fish, essentially putting an end to several years of legal battles focusing on the smelt. — RH



Ahead of the curve?

Forest Hill is not a newcomer to the landscape and irrigation scene. He's been in the business more than 30 years. In addition to his Landscape Design Inc., which he runs with his wife, Kimberly, and daughter, Kelly, Hill started a new venture, SWAN. The name is an acronym for "Smart Water Application Now." This division of his landscape operation, focuses on the water side of the landscape business.

"SWAN's philosophy is simple
— water conservation and great
design go hand in hand," Hills says.

SWAN, which Hill runs out of his family's home when he's not directing Landscape Design Inc., offers services to improve irrigation efficiency and California-friendly landscapes in the hot, dry climate of Ontario, CA, in

southern California. Services include:

- > the conversion of time clocks into weather-based smart controllers:
- integrating drip irrigation into conventional sprinkler systems;
- replacing cool-season turfgrasses with drought-tolerant grasses; and
- > monitoring irrigation use to identify and correct water waste continuously.

Most of the communities Hill serves haven't been hit with significant irrigation restrictions nor have water rates escalated enough to change property owners' watering habits, he says. "They're not feeling the pinch yet," he explains.

With SWAN, he's betting they will. To that end, Hill's Ontario, CA, headquarters is a showcase of water-efficient landscaping. He took out four feet of tall fescue in the front yard of his property for a garden path, and

replaced the remaining lawn with UC Verde, a variety of buffalograss developed at the University of California Davis. The buffalograss requires 75% less water than tall fescue to remain green and doesn't need to be mowed nearly as often, Hill says. The attractive ornamental plants that give the property's landscape color and structure are drought tolerant varieties, as well.

"So far, I've been spending Tuesdays and Thursdays marketing SWAN, "Hill says. "Eventually, I want to do this full time and take it a step or two above the fray."

Hill is just one of thousands of landscape and lawn service stakeholders that are such a vital part of the California's water picture (and economy) and will remain so in the future. Working through organizations such as the CLCA, the Irrigation Association and the Professional Landcare Network, many of them are rapidly adapting to the realities of the state's water supply issues.

It can be done

Landscape professionals can look for inspiration to other industries that have made marked strides in becoming more water efficient. For example, the state's agricultural water use has decreased since 1980 even as crop yields have significantly increased.

Is it unreasonable to expect California's progressive landscape industry, including to help educate the public to preserve the state's water resources, its biggest challenge?

"Experience has shown that efforts to improve water-use efficiency are consistently successful and cost effective," says Gleick of the Pacific Institute.

"If we put as much time, money and effort into improving water-efficiency as has gone into traditional water supply development, a high efficiency future could be readily achieved." LM

Speaking with a single voice

Groups representing different segments of the Green Industry are joining forces to get the attention of water policy makers. BY JOHN WALSH

nited as one. Sending a message. Loud and clear.

These phrases describe what's happening in states when various segments of the Green Industry form under umbrella organizations to educate legislators about the industry's impact on the economy and its need for irrigation water. These umbrella organizations — such as the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA); Green Industries of Colorado; and the Georgia Urban Ag Council (UAC) — let legislators know how restrictions and laws about issues such as water affect the industry. They're also influencing legislation in their respective states with the goal of protecting their industries.

Strength in numbers

The FNGLA chairs an informal group called the Florida Green Industry Coalition whose members collaborate on legislation that affects the Green Industry. The coalition produces position papers about various public policy issues, bringing together the voices of different Green Industry groups.

"There's strength in numbers," says Ben Bolusky, CEO of the FNGLA. "Most of the coalition's issues hinge on water use and landscape or turf irrigation. Droughts have led to the proliferation of rules and regulations. In Florida, it's either feast or famine with water because of our rainy

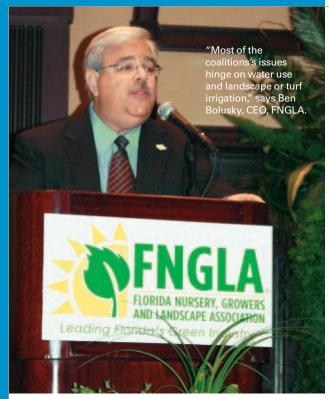


and dry seasons. But it's not an issue of water shortage; it's really an issue of water storage. We're bringing the Green Industry and Blue (Water) Industry together in Florida."

Government regulations and environmental activists have spurred Florida's Green Industry to develop a stronger voice in the legislative arena. Because of term limits in Florida, the days of relying on a lone sheriff to guard the town or good ol' boys to push a particular industry issue are long gone. Florida is becoming more urban and suburban, and the nursery/landscape industry is right in the middle of the unfolding transformation.

"Where would Florida be as a world-class tourist destination if it weren't for the plants and services from our industry? We need to be working together," says Bolusky.

SINGLE VOICE WATER WISE 2009



County and municipal ordinances regulating fertilizer use have been increasing. This means more fertilizer restrictions, which ignored science, were spreading. This spring, Florida's legislature passed a fertilizer bill (SB 494) for which the FNGLA led the charge. The bill affects growers, retailers and landscapers, among others.

Additionally, legislators signed a "Florida friendly landscaping" bill into law this spring. It'll be used as a benchmark for environmental friendliness, Bolusky says.

The new law codifies the bedrock principle of horticulture science: Put the right plant in the right place. Florida-friendly landscaping offers broad opportunities for the use of turf, native plants and plants bred for the state's several unique climates.

The FNGLA also challenged the South Florida Water Management District about the number of days one can irrigate lawns during restriction periods. At press time, the issue has yet to be resolved.

Additionally, the FNGLA is working on behalf of the Green Industry relating to land issues. Because Florida is becoming more urbanized, it's important to recognize where the concentration of nurseries are - especially during times when the governments are looking for new ways to fill their coffers, Bolusky says.

In a state with no income tax, everything is taxed unless the legislature exempts it, so there are sales tax exemptions for the Green Industry all over Florida.

"We want to ensure the tax treatment of ag lands is protected," Bolusky says. "We need to protect the tax status of nurseries, which are concentrated in urban areas."

The FNGLA wants to promote the landscape and nursery industries as an integral part of the green infrastructure, and wants them to be on the receiving end of construction projects and government buildings.

"We're ultimately helping improve the bottom lines of Green Industry businesses," Bolusky says. "Our mission is to enhance members' business success, and our vision is to be a leader that speaks to the overall industry."

Remaining vigilant

Prior to the present formation of the Georgia Urban Ag Council, its four association partners — Metro Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association (MALTA), Georgia Turfgrass Association, Georgia Sod Producers Association and Coastal Landscape and Turf Professionals Association — thought they could work with legislators about the issues affecting their businesses on their own. But that only confused legislators. The groups soon realized forming a coalition based on common issues would be more effective.

"We work well together and identify common issues — labor, immigration, water and pesticide use — affecting the Green Industry," says Mary Kay Woodworth, president of the Georgia UAC and executive director of MALTA.

The first big issue the UAC dealt with was immigration in 2005.

"Georgia has become one of the toughest states when it comes to illegal immigration," Woodworth says. "We have zealous legislators who are frustrated with the federal government's lack of enforcement, and laws have been proposed and passed that are potentially damaging to industries that rely on immigrant labor. We need to make sure businesses that are doing the right thing aren't penalized."

So far, she adds, "in many cases, we've been able to reason with legislators."

But during the past two years, and until recently, it was all about drought and water restrictions.

"The drought issue was a nightmare," Woodworth says. "The state's total ban on outdoor water use in September 2007 was devastating. No business could operate, and consumer confidence was completely eroded. From June 2007 to December 2007, the Green Industry lost \$3 billion in business."

Before a Level 4 drought was reached, the UAC made sure members knew the state's restrictions. However, local governments were allowed to implement additional restrictions, which caused problems because counties and cities enacted their own restrictions at will. For example, a contractor working in six different counties could potentially have to abide by six different sets of water restrictions. Adding to this confusion was contradiction with state laws regarding soil erosion protection — disturbed land was

required to be revegetated, for example, but with outdoor water use restricted, it was impossible to comply.

In February 2008, Georgia House Bill 1281 was proposed. The bill, as passed, says water providers won't be allowed to change state water restrictions unless it petitions the Georgia Environmental Protection Division first. Now, consumers won't be subjected to the hodgepodge of water restrictions.

"It was looked as though we were stepping on the toes of local legislators because they thought they knew best," Woodworth says. "But we helped water providers by allowing them to sell water and landscape contractors by allowing them to use water more appropriately. We had to protect the industry. Something had to be done."

The drought was declared over in June 2009, although even at press time there are still non-drought rules in place. Drought-rule revisions will start this winter. Woodworth says the industry has been assured that in the revision, care will be taken so that no one group will be penalized and everyone will suffer equally during a drought in which state water use restrictions are implemented.

"We need a balance with the environment; we just can't shut the water off," says Jim McCutcheon, CEO of HighGrove Partners, a landscape contractor part of the Georgia UAC. "Water still is a huge issue for us. That overrides anything."

Still, the UAC is dealing with people who want to ban outdoor water use. It needs data and economic information to rebuff them.

"We're beginning to effectively work with other stakeholder groups — water providers, local government, environmental groups," Woodworth says. "That wasn't so 10 years ago. We can't reach a consensus with every

group on every issue, but it's good for the industry as a whole.

"Across our region, our industry must build and sustain legislative/regulatory relationships that give us a seat at the table and a respected voice about issues like the need to increase water storage capacity, which is a regional issue that will impact all of the Southeast," she adds.

This year will be a big year legislatively in the state because groups are trying to restrict water use.

"Water woes can't be solved by conservation ... efficiency is important, but additional inventory is a must. We need to remain vigilant," she says.

Green Industries of Colorado (GreenCo), an alliance of eight trade associations representing diverse aspects of the plant and landscape industry, originally was intended to take care of big-ticket, Green-Industry-related items via lobbying. A few years ago, it hired a lobbying firm, Hicks & Associates, to keep an eye on bills and keep the Green Industry's voice heard.

Quantifying industry's impact

But it also wanted to quantify the Green Industry's impact on the state as a whole. It spurred the first impact study and several thereafter, which were conducted by Colorado State University and funded by trade associations and businesses in the Green Industry. In 2007, the study determined the Green Industry in Colorado was a \$3.3-billion-a-year industry (calculating all factors) that employed 40,000 people.

Like the UAC, water is the biggest issue for GreenCo. In 2002-2003, there was a major drought. Precipitation totaled as little as 4.5 in. for the year, and snow pack was as little as 25% of normal in some river mountain river basins.

"It was determined 50% of residential water usage is for outdoor watering, so municipalities said, 'We'll

step in.' That's when GreenCo got loud," says Eric Moroski, president of GreenCo and VP and co-owner of Colorado Springs-based Weisburg Landscape Maintenance. "We all needed to speak with one voice to keep the targets off our back."

GreenCo hired a water consultant in 2004 as a subcontractor, who became GreenCo's face in water issues.

Water quality is becoming bigger issue than water quantity, Moroski says, because all water runs downhill, and erosion affects water quality.

The No. 2 issue for GreenCo recently has been about soil. Before the recent HB 1092 Utility Locates

Bill passed, contractors and homeowners were supposed to notify the Utility Notification Center of Colorado if they were planning to move as little as a teaspoon of soil.

"The bill was poorly designed," Moroski says. "In that case, all lawn aeration would need to be notified."

The new bill, which passed last fall and went into effect Aug. 1, states no notification is needed for routine maintenance for any mechanical digging down 4 in. and hand digging down 12 in.

"This new bill had a very positive impact on us," Moroski says. LM

WALSH is an experienced Green Industry editor and writer who lives and works in Cleveland. Contact him at jwalsheditor@gmail.com





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Aslani emigrated to the U.S. from Iran in 1978 — just six months before the Islamic revolution — little did the 16-year-old high school student realize that his interest in plant science would lead him toward a career as a highly sought after fire ant control expert in northern Florida.

The lessons Aslani learned while spending time on his maternal grandfather's farms in Iran have served him well. After graduating from a Miami high school, earning an agronomy degree from the University of Florida in 1985, and working his way up to service manager for Orkin, Aslani founded Marion Pest Control in 1991.

"I had certain ideas in my mind about how a business should be run," he says. "I wanted to concentrate on customer satisfaction."

Slow, controlled growth has enabled Aslani to employ his wife, Sarita, and son Alex in the family business.

In its first several years of existence, Marion Pest Control's primary market was residential service — treating for ants, termites and general household pests in the north-central Florida citFire ants meet their match in North Florida horse country

BY LEE BLOOMCAMP

SAVE A HORSE

ies of Ocala and Gainesville. (Ocala is located in Marion County, hence the name of the business). However, in 2000, Aslani made a calculated decision to take on a new breed of client: horse farms.

The Ocala area is considered to be one of the premier locales for thoroughbred horse breeding and training farms in the world. More than 200 facilities are located in Marion County. Aside from the equine residents and the people who love and live near them, the farms also host a far less-welcome guest: the red imported fire ant (*Solenopsis invicta*).

Fire ants present a huge liability issue for horse farms because the aggressive invertebrates can injure or even kill newborn foals, and cause general health problems for valuable adult horses. The venom released in a sting from a fire ant causes a painful pustule and can lead to secondary infections. Contrary to popular belief, fire ants don't just bite their victims; they use their mandibles to grasp their victims' flesh while using a stinger on their abdomens to inject venom.

Even more troublesome is the fact that, instead of a single ant sting, fire ants typically swarm their prey before they actually attack — which results in hundreds of painful, debilitating stings. Fire ants are efficient predators and will attack humans, ground-nesting birds and animals, and any other insects, including harmless native ant species, in their territory.

Black and reddish brown in color, fire ants typically nest in the ground, topped by low, 2- to 3-ft.-wide, pyramid-shaped mounds that can have multiple entrances and extend several feet into the soil. Depending on the size of the colonies, there can be as many as 150 mounds per acre. On a property the size of a typical horse farm, this means fire ant populations can get out of control quickly if preventive and curative steps aren't taken regularly to rid the property of the pests.

Ground vibrations can trigger defensive attacks from fire ants. On a horse farm, normal feeding and move-



TOP 5 TIPS FOR RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT CONTROL

Make sure you are dealing with fire ants. Pocket gophers, harvester ants and other critters can make piles of soil similar to those made by fire ant colonies. Disturbing the mound with a stick or a quick kick will bring fire ants to the surface if they're present.

Make a long-term commitment to fire ant control. In many areas, the only way to keep properties free from fire ants is a year-round control program. Without regular treatments, fire ant populations will rebound quickly from the arrival of new, winged queens; invasion from adjacent property; and introduction of fire ants in sod and landscape materials.

Consider an integrated pest management (IPM) program. An integrated program includes spot applications to existing colonies and broadcast baits. Mound treatments with contact insecticides are effective in small areas, but it's easy to miss small colonies or do an incomplete treatment when you're working with large areas. Baits are easy to apply and eliminate the possibility of overlooking small or hidden colonies. When starting a control program on a new property that's heavily infested with fire ants, use bait first, then follow up in one or two weeks with insecticide treatments to active mounds to provide a short-term reduction in populations.

Be careful when storing and applying fire ant bait. Fire ants are discriminating feeders. Always keep fire ant bait away from other pesticides and fertilizers. Use a spreader that's dedicated to bait application only. Dust left in the spreader from fertilizer or granular pesticides can contaminate bait and be detected by fire ants, causing rejection.

Consider using biological controls. Biological control agents, such as phorid flies, have been established in some areas and are helping to reduce fire ant populations. The flies are parasites of red imported fire ants and have been effective in reducing populations in areas where they've been introduced.

To learn more about red imported fire ants, visit:

- > http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/ants/red_imported_fire_ant.htm
- > http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/animals/rifa.shtml
- > http://fireant.tamu.edu

continued on page 48

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continued from page 46 ment by the horses can disturb the ants.

Fire ants are a particular problem because they sting the foals, which are sensitive to the venom. The horses cost a lot of money, so protecting them is a priority, Aslani says.

When Aslani made changes in his business model to cater to horse farms, he found plenty of work. Currently, of Marion Pest Control's 300 customers, about 90 percent are horse farms. The other 10 percent of his accounts are those who remain from when he first started his business.

Although Aslani hasn't actively pursued the residential market in almost 10 years, many horse farm owners are former residential customers, so he still treats their properties as a matter of convenience and in the name of good customer relations.

Peterson & Smith Equine Hospital in Ocala, one of the largest equine veterinary practices in the world, has been a customer of Marion Pest Control for more than 10 years.

"Fire ants are an issue when you're dealing with horses in fields, such as we

do on a daily basis," says Paul Vrotsos, chief executive officer of Peterson & Smith. "The foals and staff attendants particularly are susceptible to bites. For a young horse, the blisters and sores caused by the bites can be traumatic."

Because of the size of most horse farms, Aslani and his son use two ATVs, mounted with spreaders, to make broadcast applications of Award insect growth regulator (IGR). For Aslani, this is an effective method of delivering the product because fire ants forage as far as 100 feet from their mounds.

Aslani has used the insecticide as fire ant bait exclusively since 1994 to treat for residential properties and horse farm customers. As one of the few products labeled for use on horse farms, Award normally takes two to three months to completely destroy fire ant populations.

"I saw results after five weeks," Aslani says.

Because fire ants don't possess the ability to swallow solid food, they take the bait granules (which have been soaked with oil that carries the active ingredient fenoxycarb) back to the mound, where it's pulverized by the ants. The ants ingest the active ingredient-laced oil and regurgitate it to larvae, the queen and other workers in the mound. The bait product eventually destroys the fire ant population because, as the queen ingests the IGR, it inhibits her ability to produce healthy eggs and the multitudes of worker ants needed to carry out the daily activities that are vital to the colony.

As with most ant species, fire ants maintain a strict social order. At the top of a fire ant society sits the queen. Her primary job is to produce the thousands of eggs needed to maintain the colony population. Fire ant queens mate with short-lived winged males during their nuptial flight. After insemination, the queen is fertile for the rest of her life, which can be as long as eight years.

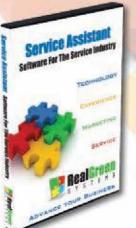
A mature queen fire ant can eventually lay as many as 1,200 eggs per day. When establishing a colony and the first eggs hatch, the initial group of workers emerges from the mound and immediately forages for food for the

continued on page 50

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SAVE A HORSE

continued from page 48 queen and larvae. After just six months, the fire ant colony can grow to several thousand workers and feature a mound that can be identified easily in a field. Colonies of this size can contain more than 200,000 large, medium and small workers — all infertile females.

The primary job of the younger and stronger worker ants is to care for immature ants and the queen. As these workers age (they have about a two-month life span), they move to different roles in the colony and are tasked with building and repairing the mound. In the days and weeks before they die, the workers are sent to the outside world to search for food because it's the riskiest activity for worker ants.

Fire ants aren't picky eaters and are attracted to such things as dead animals, worms and other insects, as well as any living animals that can't escape their Fire ant mounds can be a common sight on horse farms — that is, until Marion Pest Control arrives.

attacks. Because of their broad-ranging foraging behavior, a broadcast baiting program such as the one Marion Pest Control uses on the horse farms is effective.

Aslani is realistic when it comes to controlling fire ant populations on his customers' properties.

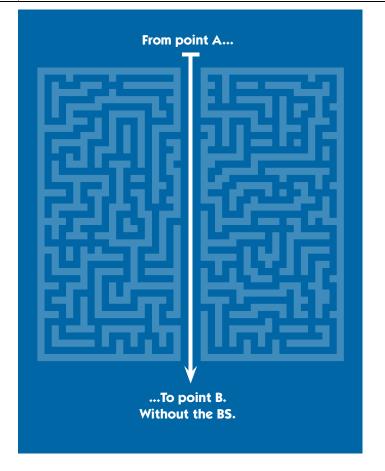
"We automatically broadcast Award every six months," he says. "After each application, I go back to the property to see if they're taking the bait, but a fire ant swarm may eventually reinfest an area. That's why we need to keep on top of it."

Though his client roster has changed dramatically in the 18 years since founding his business, Aslani has always made customer satisfaction a top priority.



"I've deliberately kept my business small to ensure good contact with customers," he says. "We emphasize customer satisfaction and treat everybody the same, regardless of size. I have a love and passion for the industry, and believe that when you promise a customer something, follow through. In fact, do better than you promised." LIM

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

July 1, 2009

652 businesses nationwide being served with audit notices today

WASHINGTON - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is lumching a bold, new andat initiative today by isoning Sections of Impection (NOIs) to 652 husinesses nationwide - which is more than ICE issued throughout all of Itsi fiscal year. The notices afert business owners that ICE will be inspecting ICE issued throughout all of Itsi fiscal year. The notices afert business owners that ICE will be inspecting laws and organized its determine whether or not they are complying with employment eligibiting laws and organized in the ICE will be inspection on playment and immigration laws. They now immarrie illustrates ICE's increased focus on boilding amployers accessed able for their hiring practices and efforts to ensure a legal work-force.

DCE is committed to establishing a meaningful 1-9 imspection program to promote compliance the Tally Tally rationwide effort is a first step in ICFs tong-term sentage to address and dear Illegal complement. Said Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE John Motion.

Employers are required to complete and retain a Form 1-9 for each individual they hire for employment in the United States. This form requires employers to review and record the individual's identity document(s) and determine whether the document(s) reasonably appear to be genuine and related to the individual.

The 652 businesses being presented with a NOI noday for a Form I-9 audit have been selected for inspection as a result of feads and information obtained through other investigative means. Due to the ongoing, fare enforcement sensitive nature of these audits, the names and focutions of the businesses will not be refused at this plant.

In FY 2008, ICE issued 503 similar notices throughout the year. In April, ICE implamented a new, comprehensive strategy to reduce the demand for idegal employment and protect employment opportunities for the nation's lawful weekforce. Under his strategy, ICE is focusing its resources on the autimity and investigation of employers asspected of cultivating allegal neekplaces by knowingly employing illegal weekforce. The nationwide initiative being launched today is a direct result of this new strategy.

Intelligenties and Country, Engineering (ECS) was undefined in March 2003 on the largest investigation registed Security, ECS is comprised of the integrated deviation that time a 21st century law indiscendent opposite lates for a member of long intervalent security processing.

A primary driver of illegal immigration is the labor market and you have to go after the pull that market has created. That means you have to go after the employers who are hiring illegal labor.

> - U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano

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BUSINESS PLANUER 2010

PEOPLE POWER

- **56** With a little help from my friends
- **64** Reach customers with low-tech, too
- 68 Nail the sale
- **74** Realize your goals in the Working Smarter Cycle
- 78 Take 9 steps to teach managers to think like owners

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

- 82 Apples to oranges
- **87** Position your company for success
- **90** Outlook for 2010
- 92 When the going gets tough
- 94 How to conduct a successful walk-through

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

- 95 Lease or buy?
- **99** It's a wide, wide World Wide Web
- 102 Products

It's grow or go time

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / MANAGING EDITOR

HE WORST recession since the 1930s has ended — or so read recent headlines. Although welcome news, it might come as a bit of a shock, or with a snort of derision, to some perusing their books.

Even if the economy has passed a textbook definition of recession, few prognosticators expect a quick return to prosperity. Words such as "slow" and "tentative" are appended to most fiscal pronouncements. Jobs and consumer

spending must rebound significantly before the nation loosens a notch or two on the economic belt it's been tightening for two years.

So now what?

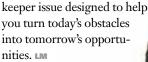
Is it time to start hiring and adding services in preparation for an upswing? Should you cut back or maintain the status quo if the recovery stagnates — or worse, the economy takes another dive? Anyone who promises definitive answers about where we'll be in six months is certifiably insane or attended the Bernie Madoff school of ethics. But that doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't prepare.

Start by taking a hard look in the mirror. Assess where you stand and where you have room for improvement. There are, no doubt, areas that have been neglected during these challenging times. Evaluate your customers and service offerings. Make sure they're good fits. And look for acquisition opportunities. Like plants that die each year and soil that reabsorbs their nutrients, businesses that don't survive economically this winter can provide fertilizer for those that do.

On the following pages, the editors of Landscape Management have collected sage advice from some of the most fertile minds in the Green Industry. We've divided our Business Planner 2010 into three sections — People Power, Strategic Solutions and Tools & Techniques, to target key growth opportunities.

Follow a group of executives as they learn from one another during a peer-review group process. Listen to veteran business owner Wayne Volz offer advice about surviving the challenges of this economy. Get the most out of what you have. Read our quintet of regular columnists: Bruce Wilson, Jim Wilson, Kevin Kehoe, Jim Paluch and Tyler Whitaker. Learn how to stay competitive from marketing whiz Harvey Goldglantz and how to train managers to think like owners from Jonathan Goldhill, our resident growth coach. Last but not least, survey new time- and money-saving tools designed especially for landscape and lawn care professionals.

We can't accurately predict the state of the economy six months from now. But as 2009 nears its end, we can say with a degree of confidence hope for an impending recover is in the air. Next year, we hope to be writing about how to manage your explosive growth. Until then, we offer our Business Planner 2010 — another



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With a little help from my

A peer group forces Green Industry business owners to take a hard look at their operations and own up to tough decisions.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / MANAGING EDITOR

TAKE AWAY

Peer group members serve as an informal board of directors.

A good facilitator keeps people on track.

It's important to narrow the focus of the issue that needs to be addressed. Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends ... Mm, I get high with a little help from my friends ... Mm, gonna try with a little help from my friends

WHO KNEW 42 years ago The Beatles were delivering some solid business advice in their classic "With a Little Help From My Friends." OK, so maybe the second line of the chorus doesn't quite fit, but we're going to assume they meant higher profits.

Business advice takes all forms — rock songs, books, family, friends, customers, strangers, professional associations, trade magazines and consultants, to name a few — and they all offer varying degrees of credibility. Of all these, few extend the intimacy of the peer group.

"Anybody who is interested in having their business grow should be a part of something like this," says John Rennels, owner of A Plus Lawn and Landscape, Lawrenceburg, KY. "The information is invaluable. As a business owner, whom do you bounce your ideas off? I'm constantly looking for areas where I can pick up information. It might be on a service offering, on financials or on customer service. This is an opportunity where you can share people's successes and failures and learn from those, and maybe save yourself some heartache and financial loss."

Rennels isn't alone. More Green Industry professionals are joining peer review groups, sharing more openly and honestly their issues and shortcomings, which often leads their sales and margins to new highs — with a little help from their friends.

There are a number of approaches to the peer group process. This article explores one.

Rennels has spent a little more than a year as part of a peer group run by consultant, author and business owner Jeffrey Scott. Having spent years in Europe and the United States both running and participating in groups, Scott now runs a consulting operation facilitating peer groups. And he's written a book on the subject, "The Leader's Edge," which at press time was on its way to the printer.

"You learn good stuff," Scott says about the peer group process. "The core process is the opposite of how (a group) of guys getting together without a facilitator might work. What they do is just bat around ideas. We try not to do that. We try to have somebody there to put a specific problem on the table to discuss."

Why it works

Scott assembles his peer groups from business owners around the country.

Members of Scott's peer groups must open their



friends

books and operations to other participants, so having non-competing group members is essential.

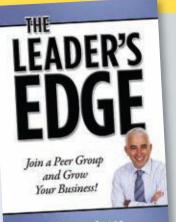
"The more you share with the group, the more the group is going to help you," Scott says. "You'd better be comfortable sharing everything, really."

Matt Kulp, owner of Showcase Group, New Holland, PA, agrees.

"These guys basically became my Board of Advisors," Kulp says. "I finally realized I'm not the only one in the Green Industry dealing with these same issues. It is about meeting with others confronted with the same issues. We are all able to learn from each other."

Learning from unbiased peers is one thing that makes the process valuable, Rennels says.

"If you were to ask your employees or your



JEFFREY SCOTT

HE WROTE THE BOOK ON IT

Jeffrey Scott's latest book, "The Leader's Edge: Join a Peer Group and Grow Your Business," is due out this month. In it, Scott discusses how the peer group process can help Green Industry business owners grow their operations.

"What got you here, will not get you to the next level in your business," Scott tells members of the green industry peer groups he leads. You can't grow by simply by doing things the same old way.

"The Leader's Edge" shows owners and managers how to use Green Industry

peer groups to step back from what isn't working and leverage the insights and experience of a facilitated peer group to do things differently — and secure better results.

The book is for owners looking to transform their operations and who are willing to consider a new approach to honing their leadership skills and management and decision-making practices.

Scott uses Green Industry examples and case studies to show owners there are quicker, less-stressful ways to grow their businesses, without the headaches and stress. The book shows professionals how to use peer groups to develop the strategies needed to grow your business and make it more profitable.

Scott also is the author of The Referral Advantage. For more information on these books and the facilitated peer review group process, visit JeffreyScott.biz.





"THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES... TO SAVE YOURSELF HEARTACHE AND... LOSS."

JOHN RENNELS, owner, A Plus Lawn and Landscape

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That's not the case with members of a peer group.

"It's invaluable information," Rennels says. "They're honest. They're going to tell you information whether you want to hear it or not."

The group meets formally four times a year either through a phone conference or a visit to one of the group member's offices.

During a conference call in April, Rennels mentioned he was working between 100 and 120 hours a week. Yet he took four hours out of one of those weeks to participate in the peer group — and that doesn't include the time he took to prepare for the discussions.

"People join because they think they're going to copy the other guy's good ideas," Scott says. "That's not what happens. What happens is, the other guys hold up a mirror and help you uncover your own opportunities you're not seeing within your business."

Size matters

It is important to have enough people in the group to keep the ideas flowing.

"A small group can feel more intimate initially, but also can run out of steam," Scott says. "At some point, (a small group) settles down into a way of working where the innovativeness can get tapped out."

Small groups also can suffer from what Scott calls "group think," when one strong personality dominates and the rest of the members adopt his opinions. That doesn't happen as easily in a larger group.

Scott likes double-digit sized groups. "Ten or 12 are fine to have in a

continued on page 60

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"I REALIZED I'M **NOT THE ONLY ONE** IN THE GREEN
INDUSTRY DEALING WITH
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MATT KULP, owner, Showcase Group

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continued from page 58 group," he says. "It sounds like a lot, but you actually get more value with nine guys looking at your problem versus three. It requires good facilitation. You need a guy who knows how to handle that size group. Short term, a small group feels better, but it's really not."

Over the years, during the natural course of life and business, a group's members might change.

"People come and go, and they do it because their lives change," Scott says.

It could be divorce, selling a business, a merger, a new partner, or any number of reasons. But changes to the group don't mean the group dissolves.

Exploring an issue

For each meeting, members of the group come prepared to discuss a single, narrowly focused issue and to explain the steps they took on the issues discussed during their most recent meeting.

At the April meeting, Scott begins with a reminder about the process: "We're just going to ask John questions. We're going to ask him single questions. We're not going to give him any advice up-front. We're going to help peel the onion to his issue."

For the next several minutes, Rennels explains details about the actions he took on the issues he raised at the past meeting. He talks about working more closely with his accountant, pushing 12-month contracts with commercial clients and a couple of other related issues. The others listen quietly.

When he finishes, Scott prods Rennels into the issue he needs help with today: "How to attract, qualify and retain an excellent, well-qualified landscape designer."

Rennels spends the next few minutes explaining what he's done so far. Rennels is on his seventh candidate, a landscape architect with an extensive background in high-end properties, who saw his busi-

continued on page 63



"I WOULD DEFINITELY BUY ANOTHER COVER-ALL...IN A HEARTBEAT."

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THE SOCRATIC METHOD

effrey Scott's Leader's Edge peer group process borrows heavily from the Socratic method — the process of instruction using guided questioning to lead the "student," or in this case, the business owner, to enlightenment.

Below is an abridged version of the peer group process facilitated by Scott earlier this year. John Rennels, owner of A Plus Lawn and Landscape, Lawrenceburg, KY, presented his issue to the group: How to attract, qualify and retain an excellent, well-qualified landscape designer. He currently contracts with a landscape architect on a project-by-project basis.

Instead of offering outright solutions, the following dialogue took place in the peer review group:

Rennels: We started as a maintenance company, and we're just now getting into design/build and

construction. A lot of the issues related to that — I don't know what I don't know.

Dave Wright (president, Wright Landscape Services, Bloomingdale, Ontario, Canada): Are you looking for someone who is as strong as this person, or do you want somebody who can grow with your company and become a designer that fits your company?

Rennels The projects we're going to be doing, at least starting off, are not going to be of the caliber of what he is capable of doing. So, no, I don't expect it to be someone as strong. I expect it to be someone strong enough to handle the size of projects and the kinds of projects that we're doing.

Craig Kopfmann (president, Green Acres Landscape & Design, Monroe, CT): John, do you have any design experience yourself?

Rennels None. I couldn't draw myself out of a wet paper bag.

Matt Kulp (owner, Showcase Group, New Holland, PA): John, what current design/build revenue do you have?

Rennels Probably less than \$15,000, \$20,000 — it's in its infancy, and that depends on what you consider "design/ build/construction." The projects we're working on would safely fit into that.

Kulp: Let me rephrase that. How much revenue would you need for a designer?

Rennels: I'm not sure I'm following the question. Are you asking where you want it to go?

Kulp: How much revenue is currently there to feed a designer who would be on staff?

Rennels: I would say, "none," pretty much. I was planning on floating that person for a period. The nice thing, this current relationship, we've got the guys who can do the installs. I'm hoping to build that revenue using this current sub relationship to where I don't have to float this person when I bring him on.

Scott: Let me throw my question in: What's your 2009 projection?



Rennels: I don't have one for design/build.
Scott: What's your guess?

Rennels: If we were able to hit \$50,000 in the first year with that, I would be tickled. That's purely a guess.

The above conversation took place in April. It turns out Rennels' guess was a pretty good one. He has continued the relationship with the landscape architect.

"He's not an employee of ours," Rennels says. "Thankfully, the relationship has gone very, very well. He is one of the premier architects in Lexington (the largest city close to Lawrenceburg)."

Rennels estimates the company has done about \$55,000 in design/build revenue year-to-date, "but for us, that's a big deal. We've got our feet wet; we've learned a lot. We've refined our process." — DJ

continued from page 60 ness dwindle with the economy.

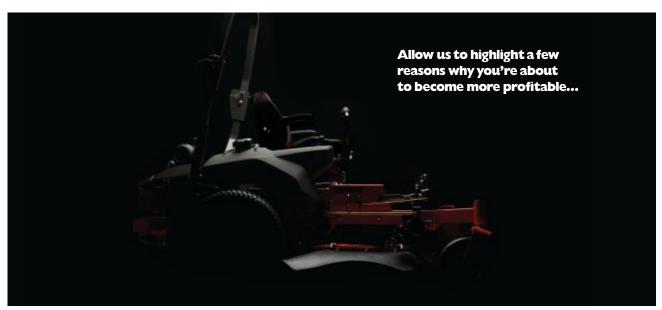
After detailing the situation, each member of the group asks a questions, without adding any advice. This has a duel purpose: It helps the business owner understand all aspects of the issue and starts him on the path to a solution.

"Sometimes, you realize the issue on the table is not the real issue," Scott says. "Sometimes, he's hiding it on purpose because he doesn't want to deal with it. He's happy when he finally shares it, but at the moment he doesn't really want to deal with it."

Peer groups can cover many issues from work-family balance to every business detail.

"Just having that soundboard there for getting ideas and listening to experiences is really beneficial," adds Kulp. "It's hard sometimes to get in an environment where you can really think things through and evaluate them unbiased when you're in your own company." LM





Reach customers with low-tech, too

Direct mail can still be a viable way to connect with current and prospective accounts, even in the Internet age.

BY JOE SHOONER



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Before you begin running counts, though, define your ideal customer. Review your customer data, figure out the Zip codes where you have good market share already, and then define home value, income and age parameters for your average clients.

Be cautious in trying to target an area or demographic that you don't currently serve. You will have much better results if you focus on the areas where you already work and the demographics that already buy from you.

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The mailing piece you send will have a significant impact on the cost and return on investment (ROI) for your campaign. Historically, sales letters have outperformed brochure and postcard mailings. However, because Green Industry services are inherently visual, they lend themselves to full-color photographic mailers.

The USPS continues to increase postage rates and tighten restrictions for folded pieces like brochures. Consequently, oversized postcards have gained in popularity. They are efficient to print and address, and still qualify for letter-rate postage.

Speaking of postage, research shows that recipients are more receptive to envelope mailers with a first-class stamp attached. Of course, this isn't always a practical option considering the extra cost and time needed compared to a presort mailing.

Your mailing piece needs to convince the reader to respond to you. Direct mail experts recommend that you make a compelling offer to motivate your prospects. When making an

offer, try to empathize with your prospects. What will get them to act? Is it cash, a percentage discount or additional free services? Unless a prospect has some idea what a project will likely cost, cash and percentage discounts don't carry much weight.

Consider their triggers and think about making offers that bundle your services together, like a year of tree/shrub fertilization following a landscape installation, or installation of some annual flowers with a maintenance contract. These are both offers that make your primary service look more valuable — and will keep customers thinking about you after their initial purchase is complete.

Don't make junk!

For as long as I can remember, I've been excited to see what comes in the mail. However, many consumers begrudge marketers for sending junk mail, making them less likely to

"CONSIDER THEIR TRIGGERS AND THINK ABOUT MAKING OFFERS THAT BUNDLE YOUR SERVICES TOGETHER, LIKE A YEAR OF TREE/SHRUB FERTILIZATION FOLLOWING A LANDSCAPE INSTALLATION."

respond to your mailing piece. In fact, response rates for a single mailing to a new prospect list will average between just 0.5% and 1%.

One way to increase recipient interest is to include variable data in your mailing. Variable data printing (VDP) can be thought of as a full-color mail merge. Today's VDP programs make use of digital printing technology to marry data and design during the printing process. The result is a mailing piece that can be fully customized for each recipient on your mailing list. The potential uses for this are limited only by the data you have on hand.



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For example, say you have recently completed and photographed five installation projects. You generate a radius list to target the neighbors of each of these clients. You mail to a list of 500 homes, but change the photo and headline depending on which home is the one to which the recipient lives closest. Your headline may read "Have You Seen Our Work on Cedar Avenue?" or "Landscaping <Neighborhood>'s Finest Homes Since 1990" and feature the project nearest the recipient's address. This results in a piece with real stopping power.

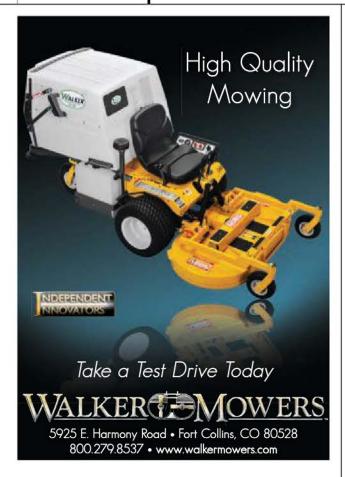
To close the loop on this method, the use of a personalized URL (PURL) gives the recipient a personalized Web address to visit for more information. The PURL (joeshooner. yourlandscapeco.com, for instance) should lead to a landing page with a summary of the information the prospect will want to know before contacting you, as well as a form for responding.

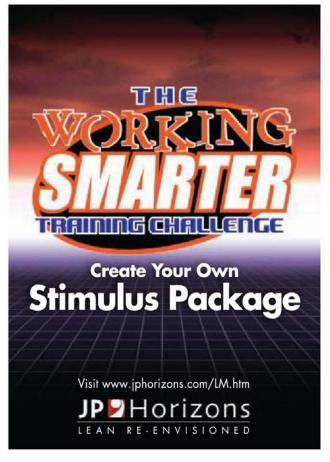
Marketers making good use of PURL technology report a 33% to 100% increase in response rates. However, if there isn't any relevant information on the landing page, and you aren't saving the prospect time and energy, it will appear very gimmicky.

In summary...

The costs for any mailing project are going to fluctuate dramatically depending on the size of the list, the format of the piece, the postage rate you achieve, and the number of times you mail. The use of VDP and PURL technology will drive up your cost per piece, but ideally you will mail far fewer pieces to a highly targeted list, thus increasing your ROI.

The author is an account executive with Focal Point Communications in Cincinnati. Contact him at 800/525-6999 or joeshooner@growpro.com, or visit www.growpro.com.







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TAKE AWAY

Gauge the effectiveness of your marketing message by the level of response you receive to different marketing initiatives.

Discounts alone won't give the results you're looking for.

To close the sale, explain benefits and value — and address the customer's specific concerns.



Nail the sale

Successfully selling lawn service requires the process be well thought out. Then, an appropriate strategy must be crafted and executed rigorously every day. BY BILL HOOPES

HEW! WHAT a year it's been
— challenging for all with
many mixed outcomes. In
fact, generalizing about
results could be misleading.

Instead, I felt compelled to confirm my observations by talking to a group of successful, veteran landscape contractors, folks with records of accomplishment throughout the years. I was interested to learn how they performed during the '09 selling season.

After an admittedly random series of conversations, it was apparent results varied significantly, from modestly successful to awful. What made the difference? I learned there wasn't one lone identifiable success factor. Still, I can confirm that, in most cases, the sales process was extremely important.

During my 25 years as a Green Industry

trainer and consultant, I've encountered only a few truly *great* marketing/sales companies. It's not that Green Industry operators are incapable of great selling; it's just that, as is often the case with technical- or production-oriented folks, selling isn't typically a core skill. It must be learned. In fact, I view selling as a process, a combination of lead-generation activities and personal follow-ups.

Begin with marketing

Did you go to market efficiently? There's no doubt gathering pros-

pect addresses, lawn sizes and phone numbers electronically is highly efficient. Did you take advantage of the latest techniques and tools?

According to my data, direct-mail response declined. For some, it declined significantly. Successful operators I contacted didn't depend on mail. They used multiple tactics to generate leads. Examples include energetic reselling of previous customers, neighborhood canvassing, block leading and driveway marketing.

Was your message effective? Did you change your focus significantly in response to the economy? If so, did it result in enough high quality leads? Some services reduced their emphasis on quality, promoting discounts alone. But while everyone wants a deal, discounting as a singular strategy didn't deliver the results most expected.

There's no best strategy for every lawn service. The way a company sells should reflect the company philosophy and deliver what the public has been led to expect. For some larger services focused on fast, lower-profit growth, discounting may be the only choice for maximizing sales. But no one should conclude that, bad economy or not, you must discount heavily to sell lawn service. This past spring, I observed a significantly different picture.

It's been my experience that, when price is the determining factor in making a sale, the first-year cancel rate for those discounted sales is higher. A competitor will come along, offer a lower price and take the customer. If a company has the ability to outsell the cancel rate, perhaps price off selling provides a sustainable

continued on page 70



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continued from page 68 model. But for the majority of small to midsized services, lifetime value is key. Businesses with limited marketing budgets — and without the ability or inclination to conduct large sales campaigns — need to keep their customers.

making it

Ask about our

Sales based on providing what the customer wants at a fair price versus simply cutting the price and pressuring the customer all season long for added revenue delivers lower cancellations and consistently higher lifetime values.

Making the sale

The main goal for landscape contractors in '09 was the same as any year: to maximize profitable sales. For companies with large, full-time sales teams, the spring sales goal is only the first phase of a year-long campaign. For smaller companies with only part-time salespeople, spring sales must provide the bulk of annual revenue. Regardless of who sells, leads must be tightly managed for a maximum close rate.

ARE YOU GENERATING **ENOUGH GOOD LEADS?**

- > Did your 2009 marketing message match the company philosophy and image? Was the marketing focus on quality and outstanding service, or did you attempt to switch to deal maker in response to anticipated sales resistance? Or did you make a significant change in emphasis this last season, possibly confusing prospects about what you stand for?
- > Did you use modern, cuttingedge tactics to generate maximum leads from high-responding prospect groups? Marketing techniques are changing. What was effective 10 years ago is no longer making it happen. Are you current?
- Did your marketing strategy target new sales, upsell current customers, resell past customers and go after leads that never closed? Selling across the customer spectrum turned out to be meaningful last spring. — BH



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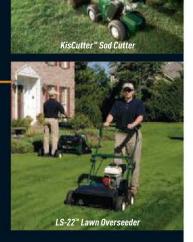
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In the spring of '09, landscape contractors used various sales strategies. Some pushed for an absolute maximum of new sales and used every trick in the book to close. Quoting one sales manager: "Once I have them on the phone, they don't get off until they're my customer." His meaning was clear: He'd do whatever it took to make the sale. But would the sale result in a profit, or would the pressured customer, succumbing to a great deal, cancel mid-season?

For a rep on the phone compensated only to close sales, it won't matter. If, however, a business depends on keeping customers for three, four or more seasons, the sales conversation is important.

The sales chain

I believe in and teach the sales chain, which is a metaphor for the process of acquiring and keeping customers. It consists of three important links, and continuity among these links is imperative for success.

The first link represents **marketing**. The company message is communicated accurately and effectively. The second link represents the **selling process**. Leads are converted to sales in a tightly managed system using daily goals and recognition. The final link is **service delivery**. If the service meets customer expectations, referrals abound, marketing is successful and the cycle begins again.

Focusing on the second link, sales methodology can be condensed into two basic camps. I describe the first as making contact, creating or building interest, baiting the prospect and hooking the sale. Typically, it's done with a tightly canned, well-rehearsed pitch.

The second is a more consultative approach I teach in five basic steps.

1. Use a strong, clear opener, which lets the prospect know who's calling and why. It also establishes the prospect's interest level.



- **2. Identify what each prospect wants.** Notice I didn't say *needs*. We buy what we want. But to provide those wants, a sales professional needs to understand what they are by asking a couple probing questions.
- 3. Communicate value. We accomplish this

by explaining how our service benefits each customer. A benefit isn't something we do, but *why* we do what we do. This is important to the prospect.

4. Look for a buying signal. A tie-down confirms the prospect understands how we'll pro-

vide exactly what they want. If we're successful, we'll get that buying signal.

5. Close or confirm the sale. If you have followed the process, closing will be a snap.

When sales resistance rears its head, our people are taught to handle objections as questions that haven't been answered. In reality, they're not objections.

My process for removing resistance and making the sale involves three steps:

- 1. Ask "why do you feel that way?" It's important to understand the prospect's motives for resisting. And even if I'm sure I already know, having the prospect repeat his or her concern sets me up to remove it.
- **2. Create empathy.** Let the prospect know you understand and you've felt the same way. Now, there's no barrier between prospective buyer and seller.

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CONVERT LEADS TO PROFITABLE SALES

- > Who has the responsibility to sell in your organization? How are they trained?
- > What's your sales message? Is there continuity between the marketing message and sales follow-up?
- > Are your salespeople setting accurate and reasonable expectations?
- Are you converting leads to customers at the highest possible close rate?
- Are you selling what prospects want, or is the sales objective simply to get to "yes"? BH

3. Remove the concern with a targeted benefit that responds to it specifically. "Mr. Homeowner, think about this ..." — and provide the appropriate benefit.

Remember, many prospects will never buy, but it doesn't matter because there are plenty of potential buyers who will understand and appreciate a presentation that clearly communicates value.

Consultative selling is an effective strategy. I believe that for higher revenue sales, leading to a strong customer commitment, followed by fewer short-term cancels, it makes sound business sense for most operators.

I'm more confident than ever before that we, as a home-services industry, will continue to succeed by offering measurable, visible value to America's property owners. While we may not be able to sell everyone, there will be enough homeowners who understand that investing a small portion of their discre-

SELLING THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY

Several operators reported successful sales campaigns based on selling benefits, not discounting. In those cases, customer growth increased from 20% to 30%. How was it done? The "old-fashioned way" — quality and reliability were promoted in fliers, personal visits to evaluate lawns were made in quick response to inquiries, and phone follow-up selling focused on the benefits of service versus discounts alone. — BH

tionary income in their properties will repay them — and that's a message I look forward to sending.

The author is the owner of Grass Roots Training/ Consulting (www.trainandkeeppeople.com) and can be reached at 614/531-4000 or hoopes@columbus.rr.com. Read his blog at www.trainingchamp.wordpress.com.



Realize your goals in the Working Smarter Cycle

If your people are happy and productive, your business will experience success. BY JIM PALUCH

MONTHLY

CHALLENGE

Discuss the Working

Smarter Cycle with

discuss what might

keep a company from

helping to grow people.

your leaders, and

TAKE AWAY

Industry innovation starts at the people level.

Earn employee buyin by making them part of the planning process.

Success isn't defined by size or location, but rather the happiness of customers and employees. WAS HOPING for earthshaking, ground-breaking, industry-making innovation when I asked for input about your experiences during the past year. I pictured Dan Jacobs and the rest of the staff debating which new idea and industry leader would end up on the front cover of the magazine. I imagined stories about the company in Idaho that learned how to cut grass merely by driving

by with a laser and not even needing to get out of the truck. I imagined the San Diego lawn care company that was able to make its five applications in a season in partnership with Google Earth, reducing their labor cost to almost zero and enabling its employees to aid the community by working at senior citizen centers throughout California ... for free!

Yes that's what I was hoping for, but what I received was the same ol' thing. And that's more than OK with me.

It's the same thing we've been hearing at JP Horizons for more than two decades: The most exciting changes happening in any company, regardless of size, location or industry, always come back to one important commonality, *the people*. The stories we heard the most about this past month were about people, and how they stepped up and became more interested and involved in their companies.

The best way to describe this process of improvement brought about by people can be

understood in the Working Smarter Cycle, which focuses on achieving a better quality of life. For a company, this may mean improved profitability. For an owner, it may mean a healthy balance sheet that allows the company to be purchased by the employees one day, thus creating opportunity for everyone. For the employee, it simply may mean being able to provide the current needs and future security

for their deserving families.

The steps of the Working Smarter Cycle, starting in reverse order from quality of life, illustrate that happy customers come next. These are supported by efficient processes, which are made possible through a culture of trust in the company, which can only come from ... you guessed it ... people.

I become inspired when I read examples such as:

- > The folks at Perm-O-Green Lawn Care, headquartered in Wichita Falls, TX, say, "This type of thinking and communicating is new to our team. It's great to watch everyone growing outside their comfort zones."
- > Rochester, IN-based Sellers Landscaping, Lawn & Irrigation is challenging its team to look at how they can work smarter in their positions. The result is an incredible list of

continued on page 76

GOOD THINGS >>>> COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT



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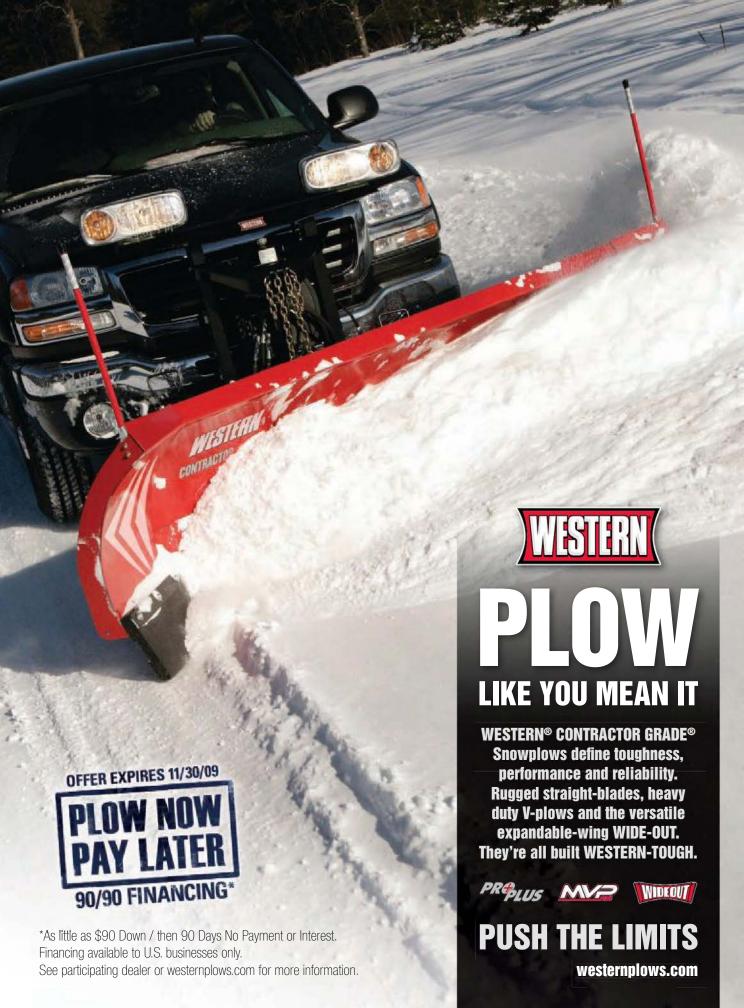
continued from page 74

ideas that — if everyone commits to accepting personal responsibility and follow-through — could save the company incredible amounts of money that would benefit everyone.

> At Skinners Nurseries' corporate offices in Jacksonville, FL, the barriers that often result from people being on different floors or departments have melted away. Meeting each week and looking for ideas to work smarter helps them communicate more openly and productively. This creates a willingness to support one another, which, in turn, helps everyone to better serve the customer.

If the aforementioned companies continue in the direction they've started and intentionally move through the Working Smarter Cycle patiently, they'll be serving the happy customers every company needs to provide the quality of life every individual in this country deserves. LM

The author is president of JP Horizons Inc. Visit www.jphorizons.com.



Take 9 steps to teach managers to think like owners

TAKE AWAY

With trained managers in place, owners can quit obsessing about their businesses in their personal lives.

Owners should focus on the big picture for their company's growth strategies; managers should be able to shoulder the day-to-day responsibilities.

Make sure you equip managers with the training, authority and resources to make such an arrangement work. Training managers to make decisions like a business owner is easy, essential and can provide more benefits than you may think.

BY JONATHAN GOLDHILL



HAT WOULD your business and life be like if you took a four-week-long, guilt-free vacation where you didn't check in with your office? What would it be like to return from vacation to find that everything operated smoothly without you?

While it may be difficult to believe, it's possible. Your main goal as a landscape business owner should be to design and shape a business that serves you and works independently from you. You want a business that will run on autopilot and continue to generate revenue continuously despite your absence. When you take a vacation, you should be able to feel guilt-free about leaving your business in the hands of your managers. But to accomplish this, your managers must have an owner's mentality.

As a business owner, it's your responsibility to think about the big picture. You should be focused on your company's purpose, direction, strategy, structure, systems, people, goals and accountability processes. Meanwhile, your managers should be focused on the day-to-day result areas: planning, organizing, staffing, supervising, delegating, measuring and reporting.

How do you get managers to think and act like owners? From my observation during the past 25 years working with thousands of small businesses — including landscape contractors — owners and managers can become more effective leaders by following these nine steps:

Regularly face reality. Observe what is and isn't working in your business. Have the courage to change what needs to be changed, while developing the wisdom to know what's unchangeable.

continued on page 80



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continued from page 78

Define and clarify your vision, goals and direction. Share your goals with your managers and take control the entire time, from execution through completion.

Manage your key resources. Manage your time, staff and money wisely. Effective stewardship of time, labor and capital enable you to leverage your most vital resources and grow faster than competitors.

> Provide educational opportunities. Learn and implement strategic and systematic approaches in each of the functional areas of business (sales and marketing, for example), and share this information with others in the company. It's vital to share information with managers to facilitate better decision-making.

1 raprocess, sell Implement systems. Well-run busithing. Accounting has a process, selling has a process, etc. Have managers learn and participate in installing these processes within the company.



Be a strong financial steward. Improve your understanding of your company's financial statements. Know your ratios — and those of your competitors. Increase the financial literacy of your managers, because they need to understand the key performance drivers in your business. Put an incentive program together so employees can share in the bottom line.

Hold individuals accountable. As Thomas Edison once said, "Vision without execution is hallucination." Likewise, having goals and making decisions without holding people accountable undermines management effectiveness. Provide frequent feedback to keep everyone on course and motivated to do better.

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Listen and ask for guidance. Receiving guidance from within and outside the company — and from within the industry — is crucial. Engage in learning from mentors to challenge yourself, and find new ways of thinking about your business.

The author coaches leaders of growing companies in the landscape industry. Learn more about his peer group coaching programs for owners and managers by calling 818/716-8826, emailing Jon@TheGrowthCoachLA.com or visiting TheGrowthCoachLA.com.

9 Learn to delegate and enjoy life. Commit to giving up micromanagement by valuing and trusting your staff and delegating with authority and control because you've put systems in place and have the right managers running them.

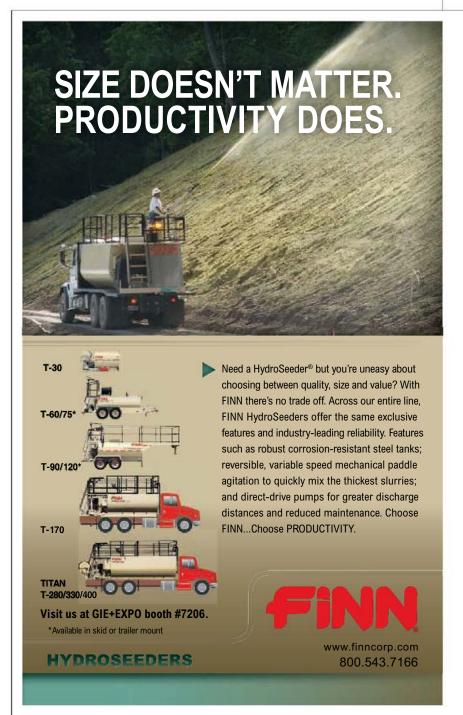
A shift in focus

Implementing all of the above will likely make you change your way of thinking and develop a more focused approach to your role. Re-engineer your mindset. Many of you didn't start out with training in business ownership, leadership or management. You had a passion for and technical aptitude in landscaping. So, now you need to shift your activities to bring out your brilliance and the talents of your managers, too.

To escape the details and headaches of your business, you must make the great mental leap from that of employee to manager, and entrepreneur to business leader. You must acknowledge your technical bias, addiction to being busy and uneasiness with delegation. You must adopt the big-picture mindset of a chief executive and strategic manager — and be a chief executive in mind and spirit to get the results you seek.

If you don't start thinking like a chief executive, it'll be nearly impossible for you to start behaving strategically and working on your business in a proactive, purposeful manner. For many owners, jumping this wide chasm from manager to leader is tough and terrifying. However, you'll never escape a workaholic existence unless you stop being a detailed-oriented technician masquerading as an owner. Stop focusing on the technical work of the business, and focus on the entire business, such as your staff.

The choice is yours. Step up and be a leader.



Apples to oranges

Highest value versus lowest price? There's no comparison. Even in a recession, superior value wins the long-term customers almost every time.

BY MARTY WHITFORD / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

OMPETING PRIMARILY on price is the equivalent of sentencing your business to death, especially amidst the country's "Great Recession."

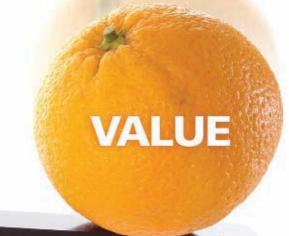
If you want to survive and thrive, you must compete on — and clearly demonstrate and deliver — superior value. That's the gospel according to Bill Hoopes, a 30-year industry veteran and founder of Delaware, OHbased Grass Roots Training.

"If you use price to gain customers, be prepared to lose them the same way," Hoopes says. "Someone else will come along before too long, and that customer will go away just like that."

Hoopes, who has served as director of training for Barefoot Grass and Scotts Lawn Service, played the dual roles of professor and preacher Sept. 17, when *Landscape Management* hosted its first *LM* Contrac-

tor Business School Webinar. Sponsored by DuPont Professional Products and archived at www.landscapemanagement.net, the Webinar, "Selling in a recession: Why service matters even more," drew more than 150 Green Industry professionals.

"If you don't differentiate your company based on the superior value you deliver, what do have to offer?" Hoopes says. "Naturally, you default to competing on price — and we all lose out, even our customers, because service usually suffers."



TAKE AWAY

Manage customer expectations from the first sales call.

Provide value to customers, and communicate your benefits.

Concentrate on cultivating and retaining customer loyalty.





During the Webinar, Hoopes explained how contractors can compete against low-ballers, and win most times, without competing solely (or even primarily) on price.

"It's all about communicating and delivering superior value," he says. (Editor's Note: For more of Hoopes' insights on sales and marketing, see page 68.)

Value 101

Recognizing sales and service are two sides of the same coin is the first step to communicating and delivering value.

"Most in the Green Industry are very strong technically, but many haven't spent enough time developing and honing their interpersonal communication skills," Hoopes says. "Studies show communicating value to customers and prospects is 85% about interpersonal communication skills and just 15% about demonstrating technical know-how. We have to do a much better job communicating to prospects the near- and long-term value of saying 'yes' to our proposals, as well as the many costs of saying 'no."

Hoopes says every prospect asks themselves one question throughout a sales pitch: What's in it for me? The path to closing more-profitable new business includes: **1 Listen and observe**. Identify the underlying benefits the prospect wants and for which he'll pay.

2 Talk the walk. Demonstrate how your business is uniquely positioned and proven to deliver those very benefits and many others.

3 Hero maker. Make the buyer look smart. Emphasize how studies have proven professional landscape and lawn care services often increase property values 10% or more.

Fear factor. Make switching from another company or from self service risk-free.

5 Easy does it. Communicate your simple plan that's chock full of value.

Another sales fundamental is to only set realistic expectations. Some sales folks will say and promise almost anything to close a deal, but that approach only results in lower customer satisfaction scores and higher cancellations, Hoopes says.

Faithful followers

Hoopes preaches and embodies the cornerstones to sales and service success, says Phil Fogarty, president of Cleveland-based Crowley's Vegetation Control and a Weed Man franchise owner and subfranchisor.

"I learn something from Bill every time I talk to him," Fogarty says. "He's committed to helping the Green Industry deliver increased value for all involved. His training tenets are proven over decades in the field, and they mesh nicely with Weed Man's business philosophy.

"The ever-constant thread is we have to keep ratcheting up the value we deliver," Fogarty adds. "We either grow or go."

But in these turbulent times, there are more companies "going" than are growing. Most business owners would be ecstatic if their 2009 revenues matched those of last year. Margins are a different, more-dismal story. However, one of Hoopes' clients already has surpassed its 2008 sales.



"IF WE GET THE
OPPORTUNITY TO
TALK FACE-TO-FACE
WITH A HOMEOWNER, IT'S A
DONE DEAL MORE
TIMES THAN NOT."

MARK GRUNKEMEYER, president/owner, Buckeye Eco Care

"We generated revenues of \$1.25 million last year, and we're already at \$1.4 million with three months to go," says Scott Emerson, owner of the Scotts Lawn Service franchise in Prince Frederick, MD.

How is Emerson doing it? He's listening to Hoopes instead of the negative national media.

"It's as simple as 1-2-3," Emerson says. "One, we listen closely to each prospect's and each customer's needs; two, we sell our unique benefits as they pertain to those specific needs; and three, we back up our word with our work."

DO YOU DELIVER?

Are your sales pitch and service delivery on the same page? Ask and listen to your customers. The goal is customer feedback on par with the following letter Buckeye Eco Care recently received:

We left a nationally recognized company after they came out and did two tree applications, two lawn applications, one aeration and one bug spray outside the house — all within three weeks! It was at that time I realized they were adding a lot of services we never authorized. They took total advantage of us! We ended up having a one-year bill of more than \$1,200!

We joined your company, and from the first call things have been fantastic! Your service techs, administrative staff, and all of your lawn and tree men have been very knowledgeable about our turf and tree issues.

We have more money in our wallet today. We have fewer treatments, yet our lawn looks beautiful. Your service has been beyond great.

Mark Grunkemeyer, owner of Centerville, OH-based Buckeye Eco Care, uses the testimonial as billboard material at the office and has added, "This is your sales advantage, guys!" to the handwritten customer note.

Grunkemeyer faxed *Landscape Management* a copy of the rave review, with a cover sheet saying, "Bill Hoopes is trying to make all of our lawn techs salespeople. Our competitors can't touch that."

Grunkemeyer's onto something — a real competitive advantage. Have you spent the time and money to develop hybrid sales/service techs and adopt a corporate culture of overdelivering, one customer at a time? — *MFW*

Against all odds

Emerson isn't alone. Quite a few of Hoopes' faithful followers are bettering their businesses amid this gloomy economy. Buckeye Eco Care in Centerville, OH, competes in a market that got a three-year head start on the recession thanks to the shutdown of several auto parts plants and a SUV factory that spiraled from three shifts to two, to one, to none.

Buckeye Eco Care's commercial sales are down 10% year-to-date, but its residential sales are up 8%. Total sales are forecasted to climb 2%, thanks to residential sales accounting for \$2.3 million of the company's projected \$3.3 million in revenues this year, says Mark Grunkemeyer, president and owner.

"If we get the opportunity to talk face-toface with a homeowner, it's a done deal more times than not," Grunkemeyer says. "People are looking for more value, and that's what our business is built on thanks largely to the tutelage of Bill Hoopes."

JM Systems, which operates six Scotts Lawn Service franchises, has bolstered its sales 11% this year. JM Systems is on track to add

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SELLING VALUE

continued from page 84 \$750,000 in new business in 2009, says John Moehn, president of the Mishawaka, IN-based company. Just as important, the business' bottom line is 18% better year-to-date.

"We talk a lot about value internally and externally," Moehn says. "Price is probably the last thing we talk about."



"WE'VE OFFSET
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LOSSES WITH PRICE
INCREASES RANGING
FROM A FEW
PERCENTAGE POINTS
TO 10% ON OUR
REMAINING BASE."

KENNY CRENSHAW, president, Herbi-Systems

Customer-centric

Kenny Crenshaw, president of Herbi-Systems in Memphis, TN, says he never pays attention to his competitors. Instead, he pays attention to his customers, employees and costs.

For example, some competitors think nothing of quoting \$10 less per chemical applica-

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LM CONTRACTOR BUSINESS SCHOOL WFRINARS

DuPont Professional Products sponsored the inaugural LM

Contractor Business School Webinar on Sept. 17. More than 150 Green Industry professionals logged on to listen to Bill Hoopes, owner of Grass Roots Training, share nuggets of wisdom culled from his 30 years in the business. Hoopes' initial Webinar gave lawn care pros the sales and service tips they need to grow their top and bottom lines in any economy.

Landscape Management plans to hold monthly LM Contractor Business School Webinars, with speakers rotating among our stable of star columnists:

- **> Bill Hoopes:** Maximizing sales and service, training and development, and employee and customer retention;
- **> Bruce Wilson & Tom Oyler:** Strategic planning and adopting best practices across commercial and residential accounts;
- > Kevin Kehoe, Frank Ross & Jeff Harkness: Increasing revenues, profits and total business valuation, and capitalizing on acquisition and divestiture opportunities;
- > Tyler Whitaker: Embracing information technology to serve your customers, employees and bottom line better; and
- **> Jeffrey Scott:** Realizing your full potential by participating in peer review groups and implementing systems to strengthen your brand, captivate clients and grow profitably. *MFW*

tion than Herbi-Systems charges, even without seeing the prospect's lawn, Crenshaw says.

"Where's the value in that?" he says. "Some of our competitors lock into a low price before they see the weed, pest, competing grass and shade issues they'll face. And then they try to make back their money by doing twice as many applications. We don't play that game."

Even with its customer-centric corporate culture, Herbi-Systems has lost 2% of its clients this year.

"So far this year, we've lost 134 customers — primarily because of this recession," Crenshaw says. "But the ones we've kept are higher value. We've offset our customer losses with price increases ranging from a few percentage points to 10% on our remaining base of about 6,800 customers."

Demonstrating and delivering quality services is the key to unlocking value, says Bill Hildebolt, president of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and of Nature's Select Premium Turf Services in Winston Salem, N.C.

"I'll never discount or match competitors' prices," Hildebolt says. "Market leaders don't do that."

The economic recession will continue to weed out the weak, he says.

"A lot of these guys are one-trick ponies
— all they know how to do is cut prices,"
Hildebolt adds. "Many of them don't even
know their true costs, and they end up putting
themselves out of business. But if you differentiate your business based on quality service
and value, there really is no price comparison
to be made.

"It's apples to oranges." LM



At the end of the day, will you be a survivor — or just another failed business because of the economy? BY WAYNE VOLZ

ISTORY TELLS us that depressions, recessions, slow economies or whatever name you want to put on hard times are simply a way of life in a free economic system. Companies have failed in the past, and many more will fail in the near future. Do not use the economy as an easy excuse. The fact remains that many other companies survived the past economies, and many will survive this one as well.

Not only is survival an option, but doing well and surpassing your competition are realistic and achievable goals. How can an otherwise stable company succeed and do well in a recession? By developing, implementing and constantly fine-tuning your plan of action.

Plan, plan, plan

Do you have goals in place for your company? It is often easy for owners to become complacent and think they do not need company goals because they are seeing everything every day. But that is exactly how we sometimes lose sight of reality. You wouldn't think of driving a vehicle without a steering wheel; why try to drive your business without goals? Without goals, you cannot be sure whether your com-

TAKE AWAY

Economical conditions are cyclical.

Don't be afraid to make changes.

Plan now so that when the economy improves, you're ready for it.

ILLUSTRATION AND PHOTO BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

pany is achieving or exceeding your expected projections. With goals — and measurable benchmarks within those goals — you are providing yourself with a standard of expected achievement and excellence for your company.

As a survivor of a few previous "bad economies" and interest rates over 20%, I would like to share a few ideas that helped us get through past tough times, as well as what we are doing now to get through this recession:

- > Don't let the media control your destiny. All the news outlets want to discuss how bad our economy currently is. I know it's bad, and you know it's bad, and we don't need to hear it every time we turn on the TV. If you hear it enough, you will begin to believe it, live it and lose to it. I am not suggesting that you bury your head in the sand and hide from it; rather, ask yourself what you can do differently and better than your competitor than the way you did it before. Don't change who you are, but do open your eyes to some new ideas.
- A positive attitude is your key to success. You can take two positions: You can be a victim or a solutionist. Being a victim is the easy choice. It's easy to blame the economy. Being a solutionist means saying "I am going to be proactive. Yes, I know times are tough, so this is what I am going to do differently and better than my competitor."
 - > Longevity does not equal success.

Don't get caught up in thinking "it's worked fine up to now, why change?" Many companies that are thriving in certain economic conditions resist change and therefore fail. They get complacent; they take employees for granted. This makes employees take custom-

"A RECENT SURVEY IN USA TODAY ASKED,
"WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY A
HIGHER PRICE FROM AN ETHICAL
BUSINESS?" SEVENTY-TWO PERCENT SAID
YES THEY WOULD."

ers for granted, and the company gets out of touch with its goals and objectives. Don't let this happen to your company. Proper training for everyone — including you, the owner — is always a proven winner.

- > Get out of your comfort zone. What can you do differently and better than your competitor? While your personal ego and pride are very important to your success, they can also be detrimental to your company if you are not willing to be open-minded and accept the fact that sometimes changes are necessary.
- > Know your costs per hour of operation. Why do you charge what you charge? If you understand your costs per hour of operation, you can calculate how low you can go and still take the job if necessary. Know your breakeven point. Although none of us want to work for minimal margins, in a slower economy it may be necessary to adjust your pricing for certain services while still maintaining a nice profit margin for others. I am not suggesting that you work for nothing, but look at the prospects of tightening up the margin if necessary to make the sell until the market changes. If you know your costs, you will not price yourself out of business.
- > Implement a service agreement to help solve seasonal cash flow issues. Implement a service agreement for your clients both residential and commercial, if you are offer ongoing service. Honest, your residential clients will appreciate the simplicity of a regular monthly payment.

> Solve problems quickly for your clients.

None of us are perfect. You will have the occasional problem. I also realize the last thing you may want to do is to make that return phone call. But this is one of those times you need to move your ego out of the way and contact your client immediately. Most people are not really too upset about the problem; they just want something corrected. However, when they feel like you are avoiding them and not returning their call, the simple service problem has turned into a much larger issue for them — and you. Bottom line: Make the phone call and solve the problem before it turns into something more.



> Increase your personal contacts with your customer. Let your clients know you appreciate their business. Are you sending a handwritten thank-you note after speaking to a potential client? Sounds a little extreme maybe, but it does make a difference. Are you using evaluation forms for all your services? This gives your clients the opportunity to critique your services without telling you to your face that something wasn't exactly the way they wanted it.

We found that on occasion our customers were not complaining to us; they were simply accepting the job as is — or even worse, not calling us back for another service. By implementing our evaluation sheets, however, we were giving our clients an opportunity to share their thoughts concerning the workmanship and professionalism of the job they received. These simple contacts go a long way toward creating perceived value and professionalism for our service. I know you will see similar results for your company.

- > Ethical business decisions are a must. Do not attempt to deceive your clients with fast talk and stories. If you can do the work, let them know you can do it. If not, help them find someone that can. Do not sell them something just because you have too many of them. A recent survey in *USA Today* asked, "Would you be willing to pay a higher price from an ethical business?" Seventy-two percent said yes they would.
- ➤ Diversify your services so your clients can buy more from you and not your competitor. You cannot be everything to everyone, but in many situations, you can offer more services to fewer clients and make more profit dollars. Take the time necessary to train and educate yourself,

your employees and your customers as to why buying more services from you makes sense.

- > Do not slow down or stop your marketing and advertising during slow economies. Too many times, advertising is one of the first areas to cut when times get lean in a slow economy. Don't do it! You must keep your name in the market-place for three main reasons:
- **1**. Less potential buyers are available for your service because of market conditions.
- **2**. There's increased competition because of people losing their jobs and suddenly becoming landscapers, lawn care contractors, etc.
- 3. When the market does turn around, your name will still be known and recognized by potential buyers who will buy from you and not your competitors, who cut their advertising and marketing budgets!
- > Sell your services based on the value of the service you are providing, not the actual cost to provide them. Create perceived value for your service over the competition that is appealing to your target market. Selling on price alone normally creates a customer base of price shoppers. These are probably not the type of customers that you are looking for. Yes, they may seem to fit now, but there is generally very little loyalty from the price shopper. The next contractor that comes along at a lower price may be the one that gets you fired for no reason other than cost. Bottom line: Do not be that contractor. Offer something different and better than your competitor by selling your services on value and not cost.

The main thing to remember is "Don't Panic." Economic conditions are cyclical. Things will get better. There will be business failures, and there will be businesses that do very well. Some will say that the businesses that survive are lucky. And while I do believe in luck, I also believe that luck is where skill and preparation come together.

What will you do to be lucky? LM

The author is the Louisville, KY-based owner of both Wayne's Lawn Service and of Profits Unlimited, a Green Industry business consulting firm. Contact him at 800/845-0499 or wayne@profitsareus.com.

Outlook for 2010

Why it will be a challenging year — and how to respond.

BY KEVIN KEHOE

TAKE AWAY

Build a budget and pricing strategy that provides the flexibility to pricepick key jobs for as much as 10% to 15% lower than your current rates.

Invest in employee productivity improvement.

wo realities facing every contractor are the need to price aggressively to retain and win new work, and the need to reduce overhead in relation to revenue.

I've written about this subject before, but it's important to revisit it now.

As we begin planning for 2010, we should have no illusions about a smart and sassy economic recovery. Still, it's important to distinguish between good news and news about the economy "not worsening." The most predictable forecast for 2010 is that the economy won't get much worse, but it won't get much better, either.

The real-estate market in particular isn't in recovery, and only a recovery will drive the kind of spending that affects contractors.

There's a substantial foreclosure problem looming in the commercial and non-subprime residential markets, and consumers still are deleveraging their balance sheets. As a result, spending will be tight next year.

And don't expect much help from a government stimulus program. There's nothing in these programs to help small businesses, no matter what the politicians say.

A second year of pain puts considerable pressure on everyone — customers and contractors — to manage money even more prudently. But the real risk facing the economy isn't *inflation* as much as it's *deflation*, or falling prices. We've seen prices decline all year long. Prices increase during an inflationary environment, not decrease. This will continue in 2010.



"IFTHERE'S ONE THING THAT HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR MANY COMPANIES THIS YEAR, IT HAS BEEN **ACTING ON**

REVENUE AND COST INFORMATION FASTERTO CLOSE SALES AND REDUCE WASTE."

Be prepared

To meet 2010 head-on, you must first build a budget and pricing strategy that provides the flexibility to price-pick key jobs for as much as 10% to 15% lower than your current rates. (See prior articles or www.kehoe.biz on how to do this.) This is doable. This year, contractors discovered customers respond and they can engineer jobs to minimize gross profit loss.

You also must be prepared to invest in employee productivity improvement. A key lesson learned this year is that employees can be more productive, measured in terms of revenue per employee, and demonstrate they can handle 10% to 20% more workload. While training is helpful, accountability produces real results.

The key to productivity improvement is accountability; the key to accountability is performance information. The keys to performance information are simplicity and availability, reporting that shows results by position every day. If there's one thing that has made a difference for many companies this year, it has been acting on revenue and cost information faster to close sales and reduce waste.

Contractors should go into 2010 with eyes wide open — and with pricing and accountability systems to manage tightly to budgets. But there's good news, too: We've probably weathered the worst, and most have survived, albeit at lower profit margins. Now we must apply the lessons learned in 2009 and employ these strategies to be successful in 2010.

The author is owner-manager of Kehoe & Co. Contact him at kkehoe@earthlink.net.





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TAKE AWAY

The economy is forcing businesses to take a closer look at how they attract and retain customers.

Ask customers for feedback on service, and adjust accordingly.

Define your competitive advantages clearly.

When the going gets tough ...

... the tough look for ways to stay competitive.

BY HARVEY F. GOLDGLANTZ

T's BEEN about a year since the economy began its free fall. Banks, brokerage houses, insurance companies, financial behemoths (such as Fannie May and Freddie Mac) and automakers all have tanked or been rescued from the brink, at least for the moment.

It's far from over.

Some point to financial indicators and say it's the beginning of the end of the recession. Others insist it's just the end of the beginning of the recession. And there are more than a few who believe we're on the precipice.

Unemployment is expected to top 10% by year's end. People are afraid. The middle class has collided head-on with Wall Street, and the fallout on Main Street hasn't been pretty. Feelings of distrust abound — of government, of financial institutions and, particularly, of big business.

What does this mean for you and *your* business? Well, that depends on how prepared you are to deal with the fallout from this mess.

First, some facts:

- > It's more difficult to attract new customers during recessions.
- ➤ There's greater competition for less discretionary income.
- > Customers are less tolerant of service failures and communication gaffes.
- > Customer cancellations increase during economic downturns.

Protect your customer base

Because new customers and revenue are more challenging and expensive to come by during economic downturns, it makes sense to protect as much of your existing customer base as possible. Here are tips to help you do that:

- > Call customers after each service call and thank them for their business.
- > Mail a thank-you card after the initial visit.
- > Survey customer satisfaction levels annually.
- ➤ Incorporate an "extraordinary service" delivery system as part of your operating strategy.
- ➤ Add scheduled customer service training sessions for staff and laborers.
- > Reward individuals for performing superior service.
- > Insist supervisors perform ride-along quality control audits regularly.

Compete for new customers

Attracting new customers in the current highly competitive environment requires differentiating your company from your competition in a superior way. However, it's been my experience

ADDITIONAL READING

If you'd like to learn more about what you can do in this challenging economy to take control of your businesses future, Landscape Management proudly presents Harvey Goldglantz's new book, Marketing Matters: The Ultimate Reference Guide to Making the Most of Your Marketing Money. Visit http://shop. landscapemanagement.net for details.

" ... IT MAKES SENSETO PROTECT AS MUCH OFYOUR EXISTING CUSTOMER BASE AS POSSIBLE.

... PICK ANY EMPLOYEE AND ASK HIM WHY A CUSTOMER SHOULD CHOOSE YOUR COMPANY OVER A COMPETITOR."

that few companies are adept at this. Don't believe me? Try this simple test:

Pick any employee and ask him why a customer should choose your company over a competitor. Chances are you'll get one of the following answers:

- > We deliver better service.
- > We're more knowledgeable.
- > We're more experienced.
- > We've been in business longer.

These are great answers, but they're the same answers your competitor's employees will give. They're hardly differentiation points.

When differentiation points fail to deliver perceived value, price becomes the central focus. Service differentiation becomes even more critical during depressed economies when the disbursement of discretionary income becomes a focal point.

The author is president of Pest Control Marketing Co., Inc. an Elkins Park, PA-based marketing and management consulting firm for the lawn care and pest management industries. Contact him at 215/782-1150 or happemeinc@aol.com.

LET HISTORY BE A GUIDE

Even during the Great Depression, there were entrepreneurs who were able to make money. Confidence can be instilled and control of your business will be obtained through the lessons learned about strategic planning and targeted budgeting.

Consider these facts:

- There will always be a need for lawn and landscape management.
- > When the economy sours, the value delivery system becomes more scrutinized.
- > During depressed economies, customers focus on and prioritize discretionary spending.
- > Companies that excel at delivering a higher level of perceived value will command a larger share of their business segment pie.
- It's more important to be able to differentiate yourself from your competitors when competing for fewer discretionary dollars in a troubled economy. HFG.

TAKE AWAY

Determine what you want to gain from a walk-through.

Review your records and see whether there are new or existing issues to resolve.

Follow up on any action items that result from the walkthrough.

How to conduct a successful walk-through

5 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE

WALK-THROUGHS

1. Determine objectives.

2. Review client status.

4. Develop a strategy.

surprises.

- BW

3. Review job site status.

5. Make sure there are no

ANAGERS AND account supervisors shouldn't take job walk-throughs lightly. If you're unprepared or become surprised during a walk-through, you begin to lose a client's trust — and eventually the job.

So, here are some best practices to consider: > Determine objectives. What do you want to gain from the walk-through? Is it a followup to a prior walk-through in which you'll need to demonstrate you've followed through on commitments? Are there enhancement opportunities? Is the main objective to confirm

the client's satisfaction? Are there specific site issues that need to be addressed? Can you improve your position for renewal?

> Review client status. What do vou know about the client? Are there unresolved problems? Are there any changes in the client status, such as new owners, a new contact person, new boss, etc.? Is there going to be a

visit by ownership or investors? Are there other client events on the horizon? Does the client owe you money? Do you need to bring any documentation?

> Review job site status. Visit the site before your walk-through, and make sure everything is as it should be. This way, if problems exist, you're prepared already. Talk with the crew leader to find out whether there are any additional issues to discuss. Make sure your open punch lists are complete. Know the contract specifications — what's included and what's extra.

Be prepared by doing your homework before and after the visit.

BY BRUCE WILSON

> Develop a strategy. Who should attend a walk-through? How will you deal with any known issues? While you shouldn't accept any excuses, don't be defensive. Be prepared with answers and action plans if needed. Try to be in a position of strength. Have enhancement proposals ready if appropriate.

For the walk-through, be on time, dress appropriately, and point out the positives and

> areas that have improved. Don't wait for the client to find fault. Listen carefully to what the client is and isn't saying. Try not to make commitments until the walk-through is complete. Clarify if items are contracted

> After the walk-through, notify your employees about the commitments, and create a follow-up timeline for the action items. Formalize your walk-through

notes; keep one on file and send copies to your client and your employees. Prepare proposals for extra work, and follow up on line-item status in seven days.

Preparation is crucial to having a successful walk-through. Be positive and in control. Don't use excuses or be defensive. Take your lead from your client regarding commitments and timing. Follow up in writing, and check on progress in seven days. LM

or extra work on the spot.

The author is a partner with the Wilson-Oyler Group consultancy. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.

Short-term and long-term investments each have their benefits and drawbacks. BY CURT HABLER

VEN As the economy starts to get back on an even keel, there are few landscape contractors with money to throw around. However, they still need to replace and update equipment. During a time when every nickel counts — and cash flow is king — contractors might wonder whether it's better to buy or lease new equipment.

"It's never black and white," says Tom Dowd, manager of lease administration for John Deere Credit in Des Moines, IA. "There are no rules of thumb that can be used to determine whether a lease is applicable."

But there are several things to consider when making the lease versus purchase decision. Before you push the buttons on your calculator, determine whether the equipment you're thinking of leasing carries a high purchase option. The higher a purchase option, the more advantages a lease offers, Dowd says.

To make the decision more complicated, the definition of what a high-purchase option is varies, depending on the evaluated equipment. Determine whether the equipment will be used for short-term, incremental projects or to meet long-term basic needs.

TAKE AWAY

The best scenario is to finance equipment until you have the cash to pay it off.

Determine how much use you would have for the equipment over the long term.

Talk beforehand with your financial advisors about the potential tax savings (and pitfalls) regarding your equipment leases and purchases.

Making monthly payments on seasonal equipment is helpful, says George Kinkead, president of Minneapolis-based Turfco.

"Instead of having big spikes, leasing can level the cash flow," Kinkead says. "The right answer on lease versus buy is to finance equipment until the point at which you have the cash to pay it off."

Each situation must be analyzed as a separate event.

"Leasing seems to make most sense when a landscaper is awarded a short-term contract and needs additional equipment to complete the job, but isn't certain there's a need for the equipment beyond the term of the contract," Dowd says. "Purchasing seems to make most sense when the customer plans to use the equipment for a long time."

ARE THINGS DIFFERENT IN TODAY'S ECONOMY?

Old-timers often claim that today's economy is different than anything they've ever seen. But that doesn't mean the lease-versus-buy rules change. The advantages of leasing don't change as the economic situation changes, says Tom Dowd, manager of lease administration for John Deere Credit in Des Moines, IA. However, the magnitude of the benefits from the advantages does change.

For example, the time when leasing seems to be most active is right before an economic downturn.

"This is because the leasing advantage of matching incremental equipment needs with current jobs has a much bigger benefit if the economy is slowing," Dowd says.

Because the likelihood of having a need for the equipment is less if the economy has slowed, a contractor can count on being able to return the equipment at the end of the lease term, and won't have to try to remarket a used piece of equipment in a down equipment market.

In a healthy economy, leasing offers another benefit: cash flow, which conserves the bank's line of credit for other uses. The advantage of leasing is the same, Dowd says. However, the economic situation changes the benefit. One successful strategy is to use the lease terms to spread the payments over a couple years, then buy the equipment and continue to use it.

Kinkead cautions against thinking about landscape equipment leasing on the same terms as a car lease, however.

"Capital, durable equipment, like renovation equipment, typically will last more than two or three years," he says. "It's a cash-flow question. Especially for a smaller operator, it's probably better not to write a check for the full cost of equipment. It's better to buy as the business grows and pay for equipment out of cash flow."

For low-hour users who take care of their machinery, it pays to keep the equipment after the lease ends.

"Any time you lease equipment, you need to know what you'll do with it at the end of the lease," Kinkead says.

Additionally, you (and your accountants) should know how you'll generate the revenue to buy a piece of equipment, and how much you're willing to pay in interest for the privilege of keeping the machine.

On the plus side, leasing allows a business to upgrade its equipment frequently. If nothing else, having new, modern, shiny equipment helps create a prestigious image. And on the more practical side, new equipment eliminates down time and lowers maintenance costs.

Benefits of leasing

A lease generally requires less cash up front and has lower payments than traditional financing. The cash flow advantage is created because of the establishment of a purchase option at the end of the lease, Dowd says.

Initially, a contractor isn't paying for the purchase option. At the end of the lease, the customer makes a decision to purchase or return the equipment. Higher purchase options create a better cash flow advantage for a lease, Dowd says.

A contractor will often have what Dowd calls "incremental equipment needs" when he or she is awarded a short-term contract.

"A lease offers a landscaper a way to acquire additional equipment to perform the contracted work, and match the term and cost of the additional equipment with income generated from the new contract," he says.

PHOTO COURTESY: SECTION 179.0RG

Kinkead agrees leasing allows a contractor to bid on jobs or offer new services. Then, once the contractor has a feel for who will buy the services, he or she can lease equipment to match the need.

"I recommend having a sense of where you're going with your business so you don't get into equipment if you don't have the jobs to cover the cost," Kinkead says.

It's recommended to sell the jobs first, and then lease equipment in sufficient size and quantity to cover the contracts you have in hand.

Leasing makes sense for seasonal equipment, too. Aeration, for example, is a job typically done in the spring and fall. While you may need an aerator for both seasons, it's likely that you won't generate sufficient revenue to pay for it until late in the year. Lease payments spread out the cost.

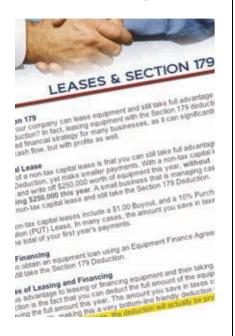
Income tax benefits

Another strategy involves off-balance sheet financing, which are leases struc-

Work with your accountant to keep current with tax rules on financing.

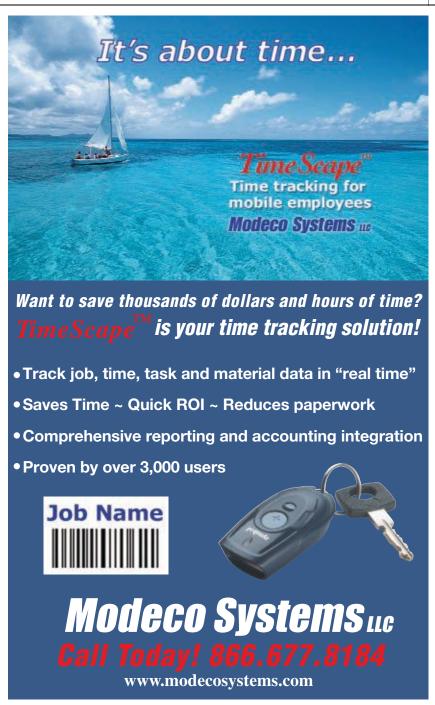
tured as true leases that don't pass title to a contractor.

"The landscaper currently doesn't need



"IF A CUSTOMER KNOWS THEY ARE GOING TO PURCHASE THE EQUIPMENT, A LEASE IS NOT LIKELY THE BEST MEANS TO FACILITATE THE PURCHASE."

TOM DOWD, manager, lease administration, John Deere Credit



to record an asset or liability on his financial statements for a lease," Dowd says.

Talk to your accountant for up-to-date information about this strategy. The Financial Accounting Standard Board (FASB) is in the process of making changes to the rules about off-balance sheet financing. Presently, a lease can be structured so a contractor doesn't show the asset on the balance sheet. Monthly payments are made like any other expense.

The FASB will likely rewrite the rules by 2011 to change off-balance sheet financing. It's expected that the changes will be retroactive — which means contractors will have to take future lease payments, capitalize the payment stream and show that as a liability. If the lessor expects to buy the equipment at the end of the lease term, that purchase option will have to be capitalized.

There are other tax implications: True leases allow 100% of the lease payment to

be deducted for income tax purposes.

"If a landscaper has maximized his Section 179 deductions on his income tax return, a lease structured with a large payment up front may offer a way for the landscaper to get a bigger deduction on his income tax return," Dowd says.

Again, consult a tax advisor to determine whether a specific lease offers a higher deduction.

Leasing pitfalls

While there are many advantages to leasing, you can incur a higher total cost if you decide to purchase and own the equipment. For example, renovation equipment and sod cutters are more likely candidates for leasing than mowers. You probably know how many hours will be put on a mower, and when your business grows to require another mower, it can be purchased. By contrast, renovation equipment use is sporadic, and adding another truck to the fleet

"DON'T GET INTO EQUIPMENT IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE JOBS TO COVER THE COST."

GEORGE KINKEAD, president, Turfco

probably doesn't require purchasing or leasing another sod cutter. One can be shared.

A contractor who thinks a lease avoids maintenance costs is in for a surprise, however. It's best to treat leased equipment as though you'll own it forever.

If you decide to exercise your purchase option at the end of the lease, the lease typically will result in a higher overall cost to purchase the equipment, Dowd says, adding that leasing isn't a less costly way to purchase equipment.

"If a customer knows he's going to purchase the equipment, a lease isn't likely the best means to facilitate the purchase," he says.

Additionally, all leases have requirements about the same condition and miles or hours allowed on the equipment when it's returned. This includes everything from pickup trucks to zero-turn mowers.

If the equipment is returned at the end of the lease and doesn't meet these requirements, there are abuse or excess use charges assessed to the customer, Dowd says. If the equipment is going to be used an excessive number of hours or in a harsh environment, a lease isn't likely the best option.

Money-saving strategies

Dowd says he has seen customers who have maximized their Section 179 deductions for leased equipment for one year, then purchased the equipment at the end of the lease, using the section 179 deduction in the next year. This way, a contractor gains use of the equipment in the current year — and maximizes his or her deductions for tax purposes.

Dowd also has seen customers lease equipment when they've been awarded short-term contracts, and then return the equipment at the end of the contract term.

The author is a freelance writer who lives in Strongsville, OH. Contact him at curt@curtharler.com.



It's a wide, wide World Wide Web

Whether it's creating a site to share your company with clients or figuring out the best browser to surf through cyberspace, the Internet is ripe with opportunity. BY TYLER WHITAKER

EB BROWSERS are an integral part of online life. And for most of us, judging from Web statistics, our online adventures usually start by opening Internet Explorer. "Are there other Web browsers?" you may ask. The answer is yes — and your choice of browser may be more important than you expect.

Which browser you use not only affects your Web surfing experience, but plays a small part in the ongoing browser war. In the early days of the Internet, you had the choice between Internet Explorer and Netscape. But now the number of available Web browsers is growing — as are the reasons to get beyond your default browser and explore what the rest of the Web has to offer.

HTML Web standards

When it comes to the Web site programming languages, standards matter. It might surprise you to know that there is an official standards committee that oversees Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and the functionality every browser should support. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) decides the future of HTML and what new features will be added.

As the number of Web browsers has grown, some proprietary Web browsers have implemented non-standard dialects of HTML, leading to problems with Web sites looking and acting differently on various browsers.

TAKE AWAY

A professionallooking Web site is a must-have for marketing these days.

Your site should be easy to edit and update at a moment's notice.

WordPress offers a user-friendly way to design and update your site to your specifications.



These differences cost us, as business owners, every time we make changes to our Web sites. The extra testing and bug fixing by our Web developers for each non-standard browser takes money out of our pockets.

Memory and speed

Performance is another key item to consider when choosing a Web browser. Time adds up fast when you are waiting for Web pages to render on your screen. Recently, Google's Chrome browser and Mozilla's Firefox 3.5 have made huge improvements in both faster speed and lower memory consumption. These enhancements translate into much higher performance — the ability to open more active browser windows, with fewer crashes than most other browsers. These performance gains allow your existing desktop computer hardware to last longer without upgrading.

Automatic upgrades

Time seems to pass quickly on the Internet. Gone are the days when we expected new versions of our favorite software packages on an annual basis. Software updates are now available multiple times a month. This is good news from a security and reliability perspective, but unfortunately, too many businesses get caught in the "Don't Change Anything" trap. It's too easy to think that if it works, we shouldn't fix it.

If you are not staying current on the latest version of your browser, you truly are missing out on the best productivity

improvements, security updates and newest features. Consider upgrading to the most recent version of your favorite browser and leaving the automatic upgrades option on so you will continuously be up-to-date.

Your choice of browser can encourage innovation and forward momentum with Web standards. Ensure your continued productivity and security by staying current on the latest browser versions. Every little bit helps.

From surfer to surfed

While you can't control which browsers clients use to access your Web site, you do need to engage them once they get there.

Let's be honest. Building a good-looking and functional Web site can be challenge. Once it's built, keeping it updated can feel like an ongoing and losing battle. But I have a few suggestions to ease your Web site pain and turn that chore into a pleasure.

Most small-business sites are built one of two ways: You know a family member or teenage neighbor who can put a basic Web site together, or your Internet-hosting provider has a template-based system that can help you build a site by uploading your logo and text. Neither is a bad solution if you just need something to start with, but the result often lacks quality.

Larger companies have the marketing funds and access to talent to build top-notch Web sites with all the bells and whistles. If they're smart, they add administrative capabilities for their staff to add new content easily without the

need to understand HTML, JavaScript and other Web technologies. They understand good Web sites are changing and improving constantly.

However, anyone who has hired an external Web design firm understands

this route can become costly and limiting quickly. What you want is a solution with the following capabilities:

nternet

colorer

The ability to edit your site in a simple and efficient manner that doesn't require tracking down the nearest IT guy. This includes uploading pictures and video.

The ability to update the style, colors and layout whenever you like. Calling your local graphic artist and asking for a Web-site makeover — and then rebuilding the entire site





On my own desktop, I'm currently running the following:

- **Google Chrome** is my default browser for everyday Web surfing. Its fast, clean interface — and integration with Google — lets me focus on finding the information I need quickly.
- > For all of my Web development needs, I use Mozilla Firefox 3.5. It's a full-featured browser with plenty of optional features available through its use of add-ons and plug-ins.
- > Internet Explorer 8 is installed, but only for testing purposes. It's much better than older versions, but pales in comparison to Chrome and Firefox. — TW

"DOYOURSELF A **FAVOR AND UPGRADE** YOUR WEB SITE USING **WORDPRESS.** YOUR SITE WILL LOOK BETTER, BE MORE UP-TO-DATE AND **COSTYOU LESS INTHE** LONG RUN."

- can be a nightmare. A content management system (CMS) is much better. Traditionally, though, they've existed only within large companies because of their cost and complexity. What's the alternative that doesn't require spending the entire marketing budget? Read on.

An accessible solution

Recently, several open-source systems have been built with the small business in mind. My favorite is WordPress from Automatic. At first glance, WordPress looks like a Web-blogging application — and it is. But if you look closer, you'll see a system with all the power and flexibility of a large CMS without the associated complexity and cost.

As an open-source program, the software, along with a large collection of site themes, is free. The themes allow you to customize the look of your site in an easy-to-manage way. No more waiting for the designer to get back to you. Don't like the current theme? Change it. Need to add new pages, images or video? No problem. You can even add additional functionality through the use of plug-ins, which extend the site's features without involving special programming. It's that easy.

Most Web-hosting providers offer WordPress as optional software to install on your site. It requires the PHP programming language and a MySQL database to run, but those are standard defaults at almost all Web-hosting providers.

So do yourself a favor and upgrade your Web site using WordPress. Your site will look better, be more up-to-date and cost you less in the long run — and that's something to blog about. LM

The author is a freelance technologist. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit www.tylerwhitaker.com.



Products



Increase productivity

Case's new power side discharge bucket for skid steers and compact track loaders increases machine utility, making it possible to do more work with the same machine. The power side discharge bucket spreads a variety of other materials, including stone, mulch or aggregate. The bucket, available in 60-, 72- and 84-in. sizes, can be operated with a choice of either a left or right discharge position, and has adjustable discharge gates. CaseCE.com or 866/54CASE6

Prevent and control

DuoCide Insect Control treats a variety of common insect pests, including ticks, grubs, fire ants, mole crickets, European crane flies and more. Similar in cost to other single-mode insecticides, the product combines



carbaryl and bifenthrin into a unique multi-mode formula that enhances performance both above and below the surface. DuoCide's performance is confirmed by multiple university research studies, and is formulated on

the dispersible DG Pro carrier for easy spreading, low visibility and maximum performance. AndersonsInc.com or 800/253-5296

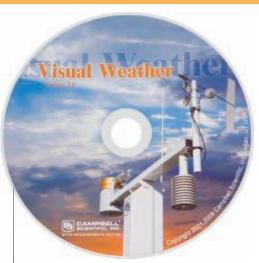
Before and after

Visual Impact Imaging offers professional landscape design software. The easy-to-use Earthscapes application allows users to communicate their landscape vision through the use of digital photos. Simply drag and drop your design features onto a "before" photo. Earthscapes includes a site plan designer, an estimator, and plant and hardscape libraries. VisualImpactImaging.com or 330/259-7661



Touch of concrete

Do you ever find yourself in need of a small amount of concrete? The new 3.5-yd. concrete mixer is just the answer. Fully self-contained and powered by a diesel engine, this attachment can be hoisted onto the truck within one minute ready to be loaded. With an Ampliroll HookLift, it changes your truck into a multi-tasking machine. AmplirollUSA.com or 866/822-3580



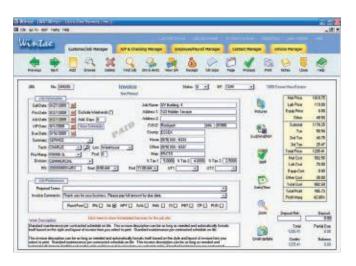
Be weather wise

Campbell Scientific's new Visual-Weather 3.0 software program integrates many enhancements from the previous version, including support for the ET107 and Toro T107, enhanced station-status and station-data screens, as well as improved Web output and FTP support. Changes have been made to the underlying database to allow faster report generation. A free trial version is available. CampbellSci.com/visualweather or 435/753-2342

Valve variety

Constructed of premium UV-resistant PVC plastic and high-grade stainless steel, K-Rain's new Pro-150 line of professional-grade plastic irrigation valves is available in 1-, 1.5- and 2-in. body configurations. Featuring a pressure rating of 150 psi, each valve includes the premium-grade K-Rain solenoid that is hand-assembled and epoxyencapsulated for proven leak-free reliability and longevity. A double-beaded diaphragm provides years of reliable operation. All models carry a two-year limited warrantv. Krain.com or 561/844-1002





New release

Intac International announces the release of Wintac 2010 business software. A completely redesigned user interface offers intuitive navigation and operation. In addition, more than 50 new features and enhancements have been added to provide more searching, sorting, reporting, and graphing options, as well as advanced mobile computing capabilities. A free demo is available. Wintac.net or 800/724-7899



Soil savvy

Available in 60 and 72 in.. Bobcat's new soil conditioner for compact tractors and the

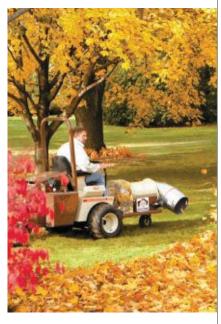
Toolcat 5610 utility work machine helps produce seed and sod beds. It also windrows and separates rocks or other ground debris, grades and levels topsoil, removes old sod and pulverizes clumps of dirt. When the removable end plates are attached to the implement, material is contained within to sort it from the finished area or to move it from one area to another. With the end plates removed, material can be spread evenly across the work

area. Bobcat.com or 701/241-8700



FINN Corp. offers the BB302 and BB705 models of trailer-mounted bark blowers. The BB302 is powered by a 33.5-hp, V1505 Kubota diesel engine and has a 1.5 cu.-yd.-capacity hopper. This allows the blower to deliver more than 10 cu. yds. of bark mulch per hour, five times faster than by hand. Featuring a 4.5 cubic-yard capacity hopper, the BB705 is powered by a 71-hp, V3300 Kubota diesel engine, which allows larger, heavier varieties of bulk material to be applied. Both models feature a radio remote control system, a 150-ft. durable, flexible hose and a rear-mounted hose reel.

FinnCorp.com or 800/543-7166



Quiet control

Use Grasshopper's Turbine Blower, featuring zero-turn maneuverability, to clean leaves and debris from congested, hard-to-reach or wide open areas and long stretches of walkways and curbs in a fraction of the time required by backpack blowers and walk-behind units. Turbine blowers are quieter than most debris blowers and offer 360-degree nozzle rotation — controlled remotely from the operator's station — making it easy to direct airflow up to 9,500 cfm at more than 150 mph precisely for faster cleanup. The blower mounts on Grasshopper 700 and 900 Series power units. GrasshopperMower.com or 620/345-8621

Cleaner air

Stihl's professional BR 600 backpack leaf blower offers vigorous blowing power, a low emissions engine and comfortable weight. A recent study conducted by the Porsche Engineering Group GmbH found that this unit is up to 28% more fuel efficient than competitive models, which can provide up to \$644 in fuel savings per unit in two seasons, depending on fuel costs and run time. In addition, it exceeds current EPA emission standards by 73%. StihlUSA.com or 757/486-9100



Walk or ride

Wright's Velke pistol grip mowers are available with deck widths of 32, 36, 48 and 52 in. It can be operated as a walkbehind for tight spaces, or it can be paired with Wright's Velke foldaway sulky for ride-behind convenience. The compact Velke has large drive tires and a hydraulic control system, with fewer parts for greater reliability. WrightMfg.com or 301/360-9810



Go green

Both the Mete-R-Matic III (pictured) and Mete-R-Matic XL topdressers feature a patented Chevron belt that delivers uniform application regardless of moisture content, whether it's sand. compost, crumb rubber or calcined clays. An eco-friendly, patented ground drive system assures uniform spread, even at varying speeds. And with no hydraulics, PTOs or engines, speed calibration is not required. The Mete-R-Matic III features a 23-cu.-ft. hopper capacity; the Mete-R-Matic XL features a 60-cu.-ft. capacity. Both machines include a three-year warranty. Turfco.com or 800/679-8201



Major League catchers

Specialty Equipment offers a complete line of steel, stainless steel and cloth grass catchers, all made in the USA. The "industry first" usage of a tough coat paint on the steel catchers give the units a similar finish and durability to spray-in truck bed liners. The stainless steel version offers the wear characteristics of aluminum catchers, with the durability of stainless steel. Both versions are available in 3.3- and 4.4-cu.-ft. capacities. A newly offered cloth catcher completes the lineup, with a durable steel frame and lightweight cloth bag featuring a poly-reinforced bottom for extended wear. SpecialtyEquipmentUSA.com or 772/398-2270

The lighter side

With new light material sides now available as an option for Earth & Turf's MultiSpread Model 320, the 1-cubic yd. topdresser virtually doubles its capacity when spreading light materials such as compost, calcined clay, etc. The maximum load capacity using the light material sides is 3,600 lbs. Available in two-wheel ground drive or hydraulic drive, the unit's 26 x 12.00-12 turf tires ensure easy pulling by 20-hp tractors. Its overall height with light material sides, plus narrow overall width, allows operators to reach in easily from either side to cut crumbed rubber super sacks when loading. Light material sides are available for dealer or customer installation, shipped either separately or together with new machines.

FarthAndTurf.com or 888/693-2638



Hit the deck

Bri-Mar's Tilt-Deck Haulers, models CHT18-10 and CHT18-7. are 18-ft.-long tilt bed haulers with 10k and 7k GVWRs. The low-angle, diamond plate steel deck includes a power tilt function that simplifies loading and unloading operations. Both models feature 5-in. channel tonque and main frame and 2x4 tube outer bed rails; an easy-load, 10-degree tilt angle; recessed D-rings; a Monarch power unit for up/down hydraulics with a 20-ft. wired remote (a wireless remote is available as an option); tandem Dexter EZ Lube axles, both with electric brakes: 15in. tires; rubber-mounted LED lights; an acid etch bath preceding a Valspar powdercoat finish; and a two-year warranty. Bri-Mar.com or 717/263-6116



Quiet power

The Shindaiwa EB802 backpack blower features a convenient "hush mode" switch that reduces the sound level to 65 dB(A). In addition, the 4.3-hp, 2cycle blower uses a special leaf guard design that minimizes any risk of overheating from leaf blockage. A newly designed and ergonomic lightweight frame uses a padded shoulder strap harness system that Shindaiwa.com or 800/521-7733

Clean sweep

Haaga Sweepers are energy-smart, people-powered machines featuring a patented, dual-action brush system with a wear-resistant, belt-free drive. The 476 Turbo Indoor/Outdoor Sweeper weighs just 26.5 lbs. and cleans side-



walks, driveways, patios, brick, pavers, pool sides, along walls, in corners and can even clean short turf. It features a patented T-bar handle for hard-to-reach places. HaagaGreatLakes. com or 651/695-1900



Now in 3D

Structure Studios' new VizTerra 3D landscape design software allows an entire design to be in complete 3D, with hundreds of fully rendered plant and tree species. The realistic presentation even allows the customer to see in real time how the design appears at different times of day, from morning to night. The program produces professional plans ready for construction. Designers can choose from a library of more than 2,000 industry standard symbols to represent plant species and container sizes. Free technical support, training and software updates are included. StructureStudios.com or 800/778-8996

Pneumatic blower

Express Blower's new TM-45 spreads a wide variety of materials, including compost, mulches, soil blends, aggregates and wood chips, with a level load capacity of approximately 45 cu. yds. Powered by a 275-hp Caterpillar C-7 engine, the TM-45 is a fully self-contained, steel-framed aluminum box designed to be mounted on a variety of truck or trailer configurations. The patented Supplemental Injection System allows users to uniformly apply mixes through Express Blower's Terraseeding process. ExpressBlower.com or 800/543-7166



wide stance, a 40-gal. liquid application tank and an 82-in., five-nozzle handheld wand for spot spraying. It also features a 125-lb. LESCO electric spreader with remote-actuated gate and side deflector. The design of the spreader and boom on a standard 2-in. hitch assembly allows the operator to move the spreader from the rear to the front, add an additional spreader to the front, or remove and attach the spreader and/ or boom to a utility vehicle or truck. A carrying tray offers additional granular storage; an optional 15-gal. spot sprayer is available. JohnDeere.com or 800/347-4272

Durable and compact

The all-new SA 2700 handheld blower from

Efco offers a maximum air volume of 412 cfm and air speed of 146 mph. It's backed by Efco's "Five Year No Fear" (five-year consumer, two-year professional) warranty. It also features a silenced muffler for reduced noise and double anti-vibration mounts for operator comfort. The SA 2700 is equipped with a 30.5 cc engine and weighs 9.9 lbs. In addition, it converts to a vacuum to collect leaves and debris, which are then finely shredded by four steel blades for reduced volume. EfcoPower.com or 800/800-4420



Why is Fall Feeding Important?





Alan Nees Vice President Turf and Ornamental Sales AGROTAIN International, LLC



FLEXIBLE
COMPATIBLE
COST-EFFICIENT
MEDIUM-DURATION
ENVIRONMENTALLY STABLE
HARD-WORKING

UFLEXX is a trademark of AGROTAIN International LLC

Fall fertilizing is the most important application a turf manager can make. Promoting good color and stimulating shoot growth are important, but many times overlooked is the importance of carbohydrate reserves and root growth.

It is important to build the carbohydrate reserves to prepare the turf for winter. The accumulation and storage of carbohydrates is greatest during the fall and early winter because there is minimal shoot growth in late fall, but good photosynthetic conditions.

The carbohydrates that are not used in growth are stored in the crown and other plant tissues. These carbohydrate reserves supply energy to promote faster green up in spring.

UFLEXX™ Stabilized Nitrogen performs extremely well for fall and winter applications.

Fall and winter feeding with UFLEXX will provide exceptional

long-lasting color without excessive growth. UFLEXX delivers maximum nitrogen efficiency and protects against nitrogen loss from ammonia volatility, leaching and denitrification.

UFLEXX delivers both ammonium nitrogen for root growth and nitrate nitrogen for tissue growth. Soil temperatures have little effect on the efficiency of UFLEXX since it does not rely on microbial activity for the nitrogen availability.

UFLEXX can be spread as a granular feed or can be melted down and sprayed as a soluble, giving you total flexibility in your fertility program. UFLEXX is also available in many fertilizer blends to match your specific fertility needs.

TO SHARE YOUR TIPS AND STRATEGIES, ASK QUESTIONS, POST NITROGEN CHALLENGES, OR READ WHAT YOUR PEERS ARE SAYING, VISIT

WHATSHISSECRET.COM.

BP2010 RESOURCE PROFILES

- 112 Agrium Advanced Technologies
- 113 Ameristar Fence Products
- 114 Ariens Co.
- 115 BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals
- 116 Blizzard
- 117 Boss LM—The Integra Group
- 118 BOSS Snowplows
- 119 Christmas Décor/Nite Time Décor
- **120** Collier Metal Specialties
- 121 Cover-All Building Systems
- 122 DeWitt Co.
- **123** DIG Corp.
- 124 Dow AgroSciences
- 125 Drafix Software
- 126 DuPont Professional Products

- **127** Finn Corp.
- 128 Fisher Snowplows
- **129** Focal Point Communications
- 130 Hilliard Corp.
- **131** Horizon Distributors
- **132** Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits
- 133 Husqvarna
- **134** Hustler Turf Equipment
- 135 LT Rich Products
- 136 LebanonTurf
- **137** Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show
- 138 Modeco Systems
- 139 PBI/Gordon Corp.
- 140 Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution

- 141 OXpress Scheduling Software
- 142 R&K Pump & Equipment
- 143 Rainbird
- 144 Real Green Systems
- 145 Reddick Equipment
- **146** Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigration Law Group
- 147 SePRO Corp.
- 148 Solucal-USA
- 149 Target Specialty Products
- 150 Toro Landscape Contractor Equipment
- 151 Turfco Direct
- 152 US Lawns
- **153** Visual Impact Imaging
- 154 Walker Manufacturing
- 155 Western Products

FENCING

Ameristar® has been manufacturing quality fence products since 1982. With national distribution through installation partners and stocking distributors, Ameristar Fence Products has become the benchmark for ornamental steel, aluminum and Montage® fusion-welded E-coated all-terrain fences for residential, commercial, industrial and highsecurity applications.

> AD PG 15 > PROFILE PG 113

FRANCHISING

The Décor Group has helped more than 375 service companies achieve greater success with its unique franchise concepts. Our Christmas Décor and NightTime Décor systems work and can give you the edge you need to zoom past competitors.

> AD PG 60, 101 > PROFILE PG 119

US Lawns is a franchise commercial landscape maintenance company with more than 190 offices open across the United States.

> AD PG CV2, > PROFILE PG 152

INSURANCE

Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits provides business insurance, employee benefits and personal insurance to landscape professionals. Since 1887, we consistently deliver comprehensive, effective insurance solutions. Hortica offers loss control and safety expertise, prompt claims handling, unparalleled customer service and financial stability to our policyholders.

> AD PG 9 > PROFILE PG 132

IRRIGATION PRODUCTS

DIG Corporation offers a full line of drip irrigation products and accessories. In addition we strive to provide the industry with the most state-of-the-art, alternative power controllers, including our ambient light powered, LeIT controllers.

> AD PG 55 > PROFILE PG 123

As the leading manufacturer of irrigation products and services, Rain Bird offers the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, public parks, commercial developments and homes in more than 130

> AD PG 5, 33-34, 67 > PROFILE PG 143

LEGAL SERVICES

Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigration Law Group is a full-service immigration law firm specializing in meeting the needs of U.S. employers and individual immigrants. Our firm provides services to hundreds of businesses needing temporary workers or I-9 audits.

> AD PG 52 > PROFILE PG 146

MARKETING

Focal Point Communications is a green industry marketing company, offering newsletter programs, web site design, direct mailing services and more than 100 semi-custom and ready-to-use marketing tools-including postcards, presentation folders, leave-behind materials and client communication toolsto lawn and landscape companies of all sizes. We create marketing plans for our clients and provide full re-branding services.

> AD PG 79 > PROFILE PG 129

MOWERS & EQUIPMENT

Ariens Co. provides professional snow removal products and the **Gravely** brand of commercial mowing equipment.

> AD PG 75 > PROFILE PG 114

Collier Metal Industries (COL-MET) provides the largest selection and availability of steel landscape edging in the industry.

> AD PG 51 > PROFILE PG 120

DeWitt Company has a full line of woven and non-woven landscape fabrics, created for professionals and homeowners, along with 30 other lawn and garden products.

> AD PG 76 > PROFILE PG 122

The Finn Corporation is a leading manufacturer of lawn, landscape and erosion control development work, with products lines including HydroSeeders, Bark Blowers, Straw Blowers and the Finn Hydroseeding Consumable Products.

> AD PG 81 > PROFILE PG 127

Hilliard Corporation offers a broad line of motion control products, oil filtration and reclaiming equipment, starters for industrial gas, diesel engines and gas turbines, under the Hilco trade name

> AD PG 16 > PROFILE PG 130

Horizon is a professional distributor that offers a variety of products and services to the green industry with more than 60 stores in the Western U.S., Texas, Georgia and North Carolina. It offers the industry's widest choice of irrigation, landscape, specialty and power equipment products.

> AD PG 50 > PROFILE PG 131

Husqvarna offers a complete line of professionally proven outdoor power equipment, including chain saws, brushcutters, trimmers, blowers, zero-turn mowers, lawn tractors, generators and other equipment.

> AD PG 63, 65 > PROFILE PG 133

Hustler Turf Equipment manufactures a complete line of commercial and high-end residential rotary mowing equipment. All models, whether walk-behind or rider, feature unsurpassed durability, productivity and ease of operation.

> AD PG 11 > PROFILE PG 134

LT Rich Products manufactures stand-on fertilizer/spray systems, aerators and turf renovators for the commercial lawn care industry. All units are zero-turn and feature a pump/wheel motor transmission. Sprayers feature all stainless-steel construction with large fertilizer and liquid spraying capacity.

R&K Pump & Equipment manufactures sprayers for the lawn care, aquatics, nursery and tree care industries. With 30 years of manufacturing experience, R&K can produce more than 50 models with various pump, engine and hose reel options to meet every spraying need.

> AD PG 14 > PROFILE PG 142

> AD PG 18 > PROFILE PG 135

Since 1965, **Reddick Equipment** has been manufacturing sprayers for the lawn care, turf, deicing and agricultural industries and provide parts for all major brands of spray equipment.

> AD PG 12 > PROFILE PG 145

Landscape professionals who want their work to look great—and pay off great—trust Toro® Landscape Contractor Equipment commercial-grade mowers.

> AD PG 71, 73 > PROFILE PG 150

Turfco Direct offers renovation equipment, service and parts direct to customers. This direct approach allows Turfco to increase landscapers' productivity, save time and offer the best equipment at affordable prices.

> AD PG 70 > PROFILE PG 151

Walker Manufacturing is an independent, family-owned company producing commercial-grade riding mowers since 1980. > AD PG CV4, 66 > PROFILE PG 154

SNOW & ICE EQUIPMENT

Blizzard[®] is dedicated to providing the most innovative, highly productive snow removal equipment available. It manufactures and markets a full line of innovative snowplows.

> AD PG 47 > PROFILE PG 116

THE BOSS Snowplow has made snowplowing efficient and easy with products that set new industry standards. All products are manufactured in an approved ISO 9001:2000registered facility and are available through a nationwide network of distributors.

> AD PG 69 > PROFILE PG 118

Fisher Engineering has been manufacturing snowplows for more than 60 years, and its plows have earned a solid reputation for reliability and strength—especially among commercial snowplowers.

> AD PG 85 > PROFILE PG 128

Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution has

been the nation's leader in commercial snow removal attachments for more than 10 years. We have a commitment to and focus on researching and developing products that will continually make you more profitable and efficient in your snow and ice management business.

> AD PG 13 > PROFILE PG 140

For nearly 60 years, **Westem**® snowplows have been the choice of the professional

> AD PG 77 > PROFILE PG 155

SOFTWARE

BOSS[®] **LM** from The Integra Group is the easy-to-use business management software that enables landscape companies of all sizes to be more profitable and grow their businesses by leveraging all information in a single enterprise system.

> AD PG 72 > PROFILE PG 117

Take your business to the next level using **Drafix Software**'s PRO Landscape design software

> AD PG 20 > PROFILE PG 125

OXpress Scheduling Software by Alocet Inc. is the scheduling software of choice for field service companies using QuickBooks.

> AD PG 80 > PROFILE PG 141

Real Green Systems provides marketing lists, mapping/routing technology, hand-held devices, custom printing from posting signs to marketing materials, direct mail and customer assistant web sites.

> AD PG 49 > PROFILE PG 144

Visual Impact Imaging is the leading provider of professional software for the landscape industry. EARTHSCAPES landscape design software is user-friendly and widely compatible, making our software solution an integral component for every landscape company, regardless of its size.

> AD PG 59 > PROFILE PG 153

STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Cover-All Building Systems is the leading manufacturer of steel-framed, membrane buildings.

> AD PG 61 > PROFILE PG 121

TIME & ATTENDANCE SYSTEMS

Modeco Systems LLC's TimeScape™ is designed for gathering employee and job time as a mobile time tracking system. Paper timesheets and manual data entry are both eliminated. "It's about time!"

> AD PG 97 > PROFILE PG 138

TRADE SHOW

The Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show,

scheduled for Jan. 20-22, 2010, at Chicago's McCormick Place West, features countless plants, products, services and equipment for the green industry. You'll find business tips, industry-focused education, networking opportunities and more.

> AD PG 32 > PROFILE PG 137

TURF & PEST MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

Agrium Advanced Technologies offers a broad selection of slow- and controlled release fertilizer solutions, making it possible for landscape and lawn care professionals to find all the products they've come to trust, such as Polyon®, Precise®, Nitroform® and Nutralene®—as well as many new products

- all in one place. > AD PG 3, 21-28 > PROFILE PG 112

BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals

develops and markets chemical solutions for improving turf quality through pest management, which includes weed, disease and insect control.

> AD PG 31 > PROFILE PG 115

Dow AgroSciences is a top-tier agricultural company that combines the power of science and technology with the Human Element. Our portfolio uses advanced chemistry to help minimize time and effort by delivering maximum control on weeds, insects and disease.

> AD PG 1 > PROFILE PG 124

DuPont Professional Products brings the company's tradition of science, innovation and safety to the pest and green industries.

> AD PG 17 > PROFILE PG 126

With extensive product selections and new state-of-the-art nitrogen sources, **LebanonTurf** offers the professional turf manager a product for almost every situation.

> AD PG 7 > PROFILE PG 136

PBI/Gordon Corp. is a national leader in specialty pest management products services, including T-Zone, SpeedZone, Surge, Katana™ 25WG, Q4 and Trimec herbicides, Embark and Atrimmec plant growth regulators, and Azatrol EC insecticide.

> AD PG 19 > PROFILE PG 139

Solu-Cal USA's family of calcium and sulfur products allows turf managers to quickly and efficiently address soil chemistry problems. Partner with Solu-Cal to efficiently manage your soil and your turf while protecting the environment.

> AD PG 6 > PROFILE PG 148

SePRO Corp. is an industry leading, specialty agrichemical company. It provides plant protection and plant management products and services that fit specialized niche markets, such as aquatic vegetation management, ornamental and turf management and tree growth regulation.

> AD PG CV3 > PROFILE PG 147

Target Specialty Products is the West's leading wholesale distributor of pest management products, fertilizers, application equipment, safety equipment, services and education. Target is headquartered in Santa Fe Springs, CA, with multiple branch offices in Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon.

> AD PG 91 > PROFILE PG 149

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Fall Education Sale

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF WINTER!

Training Video Packages on Sale October 1-31, 2009

Anti-Icing & Deicing Pro Package: Purchase 2 CD Rom Training Sets for \$198*:

- Using Liquids the Smart Way: A Practical Approach to Liquids for Snow & Ice
- Creating Stronger Relationships with Your Bulk Salt Suppliers



Receive Video 104: Basic Principles for Ice Contract free (\$99 value).

Operations Expert Package:

Purchase 2 CD Rom Training Sets for \$198*:

- Developing a Snow Response Plan
- The Right Steps: Sidewalk Management in Snow & Ice



Receive a live registration for the October 8th webinar, "Planning for Operational Success in Snow" free (\$99 value).

Business Planning Package:

Purchase 2 CD Rom Training Sets for \$198*:

- Snow Strategies for Tough Times: How to Manage Rising Costs and Protect Your Bottom Line
- Understanding Property & Facility Managers: Putting Yourself in Your Customers "Snow" Shoes

Receive Video 107: 365 Degrees of Snow & Ice Management free (\$99 value).

Snow & Ice for Beginners Package: Purchase Training Videos for \$198*:

- Video 101: Basic Snowplowing Techniques
- Video 102: Basic Sidewalk Clearing with Snowblowers



Receive Video 103: Intermediate Snowplowing free (\$99 value).

All videos and CD ROM Training Sets will be available for purchase separately for the sale price of \$75* (\$99 value)

Videos

- Video 101: Basic Snowplowing Techniques
- Video 102: Basic Sidewalk Clearing with Snowblowers
- Video 103: Intermediate Snowplowing
- Video 104: Basic Principles for Ice Control
- Video 105: Using Containment Plows
- Video 106: Skid Steer Loaders in the Snow & Ice Industry
- Video 107: 365 Degrees of Snow and Ice Management

SIMAonline



CD Rom Training Sets

- · Developing a Snow Response Plan
- Using Liquids the Smart Way: A Practical Approach to Liquids for Snow & Ice
- Snow Strategies for Tough Times: How to Manage Rising Costs and Protect Your Bottom Line
- Salt: Secure Your Supply and Use It Wisely
- The Right Steps: Sidewalk Management in Snow & Ice
- Creating Stronger Relationships with Bulk Salt Suppliers
- Understanding Property & Facility Managers: Putting Yourself in Your Customers Snow Shoes

Available separately at http://webinars.sima.org *All orders will have a \$5 shipping fee

For more information on these limited-time offers visit www.sima.org or call 414-375-1940 today!





















Smarter Ways To Grow"

Agrium Advanced Technologies 2915 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 400

Loveland, CO 80538 Phone: 888-757-0072

Web site: www.agriumat.com

Agrium Advanced Technologies

Company focus:

Agrium Advanced Technologies is the leading manufacturer and marketer of slow- and controlled-release fertilizers, plant protection products and micronutrients for agriculture, golf courses, greenhouses, nurseries, landscapes, lawn care and specialty agriculture. Agrium Advanced Technologies is at the forefront of economic, environmentally friendly technologies. Our company is working hard to provide innovative, cost-saving solutions with slow- and controlledrelease products, and we're committed to helping our customers discover smarter ways to grow.

Our non-agricultural brands include POLYON®, DURATION CR®, XCU™, NITROFORM®, and NUTRALENE® slow- and controlled-release fertilizers, AMP™ micronutrients and PRECISE® controlled-release plant protection. These products go into dozens of fertilizer brands and hundreds of blends sold throughout North America, and utilize proprietary advancedgeneration technologies to control nutrient release for improved plant growth and environmental performance.

Agrium Advanced Technologies' environmentally friendly fertilizers release nutrients to the soil gradually and consistently over a longer

period of time to meet plant demands. The gradual release increases the efficiency of the fertilizers and minimizes the chance of nutrient losses to the environment through leaching or volatilization.

Agrium Advanced Technologies continues to focus on further advancing enhanced efficiency fertilizers with an emphasis on quality and customer service. We are committed to developing new technologies, products and best practices that will help lawn care professionals do their jobs more efficiently and save money.

Earth Friendly Turf Product Line:

> POLYON® Controlled-Release Fertilizer, with its trademarked green color, has been used for years by top golf courses to feed the turf effectively and consistently for months at a time. In fact, POLYON is the No. 1 polymer-coated fertilizer in turf today. POLYON is very affordable in an annual fertilizer program and gives you access to the company's exclusive POLYGRAPH® nutrient prediction software, which customizes programs for your specific growing area.

> DURATION CR® Controlled-Release Fertilizer uses an advanced-generation polymer-coating technology to gradually meter nutrients

for two months to all season long to meet the turf's needs. Thanks to DURATION CR's enhanced efficiency, lawn care professionals can use up to 25% less nitrogen per year, which is good for the environment and your bottom line.

> XCU™ Slow-Release Fertilizer brings a major advancement in sulfur-coated urea (SCU) technology. The patented process provides the highest nitrogen content (43%), most durable coating, and is the longest-lasting SCU on the market. XCU provides up to 10 weeks of green, healthy turf.

> NITROFORM® Slow-Release Fertilizer has been a trusted brand for more than 50 years. With more than twothirds being water-insoluble nitrogen (WIN), it effectively delivers organic feeding like no other fertilizer by supplying both nitrogen and energy-rich carbon to increase and sustain populations of beneficial microorganisms in the soil.

> NUTRALENE® Slow-Release Fertilizer is a premium, methylene urea fertilizer trusted by countless turf professionals for dependable, long-lasting performance. NUTRALENE's release is triggered by temperature and microbial activity in unison with plant demand, assuring highly efficient feeding for up to 16 weeks.

Eddy Gibbs President

Ameristar Fence Products

Product focus:

Ameristar® was chartered a quarter-century ago to provide specialty fence products that were more affordable but did not compromise the quality level demanded by specifiers and consumers. This could

manufacturer of architectural metal fence systems in the world. Ameristar will maintain its leadership in providing fences of multiple performance capability and design style, within the limitations of applicable building codes and budget allotments.



- Montage® is the new generation of ornamental fencing that is changing America's landscape. Unparalleled quality, now made affordable through new technology and manufacturing processes, has made Montage the No. 1 choice of landscapers across America for both new fence construction and replacement of existing wood, chain-link or PVC fences. The popular Montage Plus® Fence System has been taken to the next level, with 7- and 8ft.-tall fencing in several styles. All systems include matching gates available for a wide range of opening sizes and, for projects requiring added distinctiveness, special arched gates called Estate Gates are available.
- > The Aegis® ornamental fence system is the strongest steel ornamental fence in the industry. It has a proprietary internal fastening system that eliminates unsightly exterior fasteners and allows the fence to follow changing landscape grades.

- ➤ The EchelonTM
 ornamental fence system
 offers an aluminum alternative
 for projects where corrosion
 considerations are amplified by
 harsh environmental conditions.
- ➤ Ameristar's ImpasseTM
 Security Fence (patent pending) offers the resistive strength of heavy-duty ornamental spear-tipped steel pales, vertically secured to a framework of specially formed steel rails and I-beam posts. The stylish design of the ImpasseTM, combined with its strength and security, provides an effective first line of defense.
- > The addition of Ameristar's Stalwart® integrated cabling system provides an anti-ram defense against forced entry, ballistic attack or vehicular impact. The Stalwart® barrier has earned the U.S. Department of State K8 and K12 ratings, successfully stopping a 15,000-pound truck traveling at 40 mph and 50 mph, respectively, within one meter of the fence line.



Ameristar Fence Products 1555 N. Mingo Road Tulsa, OK 74116

Phone: 888-333-3422 Fax: 877-926-3747 Web site:

www.ameristarfence.com

E-mail:

mktg@ameristarfence.com

be accomplished only by a complete reformation of the way fence products were being manufactured.

Product design was approached from many new perspectives: maximizing high-volume productivity; increasing strength and durability; designing the ultimate level of system security; promoting ease of installation; enhancing aesthetic appearance; and maintaining an environmentally friendly workplace.

A new plant was designed and built to house state-ofthe-art roll-forming, metal processing and powder-coating equipment. The result has boosted Ameristar® to its current position as the largest



Ariens Company has been building premium outdoor power equipment since 1933. The company provides professional snow removal products and the Gravely brand of commercial mowing equipment. Gravely commercial mowing equipment includes walkbehind, zero-turn and outfront mowers.



Ariens® Deluxe Platinum **SNO-THRO® Series**

Ariens Company introduces the **Deluxe Platinum SNO-THRO®** Series, which offers powerful 14-in, steel serrated augers to handle serious snowfall. A dual auger belt drive continuously transmits 100% of the engine power directly to the blower head with no maintenance adjustments needed.



> Deluxe 24 Platinum 24-in. clearing width 249cc 1150 series Briggs & Stratton® engine

21-in. housing height

> Deluxe 30 Platinum 30-in. clearing width 342cc 1650 series Briggs & Stratton® engine

21-in. housing height

Additionally, Ariens Deluxe Platinum SNO-THROS have a 3- to 50-ft. throwing distance. 200° Quick-Turn remote chute control and a 2.9-quart fuel capacity. Accessories include a snow cover, which improves airflow and prevents moisture build-up during storage, as well as composite skid shoes, protective cab and drift cutters.

"Green" Mowers

With high gas prices and heightened awareness of environmental issues, the product development team has been focusing on alternative-fuel powered equipment. Aimed at reducing emissions, the new alternativefuel powered introductions guarantee your ability to mow during Ozone Action Day restrictions—all intended to "Keep You Cutting."

As you look for ways to save on rising fuel costs, the Gravely 260H XDZ LP units have the ability to reduce your fuel use significantly. Other advantages include less noise, the opportunity to qualify for bid work that requires environmental solutions and the option to reduce your impact on the environment.

To see firsthand how these units still maintain the reliability and quality of cut associated with Ariens and Gravely equipment, spend time at the outside demonstration area Booth No. 6022-D at GIE+EXPO in Louisville, on Oct. 29-30, 2009.

For more information, visit www.gravely.com.





Gravely, an Ariens Company 655 West Ryan Brillion, WI 54110

Phone: 800-472-8359 Fax: 920-756-2407 Web sites: www.gravely.com www.ariens.com

E-mail: cdilger@ariens.com

Platinum series features a heavy-duty aluminum XS GEAR CASE® and three-blade and 14-in. steel impeller. This series also offers reversible skid shoes. standard clean-out tools, 15-in. by 5-in. directional snow tread tires and automatic traction control. Available in two models, the Deluxe 24 Platinum and the Deluxe 30 Platinum, both machines have standard halogen headlights, hand warmers and

automatic traction control.

Made of an all-steel

construction, the Deluxe



Dr. Toni Bucci **Business Manager**

BASF is committed to the following values: innovation for the success of its customers; safety, health and environmental responsibility; personal and professional competence; sustainable profitable performance; mutual respect and open dialogue; and integrity.



BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals 26 Davis Drive Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: 919-547-2000 Web sites: www.betterturf.basf.us www.basfturftalk.com

BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals

Product focus:

Better turf comes from better science. As the world's leading chemical company, BASF invests millions in R&D each year, applying for 1,000 patents a year and literally creating innovations on a daily basis. These investments eventually help lawn care operators control their customers' pests more efficiently, which improves customer satisfaction and increases profit.

BASF Turf & Ornamentals has an innovative product portfolio with a high proportion

of patent-protected products, as well as a strong late-stage R&D pipeline. Its patented and post-patented product offering helps lawn care operators choose the most efficient pest management product for their customers' challenges.

Headquartered in Research Triangle Park, NC, the BASF Turf & Ornamentals business group develops and markets chemical solutions for improving turf quality through pest management, which includes weed, disease and insect control.

Manufacturing facilities:

BASF is represented with production and sales facilities worldwide.

Major product lines:

The BASF Turf & Ornamentals portfolio includes:

- Insignia® and Trinity® fungicides;
- > Drive® XLR8, Onetime®, FreeHand™ 1.75G, Segment®, Pendulum® AquaCap™, Basagran® T/O and Image® 70 DG herbicides; and
- > Amdro® Pro insecticide.





















Blizzard Snowplows



Product focus:

BLIZZARD® is dedicated to providing the most innovative, highly productive snow removal equipment available. It pioneered the expanding moldboard technology and today manufactures and markets a full line of innovative snowplows.

- > POWER PLOW™—This plow sets the standard in snow removal productivity and versatility. The moldboards hydraulically extend from a compact straight position to an extended WIDE PASS™ straight position, or into a high-capacity BUCKET BLADE™ scoop position—all from the comfort of your cab. Models are available for use on trucks and skid-steer loaders.
- > SPEEDWING™—This BLIZZARD® exclusive plows like a POWER PLOW but is as easy

to operate as a straight blade. SPEEDWING automatically defaults to the scoop position for straightforward plowing, creating maximum snow containment for pushing and stacking snow. When the blade is angled, the trailing wing automatically drops back in line with the main moldboard, while the leading wing retains its forward position to prevent spillover and utilize the entire blade width.

- > HD Straight Blades—Built to withstand winter's fury and deliver superior performance in the most demanding conditions, the flared moldboard-an industry first-rolls snow farther ahead and to the side, saving time and wear and tear on your truck. Available in 71/2-, 8-, 81/2and 9-ft. widths, these plows feature an aggressive cutting edge angle, optimized blade curl and the time-saving Power Hitch™ 2 attachment system.
- > LT Straight Blades—Built for lighter-duty plowing applications, these plows share the same basic features as the

HD straight blades. 71/2- and 8-ft. models are available for pickup trucks, SUVs and select utility vehicles.

> Ice Control Equipment— BLIZZARD® offers both a lowprofile tailgate spreader and the new line of ICE CHASER™ poly/electric hopper spreaders to match your ice control needs.

Manufacturing facilities:

A division of Douglas Dynamics, LLC, the country's leading manufacturer of snow and ice removal equipment, BLIZZARD® products and components are manufactured in Johnson City, TN, Milwaukee, WI, and Rockland, ME.

Technical support:

BLIZZARD®'s expanding distributor organization provides the product knowledge and technical expertise to match the appropriate BLIZZARD plow to your vehicle and snow removal needs to maximize your plowing efficiency and profitability. To locate your nearest BLIZZARD dealer, visit blizzardplows.com.



BLIZZARD® Snowplows P.O. Box 245038 Milwaukee, WI 53224-9538

Web site: www.blizzardplows.com E-mail:

info@blizzardplows.com





Mark Tipton Managing Partner

To enable profitable growth in landscape companies by leveraging leading edge software technology to control costs, increase efficiency and deliver premier customer service. Our goal is to provide tools to build a better future for you and your company.



BOSS® LM— The Integra Group, Inc. 714 Spirit 40 Park Drive Suite 150 Chesterfield, MO 63005

Phone: 1-866-596-5971 Fax: 636-449-3900 Web site: www.bosslm.com

E-mail: info@bosslm.com

BOSS® LM — The Integra Group, Inc.

Product focus:

The Integra Group was founded in 1999 as a custom software development firm. More than 100 software systems have been designed, developed and successfully deployed. One of these systems was developed for a large landscape company with offices in multiple cities. We captured their vision and delivered BOSS® LM, a powerful, easy-to-use business management software systema single integrated solution that spans all core business operations from sales through invoicing and accounting.

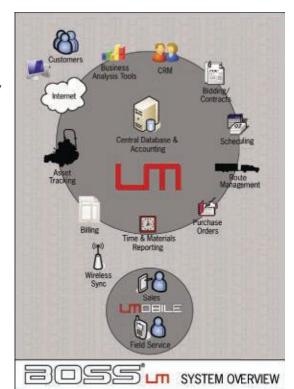
BOSS® LM is enabling companies of all sizes to better understand and manage their businesses by providing greater visibility and control over what is happening on a day-to-day basis. BOSS® LM presents the information you need for strategic planning to improve and expand your business.

One of BOSS® LM's unique features is that it is designed for use by employees throughout the organization from sales to production, not just accountants and administrators. BOSS® LM provides simple graphical screens with intuitive drill downs that give users the information they need quickly and easily. They will throw out their spreadsheets and charts—and actually use it.

That's why clients are telling us that sales is able to sell more and production is able to produce more since they implemented BOSS® LM.

Our first customer told us: "My return on investment for BOSS® LM is higher than any piece of equipment I've purchased."

Calculating the ROI doesn't just apply to equipment, but to any asset that requires an



investment, including software. One of the steps in our process with each client before he or she purchases BOSS® LM is to create a value analysis to identify the ROI.

Technical support:

Unlike many software purchases that typically don't have a plan until after you purchase the software, ours begins long before you have made any commitments. After some initial discussions, we put together a mutually agreed upon evaluation plan, which outlines the steps that we will go through together to determine whether BOSS® LM is a good fit for your business. After implementation, we provide complete support including product upgrades.

THE BOSS Snowplow



Product focus:

Since 1985, THE BOSS Snowplow has made snowplowing efficient and easy with innovative products for professionals and homeowners that set new industry standards for quality, reliability, craftsmanship and performance. Northern Star Industries, Inc. acquired The BOSS Snowplow 24 years ago and quickly became an industry leader and innovator. Using new technology and stateof-the-art engineering, the company has pioneered a number of revolutionary features and equipment additions for snowplows, setting new standards within the industry.

Manufacturing facility:

All THE BOSS Snowplows are designed, built and put to the ultimate performance test in Michigan's rugged Upper

Peninsula, where winters—and deep snow—are a way of life. THE BOSS Snowplow products are designed and manufactured at the company's ISO 9001: 2000-registered facility in Iron Mountain, MI.

Technical support:

THE BOSS satisfies customer needs by designing and manufacturing quality products and providing extraordinary customer service. Working as a team, the company uses the resourcefulness of its entire workforce to continuously improve its processes and products.

Major product lines:

BOSS offers its plows in both steel and poly designs. THE BOSS Snowplow line consists of four main categories including:

- > Power-V Multiposition Plows for 1/2- through 2-ton trucks.
- > Straight-Blade Plows for downsized 4x4s, 1/2- to 2-ton trucks, and SUVs.
- > Straight-Blade Snowplows for Skid Steers.
- > Salt Spreaders for ½- to 1-ton trucks.

Company innovations:

> SmartHitch® 2—Changing the standard in snowplow attachment time forever,

Smart-Hitch 2 allows snowplow operators to attach and detach a plow in a matter of seconds in three very simple steps. Smart-Hitch 2 represents the latest in breakthrough technology for snowplow mounting systems.

> Power-V Multiposition Plow—Synonymous with THE BOSS, the Power-V Plow, introduced and perfected by the company more than two decades ago, is the industry standard for multiposition snowplows.

> SmartLight® 2 — Designed

- to illuminate in front of your vehicle wider, farther and more consistently Smart/ight than any other plow light package on the market, SmartLight 2 uses state-of-the-art reflector optics and Halogen InfraRed bulbs to provide a whiter light that is less fatiguing to the eyes.
- > SmartShield®—Setting the standard in the industry for paint finishes, THE BOSS SmartShield baked-on powder-coat paint finish begins with an exclusive zinc

primer before the finish coat is applied. The zinc primer adheres to the metal better, providing superior corrosion resistance and gives each plow a high-gloss shine that keeps your plow looking great for years to come.



THE BOSS Snowplow P.O. Box 787 Iron Mountain, MI 49801-0787

Phone: 800-286-4155 Web site:

www.bossplow.com

E-mail:

sales@bossplow.com

Blake Smith

President

The Decor Group Christmas Decor, Inc. NiteTime Decor, Inc.

Mission Statement

The 'light' way to new revenue and additional profits from two proven business systems!





Christmas Decor NiteTime Decor 7602 University Ave.

Lubbock, TX 79423

Phone: 1-800-687-9551 Fax: 806-722-9627 Web sites: www.ChristmasDecor.net www.NiteTimeDecor.com

E-mail: jbush@thedecorgroup.com

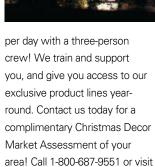
Christmas Decor, Inc. / Nite Time Decor, Inc.

The Decor Group has helped more than 375 service companies achieve greater success with its unique franchise concepts. Times like these call for action and positive steps to better position yourself for success. Our systems work and can give you the edge you need to zoom past competitors.

The Decor Group diligently works to ensure the success of all of our franchises. No other franchisor will do more to train, support and encourage its franchisees. By providing an extensive range of educational programs, technical support, inthe-field site visits, specification assistance and marketing support, we set the standard in total franchisee support. We were named a 2008 Top Ten Home Improvement Franchise by Entrepreneur magazine and AOL.

The holiday season can provide many opportunities for your business:

> Christmas Decor is a proven system that will help you provide professional holiday decorating services to homes and businesses using many of your existing assets. Trucks, equipment and employees produce more. Our franchisees earn an average of 28% net profit, and can produce \$2,698



www.christmasdecor.net

NiteTime Décor is our architectural and landscape lighting system, and the demand for this service continues to grow! Tap into this exciting industry to diversify your services and earn higher margins. Our training and support system teaches you to operate more efficiently while commanding a higher price for vour service. Call to find out how our franchisees earn an average sale of \$3,765—earning about \$100 gross profit per man





hour. Contact us today for a complimentary NiteTime Decor Market Assessment to see your territory's potential. Call 1-800-687-9551 or visit www.nitetimedecor.com.





Collier Metal Specialties LTD



Mission Statement

To provide customers quality landscape products, rapid turnaround time and excellent customer service..

Collier Metal Specialties LTD 3333 Miller Park South Garland, TX 75042

Phone: 800-829-8225
Fax: 972-494-1605
Web site: www.colmet.com
E-mail: sales@colmet.com

Product focus:

Collier Metal Specialties LTD/COL-MET manufactures an extensive line of steel landscape edging and edging accessories for residential and commercial use. Product line ranges from 14-ga-¼-in. thickness, 4- to 6-in. heights and durable powder coat colors green, brown and black. COL-MET edging products offer professional landscapers "the first choice" for longlasting, heavy gauge steel that provides attractive landscape areas separation that stays in place for years. Quick and easy installation and less cost make steel edging a better value than any other durable edging product available.

Planting beds and tree rings are the most common uses of COL-Met steel edging, to provide a clean-cut separation of planting beds and other areas without being a noticeable part of the overall landscape scene. Other popular applications include brick and stone containment, borders for gravel and asphalt walkways, drives and paths. For years, steel edging has been the choice of professionals who design and build landscape projects at many national monuments, corporate headquarters, college campuses, institutions and resort properties in America.

COL-MET edging products are manufactured from hot-rolled, low-carbon steel that can be easily formed on the job to just about any configuration with minimal radius restrictions depending on the product. Polyester powder coating provides a durable finish that is formulated to withstand outdoor exposure that is used commonly on playground and outdoor power equipment.



Nathan Stobbe CFO

Cover-All Building Systems



Product focus:

Cover-All Building Systems is the leading manufacturer of steel-framed, fabric covered buildings. Cover-All® buildings are available in clear-span widths up to 300 feet and are preengineered to meet structural requirements. Behind each Cover-All building is a worldwide team of dedicated professionals, an ISO 9001:2000-certified manufacturing facility, and continual investment in product research and development.

Landscaping contractors across North America have discovered that Cover-All buildings are an ideal storage solution for lawn care product and equipment. Contact a dealer in your area to find out how Cover-All can improve your business.

Cover-All benefits:

- > Lower operating costs— The unique properties of the DuraWeave® membrane cover allow natural light inside the building, reducing electrical costs by as much as 80% (Source: SRC Building Report, August 2003).
- Long service life—Built for long-term durability, advanced steel finishing processes ensure all steel is corrosion-resistant and tension-membrane covers will never rust-even under the harshest conditions. Backed by a 15-year warranty and an expert service team, Cover-All buildings are worry-free and easy to maintain.
- > Quick installation— Depending on the scope of the project, Cover-All buildings

can be installed in a fraction of the time needed for traditional structures. Cover-All buildings can be relocated at any time to meet changing needs.

A design that works— Available in widths up to 300 feet, the clear-span space is proven for unobstructed equipment maneuverability. Designed to meet National Building Code, each Cover-All building is constructed with durable components to stand up to the harshest conditions.

Manufacturing facility:

Our state-of-the-art 170,000-sq.ft. manufacturing plant is located inside two Cover-All TITAN® structures

Customer feedback:

"It's a great building, serving our need for storage in a costeffective manner. The design is robust and innovative. It was quick to put up, and proved the ideal height and space we needed." - Mark Dube, Ontario





Cover-All Building Systems 3815 Wanuskewin Road Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Canada S7P 1A4

Phone: 800-268-3768 Fax: 306-664-7979 Web site:

www.coverall.net E-mail: info@coverall.net

Larry DeWitt President and CEO

Mission Statement

The DeWitt Company—committed to environmentally responsible products, unparalleled customer service, innovation and value to customer.

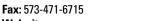
DeWitt Company

Product focus:

Today DeWitt Company has a full line of woven and nonwoven landscape fabrics, created for professionals and homeowners alike, along with over 30 other lawn and garden products —all designed to make



work easier for anyone working in landscape. DeWitt has made a serious commitment to the lawn and garden industry by introducing new products, improving existing products, and developing innovative merchandising solutions. DeWitt Company's landscaping products and plant fabrics are the No. 1 choice of professionals in the lawn and garden industry. DeWitt's high performance, quality products save time and long-term maintenance and are environmentally safe.



Web site:

www.dewittcompany.com

DOWN TO EARTH PROTECTION

DeWitt Company 905 S. Kingshighway

Sikeston, MO 63801

Phone: 800-888-9669

E-mail: delarosas@ dewittcompany.com



Manufacturing facilities:

DeWitt operates a state-ofthe-art, more than 300,000sq.-ft. facility that is centrally



located in the heartland of America. By continually investing in technology and equipment, DeWitt is able to consistently provide the highest quality products available in the industry.

Technical support, sales and customer service:

We are your experienced

sales and service team and we know the lawn and garden industry. From manufacturing to on-time delivery, the DeWitt Company prides itself on providing exceptional quality and service. "The bitter taste of poor quality lasts long after the sweet taste of a cheap price is gone."

David Levy President

Mission Statement

DIG is defined by our commitment to our customers. We strive to exceed customer expectations by embracing continuous improvement throughout our organization.

DIG Corporation

Product focus:

DIG Corporation was founded in 1981 with a commitment to developing a complete line of low-volume irrigation products for the commercial turf and landscape industry. We have expanded this vision, incorporating innovative technology to develop irrigation controls using light as a source of energy.

From concept to design, DIG's engineers are driving

remote operation (LIET XRC).

Our new LEIT-2 controller defines the term "true wireless" technology. With the elimination of field wires to the valves, and an independently powered control system, the LEIT-2 possesses an array of benefits including savings in time, labor and cost. The RC-2 handset operates up to 99 controllers or 198 valves wirelessly. With multilingual, icon-based software, the LEIT-2 controller is extremely easy to use and understand.

DIG uses state-of-the-art equipment in its manufacturing processes. DIG commissioned its extrusion line facility in 2000 and produces drip tubing and drip line, using virgin 7510 polyethylene material to ensure a reliable, long-lasting product for its customers.

With over 25 years of product development, DIG Corporation has produced a comprehensive and versatile line of irrigation products and continues to excel in the creation of intelligent irrigation solutions. DIG is dedicated to the research and development of quality, environmentally conscious products that will meet the irrigation industry's needs today and in the future.

Manufacturing facility:

Located in Vista, CA, DIG owns and operates a 40,000-sq.-





ft. facility where exceptional products are manufactured, assembled and thoroughly tested.

Technical support:

DIG is defined by our commitment to our customers. We strive to exceed their expectations by providing world-class customer service, embracing continuous improvement throughout our organization and proactively developing products of the highest quality that satisfy our global customer needs and use the earth's resources wisely.





DIG Corporation 1210 Activity Drive Vista, CA 92081

Phone: 1-800-322-9146 Fax: 760-727-0282 Web site:

www.digcorp.com **E-mail**: dig@digcorp.com

to develop technically superior products that are environmentally friendly while achieving a quality level supporting extended product life and reliability.

Light Energized Irrigation
Technology (LEIT) has been
developed and refined over
the last 18 years with a
series of protecting patents.
Powered only by ambient
light, LEIT Controllers operate
around the clock, unlike their
solar powered predecessors.
Available in up to a 28-station
configuration and optional



Antonio Galindez President and CEO

As part of The Dow Chemical Company, we share a common mission of constantly improving what is essential to human progress by mastering science and technology. This mission is embodied in what we call the "Human Element"—our commitment to drive and apply science to solve the world's most challenging human problems. This focus empowers our thinking, encourages teamwork and gives our employees the freedom to develop creative approaches. Together with The Dow Chemical Company, we strive to make the biggest impact while leaving the smallest footprint.

Dow AgroSciences 9330 Zionsville Road Indianapolis, IN 46268

Phone: 800-255-3726 Fax: 800-905-7326 E-mail: info@dow.com Web site: www.dowprovesit.com

Dow AgroSciences

Product focus:

Dow AgroSciences delivers innovative technology that exceeds market needs and improves the quality of life of the world's growing population. Every day, our employees—our Human Element—combine their different perspectives to constantly improve our organization and the products and services we deliver. This is evident in the Turf & Ornamental products we have recently introduced, and the several new products and technologies in our pipeline. That's our commitment to the industries we serve and, most important, that's our commitment to you.

Major product lines:

Dimension® specialty herbicide provides premium season-long pre-emergence control of crabgrass, spurge, oxalis and other grassy weeds, along with early postemergence control of crabgrass. With multiple formulations, including water-based Dimension 2EW specialty herbicide, Dimension can be used over the top of field- and container-grown nursery and landscape ornamentals, and on established lawns, golf courses and commercial sod farms without staining surroundings.



herbicide is the most effective pre-emergence herbicide for broadleaf weeds labeled for cool- and warm-season turf. It can be applied in spring or fall; helps minimize costly callbacks due to weed breakthrough; and provides control for up to eight months.

> LockUp® specialty
herbicide is available through
distributors as a formulated
product for superior control of
dollarweed in the South and
dandelion in the North. It offers
postemergence weed control
to lawn care professionals, golf
course superintendents and
sports turf managers. It provides
activity at extremely low use
rates (0.02 to 0.06 lb. a.i./A) and

can be applied to wet or dry cool- or warm-season turf.

> Eagle® 20EW specialty fungicide is a liquid systemic fungicide for preventive and curative control of roughly 20 turf-destroying diseases, including dollar spot and brown patch. Available in convenient, easy-to-use containers ideal for use on home lawns and backyard fruit trees. It won't harm popular turfgrass and ornamental species.

Sales and technical support:

We have more than 30 dedicated individuals serving as sales representatives, technical account managers, nursery specialists, sales managers and field scientists providing training, stewardship and solutions to formulators, distributors, university researchers and end users nationwide. Labels and MSDS are available at www.dowprovesit.com.

Our Power of MORE™ earning program allows companies to earn cash rebates on Dow AgroSciences product purchases. Visit www.powerofmore.com.

^{®™}Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products, Eagle 20EW and LockUp apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions.

Pete Lord President

Mission Statement

Our mission is to always provide the landscape professional with the most innovative, feature-rich and easy-to-use landscape design software in the marketplace.

Drafix Software 114A W. 3rd St., Suite 301 Kansas City, MO 64105

Phone: 1-800-231-8574 Fax: 816-842-5554 Web site:

www.prolandscape.com

E-mail:

sales@prolandscape.com

Drafix Software

Product focus:

Take your business to the next level using PRO Landscape design software.

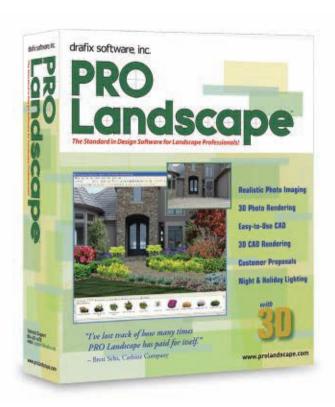
PRO Landscape is very easy to learn and even easier to use. Create stunning visual landscape designs including night and holiday lighting, 2D site plans and accurate estimates through three integrated modules. You can also automatically transform photo imaging or 2D site plans to stunning 3D. PRO Landscape makes it fast and easy to sell, plan and bid your landscape designs.

> Photo Imaging: Do

your customers have trouble visualizing your landscape designs? Use PRO Landscape's Image Editor to create a "life-like" before-and-after image of your proposed landscape using a digital photograph of the customer's house or building. The image library includes more than 7,500 of the industry's highest quality images of plants (by climate zones), grass, mulch, hardscapes, water features, night and holiday lighting and more. Create a design in just minutes that your customer will easily understand!

> CAD for Landscape

Design: Tired of drawing by
hand, then spending extra
time labeling your drawing
and doing quantity take-offs?



Use PRO Landscape's Planner to quickly create a scaled 2D-site plan that accurately represents the installation of plantings, hardscapes, even irrigation systems. While you are drawing, Planner keeps track of all the plant materials, calculates the area of pavers and other hardscapes, and volume of materials such as mulch or rock. Even creating plant callouts or a legend is quick and easy.

> Complete, Professional Proposals: Would you like to improve the professionalism of your estimates? PRO Landscape's Proposal generates an accurate bid directly from your Image Editor or Planner file, eliminating errors and duplicated efforts. Simply put in your prices and tax rate and Proposal will do the rest. Once you create your estimate, put together a professional-looking customer presentation including the cover sheet, estimate, material list and plant information in just seconds!

Technical support:

PRO Landscape comes complete with a tutorial/training DVD and free technical support. Classroom and one-on-one training is also available.



Mike McDermott Global Business Leader for DuPont Professional **Products**



DuPont Professional Products

4417 Lancaster Pike CRP Building 705 Wilmington, DE 19880

Phone: 888-638-7668 Fax: 302-355-3218 E-mail:

proproducts@dupont.com

DuPont Professional Products

DuPont' Advion

Product focus

DuPont Professional Products brings the company's tradition of science, innovation and safety to the pest and green industries. DuPont Professional Products' global portfolio includes DuPont™ Acelepryn® insecticide, DuPont™ Advion® fire ant bait, DuPont™ Advion® insect granule and $DuPont^{TM}$ Provaunt® insecticide. Our R&D efforts focus on creating highperforming turf and landscape ornamental products with the best environmental attributes possible.

Major product lines

> DuPont™ Acelepryn® insecticide was tested in over 500 university field trial protocols and has been proven capable of providing season-long control of every turf-damaging white grub species plus key surface-feeding insects with just one application when applied according to label use directions. Acelepryn® is also gentle on the environment, a key feature as more homeowners are requesting environmentally smart choices. Classified as reduced-risk by the EPA for applications to turfgrass, Acelepryn® has a mode of action different from other turf insecticides. It is available in a liquid formulation, a granular ready to use formulation and a ready to use fertilizer formulation. Acelepryn® is

designed and approved for use on residential and commercial turf as well as landscape ornamentals.

> DuPontTM Provaunt® insecticide offers a mode of action that controls a wide range of caterpillars and other key insect pests as listed on the approved label. Applications of Provaunt® causes target insect pests to stop their feeding in hours—or less, and that activity helps to stop damage to your customers' turf and landscape ornamental plants. Provaunt® is effective at the low label application rates. And this effectiveness can be attributed to the class of chemistry and mode of action of the active ingredient in Provaunt. The Insect Resistance Action Committee classifies this active ingredient in Group 22: voltage dependent sodium channel blockers.

> DuPont™ Advion® fire ant bait has been tested in the field and through professional use to show that fire ant colony control can be achieved in 24 to 72 hours. Just one or

two applications of the bait formulation has been shown capable of achieving year-long control in a fire ant infested area that has been treated-at an annual cost per acre that's more affordable than many other fire ant control products currently on the market. This product features the DuPont active ingredient indoxacarb, which was recognized by the U.S. EPA in its Reduced Risk Program for fire ant control.

DuPont' Acelepryn

DuPont

DuPont Acelepryn

> DuPont™ Advion® insect granule is a non-repellent bait that is attractive to ants. cockroaches, silverfish, house and field crickets, and earwigs. It provides lawn and pest management professionals with desirable insect control in a ready-to-use, dry bait formulation. This formulation is easy to apply in a wide range of approved application use sites including broadcast lawn treatments, attics, crawl spaces, basements and perimeter applications. The formulation consists of bait particle sizes that appeal to these key insect pests.

James Higgins
President and CEO

Finn Corporation



is more efficient than sod, broadcast seeding or any other method of establishing turf or controlling erosion. Finn HydroSeeders use hydraulically driven, mechanical paddle agitation and liquid recirculation across its entire range to enhance the loading, mixing and discharge operation. Only Finn's exclusive pump design and numerous options provide

for a more powerful and operator-friendly HydroSeeder, while keeping maintenance costs to a minimum. Finn's standard large-and medium-capacity units—ranging from 900 to 4,000 gallons—are ideal for

highway, dust control, landfill, golf course and commercial projects, while the smaller 300- to 750-gallon units are ideal for general landscaping and maintenance work.

> Straw Blowers: Finn
Straw Blowers multiply your
productivity and profits by
doubling straw coverage in a
fraction of the time it takes to
apply by hand. They can deliver
up to 20 tons of straw per hour
at distances of 100 feet. It's the
most efficient way to ensure soil
moisture retention and protect
against erosion damage to
freshly seeded areas.

> Material Delivery
Systems: Finn Bark Blowers

and Material Transfer Systems (MTS) are the most versatile performers you can find, delivering high quality results in landscaping, erosion control and construction-related applications. Finn's Bark Blowers can increase productivity up to 700%, and since they apply accurate, uniform coverage, you can achieve material savings of 25% or more. The new MTS is Finn's latest offering in bulk material movement. It's designed to carry and discharge heavy aggregate, soil mixes, mulch/compost, sand or palletized loads. Equipped with a standard leaf/debris vacuum, as well as available chipper and auxiliary extension conveyor options, the MTS is an essential tool for maximizing versatility.

Hydroseeding Consumable Products are an exclusive blend of premium products that create the ideal growing environment in a single-step HydroSeeder® tank load. Consumable Products consist of plant hormones, polymers, erosion control tackifiers, soil amendments and microbial bacteria to enhance germination, create moisture retention, promote soil stabilization and provide valuable soil nutrients. Finn's new line of hydraulic mulches, from blends to SFMs and BFMs, rounds out the full offering of products for HydroSeeding professionals everywhere.

Product focus:

The Finn Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer of HydroSeeders®, bark blowers, straw blowers and the Finn Hydroseeding Consumable Products. Finn is now proud to add to its product portfolio a line of premium Finn-branded hydraulic mulches for use with any line of HydroSeeding machines. Finn's high-quality equipment and products provide labor savings and the highest levels of productivity and reliability in lawn, landscape and erosion control projects.

Major product lines:

> HydroSeeders: Hydroseeding Sys



Finn Corporation 9281 LeSaint Drive Fairfield, OH 45014

Phone: 800-543-7166
Fax: 513-874-2914
Web site:
www.finncorp.com
E-mail: sales@finncorp.com

Fisher Engineering



Product focus:

Dedication to quality and service has been a FISHER® tradition from the start. Fisher Engineering has been manufacturing snowplows for more than 60 years in the coastal city of Rockland, ME. Through the years, its plows have earned a solid reputation for reliability and strengthespecially among commercial snowplowers. Major product lines include:

- > XtremeV™—FISHER® has taken the best features of the rugged XBLADE™ and the popular EZ-V® snowplows and combined them to build an industry-best V-plow.
- > XBLADE™—You won't find a commercial- or municipal-use snowplow built any tougher than this. It combines FISHER®'s exclusive X-Bracing with premium, corrosion-resistant stainless

steel or poly moldboard.

- > XLS™ (X-Pandable Length Snowplow)—From an 8-ft. retracted straight-blade width to the 10-ft. expanded width, to a scoop width of nearly 9 feet, and a more effective windrowing configuration, the XLS delivers a new level of profitable performance in every plowing situation.
- > HD Series—The rugged FISHER® HD Series plows will withstand the rigors of all commercial applications.
- > MC Series—For vehicles in the 17,000 to 27,500 gross vehicle weight range, these plows are designed for serious snowplowing.
- > HT Series™—Targeted specifically for today's halfton 4WD pickup trucks, the FISHER® HT Series snowplow is a full-size, full-featured snowplow with the strength to handle standard-duty commercial, institutional and extended-use homeowner applications.
 - > SD Series—Designed

for homeowners and non-commercial plowing applications.

> Spreaders—FISHER® builds PRO-CASTER™ and POLY-CASTER™ hopper spreaders and SPEED-CASTER™ tailgate spreaders to match your ice control needs.

Manufacturing facilities:

FISHER®'s modern 150,000sq.-ft. manufacturing facility is in Rockland, ME. As a division of Douglas Dynamics, LLC, the country's leading manufacturer of snow and ice removal equipment, FISHER® products and components are also manufactured in Douglas Dynamics' facilities in Milwaukee, WI, and Johnson City, TN.

Technical support:

FISHER® distributors and dealers are factory-trained to provide exceptional product and service support before, during and after the sale.



Fisher Engineering 50 Gordon Drive Rockland, ME 04841

Web site:

www.fisherplows.com

E-mail:

fe2000@fisherplows.com





Joe Shooner Sales/Marketing Manager

Focal Point Communications makes it easy for our customers to market themselves and grow their businesses. We are dedicated to improving the professional image of our clients and the industry as a whole.

Focal Point Communications 61 Circle Freeway Drive Cincinnati, OH 45246

Phone: 800-525-6999

Web site:

www.growpro.com

E-mail:

joeshooner@growpro.com

Focal Point Communications

Product focus:

Focal Point Communications is a green industry marketing company offering newsletter programs, web site design, direct mailing services and more than 100 semi-custom and ready-to-use marketing aids—including postcards, presentation folders, leavebehind materials and client communication tools—to lawn and landscape companies of all sizes. We create marketing plans for our clients and provide full rebranding services.

Focal Point's focus is on making it easy for green industry companies to look more professional, communicate better and sell more work. Focal Point has been serving the green industry exclusively since 1987, providing professional, effective and efficient marketing services for thousands of companies in that time.

Sales and service:

We pride ourselves on exceptional customer service, and when you work with us, you can expect a smooth, troublefree and friendly experience.

Our new web site www.growpro.com allows our customers to shop for marketing materials anytime.



Paul Webb President

The Hilliard Corporation

Product focus:

The Hilliard Corporation offers a broad line of motion control products, oil filtration and reclaiming equipment, starters for industrial gas, diesel engines and gas turbines under the Hilco trade name.

Major product lines:

> Auto-Lok® Differential
is used on the primary
drive axle and replaces
the limited slip or open
differential. It is easily
incorporated into
existing designs and
is being offered as an
off-the-shelf item for
walk-behind equipment.

> Our patented

Centralized Front

Differential design offers true

4WD in forward and reverse as a differential package. Featuring automatic engagement on the fly, the Hilliard Centralized Front Differential performs like a locking differential when engaged, but like an open differential when cornering.



The Hilliard Corporation has been in business since 1905. We now have more than 500,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space and employ over 300 skilled craftsman.





The Hilliard Corporation 100 W. Fourth St. Elmira, NY 14901

Phone: Fax: 607-737-1108

Web site: www.hilliardcorp.com

F-mail:

hilliard@hilliardcorp.com

Jim Ross President

Mission Statement

As a professional distributor to the Green Industry, we are committed to exceeding our customer's expectations by providing quality products, innovative services and professional knowledge; measured by the mutual profitability and success of our customers, employees and shareholders.



Horizon Distributors. Inc. 261 N. Roosevelt Ave. Chandler, AZ 85226

Phone: 800-782-8873 Fax: 480-337-6701 Web site: www.horizononline.com

E-mail: info@horizononline.com

Horizon Distributors, Inc.



Product focus:

Horizon is more than just a landscape and irrigation distributor; we are your partner, ready to deliver the products and services you need to be successful. Horizon offers the most complete selection of products in the industry, including irrigation, fertilizer, pesticides, seed and sod, mowers, 2-cycle equipment, lighting, pond supplies, barbeques, tools, safety products, pavers and more. Every Horizon region has an instore service center that offers repairs and maintenance to your power equipment.

More than 60 locations in 11 states means that there is a Horizon store conveniently located near your job or property. All stores are open merchandised, helping you to get in and out more quickly. And Horizon's professional, knowledgeable staff—which includes many bilingual team members—can offer ideas and

solutions to any member of your crew. Horizon teams include experts in agronomy, water conservation, equipment and ponding that can answer your questions and ensure you find the right solution.

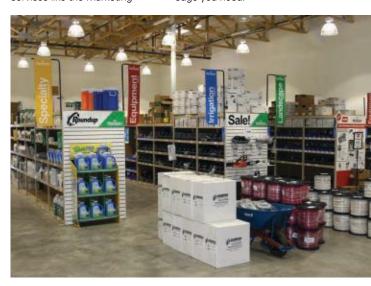
Horizon offers the Business Builder Program, an innovative new program that helps landscape professionals grow their business and be more profitable. The BBP features services like the Marketing

Toolkit—templates and printing services to help you create marketing materials to advertise your business. Most recently Horizon launched BizPro, an online training program that discusses ideas for new services you can offer to increase income along with the tools you need to help sell those services to your clients.

With on-time delivery, will-call, online account access. parts hotline, accounting hotline, paperless invoicing and more, Horizon is the only distributor you need to get the iob done.

Stop by your local store today to see the Horizon difference first hand. Or you can reach Horizon by calling 800-PVC-TURF or online at horizononline.com.

Horizon Distributors—the edge you need.





Mona Haberer President and CEO

To guide and provide the green industry with superior, cost-effective insurance solutions.



Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits

1 Horticultural Lane P.O. Box 428 Edwardsville, IL 62025

Phone: 800-851-7740 Fax: 800-233-3642 Web site: www.hortica-insurance.com E-mail: sales@hortica-insurance.com

Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits

Product focus:

Founded in 1887, Hortica is the only U.S. insurance company solely dedicated to landscape professionals, nurseries, greenhouse growers, garden centers, interior plantscapers, retail florists and wholesale floral distributors—the entire green industry. We realize the industry is unpredictable and ever-changing. Rest assured our focus is, and will remain, dedicated to protecting you.

Hortica will guide you in designing an insurance plan to provide protection for equipment at job sites, on-the-job employee injuries, chemical application, landscape design/architecture errors and omissions, your employees and other risks unique to your business. With the right coverages at competitive prices, Hortica can help your business improve its bottom line.

Hortica actively participates and supports many national and state industry associations including Professional Landcare Network, Association of Professional Landscape Designers, American Nursery & Landscape Association, OFA an Association of Horticultural Professionals, Master Nursery Garden Centers and Society of American Florists.



Facilities:

Hortica is a national company with its corporate office located in the St. Louis metropolitan area in Edwardsville, IL. The company has branch offices in California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Hortica has approximately 55 account executives throughout the country.

Support:

When you call Hortica's tollfree number, a real person will answer your call. Our knowledgeable insurance experts will help you stay abreast of your insurance program. Hortica provides costsaving services to our clients such as loss control training programs, safety resource materials and proactive claims handling. We will even help you avoid unreasonable liability by reviewing legal contracts. In the event of a loss, a professional on-staff adjuster will guide you through every detail and provide a prompt, fair and hassle-free claim settlement.

Major product lines:

Hortica is the green industry advocate that is a trusted partner for all business insurance, employee benefits and personal insurance. We provide a full range of products and services including business package policies, business automobile, workers compensation, bonds, errors and omissions, umbrella, nursery crop, employment practices liability, flood and earthquake, health insurance, long-term care, disability and a variety of personal lines coverage.

Husqvarna®

Husqvarna®, the global leader in outdoor powered products, is the total source outdoor power equipment supplier to the landscape industry. From the new PZ Series zero-turn mowers, to a professional lineup of hand-held equipment from chain saws to trimmers, today's commercial landscaper can turn to one source for all their power equipment needs.

Innovative technology and

address the unique needs of the commercial landscaper, and then asked landscape companies from coast to coast to put the mowers to rigorous in-the-field tests, with outstanding results.

Destined to set the industry standard in zero-turn mowers, the new PZ Series incorporates a high level of productivity through a balance of optimized ground speed, cut quality, clipping dispersal and maneuverability. The new cutting deck optimizes flow patterns, provides high cut quality, even clipping dispersal and reduced blowout-even at high ground speeds.

All components of the new PZ Series were carefully



well. For example, Husqvarna's patented X-Torq® engine technology, found on select chain saws, trimmers and blowers, reduces fuel consumption up to 20% and emissions up to 60%—giving landscapers more power while using less fuel and lessening the impact on the environment.

These are just a few of the many ways that Husqvarna can help maximize uptime and productivity backed by a strong heritage of global leadership in outdoor power equipment.

For a dealer locator, visit www.husqvarna.com.

Major product lines:

Chain saws, trimmers, brushcutters, blowers, zeroturn and walk-behind mowers, tractors, generators, snow throwers, power cutters and accessories.







327LS Trimmer

advanced ergonomic

solutions make Husqvarna a world leader in outdoor power equipment. Working closely with end-users ensures that the equipment offers high power and performance, durability and is comfortable for the operator to increase overall productivity.

For example, Husqvarna designers and engineers created the new PZ Series mowers to

designed to stand up to the day-to-day rugged use of commercial landscapers and stay in the field longer overall due to its durability.

Outstanding engineering capabilities extend to Husqvarna's extensive lineup of hand-held equipment as



Husqvarna 7349 Statesville Road

Charlotte, NC 28269

Web site: www.husqvarna.com



Paul Mullet President

To provide innovative and durable outdoor power equipment, maximizing customer profitability and employee satisfaction, while creating value for shareholders.



Hustler Turf Equipment 200 South Ridge Road Hesston, KS 67062

Phone: 800-395-4757 Fax: 620-327-1321 Web site: www.hustlerturf.com E-mail: info@hustlerturf.com

Hustler Turf Equipment



Product focus:

In 1964. Hustler Turf Equipment built the first true zero-turning-radius mower. Since then, Hustler has continued to concentrate on providing the highest quality, most productive, and innovative mowers to its customers.

Manufacturing facility:

More than 185,000-sq.-ft. facility in Hesston, KS, which features the latest in powdercoat paint technology with a 9-stage wash system for the best finish in the industry.

Technical support:

Hustler has earned the industry reputation of having an uncommon commitment to customer service.

Major product lines:

- > The Sport™ offers homeowners exceptional Hustler quality and dependability at a more affordable price.
- ➤ The new Hustler Z4™ merges the maneuverability and efficiency of a compact mower with the productivity of high horsepower and a fine cut.
- > With a top speed of 15 mph, the Hustler Super Z™ is one of the most productive commercial z-riders on the market. The Super Z's XR-7™deck design produces a beautiful lawn in nearly any condition. The Super Z features a large selection of deck and engine combinations.
- > The TrimStar™ is the most innovative and technologically advanced walk-behind mower





on the market. The featurerich TrimStar is priced lower than competitive hydrostatic, floating-deck mowers, making it a tremendous

Want to lower your carbon footprint? The Hustler Zeon™, the world's first all-electric zero-turning-radius mower will arrive at dealers in January.

Tom Rich President

L.T. Rich Products

Product focus:

L.T. Rich Products is a manufacturer of stand-on fertilizer/spray systems, aerators and turf renovators for the commercial lawn care industry. All units are zero-turn and feature a pump/wheel motor transmission. We use only state-of-the-art laser-cutting equipment and CNC fabrication machinery.

Sprayers feature all stainless

steel construction with large fertilizer and liquid spraying capacity. Sizes range from 100 to 300 pounds for fertilizer and eight to 50 gallons of liquid.

Aerators feature 36-in. or 46-in. tine width and 95,000-sq.ft.-per-hour productivity.

Several attachments are available for the aerators, including a spray system, fertilizer spreader, de-thatch rake, slit seeder and even

a snow plow. Custom and purpose-built units are also available. All products are sold direct or through a dealer base depending on location.

Manufacturing facility:

22,000-sq.-ft. facility in Lebanon, IN.

Major product lines:

- > Z-SPRAY
- > Z-PLUG



L.T. Rich Products 920 Hendricks Drive Lebanon, IN 46052

Phone: 877-482-2040 Fax: 765-482-2050

Web site:

www.z-spray.com

E-mail: sales@z-spray.com

Katherine Bishop

President and CEO, Lebanon Seaboard Corp.

LebanonTurf staff:

Dave Heegard, Director of Sales and Marketing

Cynthia Andrews, Marketing Associate

Mike Sisti. Marketing Manager

Lori Zimmerman, Marketing Manager

Murray Wingate, Marketing Manager - Seed

Garv Nevman. International Sales Manager

Tom Wentz, Sales Manager



LebanonTurf 1600 E. Cumberland St. Lebanon, PA 17042

Phone: 800-233-0628 Fax: 800-806-8563 Web site: www.LebanonTurf.com

LebanonTurf

Company focus:

At Lebanon Seaboard Corp., we have a proud 60-year history of serving customers, commitment to excellence, and dedication to innovation. In addition to Preen® and other well-known national consumer brands, our LebanonTurf division offers several product lines dedicated to the needs of green industry professionals. Landscape professionals, golf course superintendents and sports turf managers know they can count on LebanonTurf to provide the products they need to thrive in today's competitive business environment.

Major product lines:

- > ProScape fertilizers, fertilizer combination products and seeds are specially designed to deliver optimum performance for the serious turf professional. The ProScape line includes homogeneous fertilizers offering the ultimate in uniform distribution and coverage, premium blends featuring the latest technology in controlled release nutrient sources, and seed blends with top-ranked NTEP seed varieties. Whether you're looking for nitrogen technologies such as Meth-Ex 40 and MESA, or the top rated seed varieties, you'll find it all in LebanonTurf's ProScape brand.
- > Our Lebanon Pro line is designed to be the professional's toolbox with products created for just about any landscape situation. The Lebanon Pro line includes a wide variety of high-quality, cost-effective, blended fertilizers, fertilizer control combinations, granular control products and award-winning seed varieties. A practical approach that delivers performance and convenience.
- > ROOTS products offer an array of biostimulants, chelated nutrients, beneficial organisms and patented organic products for turf, flowers, tress and shrubs that help enhance the entire biological life of the soil and plant.



Technologies:

- > MESA® is the first nitrogen source to combine ammonium sulfate with methylene urea in a single particle. The result is an effective and efficiently controlled nitrogen source. MESA provides a consistent, brilliant color with virtually no burn potential. Unlike SCU, MESA does not rely on a coating or lose its slow release attributes when cracked. With MESA, even if cracked, the granule still maintains its slow release properties. That's why half a piece of MESA is still MESA! (Typical nitrogen Release: 6-9 weeks)
- > Meth-Ex is the most efficient, high activity methylene urea complex available today. Meth-Ex 40[®] is derived from a chemical reaction creating a nitrogen source that provides extended microbial release without the need for coatings. Microbial release, dependent upon soil moisture and soil temperature, allows nitrogen to be released when the turf needs its most. The result is color the same day of application with minimal surge growth and maximizing long-term response. (Typical nitrogen release: 8-10 weeks)
- **LSN** (Lebanon Stabilized Nitrogen) is a new fertilizer technology from LebanonTurf that provides a cost-efficient source of nitrogen by reducing nitrogen volatility. LSN maximizes nitrogen availability and offers an agronomic alternative to other slow-release nitrogen sources.



Rand A. Baldwin Managin Director



Mid-America **Horticultural Trade Show** 1000 N. Rand Road Suite 214 Wauconda, IL 60084

Phone: 800-223-8761 Fax: 847-526-3993 Web site: www.midam.org E-mail: mail@midam.org

For exhibiting information, visit www.exhibitmidam.org or contact Show Manager Suzanne Spohr.

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show

For nearly 40 years, the Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show (Mid-Am) has been helping green industry professionals connect with suppliers of plants, products, services and equipment. Mid-Am exhibitors are ready to answer questions, share their expertise, and show you how to increase your bottom line.

Mid-Am—scheduled for Jan. 20-22, 2010—is proudly owned and sponsored by the Illinois Green Industry Association (IGIA), the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) and the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation (WGIF).

Unlike for-profit trade shows, proceeds from the Mid-Am Trade Show go back into the industry to support the vital work and programs of these organizations. Because Mid-Am was developed by green industry professionals for green industry professionals, the event provides targeted, industry-specific products, information, education and networking opportunities.

Mid-Am will appeal to everyone throughout the horticulture industry at every level, from business owners and CEOs to landscape architects and educators, and beyond.

Cultivate your sustainable future

Sustainability means more than offering green products and services for your customers. Your business practices need to be sustainable in order for your company to be profitable and successful. At Mid-Am you'll find the resources to help you get answers, build contacts and obtain ideas to cultivate your sustainable future.

Mid-Am 2010 highlights include:

> Sustainability Zone. A specialized section of exhibits on the show floor is organized to help attendees keep up with the latest plants, products and information on today's hottest



movement: sustainability. Find out what you should know, what you can do, how you can start and more at the Sustainability Zone.

- > Free Relax & Learn Workshops feature the latest products, services and techniques for landscape and design professionals, making their jobs easier and more productive. Learn new techniques and gain valuable tips right on the show floor from industry professionals who know what works and what sells.
- Free Mid-Am Mixer & Reception. Scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 21, 2010, at McCormick Place West, the Mixer & Reception provides attendees an unparalleled networking opportunity. Mid-Am is a great place to nurture and cultivate your business and career. Connect with people who, like you, love what they do and look for new ways to learn and grow.
- > Educational Opportunities. Mid-Am offers industry-focused education presented by IGIA and ILCA. Attend the Pre-conference Workshop Tuesday, Jan. 19, and the Midwinter Conference scheduled Jan. 20-21. Mid-Am also provides training classes and certifications through educational partnerships with other industry groups and associations. Register by Jan. 15, 2010, to save \$10 off the regular registration fee. Visit www.midam.org for details.



Loren Olson President

Modeco Systems' goal is to provide comprehensive cost-reducing software solutions to you, our customer, to afford new vision into your business which in turn allows for a more lean and efficient operation. With simple technology, Modeco will provide software solutions that make a difference.

We work hard to make your job easy.

Modeco Systems, LLC Offices in Jackson, WI and Scottsdale, AZ

Phone: 866-677-8184 Fax: 262-677-8186 Web site:

www.modecosystems.com

E-mail: sales@ modecosystems.com

Modeco Systems, LLC

Product focus:

Modeco Systems, LLC's TimeScape™ software is a proven mobile time tracking system designed to streamline the data collection process and generate dozens of comprehensive reports for job costing, payroll, invoicing and managerial oversight. Using a small handheld scanner and barcodes to gather production information from the field, TimeScape™ downloads to a central database at the end of the day with a few clicks of the mouse. Having today's data at your fingertips proves invaluable for management at all levels. Reduce overtime, check on progress of installation projects, compare budgeted hours against actual and much more.

This business critical information will help you make business decisions based on facts rather than speculation.

TimeScape replaces daily log sheets as well as time cards, plus eliminates hours of data

entry. The information integrates into accounting packages and payroll services. Customization for your specific requirements makes this software solution for the service industry a valuable tool to ensure higher profits and lower costs for a brighter future.

TimeScape's features include:

- > Employees collect data with small hand-held scanner
- Shows exact time of arrival and departure from customer
- > Replaces time cards and job log sheets

- Downloads to a central database with a click of the
- > Crew scanning, remote downloads and dozens of reports
- > Less time crunching numbers - more time for profit

Support:

Our team of professionals will work with your company from initial purchase until you are running TimeScape™ smoothly and beyond.

TimeScape has helped large and small contractors:

"I think the more companies that know their costs the better for the industry. Your system can really help the industry with that problem."

Jim Schwantz, President Acres Group, Wauconda, IL No. 30 on Landscape Management's 2009 Top 150





Richard Martin President & CEO

PBI/Gordon Corporation, a 100% employee-owned company, is a national leader in specialty pest management products and those related products and services that keep our environment beautiful and bountiful.

Our mission is to continually improve our products and services to meet the needs of the many specialty markets that make up the professional turf and ornamental, home, lawn and garden, agricultural and industrial vegetation management industries.



PBI/Gordon Corporation

1217 W. 12th St. Kansas City, MO 64101-04090

Phone: 800-821-7925 Fax: 816-474-0462 Web site:

www.pbigordon.com

E-mail:

webmaster@pbigordon.com

PBI/Gordon Corporation

Nobody knows your turf like we do

New for 2010!:

T-Zone™ Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds provides exceptional broadleaf weed control in cool-season turforasses. T-Zone contains four active ingredients including triclopyr ("T"), a proven ingredient for hard-to-control weeds

Energized with sulfentrazone ("ZONE"), T-Zone is fast-acting with visible activity in hours. Weed death can occur within 7 to 14 days.

Katana 25WG Turf Herbicide (flazasulfuron) is a sulfonylurea herbicide that controls annual and perennial grasses, sedges, kyllingas and broadleaf weeds with post-emergent and some pre-emergent





activity. Highly selective in bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and certain other warm-season turfgrass, Katana 25WG is an excellent product for removal of overseeded cool-season grasses.

Product focus:

At PBI/Gordon, innovative product development for the turf and ornamental industry is our primary focus. We were the first to formulate products specifically for this industry. We continually search for and evaluate products or product combinations that fill the needs of the professional end-use market we service. Our professional field sales team keeps us constantly alerted to these needs.

Technical support:

Technical support service is available from dedicated support personnel on our toll-free line at 800-821-7925 (answered by real people!) or online at www.pbigordon.com or www.weedalert.com.

Gordon's Professional Turf and Ornamental Products:

- > ProForm® Herbicides
- > Trimec® Herbicides
- Embark® and Atrimmec® Plant Growth Regulators
- Azatrol® EC Insecticide
- > Ferromec® Liquid Iron
- Launch® and Focus® Plant Nutrient Supplements

Michael Weagley President

Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution

Product focus:

The Switchblade is designed for changing weather and jobsite conditions. The Switchblade is a reversible Sno Pusher for loaders, backhoes and skid steers that has both a rubber cutting edge and a steel trip edge. The rubber edge is perfect for wet, heavy snow conditions where the rubber can squeegee the surface



changing conditions and reliable during the busy season. The Switchblade is the best of both worlds.

Manufacturing facility:

Pro-Tech's products are manufactured at its facility in Rochester, NY. We use the latest equipment technology in the steel manufacturing and welding industry, combined with the expertise and experience of our employees. Pro-Tech unites its manufacturing abilities with a formal R&D branch, including a testing course on its site.

Technical support:

Pro-Tech integrates its customer support through a dedicated internal sales and customer service staff with an expansive dealer network. Pro-Tech is very concerned with progression and training of the snow and ice industry. We worked with the Snow & Ice Management

Association to produce the most comprehensive training video and guide to date for Sno Pushers. Pro-Tech offers several online resources, including www.snopusher.com, which contains helpful and relevant information for the experienced contractor down to the novice contractor. As always, our staff is available at 888-PUSHSNO to assist you.

Major product lines:

- > Rubber Edge Pushers Loader (SPL); Backhoe (SPB); Skid Steer (SPS); Compact (SPC); Fold Out (FPB/FPL); Pull Back (PBS/PBB); Super Duty (SDL); Angle (APL/APB)
- > Switchblade Pushers Loader (SBL): Backhoe (SBB); Skid Steer (SBS)
- > IST Pushers Loader (ISL), Backhoe(ISB), Skid Steer (ISS)

> Heavy Duty V Plow (VP05S)





Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution, Inc. 711 West Ave.

Rochester, NY 14611

Phone: 888-787-4766 Fax: 585-436-8172 Web site:

www.snopusher.com

E-mail:

sales@snopusher.com

clean. The steel side is ideal for scraping up hard, packed snow conditions and comes standard with the patented IST steel trip system.

Like all of Pro-Tech's products, the Switchblade is engineered for simplicity and reliability. There are few moving parts and no surprises with this snow-removal tool, taking the risk of equipment malfunction out of the equation during your snow-removal operation. Professionals understand the

Paul Jackson Founder

Mission Statement

Alocet Incorporated is built on the belief that solid business processes create solid companies. It is our mission to be the leader in accounting software add-ons by challenging our customers to adopt software and online systems that free up time from administrative tasks in order to focus on what makes them profitable.



OXpress Scheduling Software

57 Spadina Ave., Suite 210 Toronto, Ontario M5V 2J2 Canada

Phone: 888-QXpress **Fax:** 416-640-6027 **Web site:**

www.qxpress.com **E-mail**: info@alocet.com

OXpress Scheduling Software

Product focus:

OXpress is the scheduling software of choice for green industry companies who use QuickBooks.

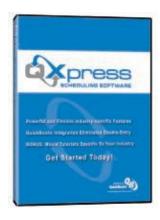
OXpress is a true

QuickBooks add-on that turns
your favorite accounting package
into top-rated, industry-specific
management software by
adding scheduling, job costing
and invoicing capabilities.

You don't have to learn a whole new system—you can just add industry-specific functionality to your existing QuickBooks.

Highlighted OXpress

- ➤ Instantly integrate with your entire QuickBooks database with one click.
- Real-time synchronization: i.e. when a customer is added in QuickBooks, it instantly appears in QXpress and vice versa.
- Scheduled services turn into QuickBooks invoices, minimizing data entry and mistakes.



- > OXpress comes with a built-in "Template Designer" to fully customize work orders, invoices, etc.
- ➤ QX Mapping TM uses highly advanced logic to reroute services to the optimal technician, day and time.
- ➤ QX MobileTM is the most advanced handheld software available for the industry, allowing wireless synchronizing, remote printing, signature capture and a customizable dataentry screen.

New product:

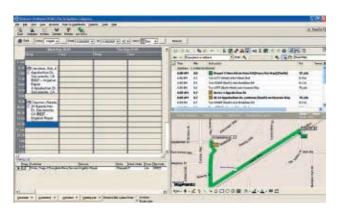
> OXPRESS ONLINE: A customizable, web-based version of OXpress Scheduling Software is now available! OXpress Online is completely customizable, so you can create your ideal scheduling add-on for OuickBooks. Simply edit existing screens, or create your own screens, tables, fields, forms, buttons and entire business processes using drag and drop wizards (no coding!).

With QXpress Online, you can access your QXpress and QuickBooks data from anywhere with an Internet connection.
Using patent-pending real-time sync technology, it is the first and only web-based field service app to sync with QuickBooks in real-time.

In addition to scheduling capabilities, QXpress Online also includes a full featured CRM, customer portal and automatic backups of your database. To see a full list of features, visit www.qxpressonline.com.

Sales & technical support:

Sales and support can be reached Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST at 888-QXpress. Call sales for a free online demo or view movie tutorials at www.qxpress.com/
MovieTutorials.



Walter K. Byrd President

R&K Pump & Equipment

Product focus:

R&K Pump & Equipment manufactures sprayers for the lawn care, pest control, aquatics, nursery & agricultural industries. With 30 years of experience in the spray equipment industry, we produce more than 50

> models with various pump, engine and hose reel options to meet every spraying need. Our exclusive all-welded aircraftgrade aluminum frames allow us to

produce a high-strength, lightweight piece of equipment that will never rust and never needs painting.



Located in Pompano Beach, FL, since 1980, R&K is proud to be an American manufacturer. All welding, fabrication and assembly is completed in-house to ensure quality control and ontime deliveries. Our shops are organized into work cells that can easily be adjusted to build a custom unit or 100 production units just as efficiently. We currently manufacture for some of the largest fleets in the lawn care and pest control industries and provide maintenance for more than 1,500 commercial spray units.

Major product lines:

> Lawn/Turf Care Trucks. or fib

Truck-mounted spray systems are available from 200 to 1,600 gallons.

We offer complete turnkey body and chassis combinations, or we can custom build on your existing vehicle.

> Pro-Series Skid Mounted
Units. Skid units range in size
from 50 to 600 gallons with poly
or fiberglass tanks and more

than a dozen pump and engine combinations. These units offer exceptional service at an economic price.

> Portable Commercial Sprayers. Our 50-, 100- and 200-gallon 4-wheel carts and 2wheel trailers are available with boom spray options and hose reel accessories to match any spraying application.





R&K Pump & Equipment, Inc. 500 NE 28th St. Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Phone: 954-295-3144
Fax: 888-229-4341
Web site:
www.randkpump.com

E-mail:

ken@randkpump.com



Anthony "Tony" LaFetra President

Corporate Philosophy

Water is a most precious resource—and the need for each of us to use it wisely has never been greater.

As the world's largest provider of irrigation products and services, Rain Bird leverages stateof-the-art technologies that help our customers use water effectively, efficiently and responsibly. From central control systems and automatic shut-off devices to pressure regulating rotors and low volume drip irrigation, Rain Bird creates products that use water wisely.

Through partnerships and educational initiatives, Rain Bird also strives to create opportunities for our industry partners to become better stewards of this essential resource.

To learn how The Intelligent Use of Water™ philosophy is woven into every aspect of the Rain Bird organization, visit www.rainbird.com/iuow.



Rain Bird 970 W. Sierra Madre Ave. Azusa, CA 91702

Phone: 1-800-RAINBIRD (1-800-724-6247) Web site: www.rainbird.com

Rain Bird

A History of Innovation

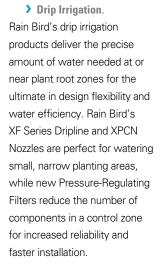
For more than 70 years, Rain Bird has offered the industry's broadest and most trusted line of irrigation products for homes, commercial developments. farms, golf courses and sports arenas around the world. A true industry pioneer, Rain Bird has been awarded more than 130 patents, including the first in 1935 for the original horizontal action impact drive sprinkler.

Today, Rain Bird continues that same spirit of innovation at one of the most comprehensive, controlled-environment irrigation testing facilities in the world. At this high-tech facility, Rain Bird engineers evaluate products under the most demanding conditions, helping ensure unsurpassed product performance and durability while finding more efficient ways to provide the moisture that turf and plants need to thrive.

Quality products for top performance

Controllers. In 2009, Rain Bird released the groundbreaking ESP-SMT smart controller for residential and light commercial use. This new controller makes it affordable for more homeowners to incorporate weather-based irrigation at their residences, simultaneously saving water and keeping landscapes healthy. No matter what the application, Rain Bird's

controllers are reliable and easy to program.



> Sprays and Rotors. Rain Bird's sprays and rotors offer a proven track record of performance that spans nearly three decades. By maintaining constant optimum pressure of 30 psi at the nozzle, Rain Bird's 1800-PRS spray heads increase system efficiency by eliminating the misting and fogging that high water pressure can cause. And, as the only rotor certified

WaterMark program, Rain Bird's 5000 PRS Rotors than other brands of rotors on the market today.



Unparalleled service

Rain Bird's commitment to excellence doesn't stop with its products. The company offers a comprehensive selection of training programs taught by Irrigation Industry Certified Trainers. Offered in English and Spanish, courses cover topics such as system design, field installation techniques, troubleshooting and business

Rain Bird also operates a fully staffed technical support call center at 1-800-RAINBIRD (1-800-724-6247) Monday-Friday, 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. (PST).

Visit www.rainbird.com today, and discover the many reasons why Rain Bird is the world leader in irrigation.





Joseph Kucik President

Our Commitment to You:
To exceed customer
expectations by providing
products and services that
are innovative, productive
and cost-effective. We
measure our success
through the success of
our customers.



Real Green Systems 8601 Boulder Court Walled Lake, MI 48390

Phone: 800-422-7478 Fax: 248-694-2029 Web site: www.realgreen.com E-mail:

realgreen@realgreen.com

Real Green Systems

Company focus:

Real Green Systems is a
25-year-old software
company that provides
software systems to
service-related industries—
primarily lawn, landscape
and pest control. Real
Green Systems provides
marketing lists, mapping/
routing technology, handheld devices, custom
printing (from posting signs
to marketing materials), direct
mail and customer assistant
websites.

Major product lines:

> Service Assistant: For the past 25 years, Real Green
Systems has provided the most powerful business operation system on the market today.
Our philosophy has been not only to help people run their business, but also to help grow their business. Our software combines the easy-to-use functionality of a business management program with superior marketing capabilities to grow your business.

Real Green's Service
Assistant integrates with Go
iLawn, an online measuring
service for the green industry.
The process is easy, fast and
extremely accurate. Enter an
address. View an aerial image
of the property with parcel
boundaries. A teardrop marker
puts you on the rooftop or



know you are at the correct address. You can measure anything on the photo—whether it's a lawn, parking lot, house, tree, swimming pool, etc.—by tracing the item with your mouse ... and it calculates your measurements for you.

It can be used to estimate a variety of services including lawn care, landscaping, lighting, snow and ice removal, irrigation, fencing and more.

> Mapping Assistant:

Mapping gives you the power to decide where your technicians go each day. Make your techs more productive and keep them safer by providing tighter routes, overview maps and turn-byturn directions. Use Mapping Assistant to perform distance searches for neighbor marketing and decrease fuel costs.

> Customer Assistant
Web site: Your own 24-hour
storefront will increase
referrals, upsell services
and most importantly,

retain customers. Customer Assistant allows your customers to make secure, online payments; purchase additional services; request estimates and service calls; view payment and service history; give maintenance tips; and give online quotes.

- > Technical Support: We include on-site installation and several days of in-house training. After installation, we offer support from the most experienced, professional technical staff in the industry.
- > Printing and Direct Mail
 Departments: Let Real Green
 Systems be your "One-Stop
 Shop" for all of your business
 forms and marketing materials.
 We offer more than 120 instock products designed to
 present a professional look for
 your business. We specialize in
 custom printing from posting
 signs to marketing materials.
 Save time and let our Direct
 Mail Department take care of
 your mailing for you.

Swanson Graves President

Reddick Equipment Co.

Product focus:

Reddick Equipment Co. has been manufacturing sprayers since 1965. We produce sprayers for multiple markets, including lawn care, turf, pest control, deicing, tree care, nursery, agricultural and highway. Our equipment is available with frames built from mild steel, stainless steel or aluminum to carry poly or fiberglass tanks from 8 gallons to 1,650 gallons. With more

than \$1.2 million in sprayer parts inventory, we can build most equipment right off the shelf and provide replacement parts for most major brands throughout the industry.



Located in eastern North Carolina just east of I-95, we operate in 28,000 square feet of manufacturing space. The strong values of our rural community are reflected in the conscientious attitude of our employees and management staff.



Our customer service department is staffed by five senior technicians with a wide variety of expertise within the spraying industry, and they enjoy sharing their knowledge. The value to you is receiving the right parts and equipment for your job-the first time.

Major product lines:

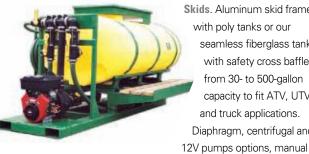
> Pest Control / Lawn Care Skids. Aluminum skid frames with poly tanks or our seamless fiberglass tanks with safety cross baffles from 30- to 500-gallon capacity to fit ATV, UTV and truck applications. Diaphragm, centrifugal and

and electric hose reel options.

- > De-Icing Skids. Aluminum or stainless steel frames and rear-mounted shielded spray booms with poly or our seamless fiberglass tanks with safety cross baffles from 100- to 500-gallon capacity.
- > Agricultural. Thee-point hitch, utility tool bar and trailer sprayers up to 1,000-gallon capacity with spray booms available up to 72 feet.









Reddick Equipment Co. 1909 W. Main St. Williamston, NC 27892

Phone: 800-334-3388 Fax: 252-792-4913

Web site: www.reddick.cc E-mail: sales@reddick.cc

Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigation Law Group

Mission Statement

The purpose and the goal of this practice are to provide legal representation of the very highest caliber, in all matters concerning immigration and nationality law, to as many people as possible. The effect of our work is very real: we are helping to serve businesses and individuals, one by one. We intend our firm to be the best it can be and we are proud of the quality of the staff and representation that our practice provides.



Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigration Law Group

3355 Bee Caves Road, Suite 307 Austin, TX 78746

Phone: 1-800-764-5570 **Fax:** 512-383-0009 **Web site:**

www.reinalaw.com

*1120 Empire Central Place Dallas, TX 75247 www.workvisasusa.com

*Principal Office

Product focus:

Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigration Law Group is a full service immigration law firm specializing in meeting the needs of U.S. employers and individual immigrants.

Reina, Bates, Kowalski & Kershaw Immigration Law Group helps hundreds of employers each year to find workers for jobs that U.S. workers won't take—including landscaping, construction and hospitality.

Reina, Bates, Kowalski and Kershaw Immigration Law Group has eight offices across the United States and Mexico.

For more than 10 years, Robert Kershaw has maintained one of the best track records in the industry by helping U.S. employers meet their needs for legal labor by obtaining legal H-2B Visa workers. He has spoken and written extensively on H-2B Visa workers for the American Immigration



Joseph Reina



Daniel Kowalski

Lawyers Association, the University of Texas, the Texas State Bar, Lexis Nexis, and construction and landscape conferences and expos.



Brian K. Bates



Robert D. Kershaw

The cost for an H-2B application is minimal compared to the possible fines and legal fees to defend hiring undocumented workers.



William Culpepper President

To provide plant protection and plant management products and services that fit specialized market segments that are often outside of the core business strategy of large manufacturers. We acquire, develop, manufacture and market value-added products and services that satisfy the unique needs of our customers. A top priority of all SePRO employees will be product and environmental stewardship.



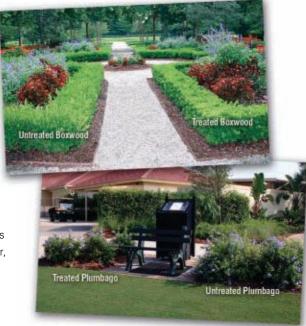
SePRO Corporation 11550 N. Meridian St. Suite 600 Carmel, IN 46032

Phone: 800-419-7779 Fax: 317-580-8290

Web site: www.sepro.com E-mail: Rogers@sepro.com **SePRO Corporation**

Product focus:

The growth-regulating power of **Cutless* Granular Landscape** Growth Regulator helps your business contribute to sustainability by reducing fuel use and emissions, landscape clippings sent to landfills and plant water consumption—all while improving plant health. And for a greener bottom line, Cutless Granular has been proven to save more than 50% of the labor costs associated with trimming hedges, shrubs and groundcovers. With Cutless Granular, it's easy to be green. Visit www.CutlessGranular.com or call 1-800-419-7779 for more information.



Major products:

- > Cutless* Granular Landscape Growth Regulator is a systemic plant growth regulator that slows shoot growth of hedges, shrubs and groundcovers in landscaped areas. Plants treated with Cutless Granular will require less trimming and will have a more compact growth form.
- > Octane* Herbicide. Today's lawn care consumers demand dead weeds now, and they don't want to wait weeks to see results. Octane Herbicide* will add the necessary fuel to your current broadleaf weed control program to speed



toward a more rapid kill. With new Octane herbicide in your tank mix, you can now show your customers the results they want, when they want them. Visual herbicidal results are evident within 24-48 hours following an application of Octane herbicide.

Octane herbicide provides: one-hour rainfastness; flexibility to be tank-mixed with any broadleaf herbicide for increased performance; excellent turfgrass tolerance and affordability.

- > Professional ornamental fungicides, plant growth regulators and insecticides
- > Professional aquatic herbicides and algaecides

Craig Canning President

Mission Statement

At Solucal-USA our mission is to provide quality, university tested and industry proven products to optimize the soil's pH.



Solucal-USA, Ltd. P.O. Box 278 West Wareham, MA 02576

Phone: 508-500-2745 Fax: 866-418-4184 Web site: www.solu-cal.com E-mail: information@solu-cal.com

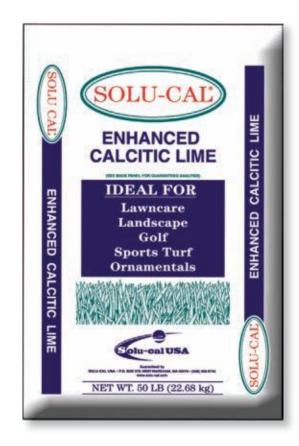
Solucal-USA, Ltd.

Product focus:

Turf managers know the critical role that soil pH plays in soil health and turf quality. They are also aware of the effects the products they incorporate into their turf program have on the environment. Solu-Cal USA takes this issue to heart and produces products that are both environmentally friendly and extremely effective.

For instance, our proprietary Carboxy technology is used in all Solu-Cal products. Carboxy is our PHCA (polyhydroxycarboxylic acid) organic acid that is derived from all natural ingredients. This technology assists turf managers in maintaining optimal pH, which is a major factor in nutrient availability, microbial activity, soil structure and overall turf vigor, reducing the amount of herbicides and their effect on the environment.

Solu-Cal USA's family of calcium and sulfur products allows turf managers to quickly and efficiently address soil chemistry problems. Solu-Cal Enhanced Calcium quickly raises soil pH at one-fourth the rate of traditional liming material. With the reduction of application rates using Solu-Cal products, less time using motorized



spreading equipment means less emissions and less stress on the environment.

Partner with Solu-Cal to efficiently manage your soil and your turf while protecting the environment.

Major product lines:

> Solucal - Provides available calcium while raising soil pH in weeks instead of months.

Available in 70 and 200sqn.

- Sulfur-Maxx Provides available sulfur and calcium while safely lowering soil pH. Available in 190sgn.
- Micro-Cal Calcium fortified micronutrient fertilizer.
- > Peak 4-0-6 w/6 & Micro's provides dark green color without the growth.
- > Solucal-L Effectively replaces liquid lime.

Target Specialty Products is

distributor of specialty

the West's leading wholesale

agricultural chemicals, fertilizers,

application equipment, services

Target has provided products and

services to both the public and

private sectors in the following

markets: golf, landscape,

nursery, professional pest

management. Committed to quality through service,

Target is ISO 9002 certified

and education programs, risk management, worker

and provides specialized training

safety classes and regulatory

management and vegetation

and education. Since 1969,

Mission Statement

To be the best wholesale distributor of specialty agricultural chemicals and supplies to the specialty markets, while striving to serve the needs of our customers, employees, suppliers, community and owners.



Target Specialty Products 15415 Marquardt Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Phone: 800-352-3870

Web site:

www.target-specialty.com

Target Specialty Products



In achieving ISO 9002 certification, all processes and procedures throughout the company from customer service to shipping and receiving are documented. ISO 9002 certification ensures consistent, reliable service.

Target Specialty Products carries a complete product line of disease and pest management products and equipment including:

- > Adjuvants, Wetting Agents
- > Fertilizers, Herbicides, Insecticides, Fungicides, Soil Surfactants
- > Soil Conditioners

- & Amendments
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nationwide network of Toro

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up to sun down.

Facilities:

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Turfco Direct

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Ken Hutcheson President

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Visual Impact Imaging



Product focus:

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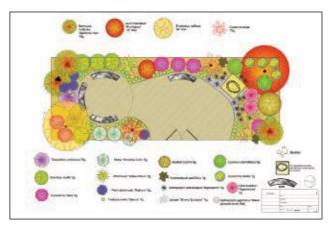
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Bob Walker President

The only way for a small company to enter an established product market and stay there is to design products with irresistible superiority and uncompromising quality. A conventional product with conventional performance may be acceptable and even attractive when offered by a large established company; the same company cannot hope to survive in the marketplace where profit margins are small, competition is strong, and consumer loyalty to existing product lines is great.

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Fort Collins, CO 80528

Phone: 1-800-279-8537 Fax: 1-970-221-5619

Web site:

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Walker Manufacturing Co.

Product focus:

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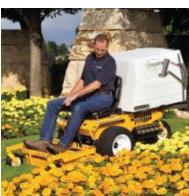
Manufacturing facility:

Walker Mowers are hand crafted in our 216,000-sq.-ft. facility in Fort Collins, CO. Walker takes pride in being more than an assembly shop. We have a full metal fabrication area and a full staff of highly skilled welders. Our average term of employment is over nine years.

Technical and sales support:

Walker sells through two-





step distribution throughout North America and around the world. Our distributors are factory supported for service but have their own in-house technical staff to support their dealer network.

Major product lines:

Commercial riding mowers and a full range of attachments make the Walker Mower a work horse all year long.

Western Products



Product focus:

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- > PRO-PLOW® & POLY PRO-PLOW®—Leave it to the Pros. Designed to meet the requirements of the professional plower, the 7½- and 8-ft. PRO-PLOW models are available in both powder-coated steel and maintenance-free poly. An 81/2-ft. model is offered in steel only.
- > Heavy Weight—With the largest blade available from WESTERN®, Heavy Weight plows are ideal for all-purpose, low-speed plowing. They are a great choice for clearing local streets, parks, county roads and large parking lots.
- > MIDWEIGHT™—As a leaner plow with lots of muscle, the 71/2-ft. MIDWEIGHT is a high-performance plow designed for personal and light commercial use. It's available in powder-coated steel or high-density
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polyethylene.

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Manufacturing facilities:

Western Products' 150,000sq.-ft. manufacturing facility is in Milwaukee. As a division of Douglas Dynamics, LLC, the country's leading manufacturer of snow and ice removal equipment, WESTERN® products and components are also manufactured in Douglas Dynamics' facilities in Rockland, ME, and Johnson City, TN.



Western Products 7777 N. 73rd St. Milwaukee, WI 53223

Web site:

www.westernplows.com **Contact:** info@westernplows.com



ADVERTISER	AD PAGE	PROFILE PAGE
Agrium	3, 21-28	112
Agrotain	106	
Alocet	80	141
Ameristar	15	113
Ariens	75	114
BASF	31	115
Blizzard Corp	47	116
Boss Snowplows	69	118
Christmas Décor	60, 101	119
Collier Metal	51	120
Cover All Building Systems	61	121
DeWitt	76	122
Dig Corp	55	123
Dow Agro	1	124
Drafix	20	125
DuPont	17	126
Empire State Green Industry Show	62	
Finn Corp	81	127
Fisher Plows	85	128
Focal Point Communications	79	129
Hilliard Corp	16	130
Horizon	50	131
Hortica	9	132

ADVERTISER	AD PAGE	PROFILE PAGE
Husqvama	63, 65	133
Hustler	11	134
Integra Group	72	117
J P Horizons	66	
L T Rich	18	135
Lebanon Turf	7	136
Mauget	29	
Mid Am	32	137
Modeco Systems	97	138
P B I Gordon	19	139
Pro-Tech Mfg	13	140

NOTES

ADVERTISER	AD PAGE	PROFILE PAGE
R & K Spray	14	142
Rainbird	5, 67, 33-44	143
Real Green Systems	49	144
Reddick Equipment	12	145
Reina Law	52	146
Sepro	CV3	147
Solu-Cal	6	148
Target	91	149

ADVERTISER	AD PAGE	PROFILE PAGE
Toro	71, 73	150
Trynex	58	
Turf Products	98	
Turfco	70	151
U S Lawns	CV2	152
Visual Impact	59	153
Walker Mfg	66, CV4	154
Western Products	77	155

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WHIT'SWORLD

MARTY WHITFORD EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Contact Marty at 216/706-3766 or via email mwhitford@questex.com.

Help set the record straight

martMoney makes quite a living systematically tarnishing the reputations and threatening the livelihoods of all types of professionals. Its often-shoddy journalism produces a plethora of dirty laundry lists — "10 Things (fill in the blank) Won't Tell You."

Some of the magazine's recent one-sided slams include "10 Things Your Contractor Won't Tell You," "10 Things Your Cable Company Won't Tell You," "10 Things Your Financial Planner Won't Tell You," "10 Things Your Lawyer Won't Tell You," "10 Things the IRS Won't Tell You," and even "10 Things Your iPod Won't Tell You."

SmartMoney's lazy, cookie-cutter approach to investigative journalism recently smeared landscape and lawn care professionals with its dirty, broad brush. On July 31, SmartMoney published "10 Things Your Landscaper Won't Tell You." In his lopsided, so-called exposé, SmartMoney contributing editor Michael Kaplan claims landscapers think deep down inside but never say aloud:

DEFEND OUR PROFESSION

SmartMoney has assembled quite an arsenal of "10 Things (fill in the blank) Won't Tell You" — so many, it's in the process of publishing a book compiling such trash talk.

Let's band together, e-mail these folks and set the record straight. We need SmartMoney to pull its slam on the Green Industry from its Web site and "10 Things ..." book manuscript. Please craft your "10 Things SmartMoney Won't Tell You About Landscape Professionals" and e-mail it today to:

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- 1. "My sprays are real killers, all right."
- 2. "Don't expect a refund if your garden croaks."
- 3. "I'm not qualified to do the job, but that won't stop me."
- 4. "My budget grows like a weed."
- 5. "... but meanwhile, I'm reaping big savings."
- **6.** "All plants are not created equal."
- 7. "I don't always finish what I start."
- 8. "What I'm doing won't necessarily make your home more valuable."
- 9. "My workers chug your beer when they should be mowing your lawn."
- 10. "It's my fault the neighbors hate you."

Offended? I don't blame you. If you're not offended by all 10 counts, you might be guilty of a few of the charges. Please take five minutes to read the entire article at www.smartmoney.com/spending/ for-the-home/10-Things-Your-Landscaper-Won't-Tell-You-12698/. Reread each of the 10 accusations flung by SmartMoney and take a hard look in the mirror. If the shoe fits ... *repair* it promptly.

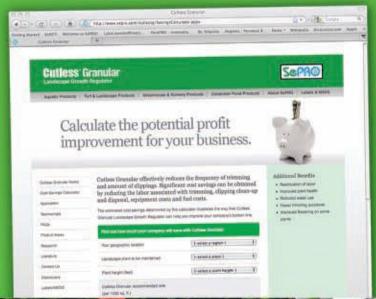
Having met many of you, seen your incredible work and spoken with your customers, I know these allegations are untrue — for the most part. Sure, a few in the profession sometimes fall short of expectations or standards, but these people and instances are rare exceptions to the rule.

A few years ago, when I was managing editor of Pest Management Professional, LM's sister publication, SmartMoney published the similarly sleazy "10 Things Your Exterminator Won't Tell You." We mobilized the industry and launched a counterattack.

Please join us in turning the spotlight 180 degrees, placing it squarely on *SmartMoney* and exposing its sensationalism masqueraded as journalism.

We cannot afford to sit quietly while others attack our reputations, professionalism and livelihoods. It's tough enough out there. We really don't need to add "complete lack of public trust" to our already-weighty business barriers.

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