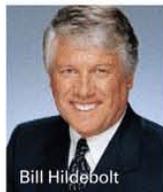




GIC places emphasis on sustainability

The president and president-elect of PLANET offer insight on how next month's Green Industry Conference will help professionals truly 'go green.'



Bill Hildebolt



David Snodgrass

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

English is a living language, and words have a tendency to shift meaning over time. Different groups claim them — some might argue hijack them — to serve their purposes.

"Green" and "sustainability" are two terms whose meanings essentially have

been lost to the Green Industry because other groups have finagled their way into the "green" discussion.

Landscape Management spoke with Bill Hildebolt, president of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), and David Snodgrass, the president-elect, about those words and about the upcoming Green Industry Conference (GIC), which runs along side the GIE+EXPO in

Louisville, KY, next month.

"It's all about emphasizing *professional* in the Professional Landcare Network," says Hildebolt, owner of Nature's Select Premium Turf Services, Winston Salem, NC.

The problem, he adds, is that outside the landscaping world, the concept of

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what constitutes a "green industry" has been co-opted by other interests.

"We want to advance and take the lead in sustainable practices, and show the world *we* are the original Green Industry," says Snodgrass, president of Dennis' Seven Dees, Portland, OR.

That will require retaking control of

the "green" message and teaching contractors to embrace sustainable business practices and lifestyles. Neither task will be easy.

"If you ask a group of 100 people what 'sustainability' means, you'll get 100 different perceptions — 90 of them negative," Hildebolt says. "The term has been co-opted by activists and used

against us so many times.

"But *we* are the professionals, the true stewards of the environment," Hildebolt adds. "What we're working toward is: How do we integrate sustainability into PLANET so we can be *known* as the true leaders in this increasingly key area?"

Learning from one another

Much of that begins with the educational programs at this year's GIC.

"Some are well ahead of others in adopting sustainable practices," Snodgrass says. "We're going to share their best practices at GIC — elevating the industry as a whole and changing and greening how we think and operate.

"This whole sustainability movement started out all about the ecology of the planet," he continues. "Now it's much broader — encompassing the necessary people and profit parts."

At GIC, top professionals in the industry will share ideas and strategies regarding sustainability and lean management, Hildebolt says. And those messages will continue through other PLANET-sponsored events in 2009 and beyond.

"We are developing a continual sustainability learning experience that will follow us from venue to venue," he says. "Last November, we had an outstanding Crystal Ball meeting on sustainability. We had a really healthy, frank discussion on what sustainability means to regulators, the public, the service sector and opinion formers."

Naturally, that discussion led to new educational opportunities at GIC.

"We're looking at how you can sustain your personnel, as well as your personal health and well-being and that of your family," Hildebolt says. "We're also looking at educating members on the many paths to increased profitability through sustainability."

Embracing sustainable business practices and lifestyles also will help the Green Industry manage the message and public perceptions.

"If you're not taking care of yourself and you don't have a profitable business model, you won't be sustaining much of anything," Hildebolt says. "At PLANET, we're taking a holistic approach." **LMM**



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GIC keynote speakers

Rick Ascolese, President & COO, TruGreen LandCare

As President and Chief Operating Officer, Ascolese oversees the operational and strategic direction of TruGreen LandCare. Throughout his 20-year career, Ascolese has held several leadership positions with some of the industry's most-innovative companies and has applied successful strategies to numerous business models including mechanical services (appliances, HVAC and plumbing), home warranty and landscape maintenance.

Scott Brickman, CEO, Brickman

Since assuming the position of CEO in 1998 at the age of 35, Brickman has grown the privately held commercial landscape maintenance firm, founded by his grandfather, from \$100 million to \$500 million in annual revenues. Today, the company has more than

6,000 employees, 135 branches in 23 states and provides quality commercial landscape services to thousands of office parks, hotels, cemeteries, health-care facilities, retail centers, homeowners associations and schools.

Craig Ruppert, CEO, Ruppert Companies

Ruppert is the CEO of Ruppert Companies, comprised of Ruppert Landscape a commercial landscape construction and management company with branches across several states; Ruppert Nurseries, a wholesale tree growing operation with more than 800 acres; Ruppert Properties, which develops, owns and manages industrial/flex warehouse properties; Ruppert Ventures; and the Ruppert Foundation.

Note: LM Editor-in-Chief Marty Whitford will serve as the GIC keynote panel's moderator.

Oct. 29th
Breakfast @ 7 a.m.

GIE+EXPO schedule

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

- 7:30 AM – 3:00 PM PAC Golf Outing
- 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Workshops – Paluch and Harwood
- 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM Maker's Mark Distillery Tour
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Workshops – Kehoe and Hayter
- 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM New Member/1st Timer's Orientation – Sponsor: Bayer Environmental Science
- 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM Welcome Reception – Sponsor: Cub Cadet Commercial
- 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM PLANET'S Live Auction

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

- 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast With Champions – Sponsor: Caterpillar Inc.
- 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM GIE+EXPO Show*
- 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM Concurrent Sessions
- 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Concurrent Sessions
- 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM PLANET Keynote – Sponsor: John Deere
- 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM Specialty Group Receptions – Sponsors: Caterpillar Inc., J. Thomas Distributors, Project EverGreen and Syngenta Lawn & Garden
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Concert on 4th Street

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

- 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast With Champions – Sponsors: Ewing Irrigation Products and Mulch Mule by Green Industry Innovators
- 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM GIE+EXPO Show*
- 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM Concurrent Sessions
- 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Concurrent Sessions
- 2:45 PM – 4:15 PM Concurrent Sessions
- 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM Faculty Forum
- 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM Awards Presentation – Reception Sponsor: Husqvarna
- 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM Student Industry Roundtable
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Concert on 4th Street

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

- 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast with Champions
- 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM Certification Exam
- 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM GIE+EXPO Show*
- 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Concurrent Sessions
- 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Concurrent Sessions

All Green Industry Conference sessions will be held at the Louisville Marriott Downtown unless otherwise noted.

* Held at the Kentucky Exposition Center

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