

**Jim Campanella** started as a technician for Old Fox Lawn Care nearly 30 years. He moved into management with a variety of companies in the Northeast before deciding to set out on his own. "At that time, I decided that I had learned all the tools I needed to start my own company," he says. Today, he's the president and owner of Lawn Dawg.

**How did you come up with Lawn Dawg as a name?** I knew I wanted something different in the name, logo, colors and the features and benefits of the services I offered. While working for Barefoot Grass, we had a softball team we called The Lawn Dogs, so I changed the spelling of Dog to Dawg, developed a logo that was friendly and distinguishable, and built my offerings based on all of the things customers told me that they did and didn't like about lawn services.

**You've been involved in the industry, as a former president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA, now part of PLANET). Why is that important to you?** Prior to starting Lawn Dawg, I had the great fortune of working for legends of this industry — including Jim Wilkinson, Marty Erbaugh, Pat Norton and Bill Hoopes. The mentoring I received from them helped me get to where I am today.

I joined PLCAA in 1998 with the desire to give my support to the next generation of leaders, just as those guys did for me. Over the years, I have developed so many friends

from all over the country, thanks to my involvement with PLCAA and PLANET.

**You've expressed frustration with the way legislators approach lawn care issues. What can — and should — be done about it?**

I've seen bad legislation passed or considered that has no scientific foundation. Emotion plays a huge factor in how bills get introduced, gain momentum and get passed. Our activist opponents are very engaged with legislators, and are constantly providing misleading and outright false information. They have been better organized than us, and have really kept us on the defensive. Of course, they have the advantage of performing their activism full time. Lawn care operators are busy running businesses, creating jobs, stimulating the economy and providing a beneficial contribution to the environment and the quality of life of our customers.

**Have you been able to influence any legislation?**

In 2010, I lost a lot of sleep: A representative in New Hampshire introduced a bill that would eliminate the use of pesticides on lawns. The first public hearing was like a circus, as the activists systematically introduced people to testify that pesticides have in some way devastated their lives. They brought people from New York, Massachusetts, Washington, Maine and Canada, including a few self-proclaimed "experts." Watching the reaction of the committee members made it clear to me we were in for a battle. Over the next nine months I attended about half a dozen committee meetings — and with the support of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), PLANET and several industry suppliers, we were able to defeat the bill.



## AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** Lawn Dawg, Nashua, NH

**FOUNDED:** 1997

**TITLE:** President

**YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY:** 28

**INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:** Former president of PLCAA and the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals (MALCP); PLANET member and Trailblazer.

**SERVICE AREA:** Northeast United States

**NUMBER OF LOCATIONS:** 8

**EMPLOYEES:** 72

**SERVICES:** Lawn and tree/shrub care

**HOBBIES:** Spending time with family, playing golf and being an avid Red Sox fan

**FAMILY:** Wife, Oana, and children Joe, Sam and Bianca

**WEBSITE:** LawnDawg.com

**What challenges and opportunities do you see for the industry in the coming year?**

We will continue to face the challenges that we've been facing in recent years, such as legislative activity, rising product costs, rising fuel costs, rising labor costs, and an economy that doesn't allow for price increases.

**THE MENTORING I RECEIVED FROM (INDUSTRY LEADERS) HELPED ME GET TO WHERE I AM TODAY.**