

PLANET announces new partnership with NJLCA

HERNDON, VA — The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) is pleased to announce a new partnership with the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA). Recognizing the importance of unifying the Green Industry at both the local and national levels, PLANET and NJLCA recently entered into this agreement that will use the strengths of both organizations to enhance the value delivered to both membership groups through education and networking, legislative advocacy, and consumer awareness programs.

“By formalizing our relationship into this agreement, we look forward to continuing to build a mutually beneficial and collaborative relationship over the coming years,” said PLANET’s Chief Executive Officer Sabeena Hickman, CAE, CMP.

This partnership will offer

PLANET members in New Jersey the opportunity to become part of a community of like-minded landscape professionals in their home state, while offering NJLCA members the chance to participate in and grow their businesses through the opportunities provided by PLANET. To promote and support the importance of membership, both organizations have agreed to extend significant discounts on membership dues to the members of the other organization.

“The New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association is very excited to be the first statewide landscape association to be partnering with PLANET in a joint venture to develop and grow both organizations,” stated NJLCA President Jody Shilan. “We are confident that this relationship will provide additional

value to the members of the NJLCA and its 45-year history, as we continuously strive to help educate our members, provide business opportunities, and help advance professionalism in the Green Industry.”

PLANET and NJLCA will officially kick off the partnership at NJLCA’s

35th annual Trade Show and Conference to be held February 29, 2012. For more information or to register, visit NJLCA.org.

For more information about this partnership, email PLANET’s Vice President of Membership and Services, Shaine Anderson, CAE, or call the PLANET office at 800/395-2522.



PLANET President
Sabeena Hickman

PLANET is the association of members who create and maintain the quality of life in communities across America. With approximately 3,800 members and affiliates, these firms and their employees represent more than 100,000 Green Industry professionals. Some of these professionals have taken the extra step of becoming certified through PLANET and bear the distinction of being known as Landscape Industry Certified.

A vote for Project EverGreen and GreenCare for Troops

In April 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched Joining Forces, a national initiative to support and honor America’s service members and their families. The initiative aims to educate, challenge, and spark action from all sectors of our society to ensure military families have the support they have earned.

In an effort to recognize those citizens and organizations with a demonstrated, genuine, and deep desire to be of service to military families, the First Lady and Dr. Biden established the Joining Forces Community Challenge.

Project Evergreen’s GreenCare for Troops was named a finalist last month in the Joining Forces Community Challenge and has a chance to win several national prizes that rec-

ognize citizens, communities, schools, non-profits, faith-based institutions, philanthropic organizations, and local governments for their efforts in supporting military families.

GreenCare for Troops along with other finalists are being profiled on Challenge.gov, where the public will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite — the People’s Choice winner. Vote for GreenCare for Troops here: <http://joining-forces.challenge.gov/>

Winners will be announced at the White House on March 16, 2012, and be featured at Champions of Change, (www.whitehouse.gov/champions), the Administration’s website where community efforts in the areas of innovation and education are celebrated.

Ewing employees compete and win in Arizona marathon

The Green Industry and marathon running have at least one thing in common — Ewing Irrigation.

Ewing employees finished the 2012 P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon and Half Marathon on Jan. 15. Team Ewing had 169 participants from 17 states — earning the team first place in the GET FIT Challenge — a friendly competition that encourages companies and groups to train and run in the half or full marathon.

“The race tests our bodies, and is a testament to Ewing employees,” said Ewing President Doug York.

At Team Ewing's pre-race dinner on Jan. 14, Ewing employees shared why they participated in the 13.1- or 26.2-mile race.

Bill Snider, manager of Ewing's

Santa Barbara location, decided to run his first half marathon with the team in 2005 because he hadn't been exercising. At first he was only able to run for a few minutes, but after months of building up his endurance, he finished his first half marathon.

“It was the longest 2 hours, 21 minutes and 3 seconds of my life, but I'd done something I never thought I'd be able to do,” Snider said.

Warren Gorowitz, Ewing's vice president of sustainability and conservation, ran his first half marathon with Ewing in 2006 and discovered his love for running as well.

“It's an individual sport. You get to challenge yourself every time you're out



Team Ewing had 169 participants from 17 states compete in the Get Fit marathon.

there,” he said.

Team Ewing also reached its goal this year of raising \$25,000 for Autism Speaks. Team Ewing runners collected more than \$7,500; Phillips Hadco made a \$10,000 donation to the cause; and \$8,000 was donated by Ewing.

Team Ewing has been committed to the cause of Autism Speaks and has raised a total of \$125,000 since 2008.

In addition to participating in the marathon, Ewing's wellness programs this past year included the Just Walk 10,000 Steps-a-Day, Biggest Loser and Active for Life programs, and sponsoring employees for the Tempe International Triathlon.

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What is the future of the ANLA Clinic?

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The conclusion of ANLA's successful 2012 Clinic has been surrounded by industry buzz asking, "What's next?" Rumors ranging from a new location to the end of the Clinic's four decade-long run as the industry's premier education event have circulated at tradeshow and in the trade press. According to Skip Shorb, ANLA Treasurer, and Chairman of the Board of American Plant garden centers, "Clinic was, by most measures, a resounding success. It remains the top event where our industry's owners, top managers and future leaders gather to learn, strategize and share the ideas that make our businesses successful. Clinic remains relevant and important to the future of our company and those of my peers."

Shorb clarifies that Clinic cannot move forward exactly the way it is today. "The Clinic we know and love, at the Galt House in Kentucky, is built for 750-1100 attendees. Our industry is not supporting that right now and the meeting has to change, just as we have changed our garden center to reflect the current economy."



ANLA President, Bob Lyons, owner of Sunleaf Nursery, adds, "ANLA also has a new partner in OFA — The Association of Horticulture Professionals. Clinic 2013 needs to reflect that partnership and serve the educational needs of our joint memberships."

During Clinic's closing general session in Louisville, ANLA executive vice president Bob Dolibois stated, "Clinic today looks very different from Clinic two years ago. We have radically changed the format to meet the rapidly changing needs of our attendees. Clinic 2013 will again differ from Clinic 2012. What will not change is the creativity, innovative education and community — the strong sense of family — that makes Clinic so unique, and so special to our industry."

What is next for ANLA's Clinic? ANLA and OFA's boards of directors are meeting jointly, later this month. Their goal is to come out of that meeting with a framework for a new meeting that allows the organizations to engage their memberships in building a new event for 2013. Stay tuned.

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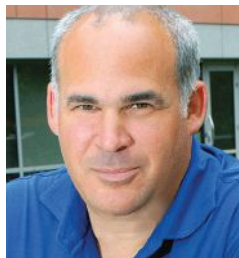
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ValleyCrest makes changes to top executives

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Landscape Cos., the largest integrated landscape services company in the U.S., announced the promotions of two senior-level executives, and the addition of another executive to its leadership team. Effective May 1, 2012, Richard A. Sperber will be promoted to Chairman of the Board of ValleyCrest Landscape Cos. This change will allow Sperber to focus on charting the vision and direction of the family of companies, while remaining involved with client and employee growth and development strategies. As part of this transition, Roger J. Zino will be promoted to Chief Executive Officer of ValleyCrest Landscape Cos., and will remain President of ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance. Additionally, Andrew J. Brennan will re-join the company as Chief Operating Officer of ValleyCrest Landscape Cos. effective January 16, 2012, a newly created position reporting to Zino.

“The driver behind these changes is to keep ValleyCrest strong and on course for the next 62 years,” said Sperber of the family of companies



From left: Richard Sperber, Roger Zino, and Andrew Brennan.

founded by his father, Burton S. Sperber, in 1949.

“I am truly excited about what’s ahead for ValleyCrest in 2012 and beyond. These are smart changes because they put in place solid underpinnings and structure to support our long-term goals. I’m confident these changes will fuel and sustain ValleyCrest’s continued growth and position the company strongly for the future.”

In promoting Zino to CEO, ValleyCrest is drawing a strong and respected leader from within its deep management team to continue moving the company forward. Zino joined the company in 2001 and oversees more than 120 maintenance branch offices across the United States.

“I am deeply honored to lead a world-class organization whose mission today is to build on the vision established by our founder, Burt Sperber, more than 62 years ago,” said Zino. “For him, it started and ended with an intense focus on our customers and our people, and that dual focus will never change.”

Zino joined ValleyCrest following 10 years in the Los Angeles office of McKinsey & Co., where he served as a principal and one of the leaders of the firm’s Service Operations Practice.

Brennan’s focus will be to continue to improve the basics of the business by aligning corporate and divisional resources with customer and branch needs.

PHOTOS COURTESY: VALLEYCREST COS. (LEFT); YELLOWSTONE LANDSCAPE GROUP



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Austin Outdoor continues to grow

BUNNELL, FL — Austin Outdoor, a commercial landscape services firm, has acquired the landscape management division of Cornerstone Solutions Group.

The merger of Cornerstone's operations with Austin Outdoor's already substantial Florida presence has created a diverse organization capable of serving commercial clients with statewide operations. Edward Schatz, Jr., Austin's founder and current president of the Southeast region for Yellowstone Landscape Group, which acquired Austin in 2008, explains: "The merger of Cornerstone with Austin Outdoor is a natural fit. Between the values they share and reputation they both have for high quality, these two organizations complement each other perfectly. The result for our clients will be even more resources and seamless service across Florida."

Cornerstone Solutions Group steadily developed since 1984 under the value-based leadership of John Faulkner. He built a substantial landscape business in Tampa, Sarasota, Orlando and Jacksonville on a foundation of superior quality and dedicated service that mirrors Austin Outdoor's approach. About the merger, Faulkner says: "This a great move for Cornerstone because it allows us to reach our goals of building a great, nationally-recognized company founded on principals of quality, integrity and culture. For the past several years the economy has been increasingly dictating the options available to us. We feel that there are still tremendous opportunities in markets that we couldn't fill quickly enough. With this merger, we'll be poised to jump to the next level in the landscape industry."

Ed Schatz Jr., Austin Outdoor's founder and current president of the Southeast region for Yellowstone Landscape Group.



For Cornerstone, the focus has always been on building strong relationships with customers. Faulkner explained that "We have always felt that our clients are our partners. With this merger, they will instantly have access to the vast resources that a large regional company offers, bringing more value and depth to the services that we provide."

Austin Outdoor maintains many premier commercial properties in the markets it serves. William Dellecker is Austin Outdoor's president and has guided its operations since 2002.



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