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Landscape Renovations creates a series of linked site enhancements, respecting the home's modernist architecture.

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B – Business, **D/B** – Design/Build, **I** – Irrigation, **LC** – Lawn Care, **M** – Maintenance

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THE LM DAILY

DID YOU CATCH THE LATEST FROM THE BLOG?

» **To be a good salesperson you need to become a great buyer**

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Visit landscapemanagement.blogspot.com to get the latest from the LM staff and a few top Green Industry contractors.



WEB EXCLUSIVE

A system isn't 'smart' if its fundamentals are not sound

It is incredible how far technology has advanced in the irrigation industry... However, none of these advancements mean anything if irrigation fundamentals are not practiced. I am talking about "Irrigation 101" type stuff.



FROM THE

TWITTERVERSE... Not following *Landscape Management* on Twitter (@landscapemgmt)? Here is a tweet you might have missed:

 **Lawn Care** @LawnCareNet 23 May
 "Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence." Hal Borland #Lawncat
 #Lawncare
 Retweeted by Landscape Management
 Expand



 **THE NOT-SO-SOCIAL SIDE OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY.**

 Landscape Management magazine shared a link. Tuesday

Has anyone ever heard of an impostor such as this guy? We have to say, "Manhunt Monday" does have a catchy ring to it.

 **Manhunt Monday: Man Poses as Landscaper | KTSM News Channel 9**
www.ktsm.com

El Paso-In this week's Manhunt Monday, a man claiming to be a landscaper, asks people for money and never finishes services he's promised.

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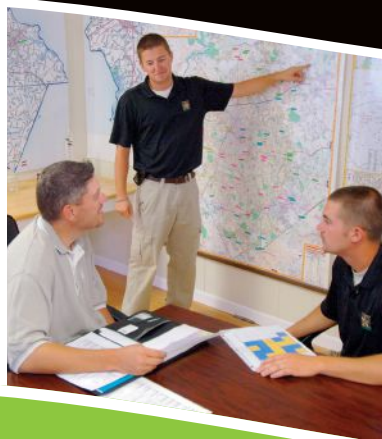


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North Coast Media's *Landscape Management* & *Golfdom* garner 16 TOCA Awards

NCM's brands nab 2 Gardner Awards for photography and new media, and win 14 other Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association Awards.

CLEVELAND — MAY 10, 2012 — North Coast Media LLC (NCM) continues to reap the rewards of its ongoing investments in *Landscape Management* (*LM*) and *Golfdom* — most recently winning 16 design and editorial excellence awards from the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA).

At TOCA's annual awards ceremony, held May 3 in Nashville, TN, *LM* reaped nine honors and *Golfdom* seven.

"Once again, we won more total landscape and golf industry TOCA Awards than any other company — strengthening our longstanding leadership position — including bringing home two Gardner Awards for photography and new media," says NCM President Kevin Stoltman.

Golfdom's seven 2012 TOCA Awards include:

▶ **"2011 Plant Health Series"** (April, May and June 2011), Editor-in-Chief Seth

Jones and Art Director Carrie Parkhill Wallace — Portrait/Personality: Photo of an individual or group;

▶ **"The Reinvention of Mark Woodward"** (April 2011 cover), Jones and Parkhill Wallace — Printed magazines: Cover photo;

▶ **"Turf on Trial"** (October 2011 cover), Parkhill Wallace — Printed Magazines: Cover page design;

▶ **"The *Golfdom* Daily"** (www.golfdom.blogspot.com), Jones — Best Blog;

▶ **"Home Course Advantage"** (May 2011 feature on Commercial Country Club), Jones — Writing for Commercial Publications: Operations profile;

▶ **"Dr. Wong gets the girl"** (*Golfdom's* "Chip Shots," June 3, 2011) — Writing for Electronic Newsletter: Original content; and

▶ **"The *Golfdom* Daily"** (www.golfdom.blogspot.com), Jones — 2012 Gardner Award: New Media.

"At North Coast Media, it's first things first," says Pat Roberts, *Golfdom's* VP of Sales. "We know from experience if we fully engage our readers, advertisers follow."

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, *LM* has won more TOCA Awards than any other publication. For eight consecutive years, *LM* has taken home more TOCA Awards than all other landscape publications combined. *LM's* nine 2012 TOCA Awards include:

▶ **"Close the Deal"** (May 2011 cover), Parkhill Wallace — Best Photograph: Printed magazine cover;

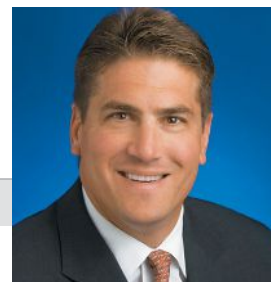


- ▶ **"Safety Superhero"** (September 2011 cover), Parkhill Wallace — Printed Magazines: Cover page design;
- ▶ **"Safety Superhero"** (September 2011 cover story), Parkhill Wallace — Two-Plus Page Design: Editorial;
- ▶ **"Business Planner 2012"** (October 2011), Parkhill Wallace — Printed Magazines: Overall magazine design;
- ▶ **"Go to the Source"** (*LM's* March 2011 "Livescapes" special section), Jamie J. Gooch, contributor — Writing for Commercial Publications: Ornamental feature article;
- ▶ **"The Turf Issue"** (April 2011 cover story), Nicole Wisniewski — Writing for Commercial Publications: Best turf feature article;
- ▶ **"Road to Recovery"** (October 2011 "The Industry Pulse" annual report), *LM* staff — Writing for Special Projects;
- ▶ **"Add-On Biz,"** Casey Payton, contributor — Writing for Commercial Publications: Series; and
- ▶ **"Close the Deal"** (May 2011 cover story), Parkhill Wallace — 2012 Gardner Award: Photography, Video & Multimedia: Publishing.

"*Landscape Management* has set the bar for Green Industry intel for half a century — and we're just getting started," says *LM* Publisher Jason DeSarle. "Stay tuned: *LM* has big plans for additional enhancements — print and digital media redesigns, circulation expansion and our new Lawn Care Forum."



Before joining The Brickman Group, Andrew Kerin served as group president at ARAMARK.



Andrew Kerin elected CEO of The Brickman Group

Scott Brickman becomes board chairman, succeeding his father, Dick Brickman, who will serve as chairman emeritus.

Gaithersburg, MD — The Brickman Group announced last month that its board of directors has elected Andrew Kerin as chief executive officer and member of the board, effective immediately. Scott Brickman, who served as CEO for 14 years, will become board chairman, succeeding his father Dick Brickman, who will serve as chairman emeritus.

Most recently, Kerin served as group president, ARAMARK Global

Food, Hospitality and Facility Services, a \$12 billion business, where he led a team of more than 200,000 associates worldwide in delivering food and facility services to multiple industries. Over the course of his 16-year tenure at ARAMARK, Kerin held numerous

leadership positions. Prior to joining ARAMARK, Kerin served as a vice president with Ogden Facility Services.

“Brickman is preparing for the next phase of its evolution,” said Scott Brickman. “With over 25 years of experience and proven track record at every level in the services industry, we are excited to have someone of Andrew’s caliber assume the leadership role.”

“I am very excited about joining an organization that is a leader in its indus-

try with a brand known for its strong values and commitment to its people and customers,” stated Kerin. “Brickman has a rich history of exceptional performance with a strong foundation to build on and I am excited about the opportunity to lead this company into the next era of growth.”

Kerin earned a BA degree from Fordham University and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program. He serves on the board of directors of Arrow Electronics, a global provider of products, services and solutions for enterprise computing solutions. He also is on the board of trustees for City Year Inc., where he was honored in Philadelphia as a “2011 Idealist of the Year”, and serves on the Board of Trustees for Fordham University.

PERC offers a perk

Contractors can receive \$1,000 toward the purchase of a new propane mower.

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) is seeking a limited number of customers to participate in the End-User Propane Mower Incentive Program. This program is a research initiative that rewards customers with a \$1,000 incentive toward the incremental cost of a new, dedicated propane mower in exchange for their commitment to provide feedback about mower performance and usage during the mowing season. Any new, dedicated propane mower with a 60- to 72-inch cutting deck is eligible for the program. Participating customers can purchase up to 10

eligible mowers with program incentives through any mower dealer across the nation.

One of PERC’s primary missions is to research, develop and demonstrate the effectiveness of new propane-fueled

equipment. This program will support that mission by encouraging mower users who are able to demonstrate propane mower technology. PERC will use the mower performance and usage data provided by participating customers to continue to improve propane mower technology and advance the market for propane-fueled commercial mowers.

Save green and mow clean

Ask your mower dealer how you can save \$1,000 on a new mower purchase.

Save money and go green this mowing season with a new, dedicated propane-fueled mower. Propane-fueled mowers offer many benefits, including:

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- › Less downtime due to approved operation on ozone action days and on-site fuel delivery

More information

To find out if you qualify to participate in the End-User Propane Mower Incentive Program, and for application guidelines, visit: <http://www.autogasusa.org/MIP/Home/>.



Time again for R&R and Day on the Hill

Register by June 22 for the annual Green Industry service and lobbying events. BY **BETH GERACI** SENIOR EDITOR

If you're a landscaper who wants to make a difference, don't miss your chance to register for the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET's) annual Renewal & Remembrance and Legislative Day on the Hill events. The events take place July 9 and 10, respectively.

As always, landscapers from across the nation will descend upon Arlington National Cemetery for this year's Renewal & Remembrance, one of the country's largest, and arguably most memorable, Green Industry service projects.

Hundreds of landscapers band together every year for Renewal & Remembrance, donating their time

and equipment to beautify 200 acres at the cemetery. The donation of labor and equipment typically is valued at \$250,000.

On July 10, meanwhile, lobby on behalf of landscapers in your state during Legislative Day on the Hill. Landscapers will meet with their U.S. representatives and senators, discussing legislative issues that impact the Green Industry. According to PLANET, Legislative Day on the Hill enables landscapers to exert greater influence on lawmakers by demonstrating strength in numbers.

For a full schedule and to register, visit landcarenetwork.org/renewal.



An arborist performs cabling at Arlington National Cemetery during R&R 2011.

CONTRACTOR HAS "HARDEST WORKING HANDS IN AMERICA"
CINCINNATI (MAY 4, 2012) – Severely dry hands can be both painful and debilitating. That's why O'Keeffe's Co., makers of Working Hands cream for dry skin, held a contest to find and celebrate the Hardest Working Hands in America. Allen Crippen, a certified welder from Kiowa, CO, who owns a tree service and steel building erection company, was chosen as the Grand Prize winner.

Crippen always has been a hard worker. As the recipient of the title of the Hardest Working Hands in America, Allen will receive \$5,000 and a lifetime supply of O'Keeffe's Working Hands moisturizing cream.

Crippen's and other winning entries can be viewed at www.facebook.com/okeeffes.

Case and Toro support separate community service projects

Following its sponsorship of a weeklong installation of neighborhood gardens throughout Milwaukee, WI, Case Construction Equipment congratulated Victory Garden Initiative for the success of its "Blitz" project that resulted in the planting of a record number of new vegetable gardens in the city.

During the May 19 through 26 Victory Garden Blitz, homeowners, community groups and volunteers installed 278 gardens.

In addition to CNH's financial sponsorship of Victory Garden Initiative, Case donated the use of a skid steer loader for the Blitz.

Throughout the project, raised-bed gardens were installed in yards, businesses, schools, churches and community spaces. Materials for each garden were available for a \$150 donation or sponsorship. A variety of volunteer and neighborhood groups helped build, fill and plant the gardens.

"With generous support from Case and our other partners, we were able to expand our 2012 capacity to plant 278 residential gardens. This will enable hundreds of Milwaukee county residents to be able to grow their own food," Mead added. "Their generous support allowed us to provide garden beds at a sliding scale fee or for free to families in need."

On May 31, the Toro Co. did its part for a different community, teaming with the Minnesota Vikings, the Minneapolis Public Schools and local non-profits to help Minneapolis children.

More than 200 volunteers helped build a new playground at Sheridan Arts Magnet School. The new playground's design is based on local kids' drawings. The playground project is meant to inspire kids to break away from the TV and play outside more. According to the event press release, only 20% of children live within walking distance of a park or playground, a reality, it stated, that "is having profound consequences for kids physically, socially and cognitively."

The new playground will provide space for more than 500 children.

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Love and hope for MJ

When Michael John “MJ” O’Boyle was just 2-and-a-half years old, Grandma noticed his right foot slightly turned in as he walked. It was in December last year when she mentioned it to Michael, MJ’s father, who brushed away any concern. After all, what kid doesn’t walk a little pigeon-toed once in awhile? Maybe it was the new shoes or maybe he bumped his knee. But when he began to get ‘clumsy’ and started falling down more frequently, they immediately went to the doctor.

The pediatrician pointed them to an orthopedist, who recommended a pediatric neurologist. On Feb. 7, MJ was diagnosed with Krabbe Disease, a leukodystrophy, which is a degenerative condition of the central and peripheral nervous system.

A couple months ago, MJ underwent a breakthrough procedure involving chemotherapy, a bone marrow transplant and stem cell replacement therapy. The transplant was performed in mid-March and is followed by the “100 days,” a three-month period of uncertainty during which they will learn if the procedure was successful. It’s also during this time that MJ remains vulnerable to infection while his immune system regenerates.

MJ was diagnosed about two months after the date of his first symptoms. In that time he lost the use of his legs. Between diagnosis and engraftment, meanwhile, MJ had further degeneration of his hands and speech.

The bone marrow transplant/stem cell replacement treatment MJ received is relatively new and a risky procedure. Had MJ not received this treatment he would have certainly continued to digress rapidly. After losing the use of the feet, legs, hands and arms, a person affected with Krabbe loses the ability to speak, swallow and see before ultimately losing cognition. A patient then enters a vegetative state for several years before finally losing function

of vital organs resulting in death.

As advanced as the technology is, the best that medicine can do is stop further progression of the disease. MJ’s condition won’t improve. There’s no way to reverse the effects of the disease, only to prevent it from becoming more debilitating.

The tragedy is that a simple and inexpensive blood test at birth could have discovered the condition, and the condition could have been addressed before any of the symptoms appeared. If MJ had been born in a hospital in New York, he would have undergone this treatment before the symptoms appeared and possibly lived a completely normal life. No other states routinely test for the Krabbe disease, which occurs in 1 in 100,000 births. MJ’s parents urge everyone to contact his or her state legislators via Hunter’s Hope website (www.huntershope.org) to encourage them to explore infant testing.

MJ is being treated in Pittsburgh and was recently allowed to move from the hospital to the Ronald McDonald House, where his mother and grandmother have been since his treatment began. Medical insurance has covered the bulk of the expenses, which Michael expects to exceed \$1 million by the time the treatment is done. But the family recently had to move to costly COBRA insurance since Robyn is now using the Family Medical Leave Act (and work is not supplementing the cost of the coverage).

To offset some of the medical costs, family and friends, including LM National Sales Rep Craig MacGregor, have organized a fundraiser at Our Lady of Angels’ Linus Hall in Cleveland, OH, July 28 from 6 to 11 pm. There will be live music; an Irish dance performance by Patrick Campbell and Kevin O’Malley of “Michael Flatley’s Lord of the Dance”; silent and live auctions; and a raffle. For more information, visit the Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/BandTogetherforMJ. The benefit is currently accepting donations to “Band Together for MJ” at any KeyBank branch or via PayPal at the website above.



MJ Boyle needs your help as he continues to battle the effects of Krabbe Disease.

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PROGRESS



Quite a find

David Van Zelst recalls the discovery of a lifetime.

In spring 1992, Van Zelst Inc. employees in Wadsworth, IL were digging an irrigation pond on the landscape company's property when one of them made a surprising discovery.

"It was the last day, the last hour of the dig, which had taken about three weeks," recalls company president David Van Zelst. "We pulled out an item, and we had no idea what it was. We literally had no idea what it was."

Since the company was situated on a route once used by Ringling Bros. Circus, Van Zelst thought the item might be something from a traveling circus.

But as *Landscape Management* wrote in its June 1992 issue, it turned out to be something far more exotic — the femur bone of a mastodon. Mastodons were elephant-like mammals that roamed North America during the Ice Age. They stood about 10 feet high and weighed up to six tons.

The leg bone the Van Zelst crew excavated was nearly four feet long. And as they kept digging, they discovered yet more mastodon bones and the perfectly preserved remains of an ancient spruce forest.

"We pulled out lots and lots of pieces that we nearly walked right over," Van Zelst marvels.

The identification

After making the discovery, Van Zelst contacted the Illinois State Museum in Springfield, IL. The following day, a team of scientists led by the museum's curator of geology, Dr. Russell Gra-

ham, arrived and quickly identified the bones. The scientists estimated that the bones were more than 10,000 years old.

"We were excited, but not surprised, because it's moderately common to find mammoths and mastodons in old bogs," recalls Graham, now the director of the Earth and Mineral Sciences Museum at Penn State University.

Graham and his team were curious about what caused the extinction of the mastodons. Ten thousand years ago, Illinois was likely a tundra. So the mastodons' extinction could have been caused by global warming or the movement of vegetation in the region, Graham theorizes.

In the limelight

"It was tons of fun," Van Zelst recalls of the discovery. "You know, you get three minutes of fame in your life, and that was my minute-and-a-half of fame."

Indeed it was. In the 24 hours immediately following the discovery, the media swarmed the Van Zelst property. And the publicity continued. "I didn't get anything done for two weeks because we were doing interviews," Van Zelst says. "It was a lot of fun and absolutely fascinating."

A photograph of Van Zelst holding a thick mastodon thigh bone was aired on late-night TV shows. "There are a lot of sexual connotations that came up with the bone," Van Zelst laughs. "You can imagine."

Final stops

Since Van Zelst didn't have the materials necessary to store the bones and logs, the



(Right) Van Zelst in '92, displaying a large ancient log his workers found. (Left) Van Zelst today, with a remnant he saved.

company kept only a few small pieces. It donated some of the logs to Arizona State University and about 70 bones to the Illinois State Museum, which had the means to preserve them.

The bones still are being stored at the Illinois museum today. Jeff Saunders, Ph.D. the museum's current curator of geology, says besides the preserved spruce trees, the Van Zelst dig unearthed bones from two mastodons, including the femur, a tusk, a pelvis, vertebrae and ribs. The dig also uncovered deer and bison bones and a cottontail bunny's thigh bone, Saunders says.

For Van Zelst Inc. today, life — and business — goes on. The company specializes in design/build projects in Chicago's northern suburbs and southeastern Wisconsin. Much of the company's 75-person staff is the same as it was in 1992.

"We're about the same size in number of people, but we have more clients," Van Zelst says. Lately, he adds, "our clients' moods have gotten better and people are starting spend again."

Even as Van Zelst's 33-year-old business continues to move forward, that 1992 irrigation project seems as close to him as yesterday. "It was a ton of fun," he says. "It was a great life experience."



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Goodwill Industries
Big Bend provides job
training, education and
employment for people
with disabilities.

AN UNTAPPED resource

Stan Womble, director of Contract Services with Goodwill Industries-Big Bend Inc. in Port St. Joe, FL, notes that disabled workers aren't given many opportunities. And that's a missed opportunity for the Green Industry.

"Everyone discounts them," he notes. "But they're loyal. We've retained most of the employees we've hired. They show up to work on time, they follow directions, they're excited to work and they're really appreciative of having a position they love. Even their families appreciate it."

Goodwill-Big Bend is much more than a retail store. With a service area that extends from Santa Rosa County, FL to Taylor County, FL, it has a career training center that provides education and job training for people with disabilities, and barrier-free apartment complexes for the disabled to live in independently. It also provides employment to people with disabilities — and is the first in the country to provide landscape services.

Womble was hired to start Big Bend's new Contract Services program in August 2009. Although other Goodwills around the country already had programs for janitorial work, the location of this one, with its long summers and mild, short winters, made it a natural choice for landscaping.

"Landscaping goes hand in hand with where we live," he

There's a labor pool that few landscape contractors have discovered yet: **the disabled.**

BY JANET AIRD

says. "It was a great way to create more jobs, especially for people with disabilities."

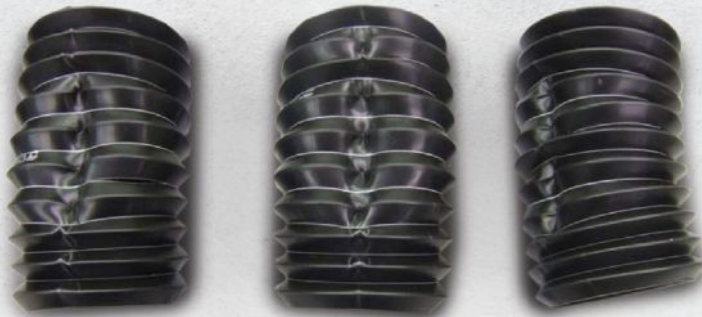
Setting up the program and negotiating the first contract — litter control for the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) in Bay County — was a joint effort with others at Goodwill. They began with a half dozen employees and had 36 the next year. By 2012, they had seven crews, with a supervisor in each crew. All employees except the supervisors are disabled.

Most of their contracts come from their partnership with Respect of Florida, a state agency that helps non-profits in the state market products and services produced by people with disabilities to government entities. Seventy-five percent of the workers performing the services must be people with disabilities.

continued on page 18



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HELPING HAND

continued from page 16

“We go through Respect to negotiate contracts,” Womble says. “We’re a work center for them.” Goodwill-Big Bend gives them prices and an estimate. Respect of Florida negotiates with state agencies on their behalf and handles the contracts. Goodwill hires the workers, performs the work and handles all the insurance.

The workers have either a mental or a physical challenge that prevents them from being competitively employed. They’re screened for disabilities and qualifications and are able to do the necessary work. Many are hearing impaired, for example. Some have autism. One has a prosthetic arm.

“Most are self-sufficient,” he says. “As soon as we get to a jobsite, they really know what they need to do.”

Some are on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Disability Insurance (SDI), so they work limited hours. Others have never applied for aid, so they can work as many hours as they want. Goodwill usually pays them a little higher than minimum wage to start.

“The workers get along well,” Womble says. “We really promote a team atmosphere.”

In addition, the work gives them self-confidence and independence. A lot of them are finding out that they can do something they didn’t know they could, he says. Some are living on their own for the first time. Some drive, and most others have another means of transportation.

Two crews pick up litter and trash on certain state highways in Bay and Calhoun counties using side-by-side ATVs that have trash cans on the front. With ATVs, the visibility’s better, it’s safer, more efficient and a little faster than picking up litter manually, Womble says. At the end of 2010, the DOT Bay County gave the litter crew a grade of 100%. In Bay County, a mowing crew that mows with tractors and batwing mowers follows the litter crew. Another crew uses a Bush Hog with a small tractor to mow the grass around 42 DOT holding ponds in Bay County.

Crews use Gravely mowers at a number of sites. On the highways, they mow right-of-ways and around fixtures to cut closely around signs. They also use them to maintain the lawns at the Goodwill store, the donation center and the 11 Goodwill apartment complexes.

One four-man crew uses them to maintain the turf at the Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park in Tallahassee, which is internationally known for its flowers in February, March and April. They use a zero-turn model, a pair of 152 riding mowers and a 48-hp push mower. Maclay Gardens extended its first contract for three years.

Goodwill-Big Bend has begun adding new services now. It’s doing sign replacement for the DOT when old signs are damaged, as well as hedge trimming, turf aeration and fertilization.

continued on page 20



“The workers get along well,” Womble says. “We really promote a team atmosphere.”



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HELPING HAND

continued from page 18

“As new as we are, we’ve promoted manageable growth,” Womble says. “We’re becoming experts in what we do now before we expand.”

So far, all the contracts have been for the state government, but Goodwill could work with privately owned landscaping companies, Womble says.

One key to its success is training. “Training is big for us,” Womble says. “Probably the biggest learning curve was learning how to use the large equipment.”

About half the landscape employees are trained on the Gravelys. Some just aren’t ready to use them, but when they are, the training is available.

Goodwill-Big Bend contracts with AbilityOne, a federal agency that provides employment opportunities to more than 50,000 people with significant disabilities. AbilityOne also offers training courses and provides landscape training for Goodwill-Big Bend’s workers.

It also contracts with National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH), a nonprofit agency that secures federal contracts through AbilityOne, for more worker training.

Goodwill itself provides safety training, stressing the motto “safety first,” Womble says. “All Goodwills have a safety rep. We have two, one for the work we do on the east side of

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Stan Womble,
Contract Director, Goodwill Industries-Big Bend:
contractdirector@goodwillbigbend.com

Goodwill Industries-Big Bend Contract Services:
GoodwillBigBend.com/contracts-2



the state and one for the west.”

Each crew has a safety meeting every morning before it starts work, where safe work practices are reviewed. There’s also a monthly meeting with all the crews on topics such as safe lifting and awareness of surroundings.

Part of Womble’s job is to visit work sites weekly and do inspections for quality control, making sure the crews are working safely, the equipment is operating well, and the project is in order and on schedule.

“It’s going great,” he concludes. “The disabled are really not different from anyone else; they’re just like you and me. Don’t be afraid to give them an opportunity — they might surprise you.” **LM**

Aird is a writer based in Altadena, CA.

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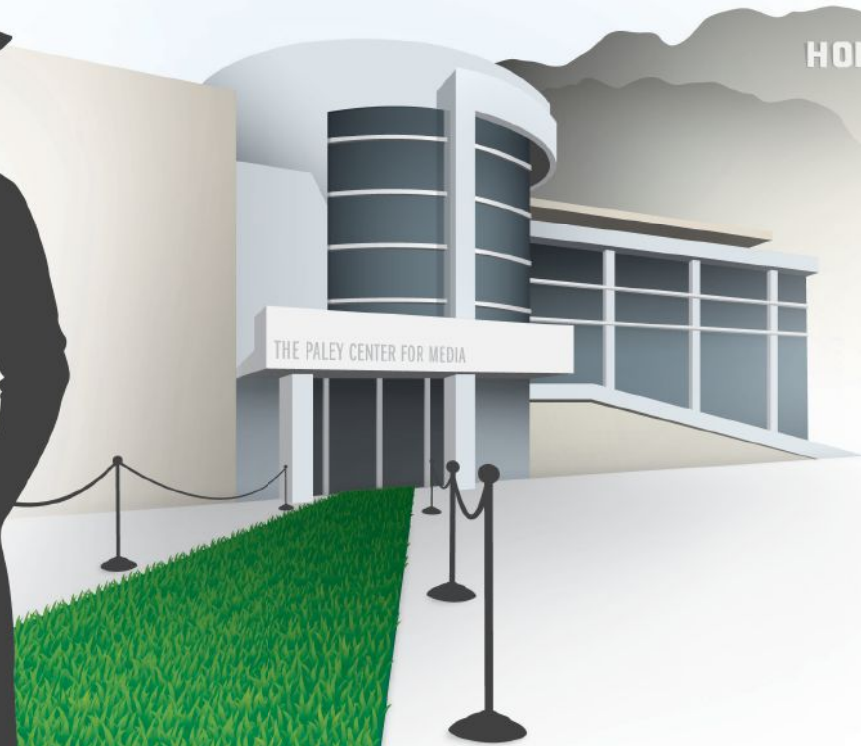
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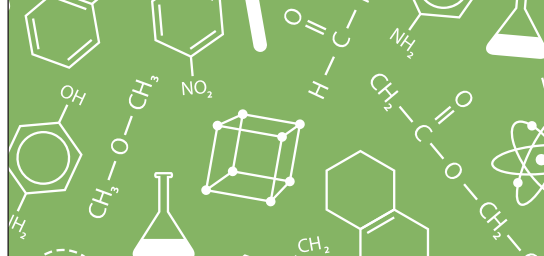


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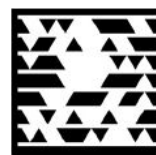
By Brian Mount | FMC

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LANDSCAPING IN THE NEWS

“... if non-native landscaping is installed along phase two of the Expo Line, the MTA will gravely undermine its environmental credibility and will torpedo what could have been a boon to the Los Angeles environment.” — **LISA NOVICK**, Director of Outreach and K-12 Education, Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers & Native Plants, on the Huffington Post blog discussing plans for The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority

ON THE RISE

A look at how the industry changed from 2002 to 2007. The data from the 2012 economic census will be published in December 2013.

	2002	2007	% Change
Number of establishments	76,102	93,687	23.1%
Sales (\$ millions)	35,172	53,910	53.3%
Annual payroll (\$ millions)	11,544	17,388	50.6%
Total employment	477,932	596,896	24.9%
Sales per employee (\$1,000)	74	90	22.7%
Employees per establishment	6.3	6.4	1.4%
Sales per capita (\$)	122	178	46.4%
Population per establishment	3,781	3,216	-14.9%

Source: United States Census Bureau



TAKING GREEN TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Green Industry companies explore and explain the value in providing sustainable services.

BY BRUCE K. WILSON

It takes a village of stewards to raise a healthy landscape. Just ask the members of Next Level Network, an executive peer group of progressive, sustainable landscape contractors from around the country who have aligned their companies' strategy and spirit with environmental responsibility.

"It's more than just good business; it's a necessity," says Andrew Key, president of Heads Up Landscape in Albuquerque, NM and a LEED-certified building professional.

While New Mexico is the Land of Enchantment, it's also an arid one — its largest city, Albuquerque, averages only 9 inches of rain per year. Contrast that with the liquid sunshine of Oregon, where it may rain 9 inches in a week, and you might wonder how sustainable best practices work to environmental

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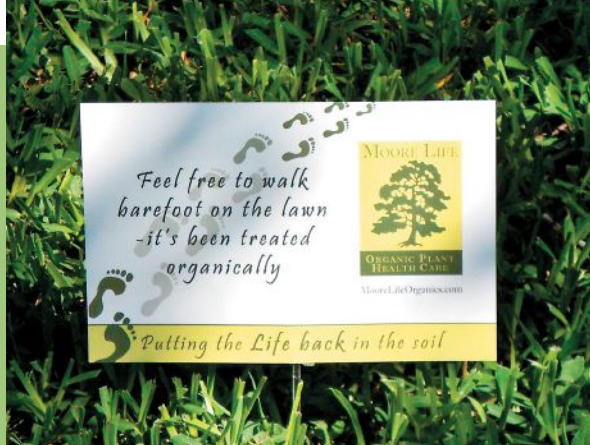
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Heads Up Landscape restored native plants at a housing complex in Albuquerque, NM (above left); Lambert Landscape Co. practices sustainability in the way it treats lawns (top right) and harvests rainwater in a 30,000-gallon cistern (lower right).



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and competitive advantages in such diverse geographic regions and markets.

We thought we'd find out. We asked the Next Level leaders to share examples of how sustainability as both policy and process changed their business, transformed the customer's landscape, and had a positive impact on the communities they serve.

High desert

Drought-tolerant landscapes are a natural for Heads Up, the Albuquerque firm located in the expansive Chichuahuan Desert and founded by CEO Gary Mallory in 1974.

"Our region hosts a fragile ecosystem richly endowed with a variety of plant life," says Key. "The extremes of hot and cold, the varied terrain with altitudes ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 feet, and the fact that it's the most thickly vegetated desert in North America, presents more than its share of opportunities for landscapers to work in harmony with the whims of nature."

Both fans of native desert plants, Key and Mallory are experts in the landscape palette of northern New Mexico. They have worked with their customers to restore many properties to a sustainable desert aesthetic, installing regionally indigenous plants and high-tech water conservation and irrigation systems.

Heads Up's xeriscape conversion program, and its commitment to creating and maintaining sustainable sites ("long before it was a formal

initiative," notes Key), puts Heads Up in the ranks of companies well positioned to become effective partners with architects and developers of commercial properties seeking to achieve energy-efficiency status through LEED. In fact, resource conservation is the prevailing cultural spirit in New Mexico, according to Key. The Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Authority recently announced it met its water mandates three years before the state deadline, and saved billions of gallons of water in the process.

"Getting the public on board with environmentally responsible commitments is exciting," adds Key. "It gives us the opportunity to be the go-to resource throughout northern New Mexico for environmentally responsible and energy-efficient landscapes and public spaces. When we collaborate with our customers, it makes us all partners for a green alliance."

Organic eco-nomics

Landscape architect Paul Fields is both Lambert Landscape Co.'s president and sustainability driver. He maintains that deep drought patterns, tough water restrictions and aquifer constraints give his Dallas-based company an opportunity to lead the resource management discussion with its customers on water use and earth-friendly practices.

Founded in 1919, Lambert committed to becoming environmentally conscious in 1986 — and by 1989, it was 100% organic. Today, the firm captures rainwater in an on-site

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FOREVER GREEN

continued from page 26
harvesting and storage system. The water is collected from the roof of Lambert Landscape Co.'s 6.5-acre facility. From this, the company brews its own "compost tea" — a high-quality, proprietary nutritional product used to enrich and condition clients' soil.

"It's all about the soil," says Fields, noting the company's motto (and business model): "A healthy soil leads to healthy plants and a healthier ecosystem."

In 2011, the company earned a Sustainable Company award from the Professional Landscape Network (PLANET). Fields says that his company is continually improving upon its organic gardening knowledge and uses headquarters and project sites to research and test new products, applications and ways to optimize and improve garden sustainability.

At Pacific Landscape Management's Portland, OR office, the company's sustainability efforts include annual sustainability fairs and rainwater gardens (below).



Texas is known for being one of the driest and hottest regions during the summer, but it's quickly becoming a hub in America's growing rainwater harvesting industry. Lambert

has seen a rise in the demand for cisterns, well water and catchment systems and is active in educating clients about their sustainable benefits.

Liquid sunshine

Bob Grover, CEO of Pacific Landscape Management, has turned perennially damp weather into a teachable moment for his community of Portland, OR. His company hosts annual sustainability fairs to showcase rainwater harvesting technologies, vertical landscapes (green walls), and rainwater gardens at its green-centric corporate facility — a sustainable site where architecture and landscape come together as public space.

"It's a learning lab," he explains, adding that it illustrates the best of what the future holds for energy-efficient environments, inside and out, and an example of how Pacific has re-engineered itself to minimize its impact on the environment.

Named by *Oregon Business Magazine* as one of Portland's Best Green Companies, Grover said Pacific has only just begun.

"Sustainability is not a destination," he says. "It's a process."

Whether it's achieving high standards for recycling or for contributing to reductions in storm water runoff, Pacific Landscape Management is generating more than its own electricity; it's generating ideas and solutions for the region's ecological future.

Progressively green

A week without rain in Oregon may be a drought; an entire winter without rain is normal for most of California, which long has been a leader in passing progressive environmental regulations.

Stay Green Inc. covers the arid San Fernando Valley northwest of Los Angeles. CEO Chris Angelo knows firsthand the impact that environmental issues can have on water-dependent southern California — and in response, he's made sustainability synonymous with his brand.

In 2011, Stay Green announced a program
continued on page 30



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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

If there is a crystal ball that holds the future success of the landscaping industry, it's in the hands of Jim McCutcheon, certified landscape professional and CEO of HighGrove Partners, an interdisciplinary land services company in Atlanta. He's also a landscape architect and chairperson of PLANET's Crystal Ball Committee.

"HighGrove decided a long time ago to integrate progressive water technologies and innovative resource programs into its daily suite of offerings," McCutcheon says. "At the time, we were ahead of trend."

The proactive approach paid off. Georgia has weathered several serious drought cycles, and HighGrove's KnowWater program has achieved measurable results. The program is saving between 20% and 40% water use and maximizing the efficiency of systems for customers who support the program.

According to McCutcheon, environmental responsibility and economic responsibility aren't mutually exclusive.

"We all agree it's the right thing to do," he says. "But why wouldn't you want to? Especially when you can save water, reduce demand and produce financial savings as a return on investment?"

HighGrove makes a strong case for the partnership role landscape firms play in decreasing costs. Building owners and property managers are measuring and reporting energy costs and use by real-time monitoring of building infrastructure systems. Many city managers and urban developers also are looking for savings.

"Water management is where this becomes a formal stewardship effort," he concludes. "If the goal is a measurable reduction of water use over a specified period of time, then we have an ability to make an impact in a significant way. Not only are our efforts as landscape professionals good for the environment, they are just good business." — *BKW*

continued from page 28

geared toward reducing its customers' carbon footprints and raising the bar for environmental leadership.

"In landscape management, sustainable practices are best practices," says Angelo. "Our company has always strived to provide responsible environmental stewardship, and our new emphasis on sustainability practices brings this approach to the forefront of all of our service lines — maintenance, water management, tree care and plant health care. We're saving money and helping the planet at the same time."

Stay Green also is addressing regional air quality with reduced-emission vehicles. It's also recycling customers' green waste, introducing custom soil blends, using organic fertilizers and pest control products and installing high-tech irrigation and water management systems.

"We're doing so willingly to set a higher standard for ourselves and our work," Angelo says. "We expect to see an increase in environmental regulations and incentives from the government in the coming decade, and a lot more companies will be investing in greener strategies. When our customers are ready to do that, we're ready to help them succeed."

Great Lakes Watershed

Mariani Landscape in Lake Bluff, IL, finds its customers easily engaged in the water-smart conversation; metropolitan Chicago abuts to an ecologically rich region that supports a wealth of



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biological diversity.

“Our customers are committed to environmental responsibility on principle; it’s the right thing to do,” says landscape architect and LEED-savvy garden designer John Mariani. “We don’t see as much dryness

Pacific Landscape Management also has a vertical landscape on its company property (above left) and installed a bioswale to manage rain water runoff in a parking lot.

as other parts of the country, but our customers in general are passionate about the natural beauty of Lake Michigan’s unique watershed and respectful of its natural resources. This makes conversations about water use technologies, alternatives to overused plants in the landscape, and sustainable best practices easy to have.”

John’s brother, company CEO Frank Mariani, agrees. He was awarded “Mentor to the (Green) Industry” in 2011 and says the firm founded by their father 50 years ago aims to prosper by adding value.

“We use eco-friendly practices to enhance our customers’ properties, and that reflects our long-term commitment to being a steward of the land,” he says.

The firm also is known for its community stewardship. Many of Mariani Landscape’s herbaceous experts, horticulturists and LEED-certified designers teach garden workshops. Some associates even volunteer to assist public land trusts and recreation areas by creating walking paths and enhancing nature preserves.

Heritage meets high-tech

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, Alaska and Ohio are the only states entirely drought-free. So, no landscape problems in Ohio, right?

Not necessarily, says Todd Pugh, CEO of Envirosapes, a 25-year-old firm in Louisville, OH. Pugh says it’s easy to

FOREVER GREEN

assume that because a landscape looks “green,” it’s sustainable. It’s not.

Sustainable means that an attractive landscape in any region — park, private home, HOA, utility corridors, corporate campuses or recreation areas — can be as useful as it is beautiful if it is planned and planted in a way that ultimately contributes to storm water control;

protects limited resources such as water; reduces pollution; and protects wildlife.

Located in northeast Ohio, Envirosapes embraced green early on. The company recently rebranded to reflect its sustainable initiatives. Since 1994, Pugh says, the firm has reused green waste, reduced the number of raw materials used on projects, and recycled

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Although New Mexico lays claim to being the Land of Enchantment, the spirit of a sustainable landscape also is just that: a terrain of scenic beauty in the hands of award-winning landscape professionals who are committed to aesthetics, regional traditions and respecting biodiversity. They’re also grounded in a shared commitment to enriching public and private landscapes, gardens and green spaces through environmental best practices.

John Mariani says it best. “There is no group more well-suited to lead on this issue than the landscape industry. Our nation has millions of acres of private, living landscapes that are touched every day by contractors whose passion for creating and maintaining their beauty has the potential to transform the quality of our communities and the quality of life.”

— BKW

more than 40,000 cubic yards of debris. It’s the same as conserving landfill space the size of a 10-story-high football field.

Pugh’s vision for sustainability is one of practicality. Whether recycling or replacing fleet vehicles with hybrid and high-mileage alternatives to improve fuel consumption, being green needs to make sense.

“At Envirosapes, sustainability is a value proposition,” he explains. “We find that most of our earth-friendly practices not only are profitable but also benefit our employees. This aligns with our corporate philosophy of ‘People, Planet and Profit.’”

Pugh says all three can work in harmony when properly thought out. He’s educating his customers about what they can do to protect the environment.

“We want to be experts and let them know that doing simple things can make a big impact,” he says.

Next Level Network is a Green Industry peer group facilitated by Bruce K. Wilson, Wilson-Oyler Group. For information on peer group networking, contact Wilson at 805/390-2357 or bwilson@wilson-oyler.com.

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150
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While things have changed a lot since then, every day, landscape professionals like you work to sustainably grow and maintain the green spaces that we all live, work and play on. We believe that industry innovation and advanced solutions to optimize sustainable landscape design, construction and management backed by your professional services can meet the future challenges of landscape management.

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Our commitment to your business doesn't stop with providing innovative and quality products. Our experienced John Deere dealer channel is there to support your business needs after the sale with the most extensive factory-trained service technicians and knowledgeable parts staff in the industry. In addition, John Deere Financial provides flexible finance solutions to help you manage your business's cash flow.

John Deere also left his mark on our business. Integrity and commitment — two of our founder's virtues — are among our core values. These values, along with countless hours of hard work from dedicated employees, have taken us from a small, Midwestern U.S. plow company to a global business committed to the success of our customers.

Reaching our 175th anniversary is a remarkable achievement, and one that generations of proud Deere employees and customers have played a role in. Together, we've contributed to a better way of life and a future bright with promise and opportunity.

We hope the work we do in 2012 and beyond will move us closer to becoming your most trusted partner on the job site. We look forward to seeing you soon, whether at an industry event, or even at a John Deere location.

Ken Taylor, CLP

*General Sales Manager-
Commercial Business Development*

Revealed

The numbers bear it out. 2011 was a better year. The economy, while far from strong, is improving, and Green Industry business owners — including LM's exclusive ranking of the 150 largest — are taking advantage of it.

BY DAN JACOBS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

T O THE UNINITIATED, running a successful business appears akin to magic.

The successful entrepreneur, like the skilled prestidigitator, provides a seamless presentation. All the pieces fit together smoothly and leave the audience awed by the beauty and skill of the final result.

Successful Green Industry business owners don't use slight of hand to gain an advantage, but like the magician, success requires careful planning, creativity, flexibility, intelligence, hard work and coordination. Business owners don't succeed by subverting the clients' attention, but they do make it look like their operations run without undue effort. The final landscape project, like the amazing illusion, leaves clients awed by its beauty. A few might wonder how it's done, but the vast majority simply enjoys the pleasure of the results.

If revenues are an indication of how good a performance a professional contractor puts

NO 12

Has the most branch offices with 463, followed by No. 10, Weed Man, with 350

continued on page S6

LEGEND NR = Not reported; * 2010 data; **NEW** New to list
 ° Retail division accounts for remainder of revenue
 ° Utility division accounts for remainder of revenue

	Company	Headquarters
1	TruGreen Lawncare and Landcare	Memphis, TN
2	ValleyCrest Landscape Companies	Calabasas, CA
3	The Brickman Group	Gaithersburg, MD
4	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, OH
5	EMCOR Group Inc. NEW	Norwalk, CT
6	Scotts Lawn Service	Marysville, OH
7	Bartlett Tree Experts	Stamford, CT
8	Massey Services Inc.	Orlando, FL
9	U.S. Lawns	Orlando, FL
10	Weed Man	Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
11	Ambius *	Buffalo Grove, IL
12	Lawn Doctor Inc.	Holmdel, NJ
13	Yellowstone Landscape Group	Plano, TX
14	SavATree	Bedford Hills, NY
15	Ruppert Landscape	Laytonsville, MD
16	Ferrandino & Son NEW	Farmingdale, NY
17	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services, an ABM Co.	Tampa, FL
18	Five Star Landscape	Folsom, CA
19	Lipinski Outdoor Services	Marlton, NJ
20	Clintar Landscape Management	Markham, Ontario, Canada
21	Mainscape Inc.	Fishers, IN
22	Marina Landscape, Inc.	Anaheim, CA
23	Environmental Earthscapes Inc. NEW	Tucson, AZ
24	Acres Group	Wauconda, IL
25	NaturaLawn of America	Frederick, MD
26	Jensen Corporation	San Jose, CA
27	Denison Landscaping Inc.	Fort Washington, MD
28	Spring-Green Lawn Care	Plainfield, IL
29	Mariani Landscape	Lake Bluff, IL
	Fairco Inc. *	Scottsdale, AZ
31	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	Portland, ME
32	The Bruce Company of Wisconsin Inc.	Middleton, WI
33	The Greenerly Inc.	Hilton Head, SC
34	ISS Grounds Control	Phoenix, AZ
35	Cagwin & Dorward	Novato, CA
36	Greenscape Inc.	East Taunton, MA
37	Complete Landscaping Service	Bowie, MD
38	AAA Landscape	Phoenix, AZ
39	Christy Webber Landscapes	Chicago, IL
40	Terracare Associates	Littleton, CO
41	Chalet	Wilmette, IL
	Scott Byron & Co. Inc.	Lake Bluff, IL
43	Mission Landscape Companies	Tustin, CA
44	Landscape Concepts Management Inc.	Grayslake, IL
45	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	McLean, VA
46	Nutri-Lawn	Toronto, ON
47	RCI *	Slidell, LA
48	Cornerstone Solutions Group	Dade City, FL
49	Chapel Valley Landscape Company	Woodbine, MD
50	Sebert Landscaping	Bartlett, IL

2011 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change From 2010	FT/PT Employees	% Employee Change From 2010	2011 Avg Rev Per Employee	% Avg Rev Per Employee Change From 2010	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix
\$1,100,741,000.00	-17.60	NR	NR	NR	NR	0/100/0
\$850,000,000.00	+18	10,000 total	+11.1	\$85,000	-8.4	100/0/0
\$844,300,000.00	+4.6	NR	NR	NR	NR	70/30/0
\$646,034,000.00	+9.2	7267/92	+8	\$87,788	+3.9	NR
\$336,246,000.00	NR	1446/536	NR	NR	NR	100/0/0
\$278,500,000.00	-4	1600/675	+33.8	\$122,417	-28	3/97/0
\$167,000,000.00	+5.7	1350/25	0	\$121,455	+5.7	16/80/4
\$136,346,547.00	+5.7	1246/0	+5.5	\$109,435	+1	10/90/0
\$117,200,000.00	+14.9	1700/0	+3	\$68,941	+11.5	100/0/0
\$110,000,000.00	+4.8	750/2500	0	\$33,846	+4.8	5/95/0
\$96,277,345.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	99/1/0
\$89,000,000.00	+7.2	46/2	+9	NR	NR	1/99/0
\$78,500,000.00	+6.1	815/504	+11.8	\$59,514	-5	90/0/10
\$67,600,000.00	+22.7	547/9	+11.2	\$120,071	+8.9	20/80/0
\$65,338,681.00	0	600/0	0	\$108,898	0	100/0/0
\$62,000,000.00	NR	325/0	NR	\$190,769	NR	100/0/0
\$60,000,000.00	0	800/50	-15	\$70,588	+17.6	90/0/10
\$57,085,600.00	NR	309/167	NR	\$119,927	NR	100/0/0
\$57,000,000.00	+33.3	92/45	+23.4	\$416,058	+8	100/0/0
\$50,500,000.00	+9.3	175/400	0	\$87,826	+9.3	95/0/5
\$47,790,000.00	+19.8	475/175	+30	\$73,523	-7.9	99/1/0
\$46,000,000.00	+7	500/0	-17.2	\$92,000	+29.2	25/0/756
\$42,254,745.00	NR	700/0	NR	\$60,363	NR	100/0/0
\$38,200,000.00	-7.2	90/600	+9.5	\$55,362	-15.3	94/5/1
\$38,112,261.00	+1	275/75	+2	\$108,892	-1	10/90/0
\$37,000,000.00	-9.7	373/0	-4.4	\$99,195	-5.6	45/45/10
\$36,550,000.00	+1.5	160/235	-2.5	\$92,531	+4.1	70/0/9
\$36,132,000.00	+5.6	95/350	+48.3	\$81,195	-28.8	8/90/2
\$35,000,000.00	0	90/330	+16.7	\$83,333	-7.1	4/96/0
\$35,000,000.00	0	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
\$33,300,000.00	+5.4	425/0	+6.3	\$78,352	-1	90/5/5
\$32,000,000.00	-.5	190/250	+6.5	\$72,727	NR	80/20/0
\$30,750,000.00	+22	390/65	+13.8	\$67,582	+7.3	70/20/5^A
\$30,000,000.00	NR	600/40	NR	\$46,875	NR	70/10/20
\$28,500,000.00	+3.8	375/0	-6.3	\$74,667	+8.7	95/0/5
\$27,500,000.00	+24	45/205	+11.1	\$110,000	+11.6	90/10/0
\$26,405,000.00	-19.1	150/200	-33.3	\$75,442	NR	94/3/3
\$26,380,533.00	+17.2	372/0	-12.9	\$70,915	+34.6	75/5/20
\$26,000,000.00	+27	250/0	-5.7	\$104,000	NR	60/10/30
\$25,500,000.00	+4.1	363/345	NR	NR	NR	56/0/44
\$24,600,000.00	+6.5	275/0	0	\$89,454	+6.5	5/95/0
\$24,600,000.00	+8.8	70/175	+5.6	\$100,408	+3.1	9/91/0
\$24,486,000.00	-2	485/0	+3.2	\$50,486	-5.1	100/0/0
\$24,300,000.00	+2.7	90/260	+2.9	\$69,428	-.03	95/5/0
\$24,000,000.00	+2.6	180/120	0	\$80,000	+2.6	100/0/0
\$23,920,000.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	10/90/0
\$23,560,000.00	NR	120/300	NR	NR	NR	98/2/0
\$23,138,223.28	+25	360/2	+0.1	\$63,917	+24.4	50/50/0
\$22,500,000.00	NR	200/100	-11.8	\$75,000	NR	64/36/0
\$22,000,000.00	+4.8	55/300	+1.4	\$61,971	NR	80/15/5

listing continued on next page

continued from page S4

on, many of the companies on this year's LM150 managed to provide a bigger and better show than they did last year. Many did it with fewer people or by adding acts (acquisitions) to their repertoire.

Sure, there were several companies who saw a drop in their revenue (not the kind of disappearing act any business owner wants to see), but more than once that corresponded with a drop in employees, so the revenue per employee figures were largely unaffected.

NO 52

Increased revenue per employee by 216%

A look ahead

The economy did appear on the list of concerns that comprise contractors' obstacles to growth, but it did so with less frequency than last year. Labor, government regulation and low-ball competitors were more common complaints.

Sean Lynam, business development manager for Urban Farmer, said his company plans to "work with the economy rather than against it, find the best opportunities to pursue."

The total revenue of the LM150 actually dipped compared with last year. But that loss is primarily accounted for by TruGreen Lawncare and Landcare's \$200 million loss in revenue. In 2011, the 150 largest companies earned \$7,543,372,333, compared with \$7,762,431,033 in 2010. This year's total still was a bump over 2009's \$7,501,566,624.

Creativity still is key. Company owners are more flexible and more willing to break with the status quo to grow their business.

Gibbs Landscaping, for example, is willing to "accept lower hourly rates as long as the customer is willing to spend money on additional enhancements," says Jamie Bloomfield, operations manager for the Smyrna, GA-based company.

Denver, CO-based Swingle Lawn, Tree &

NO 100

Increased revenues by 35.4%

continued on page S8

Company	Headquarters
Shearon Environmental Design Inc.	Plymouth Meeting, PA
52 James River Grounds Management	Glen Allen, VA
53 D Schumacher Landscaping	West Bridgewater, MA
54 Bemus Landscape Inc.	San Clemente, CA
55 Gachina Landscape Management Inc.	Menlo Park, CA
56 Russell Landscape Group Inc.	Dacula, GA
57 Ryan Lawn & Tree	Overland Park, KS
58 Berghoff Design Group, BDG Maintenance Environmental Management Inc.	Scottsdale, AZ
DLC Resources Inc.	Plain City, OH
Moore Landscapes Inc. *	Phoenix, AZ
62 Teufel Landscape	Northbrook, IL
Reliable Property Services LLC	Portland, OR
64 Senske Lawn & Tree Care	St. Paul, MN
65 Girard Environmental Services Inc.	Kennewick, WA
66 Clean Scapes	Sanford, FL
67 Pierre Sprinkler & Landscaping NEW	Austin, TX
68 Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	Monrovia, CA
69 Urban Farmer Inc.	Dallas, TX
70 Gibbs Landscape Company	Thornton, CO
71 Heads Up Landscape	Smyrna, GA
72 Lambert Landscape Co. *	Albuquerque, NM
73 David J. Frank Landscape Contracting Inc.	Dallas, TX
74 Villa Park Landscape NEW	Germantown, WI
The Highridge Corp. *	Orange, CA
76 Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	Issaquah, WA
77 Landscape Specialists Inc. *	Denver, CO
78 Dobson's Woods & Water Inc. *	Lake Forest, CA
79 Naturescape	Ocoee, FL
80 Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping Inc.	Muskego, IL
81 TBG Landscape NEW	Portland, OR
82 Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping Inc.	Austin, TX
Hazeltine Nurseries Inc. NEW	San Antonio, TX
Dora Landscaping Co. *	Venice, FL
85 Nissho of California Inc. *	Apopka, FL
86 Meadows Farms	Vista, CA
High Tech Landscapes Inc.	Chantilly, VA
88 Clarence Davids & Co.	Branchburg, NJ
89 Countryside Industries Inc.	Mateson, IL
90 McHale Landscape Design Inc.	Wauconda, IL
91 Benchmark Landscape	Upper Marlboro, MD
92 PROscape Inc.	Poway, CA
93 Stay Green Inc.	Orlando, FL
Precision Landscape Management*	Santa Clarita, CA
95 HighGrove Partners	Dallas, TX
96 Earthworks Inc. *	Austell, GA
97 ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	Lillian, TX
98 Greenscapes of SW Florida Inc.	Venice, FL
ProGrass *	Naples, FL
Angler Environmental	Wilsonville, OR
100	Richmond, VA

2011 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change From 2010	FT/PT Employees	% Employee Change From 2010	2011 Avg Rev Per Employee	% Avg Rev Per Employee Change From 2010	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix
\$22,000,000.00	-3.1	350/20	+23.3	\$59,459	-21.4	NR
\$21,419,445.06	-9.3	198/2	-52.3	\$107,097	+216	96/2/2
\$20,800,000.00	+4.3	32/123	-3.1	\$134,193	NR	55/45/0
\$20,719,000.00	+7.4	375/0	+10.3	\$55,250	-2.7	94/3/3
\$20,320,570.00	+18.5	289/2	+14.6	\$69,830	+3.4	89/4/7
\$20,170,377.65	+0.8	280/120	+1.3	\$50,425	-.05	95/1/4
\$20,070,000.00	+15.6	175/10	+13.5	\$108,486	+1.9	20/80/0
\$20,000,000.00	NR	150/2	NR	\$131,578	NR	30/70/0
\$20,000,000.00	-2	135/185	+3.2	\$62,500	-5	80/3/17
\$20,000,000.00	-1.8	320/0	-8.6	\$62,500	+7.4	100/0/0
\$20,000,000.00	0	250/250	NR	NR	NR	100/0/0
\$19,500,000.00	+11.4	190/70	0	\$75,000	+11.4	50/14/36
\$19,500,000.00	+50	45/275	+10.3	\$60,937	+35.9	90/0/10
\$19,400,000.00	+2.1	230/70	+11.1	\$64,666	-8.1	30/70/0
\$19,248,848.00	+10	240/120	0	\$53,469	+10	100/0/0
\$18,977,000.00	+4.1	342/0	+52	\$55,488	-31.5	100/0/0
\$18,600,000.00	NR	147/2	NR	\$124,832	NR	5/15/80
\$18,600,000.00	+12	29/0	0	\$641,379	+12	45/55/0
\$18,000,000.00	0	150/150	+15.4	\$60,000	-13.3	30/5/65
\$17,978,000.00	+12.7	275/0	0	\$65,374	+12.7	54/46/0
\$17,900,000.00	-2.3	235/10	-23.4	\$7,301	+26.4	70/5/25
\$17,850,000.00	0	165/5	0	NR	NR	5/95/0
\$17,800,000.00	-10.1	180/40	-20.9	\$80,909	+13.6	65/20/15
\$17,500,000.00	NR	375/25	NR	\$43,750	NR	100/0/0
\$17,500,000.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
\$17,447,981.00	+2.6	160/50	+5	\$87,239	+2.6	31/66/3
\$17,000,000.00	NR	300/0	NR	NR	NR	100/0/0
\$16,800,000.00	NR	NA	NR	NR	NR	NR
\$16,713,632.00	+7.1	172/10	+5.8	\$91,833	1.2	10/90/0
\$16,595,870.00	+0.2	185/71	-6.3	\$64,827	+6.9	50/37/13
\$16,200,000.00	NR	65/30	NR	\$170,526	NR	20/60/20
\$16,000,000.00	-23.8	200/100	-7.7	\$53,333	-17.5	70/5/25
\$16,000,000.00	NR	142/0	NR	\$112,676	NR	NR
\$16,000,000.00	NR	80/0	NR	NR	NR	90/10/0
\$15,700,000.00	NR	260/0	NR	NR	NR	20/80/0
\$15,500,000.00	+3.3	120/100	-2.2	\$70,454	+5.7	4/95/1
\$15,500,000.00	+3.3	25/250	0	\$56,363	+3.3	NR
\$15,315,000.00	-2	225/0	.10	\$68,066	+8.9	90/5/5
\$15,100,000.00	+4.1	45/190	+39	\$64,255	-25.1	62/1/37
\$15,000,000.00	+2.7	165/0	+17.9	\$90,909	-12.2	NR
\$14,857,000.00	+4.6	220/0	-3.5	\$67,531	+8.4	100/0/0
\$14,100,000.00	+3.3	265/65	+3.1	\$42,727	+0.1	90/2/8
\$14,000,000.00	+7.7	210/0	0	\$66,667	+7.7	50/1/30*
\$14,000,000.00	NR	NA	NR	NR	NR	NR
\$13,533,001.00	+13.3	182/31	+220	\$63,535	-48.5	98/2/0
\$13,500,000.00	NR	150/125	NR	NR	NR	100/0/0
\$13,250,000.00	+11.1	170/50	+2.3	\$60,227	+8.5	80/20/0
\$13,000,000.00	-8.5	232/0	+9.4	\$56,034	-16.3	100/0/0
\$13,000,000.00	NR	175/0	NR	NR	NR	70/30/0
\$12,865,221.00	+35.4	75/6	+5.2	\$158,829	+28.7	25/25/50

listing continued on next page

continued from page S6

Landscape, a family-owned operation celebrating 65 years in business, plans to utilize technology to improve efficiency. It's just like science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke wrote in 1961, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

But no matter what tools companies use, one of the best arguments any of the companies on the list can make is simply that they've been around for a long time, many with the same employees.

"Fortunately, our core group of employees is considerably more productive, so labor costs have decreased, even as sales increase," says Dave Reed, vice president of Meadows Farms, Chantilly, VA. "We are resigned to a slightly smaller

2011 COMBINED
REVENUE OF LM150

\$7,543,372,333

2010 COMBINED
REVENUE OF LM150

\$7,762,431,033



= a decrease of 2.8%

sale, but we're trying to increase the number of people we reach and the number of sales."

On the following pages we highlight a few of the companies from the ranks of the LM150. While the economy has struggled, some companies have created new opportunities for themselves by diversifying their services. We explore the areas that brought three such companies success in 2011.

Many companies grew this year, some substantially. Senior Editor Beth Geraci talks with several business owners to explore how they did it.

Finally, Tony Pope, owner of Ecoscapes explains the concept of "addition by subtraction." The Huntersville, NC entrepreneur deliberately shrank his enterprise so that he could build it again. **LM**

	Company	Headquarters
101	Pacific Outdoor Living NEW	La Crescenta, CA
102	Dixie Landscape Co. Inc.	Miami, FL
103	Sposato Landscape Co. Inc.	Milton, DE
	Land-Tech Enterprises Inc. *	Warrington, PA
105	New Way Landscape & Tree Services	San Diego, CA
106	Hermes Landscaping Inc.	Lenexa, KS
	Resident Group Services Inc. (RGS)	Anaheim, CA
	Sun City Landscapes Inc. *	Las Vegas, NV
	Westco Grounds Maintenance Co. Inc. *	Houston, TX
110	Complete Landscaping Systems Inc. NEW	Wichita, KS
111	Mickman Brothers Inc. *	Ham Lake, MN
112	CoCal Landscape	Denver, CO
113	Cleary Bros. Landscape Inc.	Danville, CA
114	Yard-Nique NEW	Morrisville, NC
115	Basnight Land and Lawn	Chesapeake, VA
116	Rosehill Gardens Inc.	Kansas City, MO
	Realty Landscaping Corp.	Newtown, PA
118	Mill Brothers Landscape Group *	Fort Collins, CO
119	Perficut Companies Inc.	Des Moines, IA
120	Hoffman Landscapes Inc.	Wilton, CT
121	Designs By Sundown	Englewood, CO
	Parker Interior Plantscape Inc.	Scotch Plains, NJ
	Blondie's Treehouse Inc.	Mamaroneck, NY
	Luke Brothers Landscape Services	Holiday, FL
	Arteka Companies	Shakopee, MN
	Carson Landscape Industries *	Sacramento, CA
127	The Spencer Co.	Houston, TX
128	Houston Landscapes Unlimited	Sugar Land, TX
129	Kujawa Enterprises Inc.	Oakcreek, WI
130	Gardeners' Guild Inc.	Richmond, CA
131	Andre Landscape Service Inc. NEW	Azusa, CA
132	Becker Landscape Contractors Inc. *	Indianapolis, IN
133	Schultz Industries Inc.	Golden, CO
134	LMI Landscapes Inc. NEW	Carrollton, TX
135	American Landscape Systems Inc.	Lewisville, TX
136	John Mini Distinctive Landscapes	Congers, NY
137	Kinsella Landscape Inc.	Blue Island, IL
138	Webb Landscape Inc.	Ketchum, ID
139	Carol King Landscape Maintenance Inc.	Orlando, FL
140	Visionscapes Inc. NEW	Tucker, GA
141	Lawn Dawg Inc.	Nashua, NH
142	Native Land Design	Cedar Park, TX
143	Stockner's Nursery NEW	Rockville, VA
144	Creative Environments Design and Landscape Inc. NEW	Tempe, AZ
	Tree Tech Inc.	Foxboro, MA
	Grant & Power Landscaping	West Chicago, IL
147	Southview Design Inc. NEW	Inver Grove Heights, MN
148	Peabody Landscape Group *	Columbus, OH
149	The Pattie Group Inc. NEW	Novelty, OH
	Outside Unlimited Inc.	Hampstead, MD

2011 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change From 2010	FT/PT Employees	% Employee Change From 2010	2011 Avg Rev Per Employee	% Avg Rev Per Employee Change From 2010	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix
\$12,508,070.00	NR	112/0	NR	NR	NR	7/93/0
\$12,250,000.00	-7.6	185/0	-5.2	\$66,216	-2.6	80/20/0
\$12,200,000.00	+4.3	325/0	+58.5	\$37,538	-34.2	70/30/0
\$12,200,000.00	NR	245/135	NR	NR	NR	95/5/0
\$12,110,000.00	-.1	178/0	-1.2	\$68,033	+1	100/0/0
\$12,000,000.00	0	120/60	0	\$66,667	0	60/35/5
\$12,000,000.00	-4	185/0	0	\$64,864	-4	???
\$12,000,000.00	NR	NA	NR	NR	NR	NR
\$12,000,000.00	NR	150/10	NR	NR	NR	100/0/0
\$11,775,213.00	NR	55/99	NR	NR	NR	90/10/0
\$11,500,000.00	NR	80/10	NR	NR	NR	50/40/10
\$11,350,000.00	NR	180/238	NR	\$27,153	NR	74/0/26
\$11,300,000.00	+15.3	165/1	+16.9	\$68,072	+1.3	85/5/10
\$11,225,000.00	NR	115/65	NR	\$62,361	NR	95/5/0
\$11,145,000.00	+6.1	95/75	+1.8	\$65,558	+4.2	70/25/5
\$11,000,000.00	NR	160/30	NR	\$57,894	NR	30/60/10
\$11,000,000.00	0	65/85	+7.1	\$73,333	-6.7	49/49/2
\$10,818,658.00	NR	140/0	NR	NR	NR	80/20/0
\$10,500,000.00	-11	45/75	0	\$87,500	-11	85/15/0
\$10,100,000.00	+12	100/0	+16.3	\$101,000	-3.6	10/88/2
\$10,000,000.00	0	100/0	+11.1	\$100,000	+10	5/95/0
\$10,000,000.00	0	93/5	-6.7	\$102,040	+7.1	95/5/0
\$10,000,000.00	NR	95/35	NR	\$76,923	NR	70/30/0
\$10,000,000.00	0	230/45	0	\$36,364	0	80/0/20
\$10,000,000.00	NR	90/3	NR	\$107,526	NR	80/15/5
\$10,000,000.00	NR	125/0	NR	NR	NR	90/10/0
\$9,945,250.00	NR	180/5	NR	\$53,758	NR	100/0/0
\$9,900,000.00	-7.1	130/0	+14	\$76,153	-19.2	100/0/0
\$9,704,557.00	+25.6	75/50	0	\$77,636	+25.6	90/2/8
\$9,500,000.00	-8	135/0	-6.9	\$70,370	-1.2	80/15/5
\$9,355,000.00	NR	195/1	NR	\$47,729	NR	95/5/0
\$9,200,000.00	NR	45/110	NR	NR	NR	90/10/0
\$9,045,000.00	+1.7	88/66	+5.5	\$58,733	-3.6	100/0/0
\$9,000,000.00	NR	125/0	NR	\$72,000	NR	100/0/0
\$8,870,182.00	-4.2	100/0	+2	\$88,701	-6.1	50/0/50
\$8,700,000.00	0	58/37	0	\$91,579	0	95/5/0
\$8,600,000.00	-7.8	24/90	-6.6	\$75,438	-1.1	73/25/2
\$8,564,212.00	+4.5	130/15	+3.6	\$59,063	+9	2/97/1
\$8,557,000.00	+2	120/38	0	\$54,158	+2	67/10/23
\$8,450,000.00	NR	45/0	NR	\$187,777	NR	95/5/0
\$8,234,404.00	+20.7	73/12	+14.9	\$96,875	+5.1	6/94/0
\$8,192,215.00	-5.9	43/110	+8.5	\$57,288	-7.2	95/5/0
\$8,100,000.00	NR	100/15	NR	\$70,434	NR	70/30/0
\$8,000,000.00	NR	60/2	NR	\$129,032	NR	10/90/0
\$8,000,000.00	NR	85/5	NR	\$88,888	NR	50/20/15°
\$8,000,000.00	-10.1	20/80	-1	\$80,000	-9.2	???
\$7,893,691.00	NR	23/52	NR	\$92,866	NR	8/90/2
\$7,600,000.00	NR	45/75	NR	NR	NR	70/30/0
\$7,500,000.00	NR	55/23	NR	\$96,153	NR	15/85/0
\$7,500,000.00	NR	125/0	NR	NR	NR	85/10/5

BY REGION

(IN U.S. DOLLARS)



LEGEND * 2010 data

NORTHEAST

1	The Brickman Group	\$295,505,000
2	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$88,510,000
3	Scotts Lawn Service	\$72,410,000
4	SavATree	\$54,080,000
5	Lipinski Outdoor Services	\$39,900,000
6	Ruppert Landscape	\$39,203,208
7	Denison Landscaping Inc.	\$36,550,000
8	NaturaLawn of America	\$28,965,318
9	Greenscape Inc.	\$27,500,000
10	Shearon Environmental Design Inc.	\$22,000,000
11	D Schumacher Landscaping	\$20,800,000
12	Complete Landscaping Service	\$17,163,250
13	Ambius *	\$16,367,148
14	High Tech Landscapes Inc.	\$15,500,000
15	Weed Man	\$14,399,000
16	Sposato Landscape Co. Inc.	\$12,200,000
	Land-Tech Enterprises Inc. *	\$12,200,000
18	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	\$12,000,000
19	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$11,025,000
20	Realty Landscaping Corp.	\$11,000,000
21	McHale Landscape Design Inc.	\$10,500,000
22	Hoffman Landscapes Inc.	\$10,100,000
23	Blondie's Treehouse Inc.	\$9,000,000
24	John Mini Distinctive Landscapes	\$8,700,000
25	Tree Tech Inc.	\$8,000,000

MIDWEST

1	The Brickman Group	\$253,390,000
2	Scotts Lawn Service	\$91,905,000
3	Weed Man	\$45,100,000
4	Acres Group	\$38,200,000
5	Mariani Landscape	\$35,000,000
6	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin Inc.	\$32,000,000
7	Ambius *	\$27,920,530
8	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$26,000,000
9	Spring-Green Lawn Care	\$25,292,400
10	Chalet	\$24,600,000
	Scott Byron & Co. Inc.	\$24,600,000
12	Landscape Concepts Management Inc.	\$24,300,000
13	Sebert Landscaping	\$22,000,000
14	Environmental Management Inc.	\$20,000,000
	Moore Landscapes Inc.	\$20,000,000
16	Reliable Property Services LLC	\$19,500,000
17	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$19,267,200
18	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting Inc.	\$17,800,000
19	Naturescape	\$16,713,632
20	Clarence Davids & Co.	\$15,315,000
21	Countryside Industries Inc.	\$15,100,000
22	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$13,360,000
23	Hermes Landscaping Inc.	\$12,000,000
24	Mainscape Inc.	\$11,947,500
25	Rosehill Gardens Inc.	\$11,000,000

SOUTHWEST

1	Yellowstone Landscape Group	\$40,035,000
2	Environmental Earthscapes Inc.	\$38,029,270
3	The Brickman Group	\$33,772,000
4	AAA Landscape	\$26,380,533
5	Berghoff Design Group, BDG Maintenance	\$20,000,000
	DLC Resources Inc.	\$20,000,000
7	Scotts Lawn Service	\$19,495,000
8	Clean Scapes	\$18,977,000
9	Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	\$18,600,000
10	Heads Up Landscape	\$17,900,000
11	Lambert Landscape Co. *	\$17,850,000
12	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping Inc.	\$16,000,000
13	ISS Grounds Control	\$14,100,000
14	Earthworks Inc. *	\$13,500,000
15	Ambius*	\$12,516,054
16	Westco Grounds Maintenance Co. Inc. *	\$12,000,000
17	The Spencer Co.	\$9,945,250
18	Houston Landscapes Unlimited	\$9,900,000
19	American Landscape Systems Inc.	\$8,870,000
20	LMI Landscapes Inc.	\$8,640,000
21	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$8,350,000
22	Native Land Design	\$8,192,215
23	Visionscapes Inc.	\$2,535,000
24	Weed Man	\$2,398,000
25	Mickman Brothers Inc.	\$1,725,000

The opportunities ahead

The better a company fills a need, the more successful it will be. We asked our *LM150* about their biggest growth opportunities. Here's a sampling of how they plan to grow.

NO 8 **Massey Services Inc.** — Orlando, FL

1. New flea treatment protocols
2. Bed bug recurring services
3. Water management - irrigation

NO 15 **Ruppert Landscape** — Laytonsville, MD

1. Capitalizing on industry talent that's now available in the market
2. Pursuing multi-scope large projects throughout the U.S.
3. Increasing margins by refining the fundamentals

NO 29 **Mariani Landscape** — Lake Bluff, IL

We are focused on maintenance enhancement sales and charging for our design services.

NO 40 **Terracare Associates** — Littleton, CO

1. Continue to embrace technology
2. Lead our industry in developing and maintaining water efficient irrigation systems
3. Further develop our customer centric approach to dealing with all of our clients.

NO 52 **James River Grounds Management** — Glen Allen, VA

1. Applying our redesigned sales process
2. Using new technology to increase efficiencies
3. Expanding our "Green" offerings to clients

NO 58 **DLC Resources Inc.** — Phoenix, AZ

1. Expanding our tree services to generate additional revenue
2. Utilizing our water management expertise as a differentiator
3. Expanding our special projects division to generate additional revenue

NO 62 **Teufel Landscape** — Portland, OR

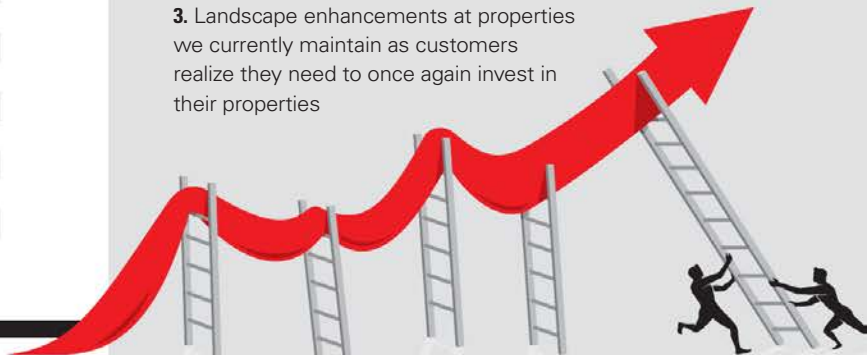
1. Repeat work from past customers, as they once again feel more positive about spending money for landscape
2. Referral from past customers for new construction that is now happening as a result of available financing
3. Landscape enhancements at properties we currently maintain as customers realize they need to once again invest in their properties

SOUTHEAST

1	The Brickman Group	\$177,303,000
2	Massey Services Inc.	\$136,346,547
3	Scotts Lawn Service	\$83,550,000
4	Yellowstone Landscape Group	\$38,465,000
5	Weed Man	\$37,851,000
6	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$31,730,000
7	The Greenery Inc.	\$30,750,000
8	Mainscape Inc.	\$30,107,700
9	Ruppert Landscape	\$26,135,472
10	RCI *	\$23,560,000
11	Cornerstone Solutions Group	\$23,138,223
12	James River Grounds Management	\$21,419,445
13	Russell Landscape Group Inc.	\$20,170,377
14	Girard Environmental Services Inc.	\$19,248,848
15	Gibbs Landscape Co.	\$17,978,000
16	Ambius *	\$17,329,922
17	Dora Landscaping Co.	\$16,000,000
18	PROscape Inc.	\$14,100,000
19	HighGrove Partners	\$13,533,000
20	ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	\$13,250,000
21	Lipinski Outdoor Services	\$13,110,000
22	Greenscapes of SW Florida Inc.	\$13,000,000
23	Dixie Landscape Co. Inc.	\$12,250,000
24	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$11,475,000
25	Yard-Nique	\$11,225,000

WEST

1	The Brickman Group	\$84,430,000
2	Marina Landscape Inc.	\$46,000,000
3	Jensen Corp.	\$37,000,000
4	Cagwin & Dorward	\$28,500,000
5	Terracare Associates	\$25,500,000
6	Mission Landscape Cos.	\$24,486,000
7	Ambius *	\$21,181,015
8	Bemus Landscape Inc.	\$20,719,000
9	Teufel Landscape	\$19,500,000
10	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	\$19,400,000
11	Pierre Sprinkler & Landscaping	\$18,600,000
12	Urban Farmer Inc.	\$18,000,000
13	Villa Park Landscape	\$17,500,000
14	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	\$17,447,981
15	Landscape Specialists Inc. *	\$17,000,000
16	Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping Inc.	\$16,595,870
17	ISS Grounds Control	\$15,900,000
18	Nissho of California Inc. *	\$15,700,000
19	Benchmark Landscape	\$14,857,000
20	Stay Green Inc.	\$14,000,000
21	ProGrass *	\$13,000,000
22	Pacific Outdoor Living	\$12,508,000
23	New Way Landscape & Tree Services	\$12,110,000
24	CoCal Landscape	\$11,350,000
25	Cleary Bros. Landscape Inc.	\$11,300,000



COMMERCIAL

1	ValleyCrest Landscape Cos.	\$850,000,000
2	The Brickman Group	\$591,010,000
3	EMCOR Group Inc.	\$336,246,000
4	U.S. Lawns	\$117,200,000
5	Ambius *	\$95,314,571
6	Yellowstone Landscape Group	\$70,650,000
7	Ruppert Landscape	\$65,338,681
8	Ferrandino & Son	\$62,000,000
9	Five Star Landscape	\$57,085,600
10	Lipinski Outdoor Services	\$57,000,000
11	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services, an ABM Co.	\$54,000,000
12	Clintar Landscape Management	\$47,975,000
13	Mainscape Inc.	\$47,312,100
14	Environmental Earthscapes Inc.	\$42,254,745
15	Acres Group	\$35,908,000
16	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	\$29,970,000
17	Cagwin & Dorward	\$27,075,000
18	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$26,720,000
19	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin Inc.	\$25,600,000
20	Denison Landscaping Inc.	\$25,585,000
21	Complete Landscaping Service	\$24,820,700
22	Greenscape Inc.	\$24,750,000
23	Mission Landscape Companies	\$24,486,000
24	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	\$24,000,000
25	RCI *	\$23,088,800

RESIDENTIAL

1	Scotts Lawn Service	\$270,145,000
2	The Brickman Group	\$253,290,000
3	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$133,600,000
4	Massey Services Inc.	\$122,711,892
5	Weed Man	\$104,500,000
6	Lawn Doctor Inc.	\$88,110,000
7	SavATree	\$54,080,000
8	NaturaLawn of America	\$34,301,034
9	Mariani Landscape	\$33,600,000
10	Spring-Green Lawn Care	\$32,518,800
11	Chalet	\$23,370,000
12	Scott Byron & Co. Inc.	\$22,386,000
13	Nutri-Lawn	\$21,528,000
14	Lambert Landscape Co.*	\$16,957,500
15	Jensen Corp.	\$16,650,000
16	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$16,056,000
17	Naturescape	\$15,042,268
18	Meadows Farms	\$14,725,000
19	Berghoff Design Group, BDG Maintenance	\$14,000,000
20	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	\$13,580,000
21	Nissho of California Inc. *	\$12,560,000
22	Pacific Outdoor Living	\$11,632,505
23	Cornerstone Solutions Group	\$11,569,111
24	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	\$11,515,667
25	Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	\$10,230,000

BY MIX (IN U.S. DOLLARS)

% GAIN IN REVENUE PER EMPLOYEE

1	James River Grounds Management	216
2	Reliable Property Services	35.9
3	AAA Landscape	34.6
4	Marina Landscape	29.2
5	Angler Environmental	28.7
6	Heads Up Landscape	26.4
7	Kujawa Enterprises	25.6
8	Cornerstone Solutions Group	24.4
9	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services (an ABM company)	17.6
10	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	13.6
11	Gibbs Landscape Co.	12.7
12	Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	12
13	Greenscape Inc.	11.6
14	U.S. Lawns	11.5
15	Teufel Landscape	11.4
16	Girard Environmental Services Inc.	10
	Designs By Sundown	10
18	Clintar Landscape Management	9.3
19	SavATree	8.9
	Clarence Davids & Co.	8.9
21	Cagwin & Dorward	8.7
22	ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	8.5
23	Benchmark Landscape	8.4
24	Lipinski Outdoor Services	8
25	Stay Green	7.7

% GAIN IN TOTAL EMPLOYEES

1	HighGrove Partners	220
2	Sposato Landscape Co.	58.5
3	Clean Scapes	52
4	Spring-Green Lawn Care	48.3
5	Countryside Industries	39
6	Scotts Lawn Service	33.8
7	Mainscape	30
8	Lipinski Outdoor Services	23.4
9	Shearon Environmental Design	23.3
10	McHale Landscape Design	17.9
11	Cleary Bros. Landscape	16.9
12	Mariani Landscape	16.7
13	Hoffman Landscapes	16.3
14	Urban Farmer	15.4
15	Lawn Dawg	14.9
16	Gachina Landscape Management Inc.	14.6
17	Houston Landscapes Unlimited	14
18	The Greenery Inc.	13.8
19	Ryan Lawn & Tree	13.5
20	Yellowstone Landscape Group	11.8
21	SavATree	11.2
22	ValleyCrest Landscape Cos.	11.1
	Greenscape	11.1
	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	11.1
	Designs By Sundown	11.1

BY EMPLOYEE FACTORS

LEGEND * 2010 data

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MONEY

MAKERS

Companies that grew in 2011 did it the old-fashioned way — through strategic moves, better marketing and a return to basics.

BY **BETH GERACI** SENIOR EDITOR

NO 39 **CHRISTY WEBBER LANDSCAPES**

2011 GROWTH

27%

The team at Christy Webber Landscapes, Chicago, IL, had a good year last year. The company's revenue rose from \$20.4 million in 2010 to \$26 million in 2011, a jump of 27%. And the company has its construction division to thank.

"It was pretty astounding to us, the growth in our construction division," says company president Christy Webber.

Webber Landscapes capitalized on the fact that other companies slated to do construction projects just didn't have the cash flow to purchase materials. In the end, that reality landed Webber Landscapes more municipal work than it anticipated at the start of the season.

"There've been a lot of companies where guys are saying, 'Doing construction is just not worth it,'" Webber says. "I ask myself that question every day. The margins — we might do a million-dollar job and come out with a profit of \$25,000. It's just stupid. I think a lot of guys are like, 'Screw it. It's not worth it.'"

Webber Landscapes started 2011 with a very low projected revenue for its construction division, yet by season's end the division had generated nearly \$7 million.

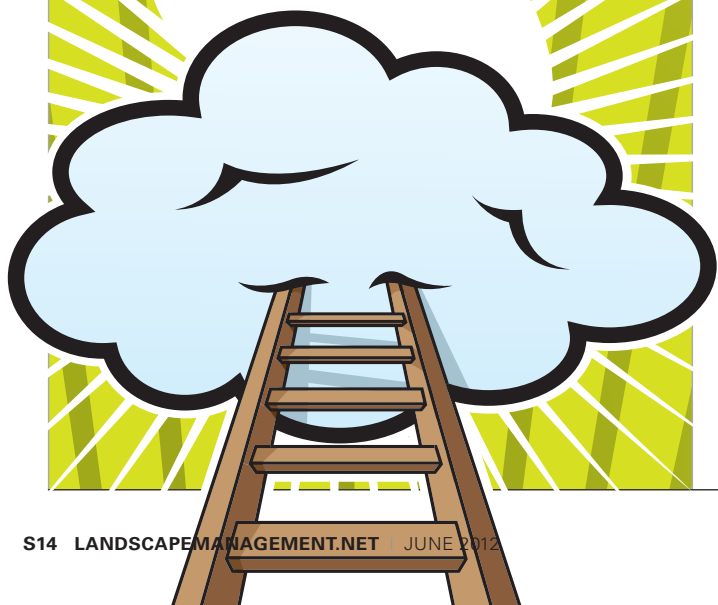
In 2011, the company also focused more on managing jobs well, which helped, and it hired construction staff instead of landscapers to manage jobs.

"To bring someone in who knew the lingo, knew the processes, things the landscaping industry has struggled with, it made a difference," says Webber. "It's a different game now." **LM**



"I think a lot of guys are like, 'Screw it. It's not worth it.'"

CHRISTY WEBBER, president, Webber Landscapes, on the typically low margins in construction work.



continued on page S16



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NO 57 RYAN LAWN & TREE

2011 GROWTH

15.6%

Ryan Lawn & Tree, Overland Park, KS, has grown little by little nearly every year in recent memory, even in abysmal 2008, says company president Larry Ryan.

In 2012, Ryan Lawn & Tree has a lofty goal: to hit \$100 million by 2030. It plans to meet that goal through organic growth and acquisitions. And, says Ryan, the company's right on target.

About five years ago, the company began studying clean water issues. And in 2011, Ryan Lawn & Tree grew by 15.6%, due largely to its merger with a Springfield, MO-based irrigation company.

The merger generated for Ryan Lawn & Tree about \$500,000. Whether that's also responsible for Ryan Lawn & Tree's share price rising is anybody's guess, but the company was reaffirmed by the fact that from 2010 to 2011 its share price rose from \$5.68 to \$6.48.

And the growth continues in 2012. So far this year, two companies have sold their irrigation customers to Ryan Lawn & Tree, which also acquired the companies' irrigation staffs. The new employees complemented Ryan's current staff in work ethic and attitude, which is exactly what the company seeks in its mergers.

"To have anybody merge with us, we want similar attitudes," Ryan explains. "We look for people who are committed to quality and are priced accordingly. Customers have to feel that you care, and if your front-line worker doesn't convey that, it will make a difference in the way customers feel."

Ryan says he wouldn't want to buy a \$10 million company; the work culture would be too slow to adapt. That's why Ryan Lawn & Tree focuses on acquiring smaller companies and growing incrementally.

Mergers and acquisitions have given Ryan Lawn & Tree an advantage, because becoming larger has reduced the company's overhead per customer.

In 2012, it plans to grow its work force by 20 employees and is eyeing more companies with which to merge. "But we're in no hurry on it," Ryan says. "We want to first make sure it's the right fit." **LM**



NO 62 RELIABLE PROPERTY SERVICES

2011 GROWTH

50%

Expansion is one way to grow, and St. Paul, MN-based Reliable Property Services did its share of that in 2011. In fact, its expansion caused it to grow by 50%.

Reliable opened two new branches in 2011, one in Des Moines, IA and another in Milwaukee, WI. The expansion is part of Reliable's five-year plan to establish a presence in new markets. Next up are Omaha, NE and Illinois, says Reliable Property Services VP of Operations Tom Hougnon.

Reliable's focus in Des Moines and Milwaukee is on building relationships with residents, Hougnon says. "It's good to be the new guy in town in a lot of ways," he adds.



"They want to make sure they're partnering with a company that's locally based. And we want to make sure we have a viable presence in the community."

TOM HOUGNON, VP of Operations, Reliable Property Services, on the importance of establishing a local presence when expanding into new cities

"You're a new face," and that causes residents to be curious about a business's offerings, Hougnon explains.

To establish goodwill with residents, when Reliable set up its Des Moines and Milwaukee branches it was careful to hire locally and buy locally.

"We'll buy trucks and trailers from Des Moines and Milwaukee dealers," Hougnon says. "You want to make sure you're established and your presence is there with local people. It's critical to make the customers realize you're not just an office with one guy doing all the work."

When Reliable branches out into new markets, residents often ask whether the company will hire locals. "They want to make sure they're partnering with a company that's locally based," Hougnon says. "And we want to make sure we have a viable presence in the community."

Reliable has a Des Moines staff of four full-timers and about 50 to 75 seasonal workers. And now, Hougnon says, Reliable is seeing double-digit growth in both Des Moines and Milwaukee, touching between 30% and 35% more customers. Reliable also sees single-digit growth in Minneapolis, where it opened a satellite office in 2011.

The company plans to keep expanding in 2012. "Our goal over the next five or eight years is to be the leading provider in the Midwest," says Hougnon. **LM**



NO 129 KUJAWA ENTERPRISES INC.

2011 GROWTH
25.6%

Over in Oak Creek, WI, Kujawa Enterprises Inc. (KEI) did some profiting of its own in 2011. Company Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing

Chris Kujawa attributes the growth to KEI's reenergized effort to increase sales.

"We ramped that up a little bit," Kujawa says. "A lot of it has to do with discipline and staying on top of certain things you do well. Do one thing at a time and do it well and on to the next."

Increasing sales, for KEI, meant increasing its marketing and visibility.

"Really, it was just a rededication to getting out there and doing things the old-fashioned way," Kujawa says. "There's no magic bullet out there. It's dedication, persistence. You just get out there and tell your story.

"Get in front of people," he continues. "Exposure is great, but exposure is not a connection. A lot of it's knocking on people's doors, trade association events, organizing social events. Be the catalyst...you know, sponsor things."

Companies are utilizing social media more, and it's a valuable tool, Kujawa says. But it's no personal connection. So over 2011 KEI made getting more face time with clients and prospects a priority.

"You can mail a proposal. That's great," Kujawa says. "It's not the same as presenting one. Now you've got an opportunity to get five minutes with the guy that maybe the next guy didn't have."

From KEI's marketing initiatives in 2011, Kujawa was reminded once again of just how far basic principles go in business, basics such as being personable, reliable, consistent and empathetic.

"You go from just being a grass cutter to being a flexible, creative, dependable grass cutter and now you've set yourself apart," he says. **LM**

"You can mail a proposal. That's great. It's not the same as presenting one."

CHRIS KUJAWA, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Kujawa Enterprises Inc., on the importance of face time with clients



SavATree has inspired its sales team (shown here) through its new health and wellness program.

NO 14 SAVATREE

2011 GROWTH
22.7%

Bedford Hills, NY-based SavATree turned to marketing and networking to grow in 2011.

"This year was really an organic-driven growth year," says Luann O'Brien, SavATree's vice president of marketing and sales development.

"Reaching out to people and really being present in the community has always been part of our culture, but I think customers are becoming more tuned in to the community involvement of companies.

"Rather than it being strictly a fact-based decision that customers are making," O'Brien continues, "it's more emotion-based. People look at trees and shrubs often as extended members of their family, and customers also look to do work with companies that are good corporate citizens."

So SavATree zeroed in even more in 2011 on its physical presence in the community—ensuring its trucks were seen in the neighborhood; rubbing elbows with people at fundraisers; and participating in community service projects.

In 2011, SavATree also enhanced its website. "Anything involving web presence is really mission critical," O'Brien says. "Everybody's looking online to see who's in their area. You have to be online and also be local."

And by using compete.com, SavATree tracks its online traffic and assesses how it sizes up against its competitors. Based on recent compete.com data, SavATree has nearly 30% more online traffic now than it did last year at this time, O'Brien says.

Among SavATree's most important drivers of growth in 2011 was the fact that it energized and motivated its sales team through the health and wellness initiative it launched last fall.

"Our sales team members have been encouraged to get healthy and fit as a way of increasing their performance, and it is working," says O'Brien. "I'm getting emails on a regular basis that our sales team has embraced a healthier way of life."

SavATree's program gives points for weight loss, quitting smoking, lowering blood pressure and more. SavATree's sales conference in February culminated in a team building event at Blue Streak sports facility in Stamford, CT in which employees had fitness breaks.

The initiative "has made a huge difference for us as a company," O'Brien says. **LM**

BRANCH

To keep profits streaming in, 3 landscape companies are diversifying their services and reaping the rewards.

BY **BETH GERACI**
SENIOR EDITOR

Since 2008, landscape companies have struggled to find ways to make a profit. Some have gone the sustainability route, others have focused on customer service. These three companies strengthened their businesses by recognizing a need and diversifying their services accordingly.

Environmental work

When the folks at TBG Landscape in Brooklin, ON do things, it's on a grand scale. That's because for TBG, which specializes in design/build projects, a typical project is worth \$250,000.

Given the huge scope and cost of those projects, once the economy tanked in 2008, so did TBG's client pool.

Thankfully, "we had two very large projects in 2007 that went through 2011," says TBG President Mark Bradley. "As they came to an end, we tried to look at ways to maintain the size of the business."

Company executives analyzed the marketplace and asked themselves how they could stay profitable. They found the answer in erosion control and environmental work.

"Erosion control was a natural transition for us," Bradley says. "In our design/build work, we've been



ING OUT

TBG Landscape workers engaged in a wetlands restoration project (below); The TBG team has found success in its erosion control work.



very focused on sustainable landscape techniques. So erosion control was kind of a natural fit for us.”

The company began its foray into erosion control in 2009 with the purchase of a blower truck. Since then, TBG has picked up substantial erosion control work for private landowners, conservation groups and government properties, also delving into wetlands conservation projects.

“With the clean water movement, there’s been a lot more government investment,” Bradley says. “So we find that the erosion control and wetlands restoration business have worked well for us.”

Since TBG began advertising its erosion control services a few years ago, its work volume

has increased, Bradley says. The company saw an opportunity in Ontario’s emerging environmental movement and in “the fact that the government is changing things at a very rapid pace in terms of compliance for new buildings,” he adds.

In response to the rising Green Movement, TBG has taken its erosion control business a step higher, now even pumping soil onto green roofs.

“The way the government’s changing the laws, there’s an opportunity, and not a lot of com-

petition,” Bradley says.

TBG began its huge green efforts in 2007, 10 years after the company launched.

“We asked, ‘What could we do to eliminate as much cost as possible in our material purchasing?’” Bradley explains.

What they could do, it turns out, was a lot. In 2007, TBG started its sustainable initiative by planting 40 acres of nursery stock to grow its own plant material. That was Step 1.

Then in 2008, TBG purchased a soil manufacturing plant. In 2009, the company added its own trucking department, purchasing five tractor-trailers to move all the soil it was making.

Its trucking business also enables it to move building materials and natural stone — about the only things it buys from a middle man — from as far as the West Coast.

By using its own products, TBG saves a lot of money. In 2007, Bradley says, TBG spent 28% of its budget on landscape materials. In 2011, that number fell to 17%. That breaks down to a savings of \$1.7 million, Bradley says.

“What I feel that’s happened is, because over the past five years we’ve invested in the integration, it’s allowed us to introduce new services. Because we have the capacity and capability to do it,” Bradley says.

Thanks to its slow but steady self-sustaining efforts over the last five years, in 2011 TBG saw a substantial return on its erosion control investment. “In 2011, it generated close to \$3 million,” Bradley says. “It was a big year for it, and that space is climbing rapidly in 2012.”

TBG traditionally has subcon-

tracted out its soil remediation work, but now the company has begun exploring soil remediation technology, hoping eventually to do that work itself.

TBG aspires to be the most profitable landscape company in the business, Bradley says.

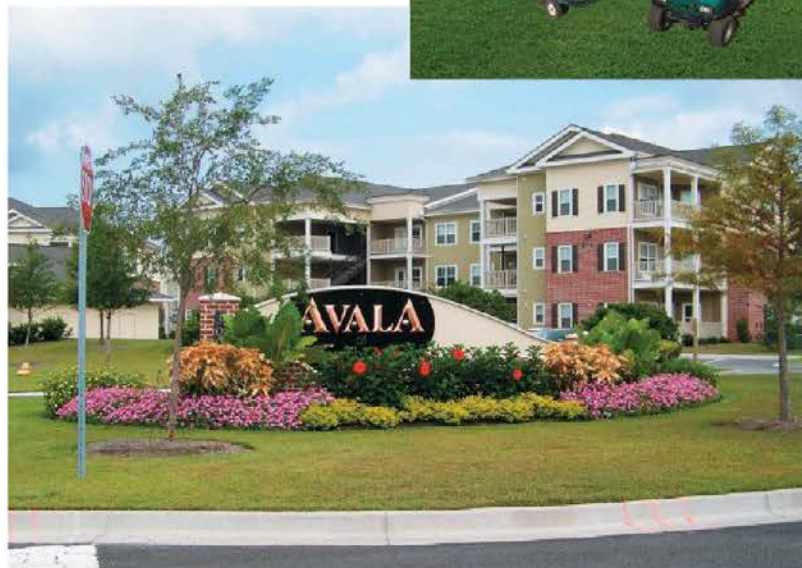
“We really only started the company in 1997, and we’re competing with companies that have been in business for 40 or 50 years,” he says. “I felt the environmental section was a way to get ourselves on the map.”

Rental and military markets

While TBG was focusing on erosion control and wetlands work in Ontario, Hilton Head, SC-based The Greenery Inc. was diversifying its business in other ways.

Before the recession hit, The Greenery’s construction division was thriving, propelling the company’s maintenance division. But “when that construction business all but dried up, we had to find a

The Greenery Inc. team (right) found the Savannah, GA rental market (below) to be profitable in 2011.



new way to drive our maintenance business,” says The Greenery President Lee Edwards.

“We diversified a bit. We went after government and municipal contracts in our Beaufort (South Carolina) market, and that enabled us to dedicate more people over there,” Edwards says.

Indeed, The Greenery has experienced growth in its Bluffton, Hardeeville and Beaufort, South Carolina markets over the last couple years.

But The Greenery wasn’t giving the same attention to its Savannah, GA market, which it long has serviced from its Hardeeville, SC branch.

That changed in 2011, when the company decided to more aggressively pursue Savannah commercial business. Now,

Edwards says, “in the past year most growth has been in Savannah. The volume of work we’re doing there has doubled.”

The Greenery’s skyrocketing volume of Savannah work will lead it to open a full branch there in 2013. No longer will Savannah be served from The Greenery’s Hardeeville branch.

The commercial work The Greenery has been engaged in in Savannah centers on apartment complexes and property owners associations (POAs).

That’s a marked change from the high-end commercial work The Greenery is accustomed to.

“In the past, we didn’t go after rental places because it was the lower end of the market,” Edwards says, “but nowadays, the rental market is really hot. That’s a big business right now.”

More and more, apartment dwellers are taking pride in the appearance of their abodes, “so some of those apartment complexes are stepping up their quality,” Edwards says, “and one way to do that

is through landscaping.”

The Greenery’s success in Savannah resulted from the company’s efforts in 2010 and 2011 to network with residents there. “It takes a long time,” Edwards says. “You can’t just go in there and say, ‘We want to do your landscaping’ and have them hire you right then and there. It takes work.”

Just as The Greenery turned to its Savannah commercial market in 2011, so too did it find success in its military

Dennis' 7 Dees President David Snodgrass (center) with his brothers Drew (left) and Dean (right)



landscaping contracts.

"We basically decided we wanted to get involved in military work, and that's a lot more difficult (to break into)," says Edwards. "There are a lot of hoops you have to jump through. So we decided to talk to Gary Mazzanna instead of trying to tackle that ourselves."

Gary Mazzanna owned Mazzanna's Lawn & Landscape, based in Beaufort, SC. He had some military contracts, and while he was looking for a way out of the business, The Greenery was looking for a way in. The cultures matched. In 2011, The Greenery acquired Mazzanna's and gained a foothold in the military landscaping market.

The Greenery brought Gary Mazzanna into the fold at the company. Being blessed with his expertise "meant it was not as steep a learning curve as it would have been," Edwards says. "Military work is very different from working in the private sector."

Three military bases are located near The Greenery's headquarters on Hilton Head Island, including Parris Island, SC, home to a U.S. Marine Corps training facility; a Marine Corps air station near Beaufort; and Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah. The Greenery has housing property maintenance contracts at two of them and hopes to land the third.

"Taking advantage of what's in the market is our goal — and that happens to be a more diverse marketplace right now," Edwards says. "In the long run, I think it will be good that we've diversified."

Ramped up self-promotion

At Dennis' 7 Dees in Portland, OR, diversifying begins at home. The company's not offering any new services, just better promoting those it already has. In 2011, the company turned to its staff for help in serving customers as a team, instead of as individual departments. As a result, the company was able to better advertise to customers all the services it offers, and even facilitate those relationships to bring in new business.

"We're talking to everybody about the big picture," says company president David Snodgrass, who runs the company with his brothers Dean and Drew. "It's not about just a single department."

Between the company's garden centers and design/build and maintenance divisions, there's plenty of room for staff members to refer one another to their respective clients. "Right now, we're able to steer customers to different services we provide, and we're doing that more effectively

than we ever have before," Snodgrass says.

In 2011, company employees are more focused than ever on referring each other. "We operate more as a global company, and that is a definite shift," Snodgrass says.

Through working together across all departments, "you have a lot more opportunity, and you're able to service the customer regardless of their needs," he adds.

When the economy went under in 2008, like other landscapers, Dennis' 7 Dees was forced to look at ways to capitalize on the business it already had.

"It's been three years of thinking it was going to change anytime, and it didn't," says Snodgrass. "So we just thought, 'OK, we need to figure this out for ourselves. And it's our diversity that we have fallen back on. Going forward, even if the economy improves, we'll go into that with strength internally and externally. We'll have renewed strength and momentum.'"

Having its workers promote the company's services through their own work has boosted morale among employees. "I think people understand the bigger picture," Snodgrass says, "and the more they're able to participate in the company, that in itself is highly motivating."

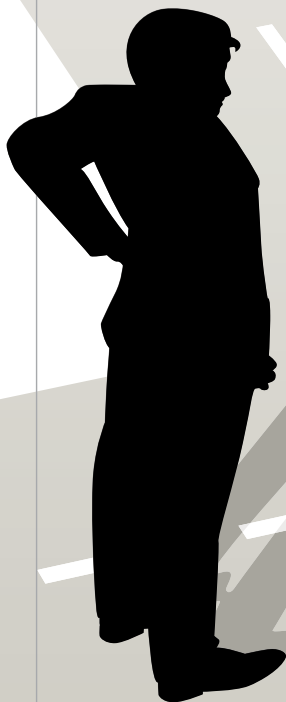
Thanks to that motivation, Dennis' 7 Dees is ahead of its 2012 projections and is finding renewed success in its maintenance division, having recently landed some large accounts.

"I'm optimistic that this is the year we've been waiting for," says Snodgrass. **LM**

AT A CROSSROADS

Most business owners look to grow their businesses. But Tony Pope knew that Ecoscape's future success required making his enterprise considerably smaller.

BY **DAN JACOBS** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



In 2007, Ecoscape Solutions Group was a \$36.6 million a year business and ranked 28th on the LM150. This year the company posted revenues of just \$6.7 million and didn't even make the list.

And owner Tony Pope is just fine with that. It wasn't the economy that forced such a change (well it wasn't only the economy). In fact, Pope intentionally shrank his company to ensure its survival.

Though Ecoscape offered services in a number of markets, the Huntersville, NC-based company was heavily tied to the housing market. And when that bubble burst, "we were faced with tough decisions, just like other business owners," Pope says. "It wasn't a decision that was made overnight."

Like many companies unprepared for the economic malaise, Pope's company saw a downturn in revenue by the end of 2008. At first he thought he could simply wait it out.

"A good part of 2009 we were still numb that it was going to last this long," Pope says. "We were still just marching forward. We still hadn't closed any of our branches down. In the fall of '09 is when it started sinking in. That's when we realized this is not going to turn around as fast as we thought it was."

The first half of 2008 the company was exceeding expectations.

"It was the biggest six months we ever had," Pope says. "In July 2008, it's like the faucet just shut off with home building."

With a large portion of the company's revenue tied



to national homebuilders, Ecoscape was deeply affected.

“We had other revenue pipelines, but construction homebuilding was such a large portion of it, it really started affecting our business,” Pope says. The company ended up closing offices in Atlanta, GA and Hilton Head, SC.

Green Industry business consultants often suggest maintaining a 60/40 or 70/30 maintenance-to-construction ratio, Pope says. His company simply was too heavily weighted to construction, which was fine until the housing bubble burst in mid-2008.

Making the decision

Pope realized in late 2009 that the company couldn't continue down the same wait-and-see path.

“In the summer of 2010, I felt like my partner and I were miles apart on where we thought the company needed to be going, in what direction,” Pope says. “We were still trying to be everything to everybody.”

Pope wanted to restructure the company and his partner didn't.

“To get us to that healthy state, we needed to carve off quite a bit of our construction,” he says. “We were still working for some homebuilders. The revenue wasn't healthy. The margins were so low — one tiny mistake and we had major losses. You spend all of your attention trying to fix that when we weren't focused on what we needed to be focused on — growing our lawn maintenance business.”

Pope knew that to survive there needed to be some major changes.

“I spent the better part of the end of the summer of 2010 having discussions with my spouse and some advisors,” he recalls. “I approached my partner in September of 2010 and told him I thought it was best if we weren't partners anymore.”

Over the next six months, the pair devised a plan to carve off portions of the business that each was passionate about. “That allowed both of us to focus more narrowly on what our niche was,” Pope says.

Beginning in April 2010, Pope began to reinvent Ecoscape Solutions Group.

He sold 70 trucks and more than 30 trailers and did not renew the lease on 45 skid steers. Pope also needed to renegotiate the relationships with his banks and vendors. Banks and vendors view a \$30 million

Ecoscape Solutions Group owner Tony Pope shrank his company to ensure its survival.

150 during the peak of the season.

“Morale was as low as I'd ever seen my entire time being in the business,” Pope says. “Some (employees) were leaving on their own accord. Quite a few of them we had to

let go just because we didn't have anything for them to do. Some of them we were able to transfer them to other parts of the business where we were trying to grow the business.”

Pope credits his team of key employees for making the transition successful. They trusted Pope enough to guide them through Ecoscape's reinvention.

“I'm really thankful that I have a lot of employees who were with me for many years are still with me today,” he says. “They saw it through. They stuck with me when they didn't know where we were going.”

There was one other person who was key to the successful transition, Pope's wife.

“She saw how unhappy I was,” he says. “It was more a conversation of what's good for your personal health, your happiness.” His wife knew the stress he was under, he adds. “She trusted me.”

The future

Pope plans to get back to the \$30 million-range one day, but growth won't come with the 20% to 30% spikes tied to residential construction. Future increased revenue will come from a combination of organic growth and acquisition.

“We will do it with discipline,” Pope says. “We'll do it with that 60/40, 70/30 rule in mind. We won't let the greed overtake our strategy. I'm not going to go back and beat myself up, because it was a great ride, and I learned a lot from it. But now that I've been through that, I will not let my greed or lack of discipline outdo the business plan.”

Pope expects to end 2012 at around \$8 million, which will likely put him back on the LM150 next year.

“The key word that I discussed many times with my leaders and my wife was ‘acceptance,’” Pope says. “Let's accept what we have; let's be happy. At the end of the day, an \$8 million company is a very respectable company in our industry. Just move on.” **LM**

company very differently than they do a \$7 million one.

There were layoffs, and some employees left because they “saw the writing on the wall.” The company went from about 450 employees to

Work with the pros who know
how to work the numbers.



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Months	Regular Payments	Adjusted Seasonal Payments
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April – October	\$243	\$355



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Weighing in on wellness

I've spent most of my married life — the past 20 years — dodging our bathroom scale. In ducking this weighty issue, I've spawned a virtual Dockers store: My closet now overfloweth with dozens of pants spanning 34-, 36-, 38-, 40-, 42- and 44-inch waists.

My mother has lovingly nudged me to lose weight for years. But her latest plea finally struck a chord deep within me: "I can't lose another son," she shared with pained eyes and broken heart.

Mom's vulnerability, and mine, were front and center. I couldn't help but flash back to 1989, when we lost Dad, without warning, to a heart attack. A tough blow for any wife, never mind a mother of 10.

Twenty years later, Mom had to bury one of her children — their first-born son, who shared Dad's name and birthday — again, without a goodbye. After suffering a heart attack at age 47, Jim left behind a wife and three children. We buried Jim on Valentine's Day 2009.

No longer is it just about me and feeding my love of pizza, burgers, fries, soda and sweets. It's about Mom.

*The sweet six
The best six doctors
anywhere
And no one can deny it
Are sunshine, water,
rest, and air
Exercise and diet.
These six will gladly
you attend
If only you are willing
Your mind they'll ease
Your will they'll mend
And charge you not a
shilling.*

— WAYNE FIELDS,
What the River Knows

It's about my lovely bride, Bridgid, and our three great gifts from above: Mickey, 17; Jamie, 16; and Meg, 14. It's about my eight surviving siblings, 26 nieces and nephews, and numerous in-laws, friends and co-workers.

It's also about honoring Jim's life through mine. Adopting a healthier lifestyle gives me a better chance of having more days to live, laugh and love as large as Jim did.

On March 3, Mom's 80th birthday, I began my quest for wellness — a single word that encom-

passes all types of fitness: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Wellness cannot be measured solely by a scale. However, a scale can serve as one of a number of useful indicators of an individual's physical wellness.

In its infancy, my wellness program so far has included a soul-enriching retreat and heightened honesty and accountability regarding my "eat less, move more" resolution.

Today, I maintain a daily food diary. If I bite it, I write it: the food type and amount, calories, and fat and carbohydrate grams. I'm making healthier choices, one day, one meal, and sometimes one moment at a time. Heck, I'm even exercising a little: family bike rides and an occasional game of hoops with Mickey.

The few changes I've made so far are working. I'm finally walking toward wellness. The bathroom scale agrees: I'm down 57 pounds.

Equally important, I'm reducing stress with deep-breathing exercises, and trying to strike a better balance between my work and family lives. I've evolved into quite the workaholic the past several years. I need to spend more time away from the busyness of business, staying connected with loved ones and our loving Creator through prayer and service.

Pleasing the workaholic in me, countless studies have proven the direct correlation between an individual's wellness and productivity. No matter how one looks at it, wellness programs work ... if we work them. Won't you please get well with me?

Today I maintain a daily food diary. If I bite it, I write it: the food type and amount, calories, and fat and carbohydrate grams.



THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

The author is owner-manager of 3PG Consulting. Reach him at editor@northcoastmedia.net.

The power of pricing

There is still a lot of gnashing of teeth about market pricing. I showed a chart at a recent Professional Land-care Network (PLANET) event that reported mowing prices in different regions of the country and what the average gross margin is at each price (see Table 1). The table details actual data we collect on pricing. It does not recommend a pricing strategy, nor does it suggest that this is the “right and fair” price. It simply reports what is happening and provides a benchmark for contractors.

The gnashing of teeth part is that some suggest that these numbers cannot be true — and if they are, then people must be “giving it away” and selling below cost. Certainly, some contractors are pricing some jobs very low some of the time, but *all* contractors pricing *all* jobs below cost all the time? This is simply not happening. Anyone practicing this strategy would soon be out of business.

TABLE 1: MOWING RATES VS. GROSS MARGINS

AMR	AGM
\$30	51%
\$28	49%
\$25	47%
\$23	45%
\$21	44%
\$19	42%

This table shows what a contractor's average gross margin (AGM) would be at a given average mowing rate (AMR).

TABLE 2: PROFIT PERCENTAGE

Two contractors in different regions offer a very different price for the same service and still make the same profit percentage.

Benchmarks/Calculation	Florida	Illinois
A: Crew average wage rate (data)	A: \$11	\$14.50
B: Price per hour charged (data)	B: \$19	\$28
C: Gross margin (A-B)/A	C: 42%	48%
D: Indirect/equipment cost as percent of revenue*	D: 16%	22%
E: Contribution to overhead (C-D)	E: 26%	26%

* Differences between this cost between the South and the North are due to:

- **Seasonality.** In Florida they mow all year long and get revenue all year long.
- **Equipment type.** In Florida they do not need to equip for snow and thus the heavy (and more expensive) vehicles required for snow removal.
- **Environment.** Because the weather is milder, the heavier equipment lasts longer.

Some explanation is in order, however, to explain pricing differentials. Table 2 shows how two contractors in two geographic markets can arrive at a very different price for the same service and still make the same profit percentage. In this very real example, the respective contractors each make a 26% contribution to overhead.

Is someone crazy like a fox here? Maybe. But this is what Milton Friedman meant when he said there are no free lunches. Markets find equilibrium, making certain that the grass is rarely greener on the other side — nor the profit higher (at least for very long).

It simply turns out that the firms charging \$19 per hour in Florida are charging what other firms in Florida are charging, based on their very similar cost structures. At the same time, it is also true that firms in Illinois that decided to charge \$19 per hour would not last very long, because they have a very different and higher cost structure.

Let's face it: We are in an economy where the customer has pricing power, not us. If we continue to approach pricing with old estimating methods and production standards, we are missing the boat on price. For example, let's compare two contractors in the same market.

Say one contractor bids 20% fewer hours, and the customer saves 25%. Is he giving it away? Not if he can do it in four hours on every mow, just as he estimated.

So, from whom would you purchase? Pricing pressure is a fact of life almost everywhere. Every year, manufacturers routinely go to their vendors seeking price concessions. Why? Because they can! They have the power. The smart vendor, instead of howling at the moon about low pricing, buckles down with his people in the factory and figures out how to make the widget more cheaply. This is a very good idea that will help us survive now and prosper greatly when the economy eventually improves, and power of price shifts back to us. This *will* happen, just as surely as the sun rises every day.

How BOSS LM Software Helped Klausing Group Achieve Their Highest Profits Ever.

The Klausing Group

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, Klausing Group focuses on the commercial market by offering comprehensive ground management services. Roscoe Klausing, President, believes that every office park, property management or industrial client that hires Klausing entrusts that decision to a person who views their responsibility as getting the job done right. This is right in tune with the Klausing Group's promise: We make you and your property look great.

Looking For Solutions

About six years ago, the Klausing management team decided that to better serve their clients, Klausing would implement an enterprise business management software solution.

The Lessons Of Poor Software

"The software was just not user friendly and support was poor and expensive, which made us reluctant to use it," Roscoe said. Worse still, he couldn't trust the information he was relying on to make day-to-day decisions. Roscoe still laments loss of a \$350K account because the job costing information he relied on from his enterprise system led him to submit an unreasonably high renewal bid.

BOSS LM To The Rescue

Still believing in the hope of an enterprise tool, Roscoe found BOSS LM business management software from BOSS LM.

Up & Running Fast

With Klausing Group's enterprise experience, the transition to BOSS LM was swift and the system went live in less than two months. Klausing Group found the methodical fit-gap approach used by BOSS LM very appealing.

The Powerful Fit-Gap Process

Roscoe commented that, "...the fit-gap process was extremely valuable because we were able to pinpoint specific operational procedures needing attention before implementing BOSS LM." The results are real time and the management team now uses information they can trust.

Employee & Other Advantages

The new user friendly system means every employee managing data vital to operational success enters that data themselves. Quarterly account-by-account audits use to take Klausing 1-2 days. With BOSS LM, data feeds seamlessly to the Accounting System and the CPA is done before lunch on the first day.

Spectacular Support

"...support from BOSS LM has been spectacular. I have no other supplier that has developed such a partnership-oriented relationship."

BOSS LM Produces Profits

A year after implementing BOSS LM, Roscoe says, "...our profits are the best they have ever been and I attribute much of that result to BOSS LM."

Favorite Feature Is In The Cloud

And, Roscoe wouldn't let you go without telling you what he sees as the single biggest BOSS LM feature—Web-based functionality. "I can access the system wherever I am through the web and still be in touch." Straight from his iPhone, Roscoe stays abreast of critical issues with a real-time view into the business. His BOSS LM system helps him achieve total control of his business.

Roscoe would ask, can your software do that?

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AT A GLANCE

NAME: Adam N. Linnemann

TITLE: president, entrepreneur, Rotarian, dad and husband

COMPANY: Linnemann Lawn Care & Landscaping Inc.

YEAR FOUNDED: 1994

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY: 18

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT: Landscape & Nursery Association of Greater St. Louis

HOBBIES: part-time police officer; vacationing in Mexico

FAMILY: wife, Sahra, and sons Nash and Wynn

WEBSITE: LinnemannLawn-Care.com

Starting your business as a teenager does have a few perks. **Adam Linnemann**, president of Linnemann Lawn Care & Landscaping, started with a push mower, riding lawn mower and wagon.

“I love talking with my clients, and at the time when I started, most of them were elderly,” Linnemann recalls. “I would spend sometimes 30 or 45 minutes with them after I cut their lawn, just socializing and enjoying a cold soda. If I was lucky, they would sometimes bake desserts.”

Linnemann doesn't have that extra time today, but he's still focused on making customers' experiences better.

How has the industry changed during your time working in it?

The competition has really increased. There are a lot of fly-by-night companies out now, guys trying to make an extra buck on the side or after hours from their full-time jobs.

Equipment is way more efficient and advanced. We used to use paper time cards; we are now using Exakttime PocketClocks for attendance. Back in 1994, when I started, I could buy gasoline for under \$1.

Why did you start your board of directors? To gain insight from an outsider's view. We have a technology person, a commercial banker and a Green Industry equipment supplier on our board.

My board has provided suggestions on offering a different selling tactic. They recommended “menu selling” — basically, offering different lawn maintenance packages in tiers. The higher the tier, the more of a discount the customer will receive.

What challenges do you see in the lawn care segment of the industry?

In general, it's been hard to find good qualified help. It's also been difficult to retain our in-the-field team members (laborers). Other issues we are facing is that the mild winter hurt our sales goal for the year and insects are bad and out in full force.

How are you addressing those challenges? The winter, we could not control. We have two available pesticide applicators this year to tackle the accounts if the weather dictates immediate action, and to also help meet and exceed our clients' expectations.

How has the economy affected your business, and how are you dealing with it? It hasn't affected us much at all, and by being mostly a maintenance company this has helped a lot. I would have

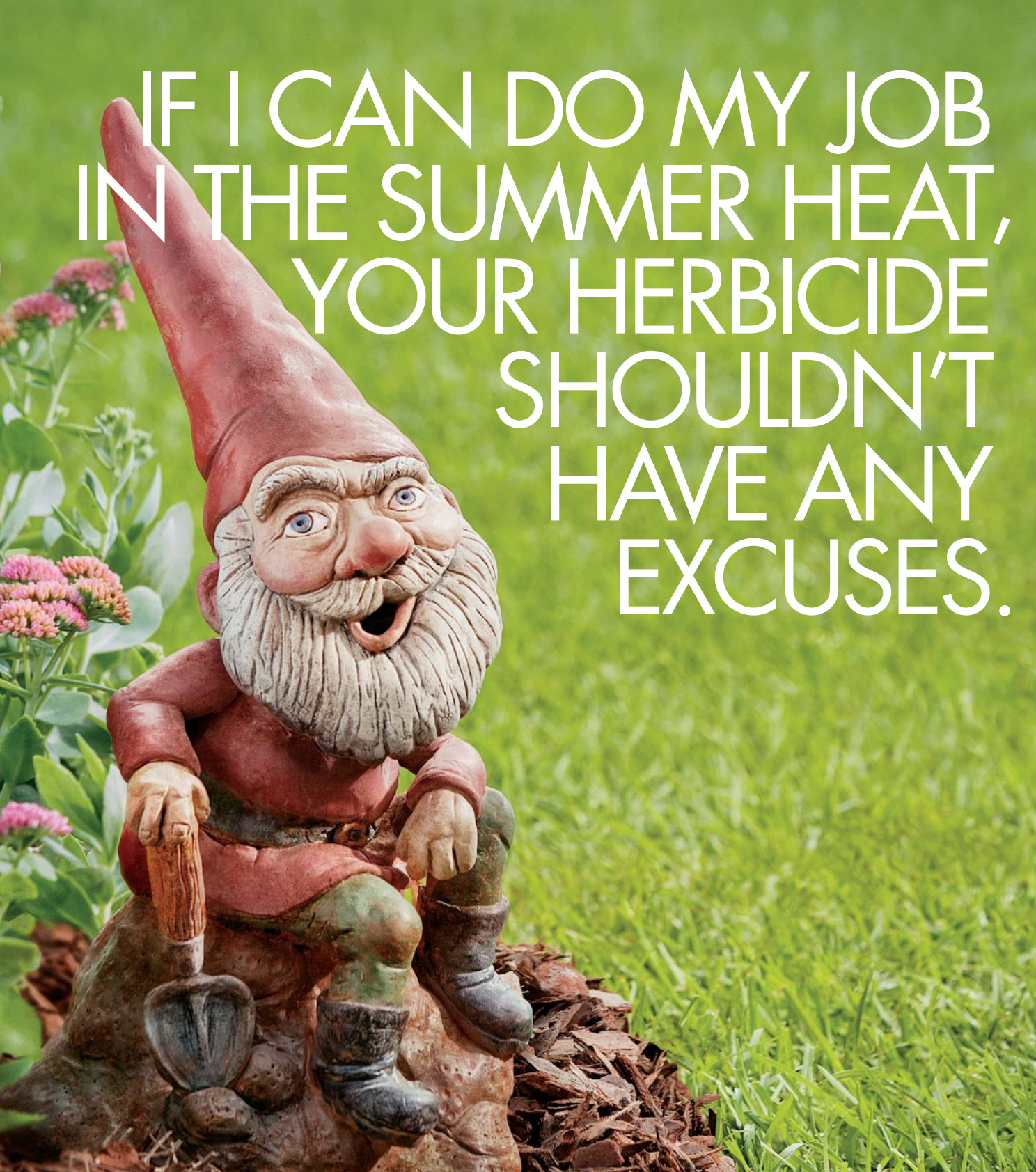
been scared if I strictly did landscape installs. We do a 70% maintenance, 30% install mix.

What's the best part of your job? Meeting new people and networking. Providing service to my community and globally is fun, and gives me a great feeling. It's also nice to know that I can pretty much go on vacation at any given time or take the afternoon off, thanks to our processes and procedures we have in place. It has taken 18 years of hard work and sweat to get to this point, but it's been well worth it.

What do you consider to be the most significant moment in your business career? There are two things: First, our first business acquisition. We bought out a lawn fertilization and weed control company that had almost 400

clients. It taught me to stick to my grass roots in marketing and customer communication. Second, being asked to speak at the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) conference was amazing. This was my first speaking event, and it was an awesome feeling and pleasure to be asked to participate. For me, it was a milestone that I hope continues to come around again in the very near future.

THERE ARE A LOT OF FLY-BY-NIGHT COMPANIES OUT NOW, GUYS TRYING TO MAKE AN EXTRA BUCK ON THE SIDE OR AFTER HOURS FROM THEIR FULL-TIME JOBS.”



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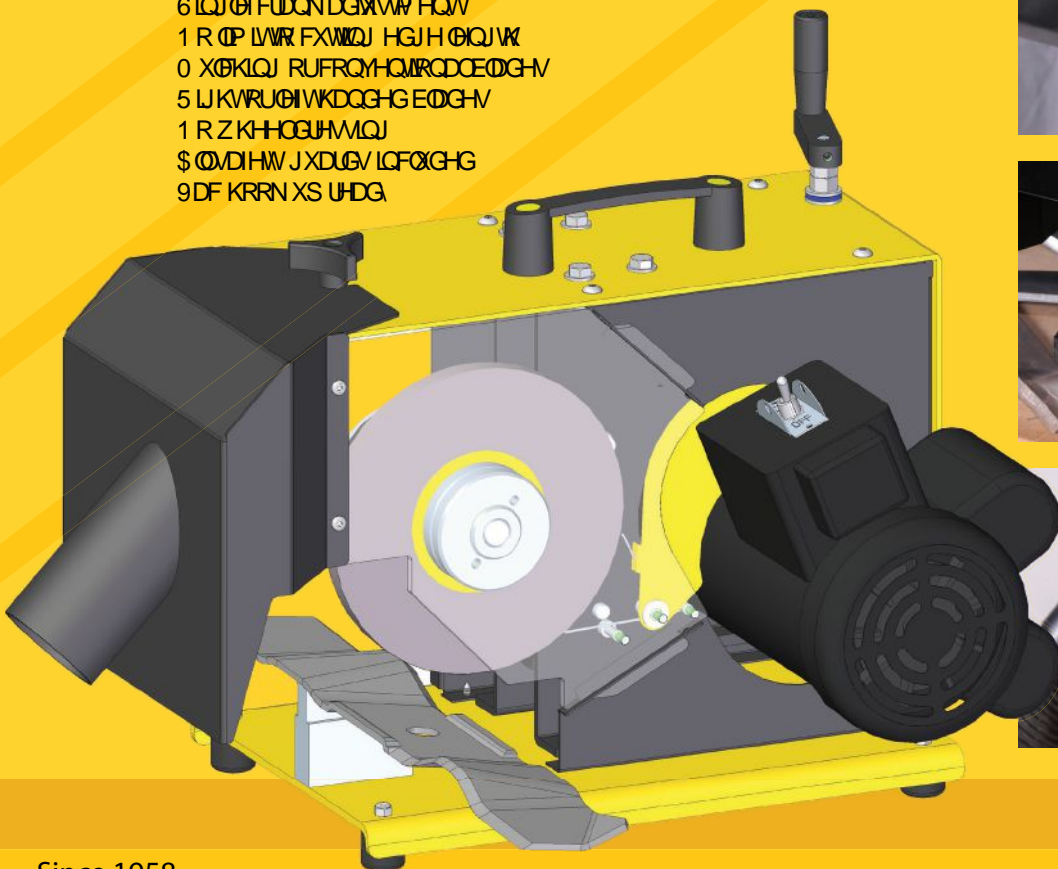


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PROFITING FROM DESIGN

JODY SHILAN

Shilan is editor of FromDesign2Build.com. Contact him at 201/783-2844 or jshilan@gmail.com.

The unbiddable master plan

Q This might be a silly question, but is there anything that you can do to stop your client from taking your design, making copies of it and then shopping it around to your competitors to try and get a lower price? Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

— Danny Wantague, Dreamscapes LLC, St. Paul, MN

A The short answer, Danny, is yes! However, it is my opinion that if clients pay you for a design, they own the plan and can do whatever they want with it. You've been paid for your design services.

With that said, there are things that you can do to provide professional design services and still make it difficult for a client to shop your plan.

Unlike the alternative process, where homeowners hire an independent landscape designer or landscape architect to create a detailed set of plans that will be sent out to bid, design/build contractors are responsible for both the design and build processes. This gives them a tremendous opportunity to not only create a practical and affordable design that their clients will love, but also do it in such a way that it gives them a real advantage against their competitors. Unfortunately, most design/build contractors fail to capitalize on this opportunity.

At Rutgers, I was formally trained to provide landscape architectural drawings that required an incredible amount of detail. These plans were specifically created to have landscape contractors competitively bid on them, providing the client with an “apples-to-apples” comparison. While many landscape contractors are extremely successful in the bid/build environment, the bidding process clearly favors

the homeowner when it comes to pricing.

One of the main reasons that landscape architectural offices usually charge more for their drawings than design/build firms is because of the incredible amount of time and energy needed to create all of the details necessary to obtain accurate and competitive bids. A set of drawings will typically include a layout plan, planting schedule, grading and drainage plan, dimension plan, utility plan, irrigation layout, lighting design and a variety of construction details.

If the project is large or incredibly detailed, there can be an entire page dedicated to descriptions and notes, explaining everything from seed mixes to material finishes.

This is not the case in landscape design/build. We do not, and should not, spend as much time detailing the drawings themselves. While our process requires detailed information as well, I always recommend including this information in the proposal and not the plan itself.

You see, Danny, the more detailed your plans are, the easier it is for clients to get their apples-to-apples comparisons. Again, while this works quite well for the client, all it does is make the design/build contractor a commodity, forcing him or her to lower prices.

By specifying every size, quantity and material selection in your plans, you are practically begging your client to call other companies to check your prices. It's crazy.

Less work, more control

Think about it. Performing quantity take-offs (QTOs) and estimating labor hours can take an incredible amount of time. Why would you do all of the hard work and then create a drawing that makes it easy for your competitors to price it? If they want the work, let them do their own footwork. And the next time your client signs your proposal and says, “I can't believe it. I called five other companies and no one else would get back to me with a price,” you can say, “Wow! I can't believe it, either. All they had to do was bid on the plan.”

Profiting from Design is a quarterly column from award-winning landscape designer, consultant and former design/build contractor Jody Shilan. Shilan is also the president of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association. If you have a question you would like answered in *Profiting From Design*, please contact Shilan at jshilan@gmail.com.

FIRST-CLASS CAB

Operator comfort takes center stage for engineers designing new cabs.

You arrive early on the jobsite, ready to work. You open the door on the cab of your new compact loader and climb in through the roomy opening. You put your coffee in the cup holder. Someone with shorter legs than yours was running the loader yesterday afternoon, so you quickly adjust the seat to fit your larger frame.

You close the door, muting the sound of the diesel pickup truck that has just pulled in next to you. You fasten your seatbelt, lower the safety bar, enter your password in the keypad and start the engine. You plug your MP3 player into the loader's stereo and select the new music you downloaded last night. Your mobile phone needs charging, so you plug the charger into the 12-volt power accessory.

It's been cool for this time of year, so you turn on the cab's heater and adjust the airflow. Later in the day, you may switch on the air-conditioning as things warm up. The sun still is below the horizon, so you turn on the halogen work lights. You look behind you to see who else has arrived on the jobsite, then grasp the joystick controls and head off to where a truck has just dumped a large pile of topsoil.

Ah yes, just another day at the office. But for



BY DOUG ZOERB

compact loader manufacturers, operator comfort and ergonomics have taken center stage in new product design as contractors battle to keep operators happy, productive — and on staff.

“It's hard to get good operators, and harder to keep them,” says Mike Fitzgerald, loader product specialist at Bobcat Co., West Fargo, ND. “Operator expectations have changed. They want to be comfortable, and they want to walk away from the machine at the end of the day and not feel tired.

“What was acceptable 20 or 30 years ago is no longer acceptable,” Fitzgerald adds. “Today, it's critical that we offer air-conditioning, radios and other items that we didn't even sell in the past.”

Listening to the customer

“Designing a new cab from scratch can take as long as four years,” says Josh Maus, senior design engineer at Bobcat Co.

Voice of the customer (VOC) plays a big role in the design and development of compact loader cabs.

continued on page 65



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CAB COMFORT

Long hours in the cab make control layout, visibility and comfort top priorities for compact loader manufacturers.

3D modeling software helps manufacturers design cabs for different sized operators.



A cleaner, quieter and cooler cab all were major requirements revealed by VOC. Knowing this, Maus says, engineers made a conscious effort to dedicate space and design time to cab seals, the heating and cooling system and air filtration of the cab.

The role of industry standards

Industry standards also play a part in cab design, Maus says. He notes that standards set out by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) are followed when it comes to items such as drive control locations, overall visibility, seat locations, seat belt requirements and display requirements.

Fitzgerald notes that while ISO and SAE create standards, they do not have regulatory authority.

Designing cabs that meet the needs of international markets is another challenge. One solution is to have a design

continued from page 63

Listening to customers plays a large role in the cab design process, Maus says. Manufacturers call this the “voice of the customer,” or VOC for short.

“VOC plays a big role in cab design and development,” Maus says. “Manufacturers need to understand early on what customers want before they can implement new items into the design. This does not just involve the cab. VOC for the entire machine must be understood before designing the product.”

Gathering VOC data is a continual process for manufacturers, Fitzgerald says.

“Product specialists like myself, district field managers and district service managers all visit customers to see how machines are used in the field,” he says. “Dealer sales and service representatives also feed information back to us as manufacturers. In addition, engineering personnel may visit jobsites to look at specific machine features or specific size machines. So there’s a lot of ways that we can gather VOC information.”

Improved control access is a major VOC item. It was taken into account for all of the controls and throttle layouts within the cabs of new Bobcat M-Series loaders, Maus says.

Cup holders and storage locations also are major requests from operators, he said. By designing them into the cab early on, engineers are able to maintain good spatial relationships between these items and the rest of the functions within the cab.

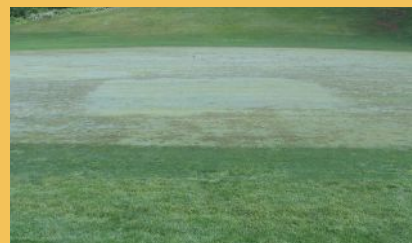
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CAB COMFORT

that will accommodate all regions worldwide.

“There are always different requirements from various regions that must be met and taken into account,” Fitzgerald says. “Typically, we offer a kit or an option designed to meet regional needs. For example, in parts of Europe, they may need a road light kit, turn



As for controls, owners of compact loaders should choose a style that is familiar to their operators.

Contractors are taking fewer days off, so comfort and productivity are important.

signals, a beacon or strobe light. We design the cab to accommodate those variations in specific locations.”

Together with designing for international markets goes the need to accommodate operators of various heights and sizes. Most manufacturers now use computer-based 3D modeling software to analyze the space requirements needed to meet a broad spectrum of operators.

“Typically, what we do is enter the parameters of the ISO 5006 visibility standards into the 3D software program and evaluate the machine that way,” Maus says. “Then, when we feel we have a design that will work well, we build a prototype and evaluate it in a test lab.”

“We can use the 3D software to check for compatibility with what we would consider a ‘95th percentile’ individual,” he continues. “In other words, we check for someone who is 95% bigger than the smallest person and 5% smaller than the biggest person.” This kind of testing affects the location of controls and comfort features such as the seat, Maus notes.

Creature comforts

“During the last 10 years or so, the market focus seems to have shifted toward operator comfort,” Maus says. “Things such as cab pressurization, control



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SHOPPING TIPS

Here are three things that the operator and/or owner should look for in the cab design of a compact loader:

1. Does the cab offer all the features I am looking for? For example, a radio is something that the operator may want, but it may not be standard on many machines in the industry.

2. Is the cab size right for my team? Room is important, especially for larger individuals who may feel cramped and uncomfortable if the cab isn't big enough for them. The seat bar, seat belt, controls and cab threshold all will be factors in the operator's overall comfort level while sitting in the machine and entering and exiting. Similarly, some smaller operators may be uncomfortable in the machine if the cab does not offer enough adjustability to accommodate them.

3. Will my team be comfortable with the controls? There are many different control options available in the industry today. Be sure that the machine has a style of controls that is familiar to your operators.



access and operator space have become more prevalent in customer feedback than they were before.”

One reason why may be more hours per day and more days per year spent in the machine, both by operators who work for a contractor and contractors who operate their own machines.

“It's fair to say that in today's world, contractors are under the gun,” says Jason Magnuson, product function leader for cabs and interiors at Bobcat Co. “They need to meet tight deadlines, so they're trying to get as much productivity out of their machines as they can. They're taking fewer days off.”

The result is that the cab environment is becoming more important to operators, even something as small as a cup holder, Fitzgerald notes.

“The fact that we have one in there is the result of customer requests,” he says. **LM**

Doug Zoerb is a Milwaukee-based writer.

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PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Concrete ideas

THE MISSION

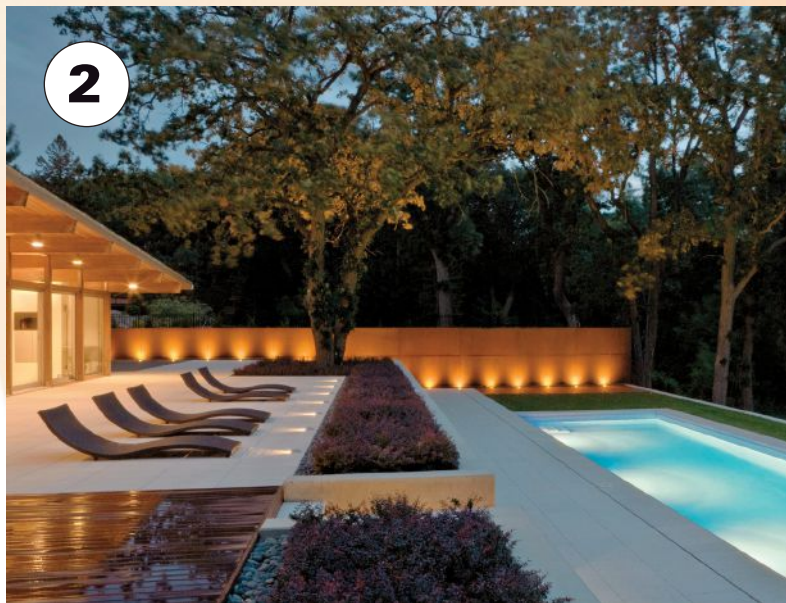
Create a series of linked site enhancements, respecting the home's modernist architecture.

“This project is a complete redesign of the entire 1.3-acre property to frame the 1950s architecture, provide dynamic usable exterior space, integrate a pool, and mitigate erosion stemming from a poor cut/fill balance when the home was originally constructed,” notes Scott Frampton, CFO and project estimator manager for Landscape Renovations, Afton, MN. “With the exception of the beautiful oak forest, not a piece of the property was left untouched.”

The landscape architect, Shane Coen of Minneapolis-based Coen + Partners, and the client worked together to develop materials and installation methods, discouraging cladding or masking of materials. The site is grounded by a circulation system of 12x24-in. white concrete pavers, with recycled glass and high fly-ash content. All paving is dry-laid in a stacked bond on a substantial aggregate base. Other surfacing materials include poured concrete (drive-way), crushed aggregate (east garden) and Ipe wood decks with hidden fasteners.

“The client regularly challenged design ideas and questioned everything — from material selection and cost, to the spacing of plant material and cone ties for the concrete walls,” Frampton reports, noting that weekly meetings and discussions resulted in an award-winning space. “Other important collaborations were with the general contractor, the metal workers, the concrete team and the arborist for integrating the large white oak in the upper terrace. We are particularly grateful to Laura Chaney of Hanover Architectural Products for her work on this project.

“All structural interventions within the landscape relate directly to the architecture,” he adds. “Walls and paving extend from architecture transitions. These interventions create thresholds, plinths and boundaries that organize the site and showcase both plants and context.”



PHOTOS BY: PAUL CROSBY, PHOTOGRAPHER, LANDSCAPE RENOVATIONS

THE WORK



1 | Front lines. A bosque of whitespire birch marks the lawn; a mass planting of crimson pygmy barberry frames the walk to the front door. Trees were spaded, and the walk consists of dry-laid pavers.

2 | Modern comfort. The COR-TEN wall along the east edge provides privacy and acts as the perimeter fence. Note the effect of low-voltage night lighting on the pool terrace.

3 | Valley vista. The south-facing upper terrace takes advantage of the view toward the Mississippi River Valley. The terrace, constructed of white concrete pavers with recycled glass, is sited at the same elevation as the home.

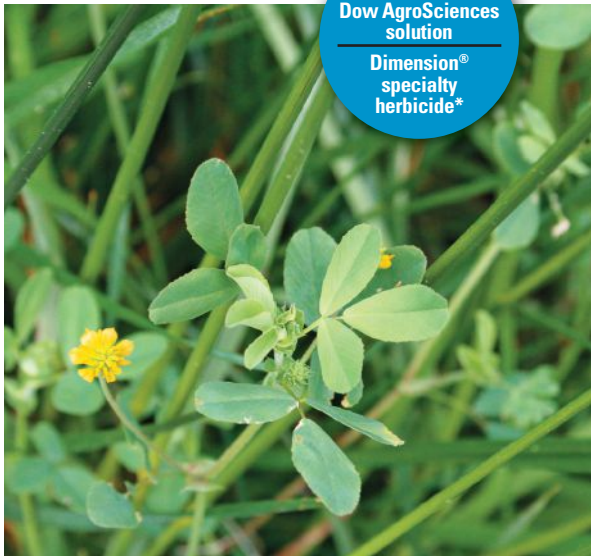
4 | Practical beauty. Pool terrace, facing west: The narrow trench drain handles runoff between the pool and cast-in-place (CIP) wall.

5 | Opulent orchard. Beneath the Golden Raindrops crabapple trees is 3/8-in. crushed aggregate.

Based in Afton, MN, Landscape Renovations is a full-service design/build landscaping company, specializing in natural stone walls and patios, concrete paver driveways and patios, water features, and planting design. This particular project garnered a 41st Annual Environmental Improvement Grand Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). For more information, visit LandscapeRenovations.com.



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BLACK MEDIC

Medicago lupulina

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

▶ This low-trailing summer annual can act as a perennial in some conditions. It is common in lawns stressed from compaction, heat and drought.

▶ Often confused with clover, black medic is easily distinguished by the bright yellow flowers and leaf arrangement. The leaf is similar to clover and other legumes with three leaflets, but black medic's center leaflet is on a separate petiole.

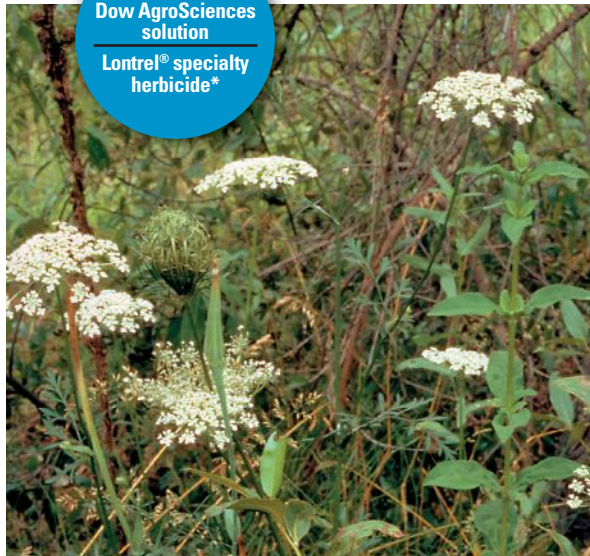
▶ Prostrate stems, 1 to 2 in. in length, grow from a taproot.

CONTROL TIPS

▶ Clean up any established black medic using a post-emergent herbicide containing two or more auxinic herbicides, such as clopyralid, triclopyr or fluoxyppy. Time your application in spring or fall.

▶ Control starts with elimination of seed production, as each plant can produce thousands of seeds. Black medic germinates when soil temperatures are between 50° F and 75° F. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide prior to germination, or just after elimination via post-emergent control.

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WILD CARROT

Daucus carota

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

▶ This biennial resembles a garden carrot in its first year of growth. Also known as Queen Anne's lace, it produces a rosette of lobed, deeply dissected leaves in the first year of growth.

▶ Leaves have long petioles, hairless on the upper surface, but may have hairs on the veins and margins of the lower surface. The foliage has a carrot-like odor.

▶ During its second year, the plant starts producing stalks with umbels of

numerous small white, flat-topped flowers.

CONTROL TIPS

▶ Apply a post-emergent herbicide when the wild carrot is in the seedling stage. Yearly applications are necessary to control the young seedlings that emerge from the seed bank.

▶ This weed species thrives in sandy and undisturbed areas. A well-maintained lawn with thick dense turf can outcompete the establishment of wild carrot.

* State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension and Lontrel apply.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds — and related control technologies and tips — please visit www.DowProvesIt.com or call 800/255-3726.

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BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at editor@northcoastmedia.net.

Take the lead on pricing

The landscape maintenance industry has been fighting a low price-to-nowhere war for the last few years. Some think it might have hit bottom, but others see more of the same. In any event, selling value has become more difficult — if not impossible.

We all know that companies are now reducing scope and frequency to gain an edge in the price war. If they are not reducing the scope in the specifications they provide, they are reducing frequencies of service, cutting corners where they can in an effort to turn their low price into a marginally profitable job.

They are also trying to sell more enhancements and mark them up to make up for their low prices. After all, if the customer is going to just look at low price, contractors have to figure out how to make money and still provide enough service.

I think we can all agree that this is not a sustainable model.

Cost vs. value: the real bottom line

Your customers view landscape maintenance as a commodity. This is because, all things being equal,

most landscape companies are perceived to be the same: They're all saying the same things, marketing themselves using similar techniques, and customers think everyone is bidding to the same specifications.

You have an opportunity to shape the conversation on price by showing them the real cost of landscape maintenance.

Customers fail to realize (or are simply ignoring the fact) that a lower level of service and attention over time will cost them money in having a deteriorating asset: their landscape. Important maintenance practices are being deferred in many cases. Contractors are also, for the most part, the ones controlling the amount of water being used on the landscape.

Water has a cost. It is part of the cost of maintaining the property. The customer pays the utility, but the contractor decides how much water to use. Some customers pay attention to this by calling the contractor out on excessive water bills, but few connect the contractor selection process with the other costs of maintenance.

This provides you with a great opportunity to help customers reduce their energy bills. Show them that you can actually *save* them money when they look at the total cost of maintenance. The customer might pay \$500 more per month for maintenance, but save more than that on water cost. Also, if you can do a better job maintaining the property through better agronomic practices, it has the added benefit of reducing the costs for enhancements over time.

If you invest some time in figuring out the total cost for customers — the service contract plus water cost as related to irrigation — and what you can do to save them money by managing their water bills, you can offer true value for the service itself, and the service partnership you hope to have over the long term.

PARADIGM SHIFT: HOW NOT TO BE A COMMODITY

- » Use new software technologies, tools, skills and advancements that make your efforts and your business better and different.
- » Build your knowledge in related fields (sustainability, the environment — and their technology, tools and advancements), so you can add value to multiple points on the value chain.
- » Invest to build your awareness and brand to where you are not considered a commodity. This will create demand.
- » Reshape the conversation on price.

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YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

OPERATIONS: SOFTWARE



Drafix Software

PRO Landscape, Version 18, contains new and enhanced features that make it easier and faster to create both photo imaging and CAD designs, as well as professional quotes. Other features

include enhanced integration with QuickBooks, as well as new paver tools, and improvements to color CAD drawings. Version 18 also introduces the new PRO Landscape Companion for iPad, allowing designers to impress customers with the ability to create, edit and present designs on-site. PROlandscape.com

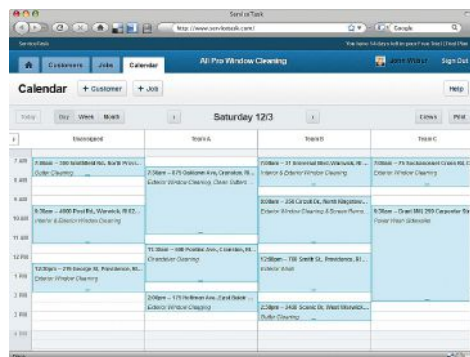


BOSS LM

Boss LM business management software enables landscape companies to manage everything in their business from a single interface. It eliminates the employee frustration, data inaccuracy and support costs of using multiple, fragmented systems. More than just software, BOSS LM delivers what landscape companies need to take total control of their business. BossLM.com

Modeco Systems

TimeScope is a mobile production tracking system that streamlines the collection and flow of field information. With the use of bar codes and pocket-sized scanners, each crew tracks properties served, tasks performed and materials consumed as it occurs in real time. TimeScope tracks job names, time of arrival and departure, tasks and material throughout the day, then instantly presents dozens of comprehensive reports. TimeScope data easily can be imported to your accounting and payroll programs. ModecoSystems.com



ServiceTask.com

ServiceTask was founded on the belief that landscaping software should be simple to use, allowing you to focus on what really matters: your business. Many landscape companies want to make sure they never forget to follow up with customers, fall behind on scheduling or allow jobs to fall through the cracks. ServiceTask makes it easier to collaborate with company members through a live recent activity feed. It's 100% web-based software, which means you can manage your business from a browser, desktop or mobile device and you can access your ServiceTask account from the Internet. There is nothing to install or download, and support and upgrades are free. ServiceTask.com

GIS Dynamics

Go iLawn is the industry go-to for fast, precise online property measurement. Go iLawn combines high-resolution property photos and measuring tools in one easy-to-use application. Use Go iLawn to measure commercial and residential properties for maintenance, chemical application, irrigation, snow removal and more. Try it today for free to see how thousands of companies are using Go iLawn to get ahead. Visit www.goilawn.com/promo and use code LM612. Goilawn.com



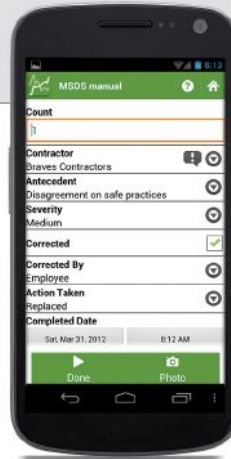


Sustainability Dashboard Tools LLC

The Sustainability Dashboard Tool is designed to identify ways to make your business operations more efficient, improve performance and save money. The web-based software program tracks and measures fuel, water and energy use and suggests ways to reduce consumption. Secure, safe and accessible, the system is cost effective, intuitive and easy to use, the company says, and reports are easy to understand. Green2Sustainable.com

Include Software

Bringing CNG-SAFE document management software to Include Software's client base reduces overhead by eliminating redundant processes in a company's operations. Asset business management software focuses on the contracting industries, helping manage every aspect of a contractor's business and eliminating the need for other software. Integration with CNG-SAFE allows Asset users to instantly pull up documents in the context of how they relate to the actions they're performing. Because Asset modules integrate to the appropriate electronic filing cabinets, users can add, edit, view or route documents directly from Asset. The integrated platform enables users to manage all documents across all business processes. Include.com and CabinetNG.com



Predictive Solutions Corp.

SafetyNet app for Android is now available for download on Google Play. Existing Predictive Solutions customers can install the app on their Android phones or tablets and use it to collect their workplace safety observations. This safety software solution automates the collection of workplace safety data, and performs advanced and predictive analytics to identify trends that can affect workers' safety. With their highest risk areas identified by SafetyNet, customers can predict where injuries are likely to occur, then proactively prevent them. The easy-to-use app drives an increased number of inspections while improving the quality of observations. By removing the manual data-entry steps associated with paper-based observations, companies get inspection results faster, allowing teams to be more productive. SafetyNet is also available on most BlackBerry devices and is available for download on the App Store for the iPhone, iPad and iPod touch. PredictiveSolutions.com



Tensor International

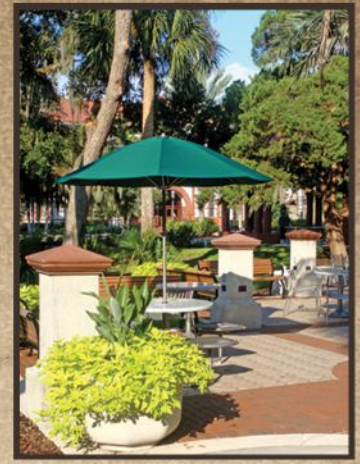
ECMS 5.0 is the improved, web-based version of Tensor's popular Erosion Control Materials Design Software. ECMS 5.0 ensures the proper evaluation and design for soil-loss prediction, product specification and project planning. It helps users quickly and easily design erosion protection for projects to comply with today's strict erosion and sediment control regulations. The application offers robust calculations to develop cost-effective, sustainable erosion control and vegetation establishment with both rolled erosion control products (RECPs) and hydraulic erosion control products (HECPs). It also features dynamic graphics throughout its various analysis pages. NAgreen.com



ExakTime

New JobClock Hornet, from the makers of PocketClock/GPS, is the first completely wireless, rugged time clock that automatically sends hourly time records from your worksites to your office. Hornet tracks workers, job activities and job locations in real time, so you get the accurate records that handwritten, paper time cards can't deliver you. Securely enclosed in a rugged, military-grade, ABS plastic composite case and built to survive any environment — rain, snow, heat or dust — Hornet has a 30-day, rechargeable battery. ExakTime.com

continued on page 77



Permeable Clay Pavers...Beautiful and Sustainable

Blending history with Creative Solutions...

Challenge...

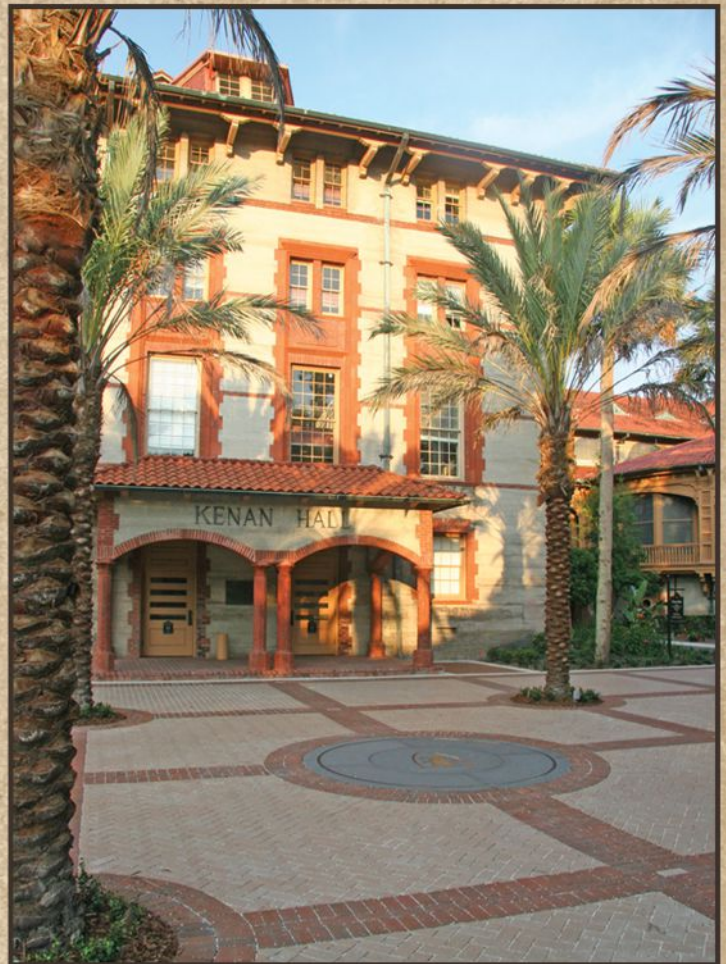
Water pooled up into ankle-deep mud directly in front of Kenan Hall At Flagler College each time it would rain. The City of St. Augustine didn't allow any new tie-ins to its storm sewer system and required all new construction to keep its storm drainage on site. Secondly, the design had to tie in with the historic nature of its surroundings.

Solution...

Pine Hall Brick StormPave® permeable clay pavers provide an effective way to drain away stormwater while at the same time, picking up colors of the nearby building - in line with local historic-district guidelines.

The 5,300-square-foot space has become a popular gathering spot for students.

The plaza is paved in gray as the primary color with autumn as the accent.



The Plaza at Kenan Hall/Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida
 Landscape Architect: Sharon Fowler of Hauber Fowler & Associates
 Builder: A.D. Davis Construction
 Mason Contractor: Paverscape Inc.
 Distributor: Oldcastle Coastal



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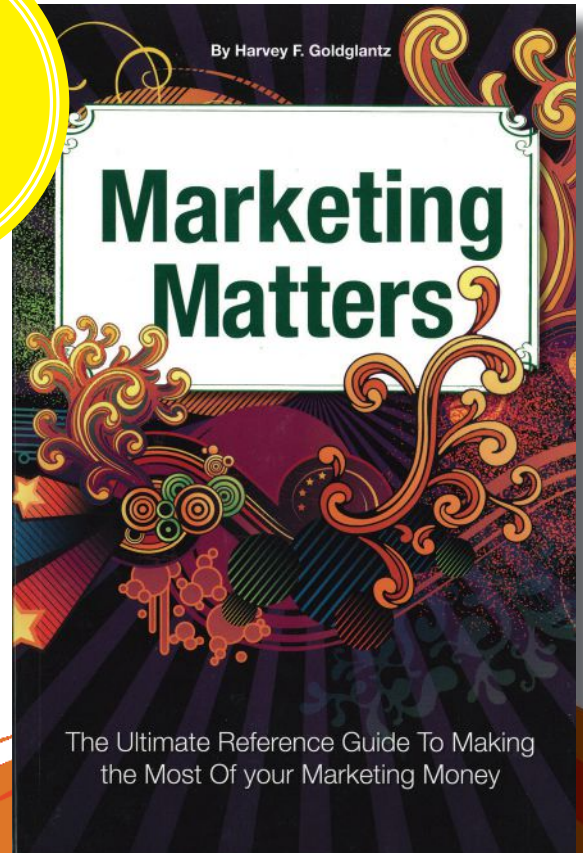
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Author: Harvey Goldglantz

shop.landscapemanagement.net/shop.php

Landscape
Management



continued from page 74

MAINTENANCE: MOWERS

Gravelly

A new diesel zero-turn mower has been added to the Pro-Turn 400 series commercial lineup. The mower features a 25hp Kubota engine and is available in a 60- and

72-in. deck. Also featured is Gravelly's air-suspension seat for all-day operator comfort. The air pressure can be adjusted with the touch of a button, and comfort foam feels more like an office chair than a standard mower seat, the company says. The seat rides smoothly over rough terrain, allowing faster mowing speeds and increased productivity. A rubber isolated foot platform also minimizes vibration for a more comfortable ride. The Pro-Turn units also feature a 13.4-gal. fuel capacity and large flat-free front tires. The seven-gauge fabricated and welded X-Factor Deck features an easy-to-operate deck-lift system aimed at reducing operator fatigue; dial adjust height-of-cut system; and maintenance-free XL spindles. Gravelly.com



Cub Cadet

The Tank LZ series provides performance, with low maintenance and consistent professional-quality cut. Designed with the operator in mind, the Tank LZ series offers an intelligent lap bar system with easy, tool-free adjustability for exceptional ergonomics and personalized comfort. Plus, you get a patented EVC (elasticity vibration control) seating system and intuitive controls for remarkable all-day comfort. These mowers are made with the thickest steel, and advanced design puts them among the strongest, most durable frames in the industry. Cubcadet.com



John Deere

The Z900 series offers a wide range of horsepower choices and deck sizes that run smooth day after day, thanks to all metal, deep and extra-wide pulleys and optimum belt alignment no matter the cutting height. The unique cross-porting system routes the coolest hydraulic fluid to the hydraulic pump doing the most work. A gear reduction drive in the wheel motor adds mechanical muscle, increasing the torque available over a purely hydraulic system. The Z900 mowers are equipped with an ANSI-certified, rollover protective structure (ROPS) and seat belt. This 3-position ROPS enhances operator safety and provides ample clearance when trailering or mowing under trees. No tools required makes repositioning easy. Extra-thick foam cushioning keeps the bumps and jolts to a minimum. Deere.com

BOB-CAT

The FastCat Pro zero-turn mower line now includes a choice of 52-in. side discharge deck with a Kawasaki FX691V engine or 61-in. side discharge deck with a Kawasaki FX730V engine (pictured). Both new models use canister air filtration and feature BOB-CAT's DuraDeck with extreme discharge system, a new patent-pending double-wave baffle system, extra-wide discharge opening and molded rubber chute. Dual Hydro-Gear ZT-3400 hydrostatic transaxle independent drives with 12cc pumps deliver smooth maneuverability. Coupled with 9-gal.-capacity duel fuel tanks, 23-in. drive wheels and 13-in. caster wheels, you can cruise at speeds up to 10 mph. A new custom seat with elastomeric radial bearing and seat suspension eliminates vibration to the operator and prevents "topping out" and "bottoming out," providing all-day ride comfort. BOBCATturf.com



Walker Manufacturing

The MTL 31-HP EFI offers operators easy starting, consistent running temperatures and user-friendly maintenance. A combination of liquid cooling and electronic fuel injection from Kohler's 31-hp fuel-injected Aegis engine provides longer engine life, more power and better fuel economy than air-cooled engines. The mower features an electric radiator fan with reversible self-cleaning action; a clam-shell style body and chassis to accommodate higher horsepower engines; and a shock-mounted instrument panel with warning lights and a horn. It also includes an ignition switch, a water temperature gauge, a voltmeter, an hour meter and a service light. Walkermowers.com



DESIGN/BUILD: LIGHTING ELEMENTS



Hunter Industries

Hunter's Pro-C irrigation controller offers a new option: the ability to control landscape lighting. With a simple facepack upgrade, the Pro-C can be used to control up to three PX lighting transformers using the PXSynch relay box. Three new lighting programs (L1, L2, L3) allow lighting schedules to be created as easily as irrigation schedules, using the same familiar Pro-C interface. Lighting programs can run simultaneously to irrigation, and are not interrupted by irrigation functions such as rain sensor condition or seasonal adjustments. HunterIndustries.com

WAC Lighting

Combining form and function for a variety of architectural-grade outdoor lighting applications, the IP65-rated, surface-mounted Panther luminaire uses energy-efficient LED or metal halide lamping, and offers tool-free precision handling and lockable aiming. Also new is a commercial-grade outdoor wall sconce that casts light up and down. The IP65-rated and die-cast aluminum constructed sconce is designed with a deeply regressed LED light source and a 35° cut-off angle that provide consistent glare-free, shadowless illumination. Both are backed by WAC Lighting's five-year warranty. WAClighting.com



Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting

Vista's 1500 Series Precision Illumination Control (PIC) features sharp cut-off LED optics and adjustable hot aiming for a customized illumination without glare. The adjustable optics allow the series to illuminate narrow forward throw requirements for stairways, or very wide forward throws for large pedestrian ingress and egress entries. Hot aiming provides a 30° adjustment range, with the maximum candela able to be placed from 25° to 55° below horizontal. With hot aiming, optics can be adjusted while installed and operational. VistaPro.com



Hayward Pool Products

New Universal Color-Logic is the first color-changing LED pool light to be UL-listed for safe installation in virtually any niche. These energy-efficient, long-lasting lights can be an easy retrofit for pools limited by old white incandescent lights. With no bulbs, filaments, color wheels or moving parts, the lights offer a choice of seven shows — ranging from a soothing, intimate retreat to a pulsating, nightclub-like experience. Users can capture any holiday with a choice of 10 fixed colors, such as Saint Patrick's Day green, Valentine's red or Independence Day red, white and blue. And with a Pro Logic controller, users can choose from 101 colors for nearly endless options. Hayward.com

continued on page 80



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continued from page 78

DESIGN/BUILD: CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

Truck Bodies & Equipment Inc.

TBEI's next-generation Ox SuperDump features four-, six- or seven-axle configurations, increasing payloads up to 25 tons and 80,000 GVWR (in most states). With the multiple axle configurations, the Ox SuperDump distributes the weight over a much longer area, meeting payload restrictions throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. The Silent Drive Maxle air-suspension trailing axle is designed to carry the extra weight of the payload and ensure a smooth ride with stability and handling. The unit also is available with a wide range of time-saving, productivity-enhancing options, including air-retractable mud flaps, on-board weight scales, non-stick liners and more.

OxBodies.com/SuperDump



Caterpillar

The Cat 907H, the latest addition to the Cat Compact Wheel Loader range, fits between the 906H and 908H models. The 70-net hp model features a skid steer loader style coupler, auxiliary hydraulic system, Cat C3.4 diesel engine, two-speed hydrostatic drive, standard differential locks in both axles, parallel-lift Z-bar loader linkage and a high-visibility operator's station. Optional features — including high-flow hydraulics, ride control and speeder transmission — enhance the 907H's performance and versatility. The hydraulically actuated skid-steer-loader-type coupler expands the 907H's versatility and allows the machine to be integrated into existing small-equipment fleets. Standard auxiliary hydraulics, proportional third-function valve and continuous-flow capability provide a complete control package for work tools such as trenchers and stump grinders. Cat.com

John Deere

The new K-Series Backhoe Loaders are eight productive and efficient models (310K EP, 310K, 310SK, 310SKTC, 315SK, 410K, 410KTC, 710K) that build on the success of the popular J-Series. Two economical tractor loader models (210K EP, 210K) round out the K-Series and provide additional jobsite versatility. Powered by a certified IT4/ Stage III B John Deere PowerTech engine, the K-Series comes equipped with a five-speed transmission that allows top speeds of 25 mph when roading. In addition, a complete redesign of the cab ventilation now circulates cab air from front-to-back, directing airflow where operators need it the most. JohnDeere.com



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Living off the land

Edible landscaping may just be the next big thing in add-on business opportunities.

A S THE IDEA of homegrown fruits, vegetables and herbs gains ground in American homes, a service offering of “edible landscaping” is beginning to crop up among residential landscapers.

But for Shannon Hathaway, president of Green Heron Landscaping Inc., in Cary, NC, edible landscaping is *not* a new concept. Her interest in it began as a little girl with her grandmother and mother’s gardens.

“My grandmother had a vegetable garden that was bigger than I’d ever seen, and I loved walking through it when I was a kid,” Hathaway recalls. “My mom’s garden focused more on herbs, so I also got a taste of growing a successful herb garden as just a kid.”

While studying landscaping in college, Hathaway fell under the tutelage of an instructor who emphasized living off the land. So it was no surprise that she offered the service when she started her business.

Hathaway says she has found it’s not a terribly hard sell. The lush climate of the region certainly helps, as does consumers’ increasing interest in their food’s origins.

“There’s definitely more interest for this lately, and I find a lot of clients come to me and ask for it. But I also suggest it every time I meet with a client for the first time,” she says. “Even if they’re certain they don’t want fruits or vegetables, a lot of people love the idea of fresh, homegrown herbs.”

Incorporating the produce into the existing landscaping is also beneficial for the plants. The produce is much more lush and healthy.

“If you incorporate your fruits and vegetables in your borders and beds, it allows you to rotate your crops more easily — and you’re not completely exhausting the soil by doing so many vegetables in just one small plot of land,” says Hathaway.

Hathaway says that offering edible landscaping goes hand-in-hand with her company’s Green Movement focus and



“Edible things can be beautiful,” says Shannon Hathaway.

has contributed to its success.

“We have found a real niche in the Green Industry by offering edible landscaping, which is part of our overall green focus,” she says. “We don’t use chemicals, and we try to educate our clients on other ways of growing. We’re reminding people that edible things can be beautiful — and that growing your own fruits and vegetables and living off the land is a wonderful thing.”

Because the company is based in suburban Raleigh, one challenge has been working with homeowner association (HOA) rules, which can be restrictive. But Hathaway says she has found ways to work with these rules and still incorporate edible landscaping into the property. Interestingly, she says that an influx of various ethnicities moving to the region has actually helped push the movement.

“We’ve had a number of clients from India who have moved into our region and are expecting the land to produce, because that’s what they’re used to,” says Hathaway. “They realize that we live in such a lush area and that you can grow a lot here, and they expect that to happen. They’re bringing their traditions of using the land for food production — and reminding many of us of our own past. It’s really helped drive the movement for more edible landscaping.”

In the Raleigh region, Hathaway says that fruit like plums, pears, figs, peaches, pomegranates and persimmons really thrive. There is also a large variety of vegetables and herbs that do well in the climate.

“It’s a wonderful region for growing, so it makes sense that more clients are showing interest,” she concludes. “I think it will only continue to grow.”

The author is a freelance writer with seven years of experience covering landscaping.

>> SERVICE SNAPSHOT

COMPANY: Green Heron Landscaping Inc.

HEADQUARTERS: Cary, NC

FOUNDED: January 2002

NO. OF EMPLOYEES: 6 full-time, 1 part-time

CLIENTELE: 99% residential

2011 REVENUE: \$400,000

2012 PROJECTED REVENUE: \$450,000

WHY EDIBLE LANDSCAPING?

“My interest in it started as a kid and only grew as I studied landscaping. I try to bring the concept of ‘living off the land’ into as many landscapes as I can.”

INVESTMENT? “There is no added cost to the landscaper to offer edible landscaping to clients, and most wholesale nurseries offer fruit trees and herbs.”



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“We believe that the spirit of our organization is our team, representing a variety of cultures from three continents and 10 countries,” says **John Gachina**, president of Gachina Landscape Management, Menlo Park, CA. “About half of our account management team has risen through the ranks, starting at entry-level positions.”

Gachina gives them important tools, including education and training. But employees must show initiative.

He tells *LM* what it means to be a good manager in landscaping today and shares his thoughts on where the industry is heading.

TOP TRENDS

› **Sustainability.** It runs the gamut from water conservation and reducing our carbon footprint to the use of alternative fuels and employing organic pesticides and fertilizers. We are located in the San Francisco Bay/Silicon Valley area. It's laden with creative, high-tech companies such as Apple, Google, Yahoo and Hewlett-Packard, many of which are our customers. Sustainability is very important to them. It's becoming a bigger and bigger deal every day.

› **Social media.** It's now the best way to reach professional young people, especially those in or just getting out of college. They are all steeped in Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and it will continue to become more and more accepted, especially through the expansion of smart phones. Our HR department currently uses social media for recruiting, and we will be using it more and more to attract new and retain current customers.

TOP OBSTACLE

› **Lower margins due to a down-turned economy with increased competition.** Even though your customers like what you do for them, they have short memories when it comes to looking for the lowest bid. The best strategy is to keep them from going out to bid. But that means you may have to lower your margins to keep them. Since margins are getting tighter, we are evaluating every business process in our company to improve on efficiencies. We are looking at new ways to cut down on our waste stream and

John Gachina says if you have true passion for the job, that optimism is contagious.

INSIDE INFO

Company: Gachina Landscape Management

Headquarters: Menlo Park, CA

Employees: 300

2011 revenue: \$20 million

Key to being a maintenance leader:

Being genuinely passionate about what you do, and that's contagious. For example, we have always been passionate about doing the maintenance side of our business, and it shows.

Also, creating a clear career path for employees and taking good care of them. This builds loyalties and long-term commitments. I have provided growth opportunities for many employees who have stayed with me for the past 20 years. We encourage and support our employees who want to earn special landscape certifications through PLANET. They also see that I promote from within.

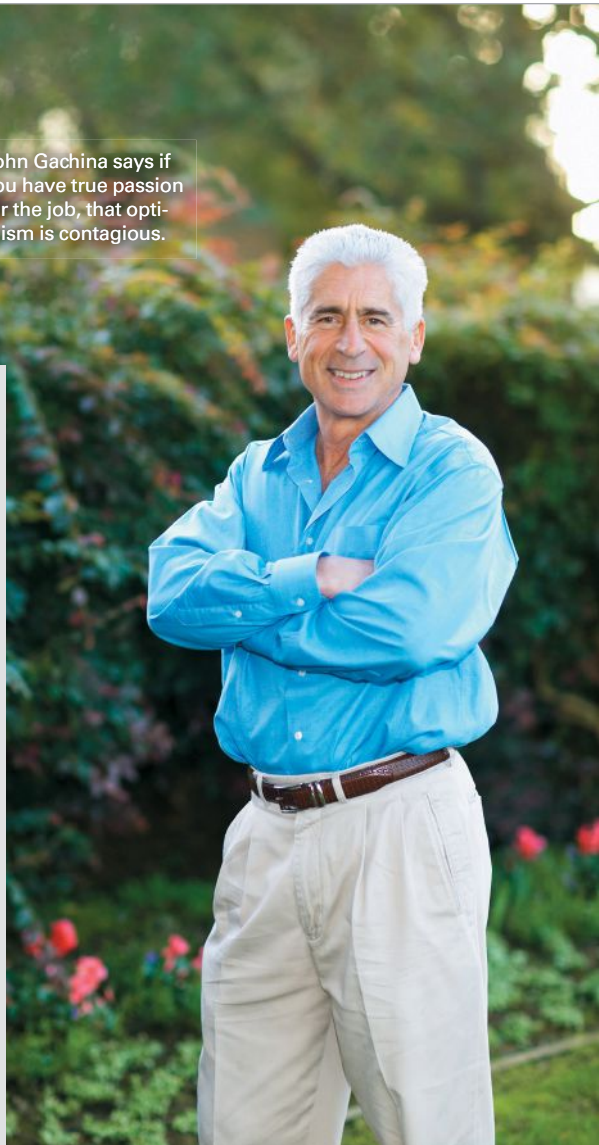
We found that all benefit when our employees started making healthy lifestyle choices both at work and at home, and these activities boosted morale and teamwork. A few years ago, to get our people active and promote teamwork, we decided to boost healthy living for all our employees and their families. We provide home-grown fitness classes, health awareness information and healthy eating. Our training room is turned over weekly to Pilates, yoga and stretching classes. All our crew members perform 10 minutes of stretching before starting any job.

more carefully manage our resources. We have a new contact management system in place. Lowering margins internally still means doing an excellent job for your customers externally — never compromising on quality.

TOP OPPORTUNITY

› **Educating your customers.** When you demonstrate to your customers that you are trying to save them money, their loyalties increase. For example, showing them smart irrigation practices to reduce water consumption and minimize erosion goes a long way in keeping them as loyal customers.

The author is a freelance journalist with more than 20 years' experience writing about the Green Industry. Contact him at tecrain@goinggreenguy.com.





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[Coming in September]

Celebrating 50 years in publishing

2012 marks *Landscape Management's* 50th year in publishing. Our year-long celebration culminates with coverage in our September issue. We'll profile the Green Industry's 50 biggest influencers, past and present. If you would like to nominate someone for us to profile, contact Senior Editor Beth Geraci at bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net.



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LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY » BY CASEY PAYTON



Robert Wilton miscalculated when he mistook his banker for his friend.



Robert Wilton

COMPANY: Clintar Landscape Management

HEADQUARTERS: Markham, Ontario

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 525

SERVICE BREAKDOWN: 30% maintenance; 20% landscape enhancements; 50% snow and ice control services

CLIENT BREAKDOWN: 95% commercial; 5% residential estates

ROBERT WILTON HAS lots of friends. As an accomplished landscape business owner, making connections comes easily. But one person that Wilton, who is now president of Clintar Landscape Management in Markham, Ontario, learned was *not* his friend was his banker. It's a lesson he had to learn the hard way in his earlier years of business.

After almost a decade of smooth sailing with his bank, Wilton was unprepared when the financial institution decided to call him about his mid-six-figures loan. Wilton says banks often view the landscape industry as having a lot of risk exposure, which is one reason he suspects he was called. Looking back, he says it was a big mistake believing his banker was his friend. That allowed him to forget the fact that he could be asked to pay back his loan at any moment.

"When they asked for their money back, I didn't have the money to give them," remembers Wilton. "So it was a very scary time."

After almost six months of sleepless nights spent trying to figure out where he could get the money, Wilton was fortunate enough to find some "angel capital" through a family friend.

"It was definitely a high-risk loan for that friend, but

I paid it back," says Wilton. "And today, I don't owe the banks any money."

Lessons learned

Wilton says that the experience taught him a few key lessons that will ensure he's never in that position again:

1 Banks don't like risk. "Banks are not there to finance start-up businesses," advises Wilton. "They are there to carefully loan money based upon a guarantee of secu-

WHEN THEY ASKED FOR THEIR MONEY BACK, I DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO GIVE THEM. SO IT WAS A VERY SCARY TIME.

rity. They don't want risk. It's not venture capitalism, it's money that's coming as a result of providing sufficient security."

Wilton says it's a common mistake to assume you can count on a bank for any needed cash, and he warns that getting a loan is not like using an ATM. Be prepared to show the bank why they're not taking a huge risk with you.

2 Keeping records is important. Keeping good records is something Wilton says many in the industry ignore. But he says it's at their peril.

"Accurate and up-to-date accounting is absolutely vital," says Wilton, who admits his old "shoebox accounting methods" might have contributed to the bank's decision to call him on his loan. "If you don't understand your financials, find someone who does. I didn't have good accounting records when this happened. Now I have the best ever. I hired a controller and gave her full authority to manage the cash. She cost me more than I ever wanted to pay, but I've found now that she's saved me a lifetime. We used to get overdraft charges regularly — now that would never happen."

3 Be honest. Wilton says his communication with his suppliers helped save the business.

"We did not make promises to our suppliers that were overdue," he reports. "We were just completely upfront with them and explained that our intent was to pay them, but we could only pay a little bit at a time — even if it took a year or more. Because we were honest and kept those promises, many of those people are still our suppliers today. As simple as it sounds as a principle, honesty is incredibly huge when you're in difficult times."

Payton is a freelance writer with seven years of experience covering landscaping.

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