

National Mall upgrades to propane mowers

One-third of the park division's mower fleet has changed over from diesel, thanks to a PERC donation. BY MARISA PALMIERI

More than 24 million people visit the National Mall each year, and the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) is betting that more than a few of those visitors will notice the shiny, new propane-fueled mowers maintaining the high-profile grounds.

On June 24 PERC donated six Exmark Lazer Z S-Series lawn mowers with Kohler Command Pro Propane EFI engines to the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA), a division of the National Park Service. NAMA encompasses the Mall and many of the national memorials around Washington.

The donation amounts to approximately \$70,000 in equipment.

"This is an opportunity to showcase this technology in a place where millions of people come every year," said Roy Willis, PERC president and CEO, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony outside the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. "We hope some decision makers see these propane mowers and ask the question, 'Why can't we do this back home?'"

The four 72-in. and two 60-in. Lazer Z S-Series propane-fueled zero-turn riders will comprise one-third of the Mall's mower fleet and replace diesel-fueled mowers. PERC selected these models for the donation because they are the first to employ Kohler's Command Pro Propane EFI engine—a technology that was developed and com-



A National Park Service employee takes a newly donated propane mower for a spin near the Thomas Jefferson Memorial on June 24.

mercialized through PERC funding.

The combined deployment of the mowers and two electric vehicles, also donated at the ceremony, added NAMA to the list of national parks advancing the Green Parks Plan, a National Park Service initiative to reduce dependence on foreign oil, mitigate the effects of climate change and conserve energy.

"We are always looking for ways to integrate sustainable practices into every part of our operation," said Bob Vogel, National Mall and Memorial Park superintendent. "The electric cars and generous donation of propane mowers from PERC will help the

National Mall meet its sustainability goals with a clean-burning, American-made fuel."

Switching to propane mowers is expected to lower carbon monoxide emissions by 80 percent compared with gasoline, reduce fuel spills and save NAMA money on fuel and maintenance costs, PERC says. Kohler estimates its engine increases fuel efficiency by 25 percent compared to a carbureted gasoline engine and also reduces overall mower operating costs.

The mowers will be refueled using a propane cylinder exchange system from Thompson Gas.

OPEI confirms officers, board

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) named its 2013-2014 officers and board of directors at the OPEI Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, Va., in June.

“OPEI is entering this new fiscal year stronger than ever, both organizationally and financially,” said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI. “The OPEI board reflects the impressive scope and breadth of our membership. Our membership is at a record high, representing small engine manufacturers with a range of power sources, utility vehicle manufacturers, and a myriad of small engine equipment manufacturers and suppliers serving a broad range of industries and uses.”

Officers for the 2013-2014 year include:

- ▶ OPEI Chairman Todd Teske, chairman, president and CEO, Briggs & Stratton Corp.;
- ▶ OPEI Vice Chair Paul Mullet, president, Excel Industries; and
- ▶ OPEI Secretary/Treasurer Lee Sowell, president – outdoor products, Technonic Industries.

Continuing service on the OPEI board are:

- ▶ Immediate Past Chairman Daniel Ariens, president and CEO, Ariens Co.;
- ▶ Marc Dufour, president, Club Car;
- ▶ Peter Hampton, president, Active Exhaust Corp.;
- ▶ Jean Hlay, president and COO, MTD Products;
- ▶ Steven Bly, executive vice president, Echo;
- ▶ Ed Cohen, vice president, government & industry relations, Honda North America;
- ▶ Michael Hoffman, chairman and CEO, The Toro Co.;
- ▶ Tim Merrett, vice president, AT&T Global Platform Turf & Utility, Deere & Co.; and
- ▶ Fred Whyte, president, Stihl.

New to the board this year are Tom Cromwell, president, Kohler Engines, Kohler Co., and John Cunningham, president, consumer products group, Stanley Black & Decker.

Minutaglio passes at 64

John Minutaglio, aka John Mini, founder and president of John Mini Distinctive Landscapes in Congers, N.Y., passed away June 21. He was 64 years old.

“This is not only a great loss for our family and our company, but also for the entire industry,” said Minutaglio’s son, Mark. “My father was a pioneer and an innovator, setting new standards and



raising the bar in the landscaping industry. Growing up, I can recall how proud he always was of our company’s achievements and the team that will carry us forward for years to come.”

Since the company’s inception in 1973, Minutaglio built it into a leading and well recognized interior landscaping, exterior landscaping and holiday decorating businesses with \$11.3 million in revenue in 2012. Minutaglio’s family says he took great pride in growing the business, along with the help of his family, employees and his business partner and Senior Vice President Jack Harris, who continues to operate the business. The company won more than 100 national awards for quality and environmental improvement.

Minutaglio served as a coordinator of the landscaping program at the New York Botanical Garden and created its curriculum for interior landscaping.



MAILBOX

Heads up

I loved “Looking up” (Hear Me Out, June). It was refreshing with excellent application at the end.

I’ve been to Italy but not to Cinque Terre; it sounds like an awesome trip. My “looking up” moment was when I was in Florence and I looked up at the “David,” that was breathtaking for me.

Ed Laflamme, LIC

*The Harvest Group
Wilton, Conn.*

