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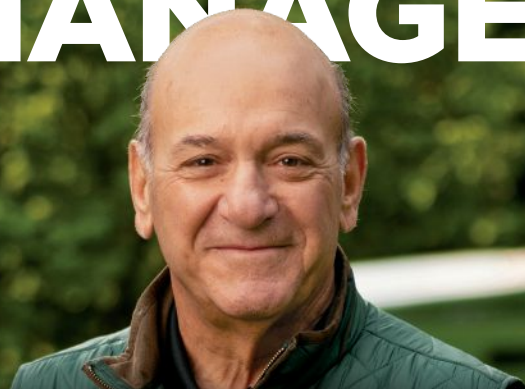
By acquiring 12 residential lawn care companies — so far — industry legend Frank Mariani takes Mariani Premier Group to No. 11 on the LM150 list

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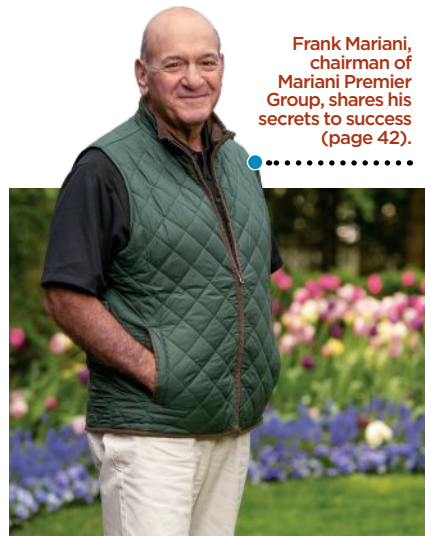
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We want your help!

Does your business have a favorite piece of equipment or tool to help you do your job better or faster? Has your operation recently adopted cutting-edge technology? Drop Editor Christina Herrick a line at cherrick@northcoastmedia.net, and we could feature your business in an upcoming *LM* story!



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Cruising along with Frank Mariani

This issue of *Landscape Management* is always a special one, as every June we celebrate the largest lawn care and landscape companies in the nation with our annual *LM150* list — sponsored by our friends at Aspire Software, Ewing Outdoor Supply and Weathermatic. This issue is also special to me personally, as it gave me the opportunity to travel to Chicago to visit industry icon, Frank Mariani.

Frank had just flown in from Florida when we met for dinner at a great steakhouse, Sophia Steak, near the Mariani Landscape headquarters in Lake Bluff, Ill. Over the following 24 hours, I got a glimpse into Frank's life. We scheduled a photo shoot with Chicago-based photographer Tim Klein the next morning. Frank offered me a ride, and we drove to three different picturesque spots around Chicago, for this issue's photos.

As I cruised around in Frank's SUV, I noticed a few things. He makes a point to wave at all his crews as he passes them by — and there are a lot of crews he passes by. He gets a ton of calls on his cell phone and takes about half of them, letting the others go to voicemail. And he has no filter — I could ask him anything, and he'd speak straight from his heart, disregarding the voice recorder that was on.

Over dinner, I asked Frank for a fond memory of his dad, Vito, who started the company with a single truck in 1958. (Frank's response to that question appears in my 5 Questions interview with him on page 42.) November will mark 50 years since Vito passed,

“Over dinner, I asked Frank for a fond memory of his dad, Vito, who started the company with a single truck in 1958. November will mark 50 years since Vito passed, leaving Frank to pick up the pieces and run the company since he was 19.”

leaving Frank to pick up the pieces and run the company since he was 19.

I also asked Frank what he thought the best thing about being a dad is. “I have a beautiful son and daughter-in-law and a daughter and son-in-law that I would take a bullet for,” Frank told me. “And I have the best grandchildren that life could ever bring.”

For my contribution to this issue's four *LM150* profiles, I report on the newly formed Mariani Premier Group, what Frank calls “a family of family-owned residential landscape companies.” That story begins on page 20.

The word ‘family’ is used often by Frank and within his company. “Family first” is one of their mottos. But Frank did tell me that when his kids were young, he didn't spend enough time with them. He was so driven to make Mariani Landscape a company that could support the families of his employees that he missed out on a lot of at-home time. He wanted to make

sure his father's creation, tragically handed to him when he was right out of high school, was on the right path.

Every time Frank got a call as he drove, he would either take the call or he wouldn't. But there was one call when he took the time to say, “Sorry, this is important,” as he took it.

That call wasn't from Bryan Christiansen, the CEO, or Mary Beth Kercher, his executive assistant. That call was from his grandkids — Joseph Francis, 5, and Anthony Vito, 3. He also has a granddaughter on the way.

It's a call he gets every morning. That morning, the boys wanted to let him know that they decided that “Pops” (Frank) is the best on the grill of anyone in the family ... and would he be grilling that weekend?

The answer was a resounding yes. While I grilled Frank, I learned that grilling is calming for Frank. And there is no one Frank would rather grill for than his grandsons (ribs are his specialty). Frank might not be able to get back that time he lost when his kids were young, but he takes full advantage of being a grandpa.

This month we celebrate the *LM150* list. This month we also celebrate Father's Day. Mariani Premier Group is No. 11 on the *LM150* list, with the largest year-over-year growth of any company in the industry.

What do you think Vito would say, seeing his son — now a grandpa, now a leader of a family of family-owned companies — on the cover today? 🍴



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EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD



MORE ONLINE

See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at LandscapeManagement.net.

What's something green industry business owners might be doing that's holding them back from unlocking their growth?



“Not having a crystal-clear picture of who your target client is. Focus can help

you grow your business faster and lower the stress of building your company.”

“Not investing in themselves either through education, peer groups or leisure travel. All business leaders need to be inspired. Find a way to do that for yourself!”



“Taking half-measures on good ideas. For instance, putting an effort toward dedicated sales (good idea) but trying to pivot an existing operations person to achieve it (half-measure).”

Landscape Professionals

Richard Bare
Arbor-Nomics Turf
Norcross, Ga.

Troy Clogg
Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Pam Dooley
Plants Creative Landscapes
Decatur, Ga.

Paul Fraynd
Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Mike Haynes
The Loving Companies
Charlotte, N.C.

Luke Henry
ProScope Lawn &
Landscaping Services
Marion, Ohio

Chris Joyce
Joyce Landscaping
Cape Cod, Mass.

Aaron Katerberg
Grapids Irrigation
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jerry McKay
McKay Landscape Lighting
Omaha, Neb.

Bryan Stolz
Winterberry Landscape
& Garden Center
Southington, Conn.

Greg Winchel
Winchel Irrigation
Grandville, Mich.

Industry Consultants

Neal Glatt
Grow the Bench
Boston, Mass.

Marty Grunder
The Grow Group
Dayton, Ohio

Phil Harwood
Tamarisk Business Advisors
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jeffrey Scott
Jeffrey Scott Consulting
New Orleans, La.



“The No. 1 hold back in my experience is working IN our business as opposed to working ON our business.

It's so darn easy to say and so incredibly hard to get past!”



“I believe that empowering leaders can either be both the most painful or the most powerful aspect of effectively leading a growing organization. Everything starts with cultural alignment, which begins with why, not what.”



“The incentives you offer in pay and promotions are a clear tool for you to communicate your goals for the business. If you want to grow, design incentives to drive and reward the people who create that growth.”



OUR MISSION: *Landscape Management* shares a comprehensive mix of content designed to stimulate growth and take our readers to their next level.

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Why Smart Irrigation Month matters to your customers

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

July is Smart Irrigation Month which the Irrigation Association (IA) created almost 20 years ago. The month highlights how the green industry uses smart irrigation technology and incorporates its practices to better deploy water to landscaping and turf.

Danny Smith, director of water management for Park West, No. 16 on the 2023 LM150 list, talks with *Landscape Management* about how his operation will spread the news of Smart Irrigation Month to its customers.

Landscape Management: What is Smart Irrigation Month?

Danny Smith: Smart Irrigation Month has been held every July for — at least — the last decade. It has gained traction with all industry partners, including contractors, distributors, manufacturers and (landscape) architects.

LM: Why is Smart Irrigation Month important for irrigation contractors?

DS: At the highest level, it brings awareness to our water conservation and management efforts. It highlights that our industry has better tools, resources

and talent to do a better job of promoting landscape sustainability with an emphasis on water use.

LM: Should customers know and care about Smart Irrigation Month?

DS: Absolutely! Drought or no drought, wet or dry states, water conservation and landscape sustainability efforts are here to stay. With the cost of water and our populations continuing to increase, everyone must do their part to raise awareness of our industry's smart irrigation practices.

LM: What can other contractors do to help their customers understand the significance of Smart Irrigation Month?

DS: Bringing awareness to new technologies such as smart controllers, dripline retrofits and other water conservation technologies is a win-win for the client and contractor. The contractor can make the sale and the customer can see a tangible reduction in their water consumption. With rebates and other resources available through their water provider, these projects provide great value for everyone involved.

LM: What does Park West tell its customers about Smart Irrigation Month?

DS: Our objectives are to highlight our smart irrigation and water conservation efforts spearheaded by our dedicated water management department. While we increase these objectives through our social media presence, we also host irrigation workshops for our property management and HOA partners to bring additional awareness.

LM: What else should LM readers know and understand about Smart Irrigation Month?

DS: The IA designed Smart Irrigation Month to bring concentrated awareness to the technologies and overall niche of water conservation as it relates to outdoor water use and landscape management. I believe all contractors should make it their mission to provide their services with an emphasis on water conservation and landscape sustainability. This will increase their service offerings to clients and help move this industry forward. 📍



Danny Smith

WASHINGTON MAN WHO USED LANDSCAPING COMPANY TO COVER DRUG SMUGGLING SENTENCED

The *Tri-Cities Herald* reports Jose Mendoza-Ruelas, 38, of Richland, Wash., plead guilty to charges of conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of actual (pure) methamphetamine, 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 5 kilograms or more of cocaine. Mendoza-Ruelas used a Kennewick, Wash., landscaping company to hide his illegal activities.

United States District Judge Mary K. Dimke sentenced Mendoza-Ruelas, who is from Mexico, to 150 months in federal prison. He also will serve 5 years of federal supervision after release from federal custody.

According to documents and court proceedings, Mendoza-Ruelas was part of a trafficking organization that used a

legitimate landscaping business to cover up the organization's activities. Mendoza-Ruelas told investigators a drug trafficking organization would give him 50,000 to 60,000 fentanyl-laced pills and large quantities of methamphetamine. Mendoza-Ruelas was negotiating a 30-pound methamphetamine delivery when he was taken into custody.

The DEA, in partnership with local law enforcement, executed numerous search warrants at the landscaping compound. Law enforcement recovered more than \$160,000 USD and several armed automatic rifles inside a compartment in a wall. The organization utilized the compound to intake and process shipments.

Jeff Korhan shares his 17 trust-based secrets of closing the sale



Jeff Korhan

On Thursday, Oct. 19, Jeff Korhan, *LM* columnist, consultant and former green industry business owner, will share his 17 secrets to closing the sale. This is part of the Equip Exposition education sessions — powered by *Landscape Management*.

Closing a deal can be a scary time for both the client and the business owner, Korhan says.

“Everybody’s always afraid of losing,” he says. “The client is in a position where they want to get what they want, but they don’t want to pay too much. They don’t want to have buyer’s remorse.”

HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE

Korhan says he will share some tips he perfected during his time in the industry to help landscape business owners and sales teams understand the specific needs of the buyer. It’s

a misconception to think clients are only concerned with the bottom line, he says.

“I found that most buyers will spend more than you think they will or more than they say they will,” he says. “What they’re afraid of is not getting full value.”

Having a sales process in place, Korhan says, reassures clients that they’re getting full value for the work and the project will meet their expectations.

KEEPING IT CLOSED


The biggest challenge sales teams face in closing a deal, Korhan says, is to shift the conversation away from outcomes and focus on the client relationship.

“If you can be the one that sorts things out and helps them focus on what needs to be focused on and ideally in the right sort of order, then you can take them to the finish line,” he says.

Korhan hopes attendees learn from his session that the buyer and seller want the same thing. And to effectively navigate through the sales process, you must take control of the process.

“How you take control is an interesting thing,” he says. “It takes a lot of practice, but once you figure it out, not only will you sell more, but so will the people that you train. If you don’t have a good method, then every selling situation will feel like starting over with no learning curve.”

REGISTER NOW

Attendees must preregister to attend *LM*’s educational sessions. To register for Equip Expo and classes, visit **EquipExposition.com**. Use the promo code “VIPLMNC” for a 50-percent discount on early bird Equip registration. 

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1	BrightView Holdings	Blue Bell, Pa.	\$2,774,600,000	9%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
2	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, Ohio	\$1,511,081,000	10%	11%	10,939/0	NR/NR/NR
3	TruGreen [*]	Memphis, Tenn.	\$1,495,890,000	1%	NR	11,111/3,076	14/86/0
4	Yellowstone Landscape	Bunnell, Fla.	\$539,000,000	21%	10%	5,100/900	80/0/20
5	Bartlett Tree Experts	Stamford, Conn.	\$437,000,000	10%	10%	2,500/200	30/64/6
6	HeartLand	Kansas City, Mo.	\$434,000,000	12%	30%	2,200/1,500	100/0/0
7	SavATree	Bedford Hills, N.Y.	\$342,000,000	2%	8%	2,100/250	NR/NR/NR
8	Sperber Landscape Cos.	Westlake Village, Calif.	\$331,000,000	18%	12%	3,155/0	100/0/0
9	Gothic Landscape	Valencia, Calif.	\$323,000,000	25%	0%	2,100/100	95/5/0
10	Weed Man	Orono, Ontario	\$308,000,000	19%	12%	NR/NR	5/95/0
11	Mariani Premier Group	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$286,615,000	174%	35%	900/1,500	13/86/1
12	LandCare	Frederick, Md.	\$275,000,000	12%	15%	1,700/2,200	100/0/0
13	Ruppert Landscape	Laytonsville, Md.	\$273,000,000	10%	10%	2,020/0	100/0/0
14	Divisions Maintenance Group [*]	Newport, Ky.	\$243,075,909	16%	20%	850/850	100/0/0
15	U.S. Lawns	Orlando, Fla.	\$205,380,000	0%	0%	1,700/700	100/0/0
16	Park West	Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.	\$190,775,000	9%	17%	1,534/0	NR/NR/NR
17	Lawn Doctor [*]	Holmdel, N.J.	\$190,371,000	11%	10%	1,500/0	5/95/0
18	Juniper	Fort Myers, Fla.	\$170,000,000	21%	18%	2,200/0	85/5/10
19	United Land Services	Jacksonville, Fla.	\$153,100,000	73%	35%	850/0	98/2/0
20	Landscape Development Inc.	Valencia, Calif.	\$139,500,000	12%	7%	1,175/0	NR/NR/NR
21	Clean Scapes	Austin, Texas	\$115,250,000	35%	12%	767/363	100/0/0
22	The Grounds Guys	Waco, Texas	\$114,000,000	29%	10%	1,100/0	NR/NR/NR
23	Rotolo Consultants	Slidell, La.	\$102,000,000	19%	23%	500/600	85/1/14
24	NaturaLawn of America	Frederick, Md.	\$101,711,708	12%	5%	609/35	3/97/0
25	Yardnique	Morrisville, N.C.	\$96,000,000	41%	25%	600/400	100/0/0
26	Clintar Commercial Outdoor Services	Markham, Ontario	\$93,200,000	7%	8%	375/375	90/5/5
27	Schill Grounds Management	North Ridgeville, Ohio	\$92,500,000	19%	10%	850/200	98/1/1
	The Greenery	Hilton Head Island, S.C.	\$92,500,000	14%	11%	898/220	90/8/2
29	Massey Services [*]	Orlando, Fla.	\$91,939,190	7%	15%	2,675/0	7/93/0
30	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	Plainfield, Ill.	\$90,500,000	9%	7%	528/150	4/96/0
31	Mainscape	Fishers, Ind.	\$82,200,000	11%	5%	697/134	100/0/0
32	Meadows Farms	Chantilly, Va.	\$80,000,000	2%	0%	300/150	1/98/1
33	Choate USA	Carrollton, Texas	\$79,710,976	49%	10%	363/0	55/45/0
34	LMC Landscape Partners	Plano, Texas	\$79,000,000	17%	8%	600/150	86/10/4
35	Landscape Workshop	Birmingham, Ala.	\$75,393,249	35%	28%	650/440	90/5/5
36	Garden Design	Farmers Branch, Texas	\$74,000,000	7%	2%	80/0	98/2/0
37	DJ's Landscape Mangement	Grand Rapids, Mich.	\$72,000,000	39%	10%	400/50	NR/NR/NR
	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	Portland, Maine	\$72,000,000	10%	12%	575/0	100/0/0
39	Elite Team Offices	Clovis, Calif.	\$70,600,000	108%	20%	525/100	69/4/27
40	Ryan Lawn & Tree [*]	Merriam, Kan.	\$68,047,690	26%	13%	468/39	10/90/0
41	Dixie Landscape	Medley, Fla.	\$65,983,000	5%	0%	345/0	NR/NR/NR
42	Denison Landscaping	Fort Washington, Md.	\$65,000,000	10%	12%	510/0	NR/NR/NR
43	Environmental Management Inc.	Plain City, Ohio	\$64,509,961	22%	5%	400/54	83/2/15
44	ABM [*]	Columbia, Md.	\$62,700,000	5%	3%	750/750	35/0/65
45	American Landscape [*]	Canoga Park, Calif.	\$62,491,000	20%	15%	220/0	30/20/50
46	Russell Landscape Group	Sugar Hill, Ga.	\$62,000,000	24%	16%	425/200	NR/NR/NR
47	Chenmark	Portland, Maine	\$58,463,693	-1%	10%	369/270	NR/NR/NR
48	Beary Landscaping	Lockport, Ill.	\$58,000,000	10%	10%	75/300	80/20/0
	Greenscape Land Design	Raynham, Mass.	\$58,000,000	52%	15%	95/400	98/0/2

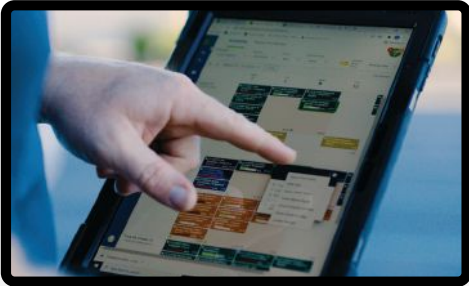
LEGEND NR = Not reported; * Indicates estimate, based on projected revenue for 2022 reported last year; ^ Indicates a portion of reported revenue was removed (such as pest control, janitorial services or other nongreen industry offerings).

	Headquarters	2022 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev. Change from 2021	% Projected Change for 2023	FTEs/ Seasonal Employees	% Comm./ Res./Gov.	
50	Sebert Landscape	Bartlett, Ill.	\$57,458,000	10%	8%	100/500	90/5/5
51	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	San Antonio, Texas	\$57,400,000	33%	15%	350/150	75/8/17
52	Bland Landscaping Co.	Apex, N.C.	\$55,581,859	28%	15%	500/125	90/2/8
53	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	Jupiter, Fla.	\$55,500,000	37%	5%	600/0	98/2/0
54	Westco	Houston, Texas	\$55,274,294	72%	12%	416/53	60/1/39
55	SiteWorks	Chandler, Ariz.	\$53,132,334	15%	5%	183/78	100/0/0
56	Kline Bros. Landscaping	Manahawkin, N.J.	\$53,000,000	8%	10%	253/250	10/90/0
	Pierre Landscape*	Irwindale, Calif.	\$53,000,000	0%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
58	SunWorks Landscape Partners^	Carrollton, Texas	\$52,748,190	3%	25%	400/300	100/0/0
59	Senske Services^	Kennewick, Wash.	\$52,700,000	19%	77%	450/100	10/85/5
60	Complete Landscaping Service	Bowie, Md.	\$52,281,000	4%	7%	160/100	99/1/0
61	Creative Environments Design & Landscape	Tempe, Ariz.	\$51,600,000	5%	20%	180/0	NR/NR/NR
62	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	Woodbine, Md.	\$51,000,000	13%	15%	325/100	85/15/0
63	Santa Rita Landscaping	Tucson, Ariz.	\$50,932,000	75%	11%	566/48	91/6/3
64	Earhtones Design	Midlothian, Texas	\$50,888,988	1%	0%	135/124	84/16/0
65	Sunrise Landscape	Tampa, Fla.	\$50,000,000	31%	20%	250/150	98/1/1
66	Pacific Landscape Management	Hillsboro, Ore.	\$49,225,579	34%	10%	400/80	100/0/0
67	Teufel Landscape	Hillsboro, Ore.	\$48,500,000	20%	-9%	364/0	NR/NR/NR
68	Xquisite Landscaping	Stoughton, Mass.	\$47,796,300	12%	15%	195/70	95/0/5
69	AAA Landscape	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$47,050,000	4%	6%	610/0	99/1/10
70	McHale Landscape Design	Upper Marlboro, Md.	\$45,600,000	28%	10%	340/0	0/100/0
71	Environmental Designs	Brighton, Colo.	\$44,132,000	39%	10%	270/100	65/26/9
72	Southern Botanical	Dallas, Texas	\$43,751,485	22%	8%	338/60	64/25/11
73	Christy Webber & Co.	Chicago, Ill.	\$42,500,000	6%	0%	290/0	50/10/40
74	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers	Portland, Ore.	\$42,102,210	6%	2%	285/45	NR/NR/NR
75	Caretaker Landscape and Tree Management	Gilbert, Ariz.	\$42,043,216	10%	8%	309/30	100/0/0
76	Perfect Cuts of Austin	Austin, Texas	\$42,025,000	36%	5%	38/76	100/0/0
77	Schumacher Cos.	West Bridgewater, Mass.	\$41,500,000	18%	5%	150/100	34/66/0
78	Harvest Landscape Enterprises^	Anaheim, Calif.	\$41,087,500	8%	12%	400/0	100/0/0
79	Superscapes	Carrollton, Texas	\$40,287,452	15%	15%	300/0	93/5/2
80	Southview Design	St. Paul, Minn.	\$39,579,305	33%	12%	110/150	48/52/0
81	Gachina Landscape Management	Menlo Park, Calif.	\$38,513,947	7%	5%	385/0	96/3/1
82	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	Suwanee, Ga.	\$36,514,384	22%	6%	248/12	3/97/0
83	SOI Group	Frisco, Texas	\$36,300,000	33%	8%	134/0	100/0/0
84	Designscapes Colorado*	Centennial, Colo.	\$36,186,099	11%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
85	Stay Green	Santa Clarita, Calif.	\$36,000,000	-6%	12%	426/426	70/0/30
86	Earthworks	Alvarado, Texas	\$35,100,000	13%	10%	320/120	95/0/5
87	Merchants Landscape Services	Santa Ana, Calif.	\$35,000,000	8%	9%	430/0	0/0/100
88	Chalet	Wilmette, Ill.	\$34,477,000	-7%	3%	125/200	0/100/0
89	Scott Byron & Co.	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$34,000,000	9%	8%	88/181	5/95/0
90	Naturescape	Muskego, Wis.	\$33,868,995	1%	3%	312/22	5/95/0
91	Conserva Irrigation	Glen Allen, Va.	\$32,742,586	52%	38%	200/75	9/90/1
92	DLC Resources	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$32,000,000	10%	2%	385/0	100/0/0
	Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	Hayward, Calif.	\$32,000,000	0%	0%	299/0	35/60/5
	Gibson Landscape Services	Alpharetta, Ga.	\$32,000,000	23%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
95	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	Indian Trail, N.C.	\$31,604,128	26%	15%	125/175	100/0/0
96	Level Green Landscape	Upper Marlboro, Md.	\$31,435,000	15%	2%	155/150	90/0/10
97	Lifescape Colorado	Denver, Colo.	\$31,410,497	21%	11%	112/70	10/90/0
98	Great Oaks Landscape Associates	Novi, Mich.	\$30,000,000	15%	8%	176/0	80/20/0
99	LandGraphics	San Diego, Calif.	\$29,850,000	NR	15%	260/0	100/0/0
100	Andre Landscape Service	Azusa, Calif.	\$29,000,000	11%	10%	332/0	100/0/0

	Headquarters	2022 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev. Change from 2021	% Projected Change for 2023	FTEs/ Seasonal Employees	% Comm./ Res./Gov.	
	The Budd Group	Winston-Salem, N.C.	\$29,000,000	4%	15%	207/0	NR/NR/NR
102	LMI Landscapes	Carrollton, Texas	\$28,846,212	-5%	15%	137/90	100/0/0
103	Andy's Sprinkler, Drainage & Lighting*	Carrollton, Texas	\$28,279,197	6%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
104	Siteworks Landscape	Richmond, Calif.	\$27,860,000	15%	0%	180/0	0/100/0
105	The Joyce Cos.	Marstons Mills, Mass.	\$27,700,200	20%	8%	120/70	5/95/0
106	Complete Landsculpture	Dallas, Texas	\$27,682,407	16%	12%	130/80	70/30/0
107	Green Lawn Fertilizing ^	West Chester, Pa.	\$27,644,474	24%	17%	270/0	6/94/0
108	Urban Dirt	Austin, Texas	\$27,200,000	32%	35%	175/150	100/0/0
109	ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	Venice, Fla.	\$27,015,675	8%	15%	317/64	80/20/0
110	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	Germantown, Wis.	\$26,972,000	-2%	10%	200/60	65/35/0
111	Saluda Hill Landscapes	Lexington, S.C.	\$26,660,421	42%	5%	140/0	15/85/0
112	Winterberry	Southington, Conn.	\$26,211,379	16%	22%	52/129	73/27/0
113	Service Direct Landscape	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$26,180,000	10%	10%	260/0	90/10/0
114	American Landscape Systems	Lewisville, Texas	\$25,404,522	16%	6%	310/60	65/0/35
115	Integrity Landscape	Morgan Hill, Calif.	\$25,300,000	15%	15%	220/40	100/0/0
116	Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions	Caseyville, Ill.	\$25,140,000	16%	5%	163/65	90/10/0
117	ProQual Landscaping	Tempe, Ariz.	\$25,000,000	25%	20%	305/0	100/0/0
118	Timberline Landscaping	Colorado Springs, Colo.	\$24,340,000	22%	5%	48/159	68/24/8
119	Hittle Landscaping	Westfield, Ind.	\$24,004,600	20%	6%	108/122	95/5/0
120	Utz Environmental Services	Leander, Texas	\$23,516,594	26%	20%	136/75	100/0/0
121	Clarence Davids & Co.	Matteson, Ill.	\$23,042,000	-3%	4%	80/128	90/10/0
122	Greenscape	Raleigh, N.C.	\$22,700,000	20%	20%	165/35	95/0/5
123	Next to Nature Landscape	Olathe, Kan.	\$22,533,475	19%	10%	86/43	53/47/0
124	Genesis Landscape Solutions	Mesa, Ariz.	\$22,509,446	11%	15%	300/0	90/9/1
125	Michael Hatcher & Associates	Olive Branch, Miss.	\$22,500,000	4%	20%	115/22	76/24/0
126	Richmond & Associates Landscaping	Carrollton, Texas	\$22,148,280	3%	3%	145/148	93/3/4
127	Art by Nature	Granite Falls, Wash.	\$22,000,000	10%	5%	136/0	99/1/0
	GreenEarth	Freeport, Fla.	\$22,000,000	10%	10%	190/0	96/4/0
129	Landry's Landscape	Baton Rouge, La.	\$21,752,560	17%	22%	66/27	96/4/0
130	Mullin	Saint Rose, La.	\$21,732,876	18%	5%	180/20	67/28/5
131	Franz Witte Landscape Contracting	Nampa, Idaho	\$21,470,500	13%	10%	121/91	55/33/12
132	Valley Landscaping	Christiansburg, Va.	\$21,394,480	52%	0%	150/80	66/30/4
133	Shinto Landscaping	Deerfield Beach, Fla.	\$21,287,000	25%	10%	200/20	70/10/20
134	Hidden Creek Landscaping	Hilliard, Ohio	\$21,183,258	25%	12%	90/27	25/75/0
135	Landscape Maintenance Professionals	Seffner, Fla.	\$21,000,000	15%	5%	310/35	100/0/0
136	Rock Water Farm Landscapes & Hardscapes*	Aldie, Va.	\$20,532,000	16%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
137	APHIX	Frankfort, Ky.	\$20,029,849	12%	12%	178/43	94/0/6
138	Pro Cutters Lawnsapes	Conyers, Ga.	\$19,882,649	16%	5%	85/20	20/0/80
139	North American Lawn & Landscape	Charlotte, N.C.	\$19,700,000	20%	10%	125/40	100/0/0
140	Sposato Landscape Co.	Milton, Del.	\$19,619,754	3%	5%	185/25	50/50/0
141	Earthco Commercial Landscape ^	Santa Ana, Calif.	\$19,392,000	16%	12%	350/0	100/0/0
142	Greener Group	Lowell, Mass.	\$19,334,126	0%	3%	88/12	98/2/0
143	Tree Amigos Outdoor Services	Fleming Island, Fla.	\$19,257,898	151%	5%	166/5	100/0/0
144	Cherrylake	Groveland, Fla.	\$19,200,000	6%	20%	304/94	100/0/0
145	HighGrove Partners	Austell, Ga.	\$19,187,085	4%	8%	185/25	100/0/0
146	Schultz Industries	Golden, Colo.	\$19,134,043	1%	4%	110/35	90/0/10
147	Benchmark Landscape ^	Poway, Calif.	\$18,897,821	-10%	20%	180/0	90/1/9
148	James Martin Associates	Mundelein, Ill.	\$18,056,637	14%	9%	62/115	43/54/3
149	GreenView Partners	Raleigh, N.C.	\$18,028,681	10%	10%	235/30	100/0/0
150	Mountain View Landscape	Chicopee, Mass.	\$17,500,000	-9%	20%	24/95	45/5/50
		Total: \$16,246,731,823	Avg: 16%	Avg: 10%			

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SKY-HIGH NUMBERS

The 2023 *LM150* list is another one for the record books, with combined revenue soaring to more than \$16 billion

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | *LM* EDITOR

This year's *LM150* list set another record, with a combined revenue of \$16.2 billion. This is \$1.9 billion up from our 2022 list.

Aspire Software, Ewing Outdoor Supply and Weathermatic sponsored this year's list.

BrightView Holdings remains at the top of the *LM150* list with almost \$2.8 billion in revenue. The Davey Tree Expert Co. came in at No. 2 this year, with \$1.5 billion. TruGreen moves down a spot to No. 3 with \$1.49 billion. Yellowstone Landscape remains at No. 4 with \$539 million in revenue and Bartlett Tree Experts remains at No. 5 with \$437 million.

Three operations on our list each saw an increase of more than 100 percent from 2021. Leading our growth list (for more on this, see page 30) is the Mariani Premier Group at 174 percent. Next is Tree Amigos Outdoor Services — a newcomer to our *LM150* list — at 151 percent. Elite Team Offices grew by 108 percent.

Mariani Premier Group acquired Southview Design, No. 80, in April

WHO DID WE MISS?

Should your company be on the *LM150* list of the largest landscape companies? Or, do you know of a firm that should be ranked but isn't? Contact Special Projects Editor Marisa Palmieri at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net to be notified next year when the submission period opens. We encourage companies that think they might make the list to contact us for information.

2023, so Southview remains separate on this year's list. To learn more about Mariani's growth, see page 20.

CHALLENGES

Labor, weather and inflation created headwinds for companies on the 2023 *LM150* list.

Jackie Ishimaru-Gachina, president and CEO of Gachina Landscape Management, No. 81, says record-breaking rains in California delayed enhancement, irrigation and water management projects.

"We used rain days for training ops crews so they wouldn't lose wages," she says. "We also communicate with clients to plan near-future projects to be ready to go."

Lane Plaisance, CEO and president of Landry's Landscape, No. 129, says inflation affected everything from labor to equipment. Landry's Landscape deploys technology to help combat these issues, Plaisance says.

"We have developed an internal matrix that categorizes employees based on skill level and experience to be able to increase wages," he says. "We have expanded our search for suppliers. We have also created a system to analyze our projected equipment and fleet needs further into the future."

To combat rising inflation, Manny Gonzalez, CEO of Westco, No. 54, says transparency with clients is key.

"(We include) annual increases on contracts and discuss inflation challenges with customers and partners about solutions and end results."

COMBINED 2022 *LM150* REVENUE

\$16,246,731,823

AVERAGE
REVENUE GROWTH
FROM 2021

16%

AVERAGE REVENUE
GROWTH PROJECTED
FOR 2023

10%

COMBINED 2022 REVENUE OF THE TOP 3 FIRMS


\$5,781,571,000

36%
OF TOTAL
LIST

HOW WE CALCULATE OUR FIGURES

LM seeks submissions from landscape companies for the magazine, on **LandscapeManagement.net**, via email and over the phone from January through May. Companies submit their details through an online form. *LM* editors compile the results and, where applicable, remove nontypical green industry revenue sources from the totals. For example, we omit revenue from pest and janitorial services.

We estimate revenue for firms that didn't provide data if they participated in last year's list and report a projected 2022 revenue figure.

The *LM150* information is self-reported unless otherwise noted. Some companies do not break out individual service lines, so we can't be sure what revenue is specific to typical green industry services. Several firms opt not to participate in the list, there are others we are unaware of, and it is possible some revenues overlap due to subcontracting agreements. 



The right tools to power growth

Property Works was founded in 2007 by Tony and Jason Batallan, two brothers born and raised in southern Florida. The Batallan Group has acquired landscape, general maintenance, and janitorial companies in the Florida market and onboarded them to Aspire to integrate these endeavors.

Dana Shaw began working with the Batallan brothers in 2016 while he was an implementation manager with Aspire Software. After building a strong relationship with Property Works while at Aspire and later as an independent consultant, Dana joined Property Works in 2020 as a full-time manager in operational strategy, overseeing the systems the company uses to manage its business.



“We had tremendous growth month over month over month. And we could see it in real time, because Aspire affords you that visibility into your sales and your operations.”

Dana Shaw

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

#11

Industry icon Frank Mariani sets out to create the leading residential landscape company in the world by joining the best family-owned companies into something bigger

BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In his way to visit a client in one of Chicago's wealthiest neighborhoods along Lake Michigan, Frank Mariani drives past a small building and points.

"That was my first building right there," he says.

That was almost 50 years ago. A lot has changed for Mariani since those humble beginnings.

"Pretty soon we'll be in every wealthy high-end residential area in the country," he says.

He means it. In 2022, Mariani Landscape added seven family-owned residential landscape companies from around the country. This year the company has already added five more (see sidebar for the complete list), including Southview Designs of St. Paul, Minn. — a company that ranked No. 80 on this year's LM150 list with annual revenue of \$39 million.

All of this activity has launched Mariani Premier Group — the new name of the platform of companies — up the LM150 list. The company reported 174 percent growth from 2021 to 2022, ranking first place in percentage growth year over year. Mariani's reported revenue of \$286 million places the company at No. 11 on the list.

A FUTURE FOR EVERYONE

A change at Mariani Landscape first started to come about five years ago, when Frank Mariani Jr. told his dad he liked working in the company but didn't foresee himself ever wanting to lead it.

"I said that's not a problem, but I want to make sure that our associates — 52 of whom have been with us for over 25 years — have an opportunity to still work here if I get hit by a train or retire," Mariani Sr. says. "My plan is

to work until I'm dead because this is not work for me. I love it. But I wanted to make sure there was a future for our associates, whether Frank Jr. or Frank Sr. are here or not."

Mariani looked into creating an Employee Stock Option Plan for the company but didn't like it. ("It didn't really work for me," he says.) Then a friend in the industry who runs a large company approached him. This friend was working on a deal with a private equity group. Perhaps the two companies could both work with the private equity group and become partners? Mariani was more than interested. He was ready.

And then a pandemic hit and the deal went away.

"I totally understood, because this particular private equity group had businesses in entertainment, so they were getting killed and didn't know what to do," Mariani says.

Mariani told the group that he was in no hurry, but he did want to make sure his team was taken care of. Around a year later, the company he was hoping to partner with was bought by a different private equity group. The original private equity

group came back to Mariani and told him they had recovered from the pandemic and were ready to make a deal.

“We made a deal in no time,” Mariani says. “And I was off to the races.”

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Mariani’s vision is to create the leading residential landscape company in the country and then the world by only partnering with the best companies. Mariani says he knows who those companies are through his years of experience in the industry and his involvement with the National Association of Landscape Professionals and its previous iterations over the years. He says people who are his friends run many of these companies.

“I would go to them and say, ‘Do you see the advantage of joining together? It protects your team,’” Mariani says. “If they care about their team, they need an exit strategy, because eventually all of us will get older and want to retire or die. This was a way to ensure that our family of companies have a plan as ownership ages.”

Additional benefits include priority access to suppliers, business management systems, HR information and a recruitment platform.

“Our goal is to quickly help our family of companies take full advantage of our group services,” says

Stephanie Blanco, head of integration at Mariani. “We have been running dozens of roundtables, workgroups and learning sessions that are helping the family companies elevate and expand their service offerings.”

Mariani says the success of the overall plan depends on the acquired companies maintaining their unique identity while gaining these assets.

Mariani Premier Group hired Bryan Christiansen as CEO because of his experience in acquisitions. Previously, as a senior vice president with Affiliated Computer Services, he helped acquire 114 companies — and allowed each to operate individually with its own profit and loss statements.

Christiansen references the Star Trek movies when Captain Kirk and Spock battle the Borg.

“What we often see in the ‘consolidation play’ is the acquiring company acts like the Borg, and everyone must assimilate,” Christiansen says. “When they assimilate, they lose their personalities. They lose what made them so powerful in their markets.”

Christiansen says Mariani Premier Group’s key to success is each acquired company gets to keep its unique personality.

“Frank is creating the best of both worlds,” Christiansen says. “He’s getting the best of the best when it comes to landscape skills and client experiences, and what we’re doing is bringing the best of the best when it comes to scaling companies and allowing them to maintain who they are.”

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Mariani stresses that he doesn’t want just any company. He only wants companies with a winning culture or those ready to work to become the best. And he has turned away companies that wanted to join the Mariani Premier Group.

“I have turned down buying, acquiring, partnering with companies

→ WHAT IT’S LIKE TO WORK AT MARIANI PREMIER GROUP

Noel Street is nearing her one-year anniversary with Mariani Premier Group, working as a project manager for the bid/build department. She says it’s exciting to work for a big company that is growing.

“This is a big step up from my last job,” she says. “The projects are bigger, more exciting, more grand.”

Street says it’s a fun, supportive culture at the company.

“Everyone is really friendly and happy to help you, or teach you when you need to learn,” she says.

CEO Bryan Christiansen credits the company’s friendly culture to the man with his name on all the trucks: Frank Mariani.

Whenever Mariani sees one of his trucks on the road, he’s sure to give a smile and wave.


“When I first met Frank, I was pretty sure I was going to love working for him, and I do love working for him,” Christiansen says. “He’s full of energy. When you talk to him, what comes across is that he’s doing what he loves. His energy is palpable. It rubs off on people, and it’s energizing.”

that have huge revenue and EBITDA,” Mariani says. “But they have a culture that is, in my opinion, cancerous.”

So, what does the future hold for Mariani Premier Group?

“The sky is the limit,” Christiansen says. “There is a desire from all the family companies to continue to grow, to continue to increase the number of companies that can participate and receive the benefits. We’re bringing to the market something that hasn’t been seen before.”

Mariani says he will continue to move forward with his goal of building the best residential landscape company in the country.

“We’re not driven by the dollars,” he says. “We’re driven by the people and the companies and the markets we want to be in.” 

THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES

- Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, Ill.
- Berghoff Design Group / BDG Maintenance, Phoenix
- Designs by Sundown, Littleton, Colo.
- Hoffman Landscapes, Fairfield, Conn.
- NatureWorks Landscape Services, Walpole, Mass.
- Rocco Fiore & Sons, Libertyville, Ill.
- RP Marzilli, Medway, Mass.
- Woodlawns Landscape Co., Chicago
- Ed Castro Landscape, Roswell, Ga.
- Glengate, Wilton, Conn.
- Borst Landscape & Design, Allendale, N.J.
- Southview Design, St. Paul, Minn.
- Siciliano Landscape Co., Red Bank, N.J.

What Do These Top LMCs Have in Common?

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AN INSIDE LOOK AT SENSKE'S AMBITIOUS GROWTH PLANS

Make no mistake, the team at Senske Services wants to dominate the North American lawn care and pest control markets

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

#59



Senske Services puts a big emphasis on opportunities for employees to learn and grow.

Last year was busy for Senske Services, No. 59 on the 2023 LM150 list, with \$52,700,000 in lawn care revenue and 19 percent overall growth from 2021 to 2022. The company also offers pest control and tree care to primarily residential clients.

Chris Senske, second-generation owner and operator and acquisitions ambassador for Senske Services, says this growth came in two forms: 1) organic growth and 2) acquisitions, including Desert Green in Richland, Wash., and Rentokil's lawn care operations in Washington and Utah.

The 76-year-old company shows no signs of slowing down. In December, private equity firm GTCR invested in Senske Services, and Casey Taylor and Nathan Hurst joined as co-CEOs.

Chris Senske says this investment will help his family's business continue to expand. The company anticipates growing 77 percent in 2023 over 2022.

"We were just about at the end of our ability to make any more purchases," Senske says. "We had tapped most of the credit that we could use at that point in time. To continue the growth path we had, we were going to have to do something else. And frankly, the market looked ripe to take advantage of the prices that some of the private equity firms were paying."

So far in 2023, the company acquired Blades of Green of Edgewater, Md., and Liqui-Lawn of Longmont, Colo.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Senske calls the process of vetting

private-equity firms a fun experience. Senske's leadership team rented out a local winery and investors gave their pitches during individual time slots. He said he looked for the opportunities the investment team would bring his company and how the investors would fit his operation's culture.

"One of the things that impressed us the most with the team from GTCR was (co-CEOs) Casey and Nate had done this process before with the characteristically same kind of business," Senske says, referring to their experience at route-based commercial water filtration business Waterlogic. "They had both had customer service orientation and on Casey's behalf, it was a family business to start with. So, it just felt like a good match."

Taylor says GTCR will help Senske with the resources needed to maintain growth.

"Chris has always had a great background in innovation. We're going continue that," Taylor says. "Having those deeper pockets, but not losing the family business atmosphere is our goal."

GROWTH PLANS

Senske says the investment from GTCR will help the company continue expanding. Taylor notes the company's ambitious growth plans are no secret.

"We have aggressive growth plans for the U.S. and eventually Canada," he says. "The goal right now is to establish more platforms throughout the U.S."

Taylor says this plan includes

potential expansions into the Midwest, Southeast and Texas.

“We want to be in 30 to 35 states within the next four or five years,” he says. “That’s the goal — just complete domination of the market.”

Senske says he’s proud of the direction in which he’s guiding his family’s operation.

“That’s part of the excitement for me is to see this family legacy carried forward and taken nationally, internationally, globally,” he says. “We’re looking for great partners who want to be part of this team and grow.”

CULTURE FIT

Culture is a big part of what makes Senske Services tick. And at the heart of Senske Services, Taylor says, is Chris Senske.

“He built the business,” Taylor says. “He took what his dad did and grew it to a tremendous degree over the last many years. He’s certainly the heart of the business.”

Senske says the business centers around four core values: do it right and do it safe, teamwork, accountability and growth. Senske says he’s heartened when employees spend their entire careers with his family’s company.

“We’re retiring people with 30 years or more of experience in our business,” he says. “It’s sad to see ‘em go because we’re losing that expertise, but it’s also very rewarding to see how they provided for their families, made a career and had a successful life.”

As the team at Senske brings acquisition targets into the fold, Taylor says it’s a great opportunity for the Senske team to learn from them.

“We’re looking for like-minded businesses and we don’t necessarily want them to lose their culture,” Taylor says.

He says it’s also a great opportunity for employees of those new additions to grow their careers.

“We’ve got opportunities for regional managers and lots of growth and lots of opportunities for them,” he says. “Hopefully that gives them a true career path, which they didn’t have before.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Senske says part of the reason his family business is in the position it’s in is thanks to some lessons he learned over the years. A key piece of advice he offers other business owners is to know and understand what your operation is good at.

“Over the years I tried the insulation business in the ‘70s during the energy crisis. I tried telemarketing,” he says. “We tried to do design/build landscape and we just weren’t good at that. We just chose to focus on lawn care and pest control.”

Senske says it’s also important to keep investing in your operation.

“I always tell folks, ‘Don’t get too greedy,’” he says. “When you are starting, it takes a lot of money to grow a business. You have to keep pushing money back into it. It does take some sacrifice to be able to grow early on.”

Along the same line, Senske says it’s important to know your numbers when you’re considering an acquisition, expanding routes or adding service. While larger operations may want to capitalize on every opportunity to grow, he says he’s learned

the hard way that you need to do some homework first.

“The first time we tried to work in the Seattle market our consultants told us, ‘Don’t go to Seattle. It’s not the right decision,’” he says. “And I spent 10 years banging my head against the wall trying to sell lawn care to a market that wasn’t really buying much lawn care at the time. We ended up selling those customers and now 15 years later I bought ‘em back along with several thousand others.”

The valuable lesson he learned was the need to understand the market before expanding there, he says.

“One of the things we try to instill in the business at all levels of management is to get advice from your peers, get advice from your boss — if it’s that type of relationship you have — and get advice from someone who may be your subordinate,” he says. “Then you meld all that data and generally, we make a better decision.”



Chris Senske

→ WHAT IT’S LIKE TO WORK AT SENSKE SERVICES

Casey Taylor, CEO of Senske Services, says Chris Senske, acquisitions ambassador, is the driving force of the company’s cohesive and thriving work environment.

“He’s built the culture that makes it fun to come to work,” he says. “He really takes care of his employees and always makes sure to take care of his customers.”

He says Senske has built a culture of innovation and investment and it’s an infectious environment to be a part of.

“You walk in the door, and you feel like this is a team that I want to be a part of,” he says. “People are cheery, they’re having fun in the office. There are goofy things going on and decorations, and you can tell the culture is really good. But also, at the end of the day, they’re serious about the results.”

Taylor says it’s part of that work hard, play hard mentality that pushes him to come into the office every day. The company emphasizes a strong work-life balance.

“Having a focus on aggressive growth, that’s just fun to be around too,” Taylor says. “Part of it is just working for a winner and you feel like that at Senske. You feel like they’ve always been a winner. You’re not stagnant, it’s not the same thing year over year over year.”



Casey Taylor



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CREATING SOMETHING BIG IN THE DESERT

A close look at how Genesis Landscape Solutions makes its acquisitions feel like part of the family

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As Genesis Landscape Solutions in Mesa, Ariz., enters its second decade of existence, big changes are on the way. The company, which makes its *LM150* debut in 2023 at No. 124, has a fresh face in its leadership team and a new strategy for growth.

At the helm of the company are President and COO Warren Wheat,

and CEO Joe Calland, who joined the company a year ago. The duo brings a lot to the table with quite different life experiences before joining forces at Genesis.

Calland holds an MBA from The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and proudly earned a perfect SAT score. Wheat was an eighth-round draft pick of

the Los Angeles Rams in 1989 out of Brigham Young University and earned seven starts in a multi-year NFL career with the Rams and the Seattle Seahawks.

"We lead with that, not the test score," Calland jokes when Wheat brings up his football career.

Whatever you lead with, the facts are the duo helped grow Genesis with an acquisition strategy that looks to integrate companies under one banner, while allowing them to continue their own growth.

The strategy has paid off as Genesis slots in at No. 124 in the *LM150* ranking with a revenue of \$22,509,446, and 11 percent growth from 2021 to 2022.

MOVING AND SHAKING

A relatively young company — Wheat founded the Arizona-based operation in 2012 — Genesis is already making some significant moves. Over the last few years, the company has made several acquisitions of fellow Grand Canyon State businesses — Desert Care Landscape Resources and Botanicare Landscape Management — in a bid to expand its footprint in the area.

"We're looking to make Genesis a platform for investments where we see a strong opportunity," says Calland. "When you add these companies, you also add the people and the relationships they have with their customers.



Joe Calland

Homeowners associations make up most of the business for Genesis Landscape Solutions, setting the baseline for what it looks for in an acquisition.



And then, in a distant third, in our eyes, is the equipment and the facility.”

Genesis serves a 90-percent commercial clientele, with most of that being homeowner’s associations, according to Calland. As a part of their growth strategy, he adds, it’s crucial to find companies that not only share similar values, but a client base that Genesis can add — and get — value from.

“One of the things we look for in a business investment is the customer relationship and is that something that fits into our strategy?” he says. “We don’t want to invest in a business that doesn’t align with what we’re good at. So, we view it as wanting to know what we’re getting from a customer service perspective and seeing a clear way to maintain or even improve it.”

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The investments Genesis made in its acquisitions go far beyond adding the business to its brand, Wheat says.

“Philosophically, (Joe and I are) both the type of person where, if our new acquisition has an idea on how we can make our processes better, we want to hear it,” he adds.

Genesis also brings its expertise to the table, Calland says, citing the addition of new tree mapping software to its newest acquisition. Calland and Wheat also see value in their company’s leadership structure and its ability to modernize and professionalize these new additions to their brand.

“We look at companies that might not have that structure, but that have people who could fit into those higher-level roles,” says Calland. “When we do find those gems, we sell them on adding our processes while continuing to do what they’ve always done. We do everything we can to close the deal while keeping all of their people in place because we see that generating consistent and great results.”

→ WHAT IT’S LIKE TO WORK AT GENESIS LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

What does it mean to be a destination company? That’s what Genesis Landscape Solutions’ COO and President Warren Wheat and CEO Joe Calland are constantly searching for.

“There are a ton of landscape jobs in Arizona and in this market,” says Warren Wheat, COO and president of Genesis Landscape Solutions. “We have to find out what can we do to make our experience different for someone who comes in to work here.

So far, according to Calland, there have been some pretty obvious buttons you’ve got to press.

“It’s about knowing that you’re cared about,” he says. “Whether that’s through being given the opportunity to advance, or just being treated well. It’s a whole number of things that spreads through the company and then through the industry, where we hope our employees will tell their friends that Genesis is a great place to work.”



Warren Wheat

A DELICATE BALANCE

Alongside acquisitions inevitably comes change. As part of its acquisition strategy, Genesis makes it clear to the businesses it invests in that its intention is not to bury the existing culture of the company. Instead, Calland says, the message focuses on how collaboration can create the most scalable business possible.

“There is a lot of pride in these companies, and that’s why they’re such good investments,” he adds. “What we try to do is build a consensus and say to them, ‘We’ve invested in this company because of the work you’ve done.’”

Calland is a new recruit to the green industry. Both before and after his graduation from Wharton, he worked in the consulting world most recently at Boston Consulting Group, where he worked with a company to fix issues before moving on to another to do the same.

That, he says, has set a solid baseline for his work at Genesis in integrating companies into the brand.

“The last thing we want to do is come in on day one and change what has been a winning formula for them,” he says. “Our approach starts with finding out what the business might

struggle with. What are the pain points they see on a day-to-day basis?”

Identifying those pain points takes time and communication between the existing Genesis leadership and the new acquisition, Calland says.

“It starts with an introduction period where you say, let’s talk about what you think is going well and what isn’t, and then let’s adjust accordingly,” he says. “That gives us a pretty good sense of what those things are going to be that you need to change versus the ones that are good processes that should stay.”

WHAT’S NEXT?

Up to its most current acquisition, Genesis melded companies it adds into its Genesis Landscape Solutions platform. Calland says he sees value in having one name, specifically when operating in a single market.

That could change in the future, however, if and when, Genesis expands beyond Arizona.

“Our goal is to continue our growth in the Phoenix area and get to a hundred-plus million in revenue,” says Calland. “Then, potentially, looking at repeating this process in another market where we see a similar opportunity.”

THE GREENERY CELEBRATES GROWTH AND COMMUNITY FOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

#27

What started out as a landscape nursery is today one of the nation's largest landscape companies

BY BRIAN LOVE
LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When it comes to growth, few have done it like The Greenery. This year, the company celebrates its 50th year of operation. Not a bad way to ring in the anniversary is ranking No. 27 on the *LM150* list with \$92,500,000 in revenue and 14 percent growth from 2021 to 2022.

The company, which offers maintenance, design/build and installation, irrigation and turf and ornamental care to primarily commercial clients, attributes its growth and success to its employees. As it acknowledges its history, there is a feeling of pride among the employee-owners.

"To me, being an employee of The Greenery means being a part of something," says Romario Blackwood, a licensed pesticide applicator from the Sun City branch in Bluffton, S.C. He has been with the company for three years. "Since I've started working here, I can see how the properties we have worked on have developed. I've seen a lot of changes in myself. Being a part of The Greenery means getting the opportunity to learn and grow."



BEING EMPLOYEE-OWNED

The company's employee ownership started when Berry Edwards, co-founder of The Greenery, began prepping for retirement in 2003. He was looking for an exit strategy that would serve as a proper thank you for his employees. His search led to the decision to establish an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), giving his employees the ability to earn ownership in the company.

Employees see the ESOP as a motivator to do their job to the best of their abilities. They want to see the company's stock price go up year after year.

"Having this knowledge helps to push you toward improving yourself," Blackwood says.

"At the end of the day, my success is also the success of The Greenery. That works the other way around as well."

Since making this shift, the number of employees at The Greenery has skyrocketed from 200 to 800 people. Joe Dubois, an account manager at the Sun City branch credits The Greenery's investment in its people as helping establish the company as an industry leader.

An Employee Stock Ownership Plan helps motivate The Greenery's team to greater growth as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

“Knowing that your work can affect the bottom line makes you have a little bit more skin in the game,” he says. “It’s about accountability. You know that what you are doing can eventually affect the bottom line of the company, along with your retirement. You learn that other people have your back.”

Dubois came to The Greenery 10 years ago with a desire to learn more about the landscape industry. Wanting to gain experience, he saw a position with the company as something he could learn by doing as opposed to reading about it.

Blackwood agrees, noting a hands-on education is one of the best elements of the company.

“I wanted to learn and grow,” Blackwood says. “There are plenty of things that you can read about and classes where you can talk about those topics. (This) is hands-on work that I appreciate being able to do here.”

Dubois believes the ESOP model is a positive influence. In his mind, it is hard for any business to stay relevant for just 20 years, but even harder for it to be so dominant after 50 years.

“There were a lot of guys that were above me when I first started working here,” Dubois says. “They showed me how they do things. Those interactions and lessons help with the longevity of the company. I think I’ll be around for another 50 years as long as they keep this same model.”

THE LONG JOURNEY

Ruthie and Berry Edwards fell in love with Hilton Head Island, S.C., while on vacation in 1973. After relocating to the spot, they bought a nursery with the desire to grow their business.

Starting as a full-service landscaping company at a nursery in 1973 with six employees, the Edwards’ hired knowledgeable gardening and landscaping staff from the area. Now, their son, Lee



Joe Dubois

Edwards, serves as president and CEO of the company.

The Greenery now serves a broad list of clients requiring different service levels. The operation’s installation and landscape management clients include multifamily communities, hospitals, hotels, exclusive resorts and a few residential homes.

It continues to expand its reach to multiple cities and states. The Greenery now has locations in South Carolina in Beaufort, Bluffton, Greenville, Palmetto and Spartanburg; Daytona and Jacksonville, Fla.; and Savannah, Ga.

A retail center still operates on Hilton Head Island.

ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Reflecting on his time at The Greenery, Blackwood recalls a moment from earlier in the year. As the seasons changed, he and his team treated azaleas on a property. This visit was a mixture of irrigation, maintenance and plant health services departments working together. At the end of it, they had perfectly maintained azaleas.

“I was driving by and I had to stop and get out of my car to properly look at it,” Blackwood says. “I took a picture of it and sent it to my supervisor. I was thinking, ‘That is why we are here.’”

Blackwood adds that the feeling of community has always been a highlight of the job. Everyone has a different role to play. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses, and they all come together to work through challenges.

Dubois says the entire team at The Greenery shares admiration for the communities they serve.

“People have worked here since (the Bluffton, S.C., branch) started and during the time when the company became employee-owned,” says Dubois. “Time has gone on and on, yet we maintain some of the stuff put in by our predecessors and former leaders. It continues to expand. I always tell people about The Greenery.” 📍

→ WHAT IT’S LIKE TO WORK AT THE GREENERY

When asked if they would recommend working at The Greenery to their friends and family, employees unanimously say yes.

Leticia Jimenez, who works as a maintenance worker for the floral department (which supports The Greenery’s South Carolina branches), says her job means a lot to her.

“Everybody has been so friendly during my time here,” says Jimenez. “I love my job and what I do. The people here treat each other like family.”

Meanwhile, Romario Blackwood, a licensed pesticide applicator from the Sun City branch in Bluffton, S.C., says his favorite part of working for The Greenery is the chance to be in nature.

“This is going to sound corny, but I love getting to work outside in the morning, feeling the cool breeze and watching the sunrise,” says Blackwood. “In the past, I have worked in other industries, including the food industry. For many years, I just found myself inside a building all day. Now, when I get here in the morning, it feels like a complete 180-degree change from then. And I really enjoy it.”



Leticia Jimenez



Romario Blackwood

ALL RISE

More than 40 companies on our 2023 LM150 list grew by 20 percent or more last year. Executives from some of these companies share how their operations did it.

Elite Team Offices

"The key to our 2021 to 2022 growth was expansion throughout California. We were able to extend our service offering in Northern and Southern California and along the Central Coast."
Tracie Anes, brand manager

Pacific Landscape Management

"We had strong organic growth of about 14 percent from our legacy Portland, Ore.-based operations. We also acquired two companies — Earthworks Landscape Services, and the maintenance division of His Hands Lawn care."
Bob Grover, president

Shinto Landscaping

"The strong growth results were twofold: we had a very good sales year with close to a 20-percent increase on the landscape maintenance service side and we acquired two additional companies. The total revenue from all that activity significantly moved the bar for us."
Kevin Hunt, chief marketing officer

Lifescape Colorado

"Over the past seven years, Lifescape has prioritized and invested heavily in improving process and service while continuing to push on growth. With this type of growth, we have found that the key to success is relentless follow through on processes and systems combined with providing a level high level of service."
LeAnn Osthimer, chief operating officer

Growth Rank	LM150 Rank	Company	% Rev Change from 2021
1	11	Mariani Premier Group	174%
2	143	Tree Amigos Outdoor Services	151%
3	39	Elite Team Offices	108%
4	63	Santa Rita Landscaping	75%
5	19	United Land Services	73%
6	54	Westco	72%
7	48	Greenscape Land Design	52%
	91	Conserva Irrigation	52%
	132	Valley Landscaping	52%
10	33	Choate USA	49%
11	111	Saluda Hill Landscapes	42%
12	25	Yardnique	41%
13	71	Environmental Designs	39%
	37	DJ's Landscape Management	39%
15	53	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	37%
16	76	Perfect Cuts of Austin	36%
17	35	Landscape Workshop	35%
	21	Clean Scapes	35%
	19	66 Pacific Landscape Management	34%
20	51	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	33%
	80	Southview Design	33%
	83	SOI Group	33%
23	108	Urban Dirt	32%
24	65	Sunrise Landscape	31%
25	22	The Grounds Guys	29%
26	70	McHale Landscape Design	28%
	52	Bland Landscaping Co.	28%
28	120	Utz Environmental Services	26%
	95	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	26%
	40	Ryan Lawn & Tree	26%
31	134	Hidden Creek Landscaping	25%
	133	Shinto Landscaping	25%
	9	Gothic Landscape	25%
	117	ProQual Landscaping	25%
35	107	Green Lawn Fertilizing	24%
	46	Russell Landscape Group	24%
37	92	Gibson Landscape Services	23%
38	82	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	22%
	43	Environmental Management Inc.	22%
	118	Timberline Landscaping	22%
	72	Southern Botanical	22%
42	18	Juniper	21%
	4	Yellowstone Landscape	21%
	97	Lifescape Colorado	21%
45	105	The Joyce Cos.	20%
	45	American Landscape	20%
	119	Hittle Landscaping	20%
	122	Greenscape	20%
	139	North American Lawn & Landscape	20%
	67	Teufel Landscape	20%

Mariani Premier Group

See page 20 for the full story.

Tree Amigos Outdoor Services

"Tree Amigos Outdoor Services expanded into a new geographic market while exceeding client expectations to increase retention. We also increased frontline training, which allowed our management team to have more time to grow the business."

Rob Huether, CEO

Valley Landscaping

"Valley Landscaping acquired a full-service landscaping company in Richmond, Va., in November 2021. This acquisition helped us scale into new service lines and take market share in a new location quicker than the traditional organic growth we have used in the past to open new branches."

Brandon Walters, director of recruiting and employee development

The Grounds Guys

"Heading into 2022, we were concerned about runaway inflation and a potential pullback in consumer spending. As a result, we focused heavily on increasing our revenue-per-customer metrics. We did this by implementing significant price increases, replacing unprofitable customers and by expanding services within our existing customer base."

Joshua Sevick, president

Bland Landscaping

"About 20 percent of our growth last year came from acquisitions and the balance came from the net increase between contract attrition and new contract sales. By leveraging technology and controlling administrative overhead and indirect costs as we grow, we are able to make meaningful investments in areas such as operations, sales and recruiting. Those additional resources fuel and support growth"

Kurt Bland, president and CEO

LM150 Company Index

Company name	LM150 rank		
AAA Landscape	69	Great Oaks Landscape Associates	98
ABM	44	Green Lawn Fertilizing	107
American Landscape Systems	114	GreenEarth	127
American Landscape	45	Greener Group	142
Andre Landscape Service	100	Greenscape	122
Andy's Sprinkler, Drainage & Lighting	103	Greenscape Land Design	48
APHIX	137	GreenView Partners	149
Art by Nature	127	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	78
ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	109	HeartLand	6
Bartlett Tree Experts	5	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	95
Beary Landscaping	48	Hidden Creek Landscaping	134
Benchmark Landscape	147	HighGrove Partners	145
Bland Landscaping Co.	52	Hittle Landscaping	119
BrightView Holdings	1	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	53
Caretaker Landscape and Tree Management	75	Integrity Landscape	115
Chalet	88	James Martin Associates	148
Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	62	Juniper	18
Chenmark	47	Kline Bros. Landscaping	56
Cherrylake	144	LandCare	12
Choate USA	33	LandGraphics	99
Christy Webber & Co.	73	Landry's Landscape	129
Clarence Davids & Co.	121	Landscape Development Inc.	20
Clean Scapes	21	Landscape Maintenance Professionals	135
Clintar Commercial Outdoor Services	26	Landscape Workshop	35
Complete Landscaping Service	60	Lawn Doctor	17
Complete Landsculpture	106	Level Green Landscape	96
Conserva Irrigation	91	Lifescape Colorado	97
Creative Environments Design & Landscape	61	LMC Landscape Partners	34
David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	110	LMI Landscapes	102
Denison Landscaping	42	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	37
Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers	74	Mainscape	31
Designscapes Colorado	84	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	51
Divisions Maintenance Group	14	Mariani Premier Group	11
Dixie Landscape	41	Massey Services	29
DJ's Landscape Mangement	37	McHale Landscape Design	70
DLC Resources	92	Meadows Farms	32
Earthco Commercial Landscape	141	Merchants Landscape Services	87
Earthtones Design	64	Michael Hatcher & Associates	125
Earthworks	86	Mountain View Landscape	150
Elite Team Offices	39	Mullin	130
Environmental Management Inc.	43	NaturaLawn of America	24
Environmental Designs	71	Naturescape	90
Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions	116	Next to Nature Landscape	123
Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	92	North American Lawn & Landscape	139
Franz Witte Landscape Contracting	131	Pacific Landscape Management	66
Gachina Landscape Management	81	Park West	16
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		Southern Botanical	72
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		Sposato Landscape Co.	140
		Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	30
		Stay Green	85
		Sunrise Landscape	65
		SunWorks Landscape Partners	58
		Superscapes	79
		Teufel Landscape	67
		The Budd Group	100
		The Davey Tree Expert Co.	2
		The Greenery	27
		The Grounds Guys	22
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		Timberline Landscaping	118
		Tree Amigos Outdoor Services	143
		TruGreen	3
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		Utz Environmental Services	120
		Valley Landscaping	132
		Weed Man	10
		Westco	54
		Winterberry	112
		Xquisite Landscaping	68
		Yardnique	25
		Yellowstone Landscape	4

TURF DISEASE ID + CONTROL



Lawn care operators have several control options to tackle summer, large and brown patch. With different strains of large patch, LCOs will need to deploy different controls strategies.

The causes and cures of summer, large and brown patch

These devastating diseases can hit your customers' yards this year. Here's what to look for

BY MIKE KENNA, PH.D. | CONTRIBUTOR

Brown patch and large patch are some of the most damaging diseases of cool-season and warm-season turfgrasses. Summer patch is another devastating disease. To properly diagnose and treat these diseases, let's reference NC State University Extension's Turf Files.

BROWN PATCH

In landscape situations, where mowing height is greater than 1 inch, brown patch

appears as roughly circular patches that are brown, tan or yellow and range from 6 inches to several feet in diameter. The affected leaves typically remain upright, and lesions are evident on leaves that are tan in color and irregular in shape with a dark brown border.

Brown patch is most severe during extended periods of hot, humid weather. The disease can begin to develop when night temperatures exceed 60 degrees F, but it is most severe when low and high

temperatures are above 70 and 90 degrees F, respectively. Poor soil drainage, lack of air movement, shade, cloudy weather, overwatering and watering in the late afternoon can increase disease severity.

LARGE PATCH

Large patch is a new name for an old disease of warm-season grasses. This disease was called brown patch, but some differences distinguish this disease. Different strains of *Rhizoctonia solani* produce distinct symptoms and require different control strategies.

Large patch begins to develop when soil temperatures decline to 70 degrees F. Symptoms are most evident during cool, wet weather in the fall and spring.

Excessive nitrogen, poor drainage and overirrigation favors large patch.

PHOTO: MARY ANN HANSEN, VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY, BUGWOOD.ORG

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SUMMER PATCH

This hot-weather disease occurs in annual bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescues. The symptoms of summer patch appear in circular patches or rings ranging from 6 inches to 3 feet in diameter. The turf within these patches is initially off-colored, prone to wilt, growing poorly or sunken in the turf stand. The turf continues to decline for one to two weeks, eventually collapsing to the soil surface.

The disease attacks the plant in the spring when soil temperatures reach 65 degrees F. Summer patch is most severe when the soil pH is 6.5 or greater.

Several fungicides that control these three patch diseases include propiconazole, azoxystrobin, thiophanate methyl and iprodione. (See Table 1). 

Mike Kenna, Ph.D., is the retired director of research for the United States Golf Association Green Section.

Company	Product name	Active Ingredient	Group	Brown patch	Large patch	Summer patch
Prime Source	AzProp Select	9.5% propiconazole 5.73% azoxystrobin	3 11	X	X	X
	AzProp G Select	0.31% Azoxystrobin 0.75% Propiconazole	11 3	X	X	X
	TM 4.5F Select	thiophanate methyl	1	X	X	X
	Azoxy 25C Select	22.9% azoxystrobin	11	X	X	X
	AzoxyBio	18.4% azoxystrobin 10.2% <i>Reynoutria sachalinensis</i>	11 P5	X	X	X
Quali-Pro	Strobe 50WG	50% azoxystrobin	11	X	X	X
	Strobe Pro	6% azoxystrobin 10% propiconazole	11 3	X	X	X
	Strobe Pro G	0.31% azoxystrobin 0.75% propiconazole	11 3	X	X	X
	Chlorothalonil 720 SFT	0.54% chlorothalonil	M5	X		
	IPro 2	23% iprodione	2	X	X	X
Syngenta	Daconil Ultrex	82.5% chlorothalonil	M5	X		
	Heritage	50% azoxystrobin	11	X	X	X
	Heritage G	0.31% azoxystrobin	11	X	X	X
	Headway	5.73% azoxystrobin 9.54% propiconazole	11 3	X	X	X
	Headway G	0.31% azoxystrobin 0.75% propiconazole	11 3	X	X	X
Nufarm	Banner Maxx II	14.3% propiconazole	3	X	X	X
	3336 EG	50% thiophanate-methyl	1	X	X	X
	3336 DG Lite	2.08% thiophanate-methyl	1	X	X	X
	Affirm WDG	11.3% polyoxin D zinc salt	19	X	X	
	Tourney EZ	42.5% metconazole	3	X	X	X
Strider	14.3% propiconazole	3	X	X	X	

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THE BIG ONE

Major League maintenance

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

LOCATION St. Louis, Mo.

COMPANY Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions

DETAILS To say this is a high-profile property for Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions would be an understatement. Busch Stadium is the home of the St. Louis Cardinals. The company manages the property year-round as the stadium hosts other events throughout the baseball offseason.

The current stadium opened in 2006, and Focal Pointe's relationship with the Cardinals extends further back. The company also briefly maintained the team's previous stadium, says JD Gregson, Focal Pointe's marketing manager.

The property's challenges include microclimates. For example, one side of the stadium gets more sun, and one side gets more wind, Gregson says. A nearby interstate also impacts air quality.

There are also high-profile areas of the property including the outfield wall and Stan Musial statue, where fans and sports reporters flock.

"Whenever there's a home run or ball in the outfield, the Focal Pointe team is looking at the outfield wall to make sure it looks good," he says. "There's plant material on top of the walls, causing any home runs to put our work on full display."

Focal Pointe's account manager for the stadium, Craig Spihlman, selects hardy plant material for the high-traffic areas and microclimates. With the unpredictability of Mother Nature, crews servicing Busch Stadium need to be flexible and in constant communication with the stadium's facilities team, Gregson says.

"We're constantly working with them and communicating with them to figure out the plan as far ahead as we can and then be ready to change it whenever we need to," he says.

Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions won a silver award from the 2022 National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program for this project. 🏆

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/thebigone.



Captions | 1. Busch Stadium is home to the 11-time World Champion St. Louis Cardinals. The Cardinals consistently draw more than 3 million fans a year. 2. The third base gate is one of the team's most popular entrances to the stadium. The team at Focal Pointe selects plant material suitable for a high-traffic area. 3. 'Karl Foerster' feather reed grass highlights this seating area. 4. Focal Pointe plans seasonal color rotations when the team is away. 5. Coleus highlights the stadium's foul poles. Crews prune this area to ensure plant material doesn't interfere with a fair or foul call.



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HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Bucket-list build

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Corning, Iowa

COMPANY Sun Valley Landscaping

DETAILS At the center of this project sits a dry stack bridge, inspired by the Hogan Bridge at Augusta (Ga.) National Golf Course — host of the Masters tournament.

“This project had a lot of bucket list items,” says Hugh Morton, owner and president of Sun Valley Landscaping, based in Omaha, Neb. “For me, the dry stack bridge was one of those. It’s something that, as a landscape architect, you think would be awesome to accomplish, because gravity is truly the only thing holding it together.”

Morton jokes that after the completion of the bridge, his crew made him remove the forms to see if the bridge would hold.

“When you pull those boards, you’re under a ton of rock,” he says. “You have to have a lot of confidence in yourself to do that.”

The bridge crosses over a natural stream that runs through the middle of the yard. The stream separates the client’s home from a vineyard, which was also a major focus of this project.

Sun Valley utilized flagstone for the vineyard’s patio and also installed custom metal screens, which cast patterns onto the hill when sunlight passes through them.

“The direction (from the client) was to have a spot to sit down and be comfortable,” says Morton. “I knew the budget was enough to where we could make it a super enticing place to be, even if the client wasn’t working in the vineyard.”

Located an hour and a half east of Sun Valley’s Omaha, Neb., headquarters, Morton says crews camped at a local state park while working on this project.

“We worked some long hours out there in the sun,” he says. “So, to have a place for the crew to come back and rest, fish and bond together was special.”

The project earned Sun Valley Landscaping a Gold Award from the 2022 National Association of Landscape Professionals Awards of Excellence program. 🏆

See more photos from this project at [LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions](https://www.LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions).



Captions | **1.** An in-progress photo of the bridge shows the form, which helped crews pull the dry stack bridge. **2.** The dry stack bridge connecting the home to the vineyard was a point of pride for Sun Valley Landscaping President and Owner Hugh Morton and his crew. **3.** Morton says maintaining green spaces on the property was a priority to avoid overriding the landscape with hardscape materials. **4.** Garden tower lights line the walking path through the project, providing adequate lighting.



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BUSINESS BOOSTERS

How tech-savvy is your irrigation department?

Learn to leverage Wi-Fi irrigation technology for more opportunities and a robust bottom line

BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

With the proliferation of “smart” devices, Wi-Fi-enabled technology has integrated itself into everyday life. Some irrigation contractors have been slow to adopt or capitalize on this trend and risk overlooking business and sales opportunities.

The irrigation industry focuses on sustainability and water conservation. With this mission in mind, manufacturers added smart functions—including Wi-Fi-enabled features—to their products.

“While we all do it a little differently, these technologies afford what that old Ronco infomercial used to say: ‘Set it and forget it,’” says Rain Bird’s Joe Porrazzo, marketing group manager for controllers.

CONSUMER INTEREST

Data trends reveal that consumers are open to and desire this technology. For example, Americans spend more than 5 hours on their mobile devices daily, with 48 percent admitting they’re addicted to their smartphones, says Kevin Battistoni,

national customer experience manager at Hunter Industries. Moreover, in 2022 the smart-home industry was estimated at around \$30 billion and projected to reach \$52 billion by 2027, according to Statista.com.

“What most contractors fail to recognize is that everything and anything that can talk to someone’s mobile device is desired,” Battistoni says.

He continues by saying that it’s up to irrigation contractors to capitalize on this consumer trend. Some irrigation pros aren’t as confident discussing the world of connected devices and wireless local area networking and Wi-Fi as they are when discussing the technical aspects of irrigation.

“They’re going into the situation thinking, ‘I don’t want to look like an idiot,’” he adds.

MOBILE FIRST

So why sell Wi-Fi? It provides customers with a service level that wasn’t feasible before this technology became widespread. At their base level, Wi-Fi-enabled controllers monitor the electrical and hydraulic integrity of the irrigation system in real-time, which is a billable service. So, a broken pipe, a stuck valve, a shorted solenoid or a faulty wire connection immediately alerts the homeowner and the irrigation contractor in tandem.

“Instead of getting that nasty phone call, (the contractor) proactively reaches out to the customer and says, ‘We noticed a break here online. I can get a guy out there first thing in the morning,’” Porrazzo says. “In the meantime, the system has automatically turned itself off, and there won’t be any additional loss or damage to the property.”



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PHOTO: RAIN BIRD

GET SMART

Smart irrigation features can add new revenue streams to your business.

When paired with weather data, this technology considers an algorithm of temperature, wind, humidity and precipitation probability for a predictive trigger

the contractor sets up for more accurate water usage.

NEW REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

Contractors find additional revenue opportunities in the relative ease of retrofitting existing systems with Wi-Fi modules.

“We saw contractors who created a new sales process in their businesses where they hired college interns to go door to door in subdivisions that had Rain Bird controllers and offered to set up Wi-Fi for a nominal fee,” Porrazzo says. “Because the install takes 10 seconds, they could add \$150 to \$200 worth of revenue on a door-to-door basis with fairly minimal work.”

Lastly, keeping homeowners updated weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually leads to monitoring and reporting fees.

“A contractor can charge \$75 annually to monitor the hydraulic and electrical integrity, making adjustments and/or suspensions, as well as being available via text or email,” Battistoni says. “Let’s say the contractor has 3,000 customers — that’s potentially an additional \$225,000 in new revenue.”

Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer covering the landscape and turf industries for nearly two decades.

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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Frank Mariani

CHAIRMAN
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LAKE BLUFF, ILL.

1 You have been a well-known industry leader for decades. But do you think of yourself as a leader?

I loved the Boy Scouts growing up; I was the senior patrol leader. I was the oldest grandchild. I've always assumed a leadership role even when, sometimes, I shouldn't have. But I've never felt adequate in that role. I know there's so much more I can learn. I like to rely on friends. I like to use consultants. I like to learn from clients who have done extremely well in business. I think when you feel that you've accomplished a 'leadership role,' you're dead. If you maintain a curiosity, you'll do fine.

2 When hiring, how do you identify great talent? Is there a trick?

This November, my dad has been gone for 50 years. Basically, since right out of high school, I've been running the company. The only reason I still like doing this? Relationships. I have relationships with the associates at Mariani and our sister companies around the country. I have relationships with our clients, and I have relationships with people in the green industry. I love that. When somebody comes in, look for a particular talent that might add something to the company. I believe that most people are honest — with a few exceptions — and I like to trust them. I've done pretty well by meeting somebody, looking into their eyes, shaking their hand and trusting them to deliver on what they promise.

3 What is a memory of your dad that has stuck with you?

My brothers and I were in grade school. The nuns came in and said, 'Your dad's picking you up at 11:30.' I said, 'Something bad must have happened for Dad to take us out of school.' He picks us up, and we drive to the lakefront. 'Dad, what's up?' 'It's a customer. I want you to see this project.' We walk into the backyard. It's a beautiful estate, a huge mansion. There's a concrete pad that he poured and here comes a helicopter from the lakefront with a statue. A piece of art comes down and I look at my dad and I said, 'Dad, this is so cool! We get to see this helicopter drop this piece of art.' He hits me in the back of the head and goes, 'No, no, no! This gentleman right here? This man came from Russia, a Jewish immigrant with nothing. He went to school, worked his tail off to get an

education, grew his business — because this is the greatest country in the world — and now he has this beautiful estate and a helicopter over it with this piece of art!' I'll never forget that. Then I said, 'OK Dad, now can we go get lunch?' He said, 'No, you're going back to school.'

4 What sports teams do you root for?

The Chicago Bears and the White Sox. I love the Blackhawks. I have a few golfers I root for, including Jason Day. I played with him. He's a true family man. And basketball isn't my thing, but I like it when the Bulls win. There's a guy, No. 23, who is a client and a friend. I did enjoy basketball when Michael Jordan was playing, I'll say that.

5 What is the best thing you've seen in person, in terms of the performing arts, or a game, etc.?

I have seen some things I'm very grateful for. I remember once I was in the London House, which is a little restaurant and bar on Rush Street in Chicago. I've got a New York strip on my plate. And right across from me — about as close as I am to you right now — B.B. King was playing. It was one of the greatest nights. I love jazz and blues. Another time I was in Albuquerque, I saw Johnny Winter with James Cotton. That was sensational. But I've got to say, being in New Orleans when the Bears won their first Super Bowl was a lot of fun. 🍷



BEST ADVICE

"I was new on the board of the Illinois Landscape Contract Association. Peter Grathoff, who was a landscape contractor in Chicago, was on the board. One day he pulled me aside and said, 'Frank, we're so blessed to have you at this meeting. Thank you for being able to come. You know, the rest of us really have nothing else to do except wait for you to show up for the meetings.' He was right, and I was absolutely wrong. I had no right to be late. I took that lesson."

PHOTO: TIM KLEIN PHOTOGRAPHY

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BY BOB MANN

The author is the director of state and local government relations for the National Association of Landscape Professionals. Reach him at Bob@landscapeprofessionals.org.

The secret behind every green industry business

There are plenty of negatives about being a grizzled veteran in the landscape industry. For me, being 6 feet 4 inches tall has ruined my lower back (forget the “lift with your legs, not your back” stuff, folks — buy a fork-lift instead). But the good far outweighs the bad, and you accumulate lots of great stories along the way.

Back when I owned my own business, it came time to change banks, restructure my loans and get a new line of credit. You know the drill. Through some relationships, I met a



banker eager for my business. As we began the due diligence process, he came across a line item on my balance sheet for a promissory note. “What’s this?” he asked. I explained I sold several residential lawn care accounts to a buddy of mine years before. The deal was for a few thousand dollars down and a few thousand dollars a month until he paid it off.

The banker was incredulous. He didn’t believe that goodwill was a transferable asset. He told me he wanted to see every documentation related to the transaction and

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demanded to speak to my buddy. I happily provided him with everything he asked for. In the end, not only did he give me the loan, he demanded the promissory note as collateral!

DEMOCRACY OF LANDSCAPING

None of that is a surprise to any of us in the lawn care business. Mergers and acquisitions valued in the millions of dollars happen all the time, and much of the basis for the valuation is the expectation of future business. Lately, however, these transactions have become more common.

Even more surprising is the entry of mainstream venture capital into the green industry. People with serious money are buying well-established companies across the country. There is a level of maturity in our industry today that did not exist a few years ago. This is fantastic.

The landscape industry is utterly democratic. Not the red versus blue form of democracy, but rather the kind that speaks to equality and lack of snobbishness. A person that didn't attend college can compete in the green industry with someone with a horticulture doctorate. At some point, every single business on the LM150 list began with zero customers and zero revenue.

It's humbling to start a business and have obligations staring you in the face with no money coming in. You wonder if you'll even survive.

“ There is a level of maturity in our industry today that did not exist even a few years ago. This is absolutely fantastic. ”

SHARED STORIES

Behind each of the LM150 companies is a story — one that will seem very familiar to you. Many of the LM150 companies are multigenerational businesses, while some are relatively new. They are headed by people whose families are growing at the same rate as their businesses.

Sometimes I think it's hard for someone just starting in the industry to relate to a company doing \$1 billion a year. However, the difference isn't so much a question of dollars — it's a question of time. How much time has elapsed since the business started and how much time has the owner of the business invested in it? You'll hear comments from successful business owners all the time about how they're shocked looking at what they've created as if the business took on a life of its own.

Success has many faces; what one person might envision as success might not be another's definition. For some, it's being the biggest, while for others, it's being the best. Sometimes it's both. Others simply want something that allows for a livable work/life balance. Therein lies the secret — figure out what is right for you. 🍌

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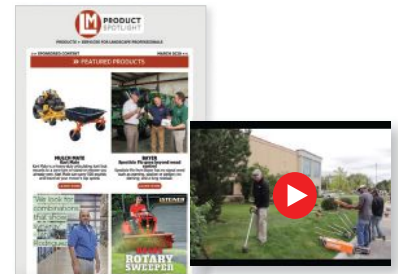
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RESOURCES

Calling all Equip Exposition fans!

Has your operation attended a few Equip Expositions or GIE+Expos in the past? Do you have a fun story to share about your time in Louisville during the show (keep it clean though, this is a family magazine), email Editor Christina Herrick at cherrick@northcoastmedia.net.

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GROW WITH GRUNDER

BY MARTY GRUNDER

The author is the CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group, based in Dayton, Ohio. Reach him at marty@growgroupinc.com.



Introducing The Grow Show, a new asset for business growth

In April, my team and I launched an exciting and new way for landscape professionals to continue growing and learning throughout the year. This is The Grow Show, powered by Stihl.

The Grow Show is a weekly show and podcast hosted by The Grow Group, and yours truly. In it, I share thoughts, tips, tricks and strategies and interview leaders both within and outside of the industry to help us all grow and get better.

Our goal at The Grow Group is always to help you better your business and this will be one more medium we can do that with. In addition to our weekly Great Idea and this monthly column, you'll now be able to listen and learn while you're in your truck or working in the field.

I thought this month, I would give you a little synopsis of a few episodes. You can listen to the full episodes on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or watch on The Grow Group's YouTube channel.

EPISODE 2: EFFICIENCY RATINGS

The economy has been strong for years. Most landscape professionals have benefited from that. As a result, it's been easy to raise our prices to cover inefficiencies. That time is ending, folks. It may already be over.

As we navigate the changes in the economy and market, one of the best data points to rally your team around is your efficiency rating — simply a way to compare budgeted to actual hours. You calculate it by dividing your budgeted hours by the hours worked. A number above 1 indicates

“Our goal at The Grow Group is always to help you better your business, this will be one more medium we can do that with.”

you completed the job in less time than you bid it for.

In this episode of the podcast, I detail ways we use the efficiency rating to motivate and reward our team and to track our performance throughout the year at Grunder Landscaping Co. This number has become so important to our success at GLC. It lets us keep a constant pulse on the company's performance.

EPISODE 3: MARKETING PIECES YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Many companies renewed their focus on marketing this year as the economy shifted, and I think that's so smart. We've done the same at GLC. On this episode, Emily Lindley, who oversees content and events at The Grow Group and marketing at Grunder Landscaping Co., joins me. She shares her three favorite marketing pieces that companies can use right now, as well as these tips for optimizing them:

- **Keep the text concise.** Be strategic about what text is on the marketing piece and highlight the information most likely to get a prospect to take the next step.
- **Use big pictures.** Make sure the images you choose are large, clear and colorful enough to draw attention.
- **Always, always include a call to action.** There's research to back

this advice. Including a clear call to action improves the rate at which recipients will take the action you want them to. Some examples? “Call us now!” “Visit our website to learn more,” or “Fill out this form to get started.”

DEEPER DIVES

In addition to these short, topical episodes, I also interview professionals on the podcast once a month to dive deeper into their advice for landscape professionals. So far on our show, we've been joined by:

- Roger Phelps, corporate communications manager at Stihl. He shared leadership lessons that anyone, no matter their position, can apply to be a better leader in everything they do.
- Ed Eppley, a longtime mentor and respected speaker on teams worldwide. He shared what teams can do to foster a positive company culture.
- Mark Sanborn, an acclaimed best-selling author and friend. Mark talked about why how you do the job often matters more than the job itself and how leaders can create a sense of purpose within their teams.

I hope you'll enjoy The Grow Show. I think that it will be one more great resource for you and your team to continue to grow and get better. You can find links to all our episodes at [GrowGroupInc.com/The-Grow-Show-Podcast](https://www.growgroupinc.com/the-grow-show-podcast).



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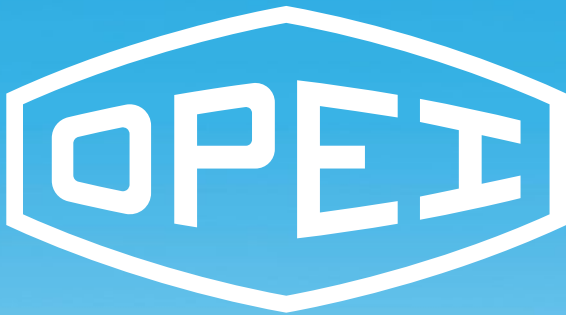
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FUTURE FOCUSED

This year is a celebration for the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. We'll host our 70th Annual Meeting in June and produce our 40th Equip Exposition trade show in October. In the decades since OPEI's founding in 1952, the association and the industry it serves have changed again and again. What hasn't changed in those years, though, is the association's mission to advocate for its members.

The organization began in 1952 when a handful of lawn mower manufacturers came together to form the Lawn Mower Institute. It has since grown into a thriving organization focused on the future of the outdoor power equipment industry. Along the way, OPEI brought in handheld equipment, generators, golf carts and UTV manufacturers, as well as their supplier companies and the financial firms who support the industry.

ONE-STOP-SHOP

While OPEI represents manufacturers and suppliers, we are highly active at all levels of the industry. Most landscapers, dealers, tree care professionals, irrigation contractors and other end-users engage with OPEI through our trade show, Equip Exposition.

Started in 1984 in partnership with the city of Louisville, the outdoor power equipment exposition has known several names, since it began. Relaunched last year as Equip Exposition, the show is the largest annual trade show in the United States and provides the industry with a one-stop shop for the latest and most advanced products, education, and networking they need to grow their business.

OPEI advocates for our corporate members and for individual landscapers and homeowners. Through our TurfMutt Foundation, we promote the benefits of the managed landscape. Throughout the California drought response in 2002, TurfMutt pushed education

into schools nationwide highlighting the vital environmental impact our living landscapes have.

Thanks to partnerships with organizations like Discovery, Scholastic, the U.S. Green Building Council and now CBS/Hearst

Television, TurfMutt has shown more than 70 million teachers, students and parents that nature starts at their back door.

A CHANGING INDUSTRY

In addition, OPEI has remained nimble and at the forefront of how the industry engages. We developed a market statistics program to give members monthly insight into product shipments and have continued to expand the product safety standards we maintain. And we have remained engaged as the industry undergoes the transition to battery/electric power.

OPEI also expanded its international engagement with a sister Canadian organization — OPEI Canada — to interface with provincial governments on issues related to the recycling of outdoor power equipment, as well as serving on advisory groups for the International Standards Organization, making sure members have input in the process to ensure harmonized product standards across borders. We also administer the Outdoor Power Parts and Accessories Association, which represents parts manufacturers and distributors.

What does all this mean for the average landscaper? Our members make the equipment you need and ensure it's safe and efficient. Our TurfMutt Foundation promotes the asset you help design, install and maintain. And our trade show, Equip Exposition, brings together the entire industry to see and try out the latest product innovations and learn from experts on how to grow your business.

OPEI, TurfMutt and Equip Expo are fully engaged in the industry — have been for decades — and look forward to the future.



Kris Kiser

President and CEO
OPEI, Equip Exposition, TurfMutt Foundation

ON THE COVER

Members of the OPEI Board of Directors, partners and staff gather to cut the ribbon on the association's new headquarters building in Alexandria, Va., in 2018.

PHOTO: OPEI



KRIS KISER, UNSCRIPTED

OPEI's longtime president and CEO sits down with *Landscape Management's* Seth Jones to discuss the current state of the association and the future of Equip Exposition **BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Kris Kiser wears many hats.

For the last 16 years, he has served as the president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and its massive trade show, Equip Exposition. He also serves as president and CEO of OPEI Canada. And he also leads the TurfMutt Foundation and Muligan's Mutt Madness, two programs directly connected to OPEI that allow him to carry on his passion for rehabilitating and rescuing dogs.

In just the last few years, Kiser managed the association through a rebranding and change in ownership of Equip Expo; through the choppy waters that COVID-19 brought to all public gatherings; and in the grand opening of a new headquarters in downtown Louisville, Ky.

As part of the celebration of OPEI's 70th anniversary, Kiser took time out of his schedule to discuss the current health of the association, the future of Equip Expo and why he loves his job.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT: Kris, as always, thank you for taking the time. My first question is also my most basic. How would you describe the current health of OPEI?

KRIS KISER: First and foremost, the association is its members, and it's also the staff. It's the staff that does work of the association. It's the staff that does the work of Equip Exposition. They put in the time and the effort to make it all possible. My job is easy: I hire good people and get out of their way. The association is sound.

We have significant challenges with the implementation of California's new air emission rules. We have a very significant challenge with the Consumer Product Safety Commission on UTV safety. The right-to-repair issue in the States is significant and ongoing.

The evolution of the marketplace is dramatic. We have significant battery entries, robotic entries, remote control products, etc. All of those new products have challenges associated with them.

Our role is to assemble these manufacturers so they can act collectively. Whether it's an evolution of safety standards, or the creation of a new standard for a new product, that's our responsibility.

LM: These challenges are almost overwhelming, but there is also a lot of good news.

KISER: Absolutely. Our membership is at an all-time



Left to right: Lee Sowell, president, outdoor products group, Techtronic Industries; Cleo Battle, president and CEO, Louisville Tourism; Mike Clancy, CEO, Chervon North America; Tom Duncan, CEO, Positec; Brian Melka, group president, power, Kohler Co.; Joe Wright, president and CEO, Excel Industries; Mike Berry, secretary, Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage; Tim Dorsey, president, Echo; Kris Kiser, president and CEO, OPEI; Rick Olson, chairman of the board, president and CEO, The Toro Co.; Greg Fischer, mayor of Louisville, Ky.; Dan Ariens, CEO, Ariens Co. cut the ribbon on the Equip Exposition office on Main Street in Louisville, Ky.

PHOTO: ALLIE FELLE



“FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE ASSOCIATION IS ITS MEMBERS, AND IT’S ALSO THE STAFF. IT’S THE STAFF THAT DOES WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION. IT’S THE STAFF THAT DOES THE WORK OF EQUIP EXPOSITION. THEY PUT IN THE TIME AND THE EFFORT TO MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE. MY JOB IS EASY: I HIRE GOOD PEOPLE AND GET OUT OF THEIR WAY. THE ASSOCIATION IS SOUND.” KRIS KISER

high. Our trade show is as successful as it has ever been. We’re celebrating our 70th year with our annual meeting coming up. And this year is our 40th anniversary for the trade show. Last year was our largest show ever. Equip Expo continues to grow and excel.

LM: Looking across the spectrum of all things OPEI, is there one thing that stands out to you that makes you feel excited for what the future holds?

KISER: During COVID-19, with all the travel restrictions and challenges, we saw a significant drop in international exhibitors. But the show stayed strong. We had one remote show, then we came right back. This year, we’re seeing a return of the international players. We’re seeing very significant participation from Japanese companies, Chinese companies, Australian companies and European companies. The reason we expanded to the West Wing is because Equip Expo is the place to be. We really have become an international showplace for our industry.

Remember, our show is unique in that it’s just us. We’re not sharing it with construction or agriculture. It’s a show based on our industry, our users, dealers and landscapers.

LM: How far out are you and your team planning these shows? Are you already thinking about the 2030 Equip Expo?

KISER: Your timing is fantastic. I sit on something called the Client Advisory Council for Kentucky Venues. (Kentucky Venues) owns the Kentucky Exposition


Center (KEC) and KICC — the Kentucky International Convention Center downtown. They listen to us; we engage with them. We’re space challenged now with the current structure of KEC, and it’s actually one of the largest facilities of this kind in the country.

There are very significant expansion plans for the KEC that are underway. The preliminary funding has been done by the state government. We’re part of that process.

The 2025 contract is literally sitting on my desk. We’ve exercised the 2025 option. We now have 2026, 2027 and 2028 as contract opportunities. Hardscape North America has asked to partner with and continue our partnership through those dates. We’re here to stay.

LM: What is the best part of having your job?

KISER: It’s the people. It’s getting people together. It’s a forum. It’s getting people to work together on a common problem, common challenges or common opportunities. We help them find consensus on a particular issue or challenge and work toward the solution.

I could not be happier. We have terrific companies but most important, it’s about the outdoors and community. Our education is told from a dog’s point of view — our beloved Turf Mutt is going to be a character on CBS’s Saturday morning program *Lucky Dog* — which thrills me. I’ve been involved in animal rehab and rescue for decades, and my board of directors allows me to be in that space at the same time. To me, it’s the perfect job. 

HOW THE OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT INSTITUTE BENEFITS YOUR OPERATION

Whether it's ensuring the safety of the products you use or advocating for the responsible integration of the latest technology, the organization plays a critical role in the green industry

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

When you think about the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), what comes to mind? Is it OPEI's trade show, Equip Exposition? Is it the TurfMutt Foundation? What about the safety standards OPEI oversees? When it comes down to it, OPEI is more than meets the eye.

OPEI has four cornerstones: safety standard development, industry advocacy, market statistics and the Equip Exposition show. The organization, which launched in 1952 as the Lawn Mower Institute to represent 11 mower manufacturers, now represents more than 100 manufacturers and suppliers of power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles and golf carts.

STANDARD DEVELOPMENT

Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI, says the association helps manufacturers address industry challenges with a collective voice. A major component of OPEI, Kiser says, is as a standards development organization. OPEI is accredited through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop and maintain standards to meet industry needs.

OPEI also works with the Consumer Product Safety Commission to analyze, maintain and refine OPEI's voluntary standards. OPEI developed 35 safety standards covering products including lawn mowers, chainsaws, robotic mowers and utility vehicles.

"We work with manufacturers on specific products to help them develop standards for the American National Standards Institute," he says. "The manufacturers of

the product, their engineers and techs work together to create a safety standard that everybody builds to so it's the safest product you can make today."

Kiser says these safety standards also ensure the materials and components OPEI members use to manufacture outdoor power equipment meet state, federal and international laws.

OPEI's influence on standards extends beyond the U.S. and Canada. OPEI serves as the U.S. representative for a technical group that develops international standards for outdoor power equipment for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). OPEI works with its members to provide insight as ISO develops new safety standards.

OPEI also serves on the U.S. National Committee for the International Electrotechnical Commission, which oversees international standards for electrical, electronic and related technology.

EMISSIONS AND NOISE REGULATIONS

OPEI advocates for both battery-powered and gas-powered equipment, Kiser says. The organization works with regulators and state legislators to advocate for the needs of end users and to help mitigate any misconceptions lawmakers might have.

"Our role is to try to educate them on the facts of the situation and the market needs," he says.

He says OPEI and its members focus attention on the growing demand for low-emissions and low-noise equipment and the responsible transition to battery-powered equipment. Kiser says OPEI understands its members offer many different outdoor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

power equipment solutions. End users often have different needs depending on the work environment.

“While battery technology is continuing to evolve there still is no one-size-fits-all kind of application,” he says.

Kiser says OPEI works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on emissions regulations for outdoor power equipment.

“We are a tightly-regulated industry in this area,” Kiser says. “We look for the opportunity to continue to work with the EPA where we can improve emissions technology.”

RIGHT TO REPAIR

Colorado recently passed right-to-repair legislation that goes into effect in January 2024 for agricultural equipment. This legislation extends the already-in-place consumer right-to-repair statutes for powered wheelchairs to now cover agriculture equipment. The new law will require agriculture equipment manufacturers to provide resources including parts, firmware, manuals and more.

Kiser said OPEI’s key role and responsibility is to weigh in on key industry issues such as the right to repair. A big concern for OPEI members is any modifications end-users might make to equipment could affect the safety or the emissions of the product.

Another focus for OPEI is the ongoing discussion about battery recycling. Regulatory requirements for handling large-format batteries, such as those for mowers, are different than those for handheld devices.

Many states look to enact laws and regulations around extended producer responsibility (EPR) to define the roles and responsibilities of companies that manufacture and import batteries.

Currently, New York, Minnesota, California and British Columbia have EPR regulations in place. Kiser says OPEI’s battery committee focuses heavily on EPR.

Kiser said once a battery hits a threshold of use, electric outdoor power equipment manufacturers must consider key EPR questions. He says these questions include: “‘We’ve sold all these batteries, now what do we do with them?’ ‘How do we recover them?’ ‘How do we recycle them?’ ‘What’s the role of an end user?’ ‘What’s a retailer’s role?’”

OPEI plays a role in understanding the implications for its members and green industry business



Mulligan the TurfMutt, pictured here on location filming for an episode of CBS/Hearst’s Lucky Dog, teaches that nature starts at our back door.

owners and addressing concerns to the states introducing legislation, Kiser says.

“They want to deal with a collective voice representing that industry,” he says of state governments. “And that’s who we are.”

AT THE GROUND LEVEL


A critical part of OPEI’s advocacy work starts at the ground level — literally, Kiser says. The organization created its TurfMutt Foundation in 2008 as the green industry was in the crosshairs of a war on turf as drought conditions ravaged the West.

“Lots and lots and lots of voices were saying the lawn was bad — whether it was water or inputs or what have you — but it was simply an aesthetic,” he says. “It was just a pretty thing that served no purpose.”

The TurfMutt Foundation refocused the conversation to highlight the critical role turf plays, thanks to its first spokesdog, Lucky, and current spokesdog, Mulligan. TurfMutt highlights the benefits of green spaces to people, pets and the environment.

“Nature starts at your back door, and we live in these man-made environments,” Kiser says. “TurfMutt was designed to educate kids and take that message home.”

Kiser says during the pandemic, parents utilized TurfMutt’s STEM educational classroom lesson plans created in partnership with Scholastic, an educational publishing company. He says messages presented by Lucky and Mulligan help.

“Nobody wants to hear me talk about it, but suddenly you put a cape on a dog and the kids are all over it,” he says. “We tell it from a dog’s point of view. No one knows your yard like your dog. And so as an informed source, your dog knows it as well as anyone.” 

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OPEI/Expo Timeline



1960

The trade association's name changes to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI).

Sponsored by the Lawn Mower Institute, *American Standard Safety Specification for Power Lawn Mowers* publishes. The standard is the first American Standard Association (ASA, eventually ANSI) standard for gas- and electric-powered mowers.

1956

The organization invites engine manufacturers to participate.

1962

OPEI becomes an associate member of the ASA (which adopts its present name, ANSI, in 1969).

1952

11 mower manufacturers charter The Lawn Mower Institute, a national, nonprofit trade association.

1953

The organization creates a monthly statistical reporting program for members, which continues to this day.

1961

OPEI creates the first safety seal and makes it available to members.



1969

OPEI approves the independent, third-party voluntary testing for mowers.

1975 to 1986

OPEI publishes the first edition of American National Standards for gas- and electric-powered snow throwers, commercial mowers, shredders/grinders/baggers/chippers/vacuums, log splitters and tiller/cultivators.

1984

OPEI launches the industry's first U.S. trade show, the International Lawn Garden & Power Equipment Exposition, in Louisville, Ky.

2007

Green Industry Expo merges with the International Lawn Garden & Power Equipment Exposition, creating the first Green Industry & Equipment Expo (GIE+EXPO).



2008

The OPEI Education and Research Foundation debuts TurfMutt, a science-based educational platform and curriculum offering classroom resources to foster an appreciation of the living landscape.

2001

The Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association dissolves and transfers representation of its member products to OPEI. As a result, OPEI adds to its portfolio B175-series handheld product American National Standards for chain saws, blower/vacuums, grass trimmers/brush cutters, and cut-off machines.



2010

The Hardscape North America trade show co-locates with GIE+EXPO.

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute Canada

2012

OPEI Canada, the trade association's sister organization established to manage equipment recycling mandates in British Columbia, has its first stewardship plan approved.



2009

The TurfMutt program expands nationally in concert with Discovery Education.

2011

OPEI begins to add staff to strengthen its ANSI, ISO and IEC standards development support and advocacy efforts.

1990

2000

2018 to 2021

OPEI publishes the first edition of American National Standards for hedge trimmers, pole pruners and edgers.

2018

GIE+Expo held the first Lucky's Mutt Madness, a national dog adoption event, in partnership with the Kentucky Humane Society, helping 11 dogs find forever homes with trade show attendees.

OPEI opens its new headquarters building in Alexandria, Va., having outgrown its previous offices due to increasing membership and engagement.

2019

10 years after the launch of the TurfMutt education platform and reaching more than 70 million students, teachers and parents, the OPEI Research and Education Foundation rebrands as the TurfMutt Foundation.



The International Light Transportation Vehicle Association dissolves and transfers representation of its member products to OPEI. As a result, OPEI adds to its portfolio American National Standards for golf carts and personal transport vehicles.



2021

OPEI brings management of its trade show in-house, opening a new show office on Main Street in Louisville, Ky., and launching Equip Exposition.

2020

OPEI publishes the first edition of American National Standard for robotic mowers. The standard is the first OPEI adoption of an International Electrotechnical Commission and its first standard developed exclusively for electric-powered mowers.

2010

2020

2022

Equip Exposition hosts the largest trade show in 40 years in Louisville, Ky., — and the first-ever sold-out trade show floor — with more than 25,000 people attending from all 50 states and 49 countries.

2023

OPEI celebrates the 40th Equip Exposition and its 70th annual meeting.



The TurfMutt Foundation sponsors the CBS/Hearst shows *Lucky Dog*, which promotes dog rescue and the living landscape, and *Mission: Unstoppable*, which promotes STEM careers to girls.

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LEARNING AND GROWING FOR THE FUTURE OF EQUIP EXPOSITION

From 40 years ago to today, Equip Exposition is as relevant as ever

BY BRIAN LOVE | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Every October, thousands of tens of thousands of dealers, landscape, hardscape, irrigation, snow removal, outdoor lighting and grounds management professionals flock to the Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC), eager to see the latest and greatest products and equipment that the industry has to offer.

With that time once again approaching, there are many things to enjoy and celebrate about the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and its annual Equip Exposition. Last year, attendance and exhibit space broke records. This year, the event will once again expand as the show celebrates its 40th anniversary, while the OPEI itself will ring in its 70th anniversary.

“Equip Expo allows for the unique opportunity of getting to hear from our customers face-to-face,” says Terry Horan, president and CEO of Stihl, and a board member of OPEI. “In doing so, we are able to get a better understanding of their business needs and, in turn, deliver products and solutions to meet those needs.”

FROM THE BEGINNING

The year is 1983. Ronald Reagan is the president of the United States. *Return of the Jedi* arrives in theaters. There were no cell phones, no texting. The biggest

innovation in technology was when Steve Jobs and Apple released the Lisa computer, the first commercial computer with a graphical user interface.

That was the world when the show, now known as Equip Expo, first launched. While much has changed in the world since then, Equip Expo has been a constant.

In 2007 the name of the show changed to GIE+EXPO. Though show organizers canceled the event in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it still drew in similar numbers when it returned in 2021 and 2022.

TO THE NOW

This year’s Equip Expo takes place Oct. 17 to 20 in Louisville, Ky. There will be new educational programs, additional events, an expansion into the West Wing of the KEC, new food options and, for the first time, an arena concert.

Historically, the Expo features more than a thousand exhibits and hundreds of educational opportunities, presenting tools, software, products and strategies. This year will be no different.

“Last year was our largest show ever,” says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI and Equip Expo. “It continues to grow with each year.”

PHOTO: OPEI



Equip Exposition's outdoor demo space has grown over the years and now spans 30 acres.

As the exhibits and equipment are on full display, thousands of landscapers, manufacturers, contractors and dealers have the opportunity to network with one another and other professionals in their industry.

"The evolution of the marketplace is dramatic," says Kiser. "It's a good time to be with OPEI and at Equip Expo. We've expanded into the West Wing for the first time ever. We've already reached a couple new milestones. We know that the 2023 Equip Expo will be the biggest one ever."

GROWTH AND CHANGE

There is a lot to look forward to with this year's show, and future Equip Expos. While OPEI and Equip celebrate these landmark anniversaries, the new developments surrounding the show seem to be increasing each year in order to provide the best possible trade show for landscape professionals.

The event's star power stepped up last year when country music sensation Trace Adkins held a free concert at 4th Street Live! in downtown Louisville. Golf funnyman David Feherty kept a packed ballroom in stitches giving his keynote presentation.

This year, singer-songwriter Dylan Scott will open for headliner Third Eye Blind, who will perform a special set list at the KFC Yum! Center on Thursday, Oct. 19.

Kiser says the plan moving forward always will center around growth and expansion.

Dan Ariens, chairman and CEO of the Ariens Co., and Equip Expo show chairman, believes the show became even more important in the wake of the global pandemic.

He says Ariens exhibited at the original trade show and believes the show has continually evolved over the years in order to make the event ideal for customers and business relationships.

"I'm a long-term believer in relationships that companies have with their customers," Ariens says. "A trade show is one of the easiest ways to build

relationships with a lot of people. COVID-19 taught us how much we miss making those connections, which cannot happen through virtual means. We are human beings who need to be together."

ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD

Equip Expo continues to grow each year, and KEC grows along with it.

"There are very significant expansion plans for the KEC underway," says Kiser. "The preliminary funding has been done by the state government. We're part of that process. We're in the top five of revenue-generating shows for the state of Kentucky. We bring more than \$20 million every year to Kentucky. It's a symbiotic relationship — what's right for us is good for them."


Even with all the exhibits, new technology and continuing advancements with products and equipment, the show still centers on the human experience. Kiser says it's about people coming together over common interests, wanting to learn more.

"A highlight has been that the show goes on and it continues to go on," says Ariens. "The show will continue to be innovative.

We have a good staff there that is full-time and working on it. It may be a week-long event for attendees, but it is a year-long event for staff and managers."

Ariens adds that there is always going to be the need to build upon the existing Equip Expo experience, no matter how good it gets.

He wants people to walk away from the event feeling they learned something valuable, while also getting the chance to try the industry's newest products and equipment.

"Equip Expo can be a busy and exhausting time, but it is important," Ariens says. "When you and your company have a big presence there, you see that it is an opportunity to meet a lot of customers in one place and spend quality time with them. It allows you to show them the new features of a product and future innovations. In the end, all the hard work is worth it. Brands live a long time when relations are strong and lasting." 



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THEY SAID IT

Industry veterans discuss the importance of Equip Exposition

“It’s a great opportunity to be able to show our new products and demonstrate our products to new customers. We talk with existing customers about support, service and new things we’re doing. It’s a really good opportunity to connect with a wide variety of customers around the country. It’s just a great get-together for the whole industry.”

— *Scott Kinkead, executive vice president, Turfco*



“This event is so special to Stihl because it really connects us to our dealer network and the contractors who use our products. It gives Stihl an opportunity to share what we’ve been working on and, more importantly, to thank our customers who invest in our products and solutions as a critical part of their business. Equip Expo allows for the unique opportunity of getting to hear from our customers face to face.”

— *Terry Horan, president and CEO, Stihl*



“The Equip Exposition is a critical customer touchpoint for SiteOne, allowing us to connect to the largest audience of professional landscape decision-makers and influencers. Whether it is in our indoor or outdoor space, our team is excited for the opportunity to share our newest tools, product solutions and services to help landscape pros grow. The show producers make it one of the easiest to execute and deliver to the right audience. This show is a staff favorite!”

— *Christina Moore, director of events, SiteOne Landscape Supply*



“Bobcat Company is excited to attend Equip Exposition 2023 to showcase our latest landscaping, turf and grounds maintenance offerings. We want event visitors to be among the first to see and experience the newest Bobcat machines, technologies and services, including our latest innovations. This is a significant year for Bobcat as we mark 65 years since our company invented the first compact loader and sparked the start of the compact equipment industry. We are thrilled to celebrate this alongside Equip Expo’s 40th anniversary.”

— *Chris Knipfer, vice president of grounds maintenance equipment business, Doosan Bobcat*



“Equip Expo can be a busy and exhausting time, but it is important. When you and your company have a big presence there, you see that it is an opportunity to meet a lot of customers in one place and spend quality time with them. In the end, all the hard work is worth it. Brands live a long time when relations are strong and lasting.”

— *Dan Ariens, chairman and CEO of Ariens Co., and chairman of Equip Expo*



“The Toro Company is proud to be a longtime exhibitor and supporter of Equip Exposition, and one of the largest when you consider all of our brands focused on serving customers in landscape management, irrigation and lighting, and construction. We always enjoy the opportunity to connect with our dealers and landscape contractors from across the country – to hear from them and showcase our latest technologies and product innovation.”

— *Rick Olson, chairman of the board, president and CEO, The Toro Co.*



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THERE'S MORE TO OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT INSTITUTE

Learn how OPEI touts the benefits of the outdoors and the green industry through several endeavors

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI)'s mission is to serve and protect the interests of the outdoor power equipment industry. OPEI guides its members through the issues the industry faces so the good that equipment does can leave a lasting impact on the world.

Here's a few ways OPEI's reach extends beyond its members:



Powering good.

Outdoor Power
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Canada



OPEI is a trade association that represents more than 100 manufacturers and suppliers of outdoor power equipment. OPEI is a recognized Standards Development Organization for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and active internationally through the International Standards Organization (ISO) in the development of safety and performance standards for outdoor power equipment.

OPEI Canada is a trade association representing the outdoor power equipment industry in Canada. It works to promote the responsible use of outdoor power equipment, to develop and enforce safety standards and to educate consumers about the benefits of outdoor power equipment.

Equip Exposition is the largest annual trade show in the U.S., and is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2023. The show will be held Oct. 17-20 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., and will feature 1,000 exhibits, 100 educational sessions, and a variety of networking events.

The TurfMutt Foundation is a nonprofit organization that promotes outdoor learning experiences, stewardship of our green spaces and care for living landscapes. It has helped teach more than 70 million students, teachers, and families that nature starts at their back door. It does this by providing educational resources to K-8 educators and students and promoting its mission through information, resources and data on the green spaces around us, and providing charitable outreach to related nonprofit organizations and events.



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THE TURFMUTT FOUNDATION:

Your industry's ambassador

BY CHRISTY NELSON | CONTRIBUTOR

The TurfMutt Foundation is the environmental education program founded by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) in 2009 to teach students, teachers and the public how to “save the planet, one yard at a time.” Since its inception, the program has reached more than 70 million children, educators and families through education partners such as Weekly Reader, Discovery Education and Scholastic.

It all started with a dog named Lucky, rescued and adopted by OPEI president and CEO, Kris Kiser in 2008. They quickly assembled a team that would shape the way future generations appreciate, interact with and find inspiration from the green space right outside their door. Now, Lucky passed that legacy on to another rescue pup, Mulligan the TurfMutt, and the mission continues.

“Using a dog as the face of the TurfMutt Foundation makes sense for a number of reasons,” says Kiser. “After all, who knows and appreciates the family yard more than a dog? We also knew that if we could reach kids with the program, they would ultimately teach their parents, and that has been a winning formula.”

TAKING OFF

In 2009, Lucky the TurfMutt became a cartoon, and *Weekly Reader* collaborated to pilot the program in a handful of schools. In 2012, Discovery Education helped TurfMutt’s youth curriculum expand by rolling out lesson plans, multimedia content, and at-home activities for teachers, students and families nationwide.

That same year, TurfMutt held its first “Spruce Up Your School” sweepstakes and awarded a \$5,000 grant to Palomar Elementary School in Chula

Vista, Calif., to add trees and other green spaces to the schoolyard.

San Diego-based Heaviland Enterprises planted 10 large canopy trees as a part of the project — each dedicated to a class at the school — and installed benches on the play area’s perimeter. This is just one of many examples of how TurfMutt collaborates with local landscapers to spruce up schools across America.

In 2015, the TurfMutt program joined with Scholastic Education, the leading global education publisher for children to provide greater access to the youth curriculum.

Today, TurfMutt is an official U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) Education Partner and part of its global Learning Lab. TurfMutt has been an educational resource at the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Green Apple, the Center for Green Schools, the Outdoors Alliance for Kids, the National Energy Education Development (NEED) project, Climate Change Live, Petfinder and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In 2017, the TurfMutt animated video series won the coveted Cynopsis Kids Imagination Award for Best Interstitial Series. The 2017-2020 Wildlife Habitat Council calendars featured TurfMutt’s personal home habitat.



Lucky served as the face of the TurfMutt Foundation after its launch in 2008.



BROADER AUDIENCE

TurfMutt moved from focusing on children’s education to also include landscape messages aimed at adults when it signed on the “pawprint line” in 2015 to appear on the Emmy-award-winning television series *Lucky Dog* on CBS. The TurfMutt Foundation also partners with the television show *Mission Unstoppable*.

“The energy and innovation in our industry are off the charts right now as America has renewed its commitment to outdoor living over the last few years,” Kiser says. “Our mission to make that outdoor life easier and more powerful aligns well with both shows.” The TurfMutt Foundation also previously partnered with the television show *Ready, Set, Pet*.

In 2018, the TurfMutt Foundation doubled down on its commitment to pet rescue with the launch of the Mutt Madness pet adoption event, held at the Equip Exposition trade show in partnership with the Kentucky Humane Society. In total, Mutt Madness helped 44 dogs find their forever homes.

“Mutt Madness connects dogs needing homes with the very people who create the amazing landscapes families and their pets enjoy,” Kiser explains. “It’s a win-win.”

Since its establishment, the TurfMutt platform has been an effective way to counter threats to the managed landscape. *Parade Magazine*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Good Housekeeping* and other top consumer publications shared TurfMutt messaging. The National Association of Realtors interviewed Kiser several times for its radio program, and state real estate associations throughout the country share TurfMutt messaging with homeowners.

ADVOCATING FOR THE GOOD OF GREEN SPACES

During the height of the drought in the West, TurfMutt’s messaging centered around the benefits of a living landscape. Through extensive media relations and social media efforts, TurfMutt’s “save living landscapes” messaging percolated into community discussions and even the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Houston Chronicle* and *Realtor.com*.


Throughout pandemic shutdowns, TurfMutt reiterated the importance of backyards and highlighted



the value of the green space right outside our doors for stress relief, socially-distanced gatherings and outdoor classroom activities.

By showcasing a new “backyarding” trend for spring of 2021 — where activities typically associated with the indoors moved outside — TurfMutt once again elevated the conversation around managed landscapes and the benefits of taking care of and using the green space around us.

And Americans’ love of backyards and outdoor living has yet to abate. In 2023, TurfMutt took it a step further by introducing the idea of “master backyarding,” which takes the outdoor space to a new level.

“The TurfMutt program has proven to be very nimble and effective at addressing the issues facing the landscape industry,” says Kiser. “From regional droughts to the pandemic and the villainization of the American lawn, we have used TurfMutt to adjust our messaging and share the many benefits of taking care of and getting out and using the green space around us.” He adds, “The TurfMutt Foundation will continue to evolve to meet whatever challenges are ahead in this arena, and we look forward to what’s next.” 

Kris Kiser with Alisa Gray, president and CEO of the Kentucky Humane Society, and Mulligan the TurfMutt at TurfMutt Park, a dog park and exercise facility built by the Foundation for the KHS.

“BACKYARDING” IN THE U.S. AND CANADA: Our landscapes take center stage

BY CHRISTY NELSON | CONTRIBUTOR

When the pandemic hit in 2020, people struggled with the repercussions of being stuck at home. Spending time in backyards and community green spaces became critical for health and happiness. During this time, the TurfMutt Foundation, the environmental education program founded by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), was on a mission to remind people to get outside into nature, just beyond their back door.

“The world was shutting down, but our backyards were always open for business,” says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation. “The natural, proven benefits of green space gave everyone — adults, kids and pets — a break from being cooped up inside during the pandemic. Our message was clear: Get outside, mow your lawn, trim bushes, plant a butterfly bush and enjoy nature. By becoming a steward of your yard, you are helping preserve not only your own health and well-being but also your own corner of the overall ecosystem.”

HERE TO STAY

By 2021, “backyarding” was a way of life as people moved many indoor activities such as working, entertaining, exercising, studying and even vacationing to their own backyards and community parks. Kiser says the TurfMutt Foundation knew the interest in backyards was here to stay, and landscapers and contractors made record profits as backyard improvements soared.

“People realized that a backyard isn’t something you *have*, it’s something

you *do*,” Kiser explains. “The backyard is nearly limitless with possibilities, and homeowners got very creative as they expanded and enjoyed their yards during the pandemic. We knew that backyarding was now a way of life.”

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The TurfMutt Foundation and spokesdog Mulligan help promote the benefit of outdoor spaces. “No one knows your yard like your dog. And so as an informed source, your dog knows it as well as anyone,” says Kris Kiser.

PHOTO: OPEI



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Recognizing that backyards have a different purpose for every individual, the TurfMutt Foundation introduced personality types as a way for individuals to hone in on their preferred practices. These personality types range from a work-from-home pro who uses their backyard as a video call background to an entertainer extraordinaire whose backyard is the neighborhood hot spot.

“In order to create a more purposeful outdoor space, people first needed to identify what type of ‘backyarder’ they are,” Kiser describes. “Then, they could get to work in their yard with that idea in mind — that’s what

the ‘backyarding’ personality types are all about.”

TurrMutt’s “backyarding” message really caught on and has been shared extensively by top media outlets in the U.S. and Canada, including *Good Morning America*, *Parade* magazine, *Good Housekeeping*, *The Toronto Sun* and the National Association of Realtors, to name a few.

76%
More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Americans who have a yard say the family yard is one of the most important parts of their home.

TIME WELL SPENT

Recent surveys conducted by The Harris Poll for the TurfMutt Foundation underscore the importance of backyards and community green space as an extension of our homes and lifestyles. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Americans who have a yard (76 percent) say the family yard is one of the most important parts of their home. Nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of Americans who have a yard (24 percent) spend more time in their yards now than before the pandemic.

And they are really enjoying the extra time outside. More than $\frac{3}{5}$ of Americans who have a yard (63 percent) say they enjoy doing more activities in their yard since the pandemic began. The survey also shows 68 percent of younger adults aged 18-54 and 73 percent of parents of kids under 18 say they are more apt to feel this way. The yard has also become a place to relieve

stress, with more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of Americans who have a yard (69 percent) saying doing yard work, such as mowing, trimming or planting, is one of the ways they like to de-stress.


According to the results of a Harris Poll recently conducted in Canada, enjoying managed landscapes — including yards, parks and other green spaces — is quite common among Canadians (89 percent). In fact, many Canadians (24 percent) spent more time in managed landscapes, including yards, in 2022 compared to 2021.

Additionally, “backyarding” activities such as spending more time outdoors appear to be important as the majority of Canadians who owned a yard in the past two years (76 percent) said they have invested in it recently. A majority of Canadians (82 percent) also say if they were looking for a new home, a spacious yard would be at the top of their wish list.

Now the backyard is part of our daily lives and the TurfMutt Foundation is once again advancing the concept by declaring 2023 the year of the master backyarder.

“Master backyarders have taken backyarding to a new level, and their skills are elevated and inspirational,” explains Kiser. “Time to relax? They go outside. Have a web call? They set up their laptop on their deck or patio. Have a party to throw? They entertain in their backyard.”

As “backyarding” continues to evolve, so will TurfMutt’s messaging around it, promises Kiser.

“The TurfMutt Foundation has always promoted the benefits of working in and using our yards and community green space for the health of people, pets and the planet,” he says. “As we like to say, nature starts at your back door, which means its benefits are right at our fingertips.” 

82%
A majority of Canadians say if they were looking for a new home, a spacious yard would be at the top of their wish list.

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Ardisam	Cumberland, Wis.	Ardisam.com
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Daye North America	Charlotte, N.C.	DayeNorthAmerica.com
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Freudenberg Sealing Technologies	Waterville, Ohio	FST.com
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Honda Canada	Markham, Ontario, Canada	Honda.ca
Huntington Distribution Finance	Schaumburg, Ill.	HuntingtonDF.com
Husqvarna	Charlotte, N.C.	Husqvarna.com/us/
Husqvarna Canada Corp.	Mississauga, Ontario, Canada	Husqvarna.com/ca-en/
Hydro-Gear	Sullivan, Ill.	Hydro-Gear.com
Identco International	Ingleside, Ill.	Identco.com
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Johnson Electric Industrial	Sha Tin, Hong Kong, China	JohnsonElectric.com
Kawasaki Motors Corp. USA	Foothill Ranch, Calif.	Kawasaki.com

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OPEI Member	Location	Website
Kawasaki Engine Group	Grand Rapids, Mich.	KawasakiEnginesUSA.com
Kioti Tractor Division	Wendell, N.C.	KiotiTractor.com
Kohler Co.	Kohler, Wis.	KohlerPower.com
Kubota Canada Ltd.	Markham, Ontario, Canada	Kubota.ca
Kubota Tractor Corp.	Grapevine, Texas	KubotaUSA.com
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Mahindra USA	Houston, Texas	MahindraUSA.com
Makita U.S.A.	Alpharetta, Ga.	MakitaTools.com
Maruyama U.S.	Fort Worth, Texas	Maruyama-US.com
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Milsco Manufacturing	Milwaukee, Wis.	Milsco.com
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MTD Products	Valley City, Ohio	MTDProducts.com
OPEESA	Knoxville, Tenn.	Opeesa.com
Oregon Tool	Kansas City, Mo.	OregonProducts.com
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The Vexa Group	Wixom, Mich.	VexaGroup.net
Timken S.M.O.	Springfield, Mo.	Timken.com
TopSun USA	Mooresville, N.C.	ProRunTech.com
Tuff Torq Corp.	Morristown, Tenn.	TuffTorq.com
USA Zama	Franklin, Tenn.	ZamaCorp.com
Venture Products	Orrville, Ohio	Ventrac.com
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Walbro	Cass City, Mich.	Walbro.com
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Wright Manufacturing	Frederick, Md.	WrightMFG.com
Wright Metal Products Crates	Rome, Ga.	WMPCrates.com
Xtreme Outdoor Power Equipment	North Circle Pines, Minn.	XtremeOPE.com
Yamaha Motor Corp.	Cypress, Calif.	Yamaha-Motor.com
Yanmar America	Adairsville, Ga.	Yanmar.com
YAT USA	Scottsdale, Ariz.	YatTool.com

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