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Property at a glance

Location: Milwaukee, WI
 Staff: David J. Frank Landscape Contracting
 Category: Hospital or institution
 Total budget: \$39,360
 Year site built: 1955
 Acres of turf: 2
 Acres of woody ornamentals: 3/4 of an acre
 Acres of display beds: 700 sq. ft.
 Total paved area: 2 acres
 Total man-hours/week: 23

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Heavy debris patrol in urban environment
- ▶ Truck watering of flower beds/new plantings
- ▶ Snow removal

Project checklist

N/A

On the job

- ▶ 3 full-time staff, 1 seasonal employee, 2 licensed pesticide applicators

Sinai Samaritan Medical Center

A 2000 Honor Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for Hospital or Institution

One good thing about doing landscape work on the grounds of a hospital is that, if you get injured, you're literally steps away from emergency treatment. It's doubtful, however, that the employees of David J. Frank Landscape Contracting who care for the East Campus of Sinai Samaritan Medical Center are spending too much time thinking about injuries — they've got mounds of trash, vandalism and security issues on their minds.

Heavy debris at this urban location requires trash pick up twice a day, seven days a week. Herbaceous plants need to be continually replanted due to unintentional damage and vandalism. A large number of new plantings in unirrigated areas require time-consuming truck watering.

Aside from doing routine chores, the crew of David J. Frank has contributed to an overall redesign of Sinai Samaritan for more color and a more modern look. Part of that look was created at new

planting beds adjacent to the entrance signs filled with bold annual flowers, sheared evergreens and bright perennials. In displays varying from pattern plantings to country bouquets, over 6,000 annual flowers were installed for color and interest.

Maintaining planting beds takes up a good portion of employees' time.



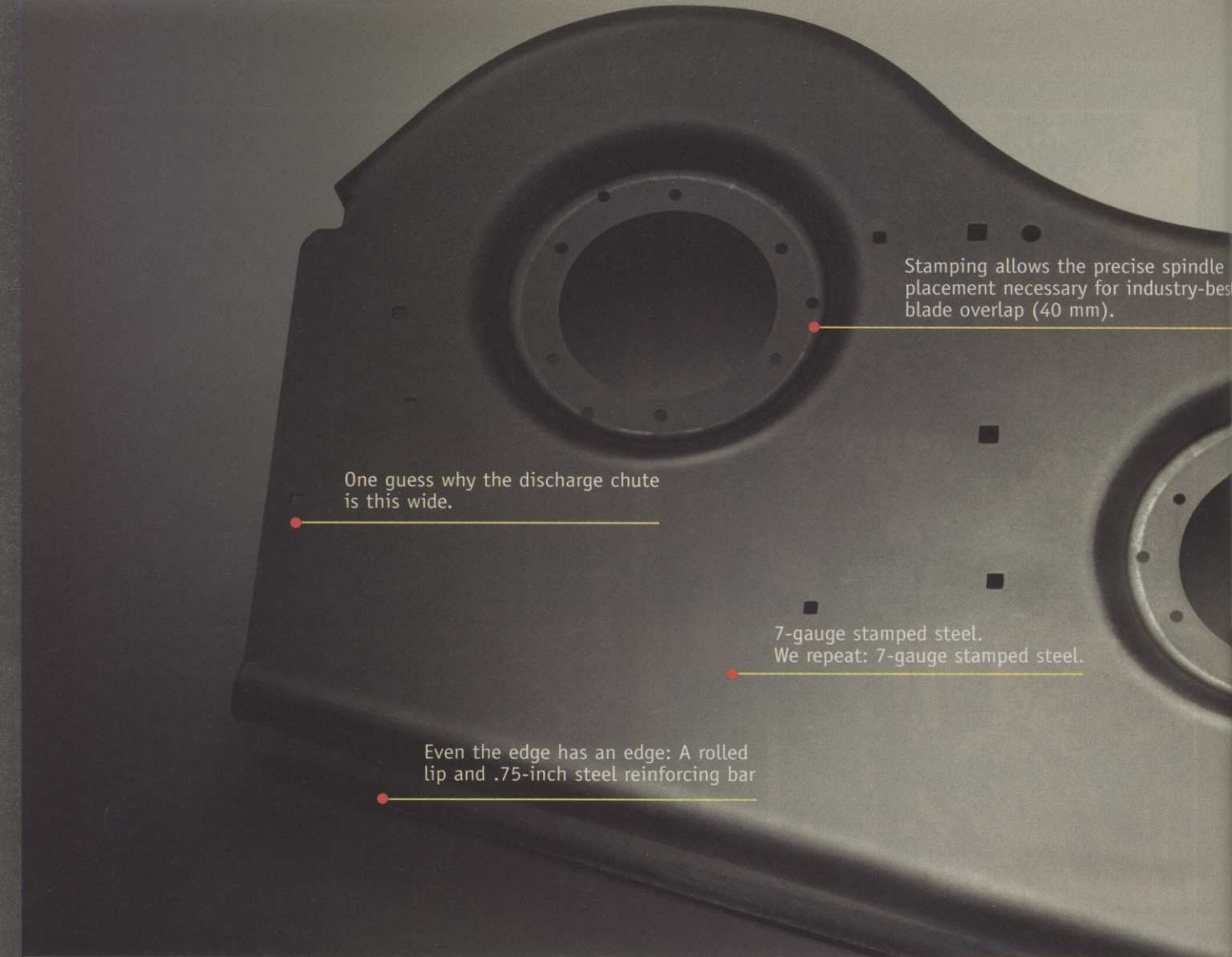
PGMS
Landscape
 MANAGEMENT

Editors' note: *Landscape Management* is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. The 2001 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2000 Awards, contact PGMS at:

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Ornamental grasses and assorted perennials at the medical complex offer a balance of color, structure and style.





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- 4-6
- 7-10
- 11-15
- 16+

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Success in irrigation

BY VICKY POULSEN

Three irrigation contractors discuss the keys to making irrigation installation work for you

Irrigation design, installation and maintenance is an exact science that some say is best left to the experts. That's why the American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) urges landscape contractors and architects to consult them before embarking on an irrigation project. They have experience, and they stay abreast of the rapid changes in irrigation technology through industry contacts and continuing education.

Still, many contractors go it alone and do quite well because they've developed competent irrigation crews. Crew members have taken a proactive approach to learning everything there is to know about

▲ PHOTO COURTESY: NETAFIM

irrigation systems and their components. Their superiors, in turn, have provided them with intensive training and "real world" experience by sending them to job sites all over the country, seminars, trade shows and manufacturer training classes.

Knowledge is the key to success in irrigation, and those who have a vested interest in this market don't take their jobs lightly. Mistakes can be costly and ruin the reputation of even the best companies.

We wanted the inside scoop on what today's contractors are up against when it comes to servicing the irrigation market, and here's what they had to say:

LARGE CONTRACTOR

Name: Todd Huston
Title: Vice president
Company: Terrain Systems, Inc.
Location: Phoenix, AZ
2000 revenue: \$14.6 million
Business mix: Mostly commercial
Employees: Between 180 and 300, depending on the season

Company profile: Founded by current owner Dale Micetic, the company has provided landscape and irrigation contracting services to commercial and industrial clients since 1974. Landscape Care, LLC, an affiliate company of Terrain Systems, Inc., provides landscape and site maintenance services to commercial and industrial sites throughout central Arizona. In mid-1998, Terrain purchased DKS Land Design, another local landscape design/build company that provided new leadership and a tree nursery now called Southwest Tree Growers, LLC. Each of the three companies operate as separate profit



centers and serve to increase profit through vertical integration of horticultural products and services. Terrain Systems fields 18 crews with Landscape Care, adding another 14 maintenance crews in the field daily. Approximately 35% of its landscape/maintenance services are devoted to irrigation installation and repair.

Product information sources: "We obtain most of our information through our vendors and trade-related seminars. We also have three large distributors who continually update our product knowledge and provide us with new catalog information on a regular basis."

Equipment arsenal: "We own all our equipment, everything from tractor-type trenchers to walk-behinds, backhoes, grade tractors and skid steers. Additionally, Terrain Systems operates a crane and water truck service for commercial construction sites. We have our own in-house mechanics to repair our equipment and keep the preventative maintenance up-to-date."

Picking a supplier: "Service is a major aspect of ordering irrigation parts. We can't afford to have our parts back ordered. Without materials, we can't meet our production schedules."

Biggest challenges: "One is all of the documentation and field plans you have to study before beginning a project. In our region, the weather is arid and dry, and local government regulations prevent new development from installing any new turf along right-of-ways. So it's an absolute must to know your county and city water regulations before embarking on an irrigation project. In the Phoenix area, drip irrigation prevails. We are hardly ever allowed to use bubblers and shrub sprays to water planter beds. Design guidelines require that plants be irrigated with low water use emitter systems (called xerigation in other areas of the country). Under this system, each plant is watered independently to insure each gets the proper amount of water."

Products to watch for: "Solar-controlled controllers are up-and-coming."

Word to the wise: "Look at and understand the complete project before coming up with and submitting the final bid. Also, buying the best irrigation products on the market is the best investment you can make for your client."

Teamwork is key in making irrigation installation work.

MEDIUM CONTRACTOR

Name: Takeshi Yamamoto
Title: Irrigation division manager
Company: Del Conte's Landscaping, Inc.
Location: Fremont, CA
2000 revenue: \$6.5 million
Business mix: Mostly commercial (HOAs)
Employees: 115 (90 year-round and 35 seasonal)

Company profile: The 29-year-old firm, which offers mostly commercial landscape installation services, is located south of the San Francisco Bay. The development of analytical methods of water management is a personal passion for owner, Tom Del Conte, who pioneered the use of technology to effectively manage irrigation zones. The company employs both central computer-



Yamamoto

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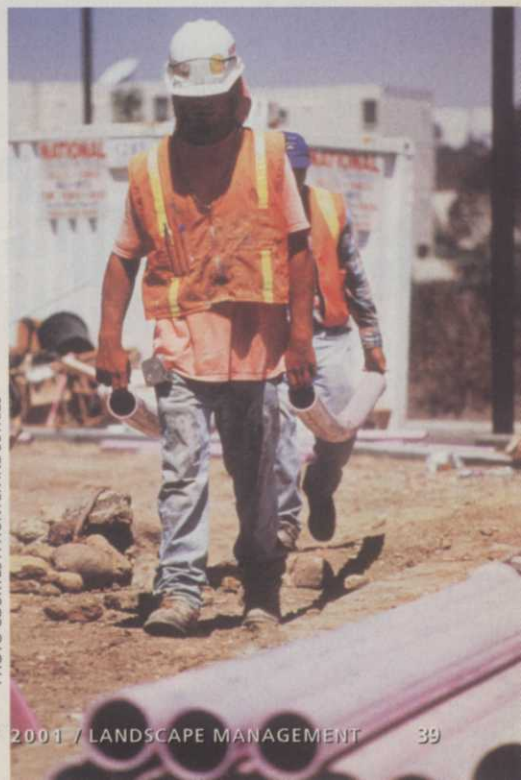


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ized irrigation water management via phone modem and conventional timing management by use of its own proprietary software developed by Yamamoto. Irrigation maintenance and construction services contributed more than \$1.7 million to the company's gross profit revenue of \$6.5 million in 2000.

Product information sources: Trade shows, magazines, catalogs and distributors. Yamamoto takes a proactive approach to learning about products and systems on the market. He interacts frequently with water conservation staffs so he can keep updated on what they're encountering in the field.

Make sure that you're carrying only the best products onto your project site.

Picking a supplier: "A lot of products look good on paper but don't work in the real world. For example, when the trend towards drip irrigation was increasing, there was an onslaught of products in that market. Many of those manufacturers at the time came up with products that weren't worth putting into the ground because of poor workmanship and design. But because that market has matured, contractors are figuring out what works, and the learning curve is catching up. We use only what we know works and invest only in the best."

Equipment: "We own all our equipment,

including several large excavators, back hoes, loaders, dump trucks, vibratory plow machines and trenchers of all sizes for installation jobs. For maintenance, we use customized compact vans fully equipped with all sorts of rack and irrigation components. Every tech also has a wireless remote control to activate the system as they walk around."

Biggest challenges: "My biggest challenge here is that the price of water is so cheap. To convince a client that a computerized, centrally-controlled irrigation system is going to save him a tremendous amount of money and conserve a tremendous amount of water is difficult with where water rates are right now. Until water is in short supply, the rates won't increase because of all of the political pressure surrounding this issue."

Products to watch for: "Wireless will be the wave of the future. Control valves will be in the field, and you'll simply have a wireless receiver on each one. The controllers will talk to the valves as well as send power to them. When its name is called, the valve turns on."

Word to the wise: "Knowledge is the key to running a successful irrigation operation."

SMALL CONTRACTOR

Name: William L. Wollett, Jr.
Title: Owner
Company: Golden East Lawn Service, Inc.
Location: Rocky Mount, NC
2000 revenue: N/A
Business mix: 100% residential
Employees: 5 during peak season
Company profile: Founded in 1989, the



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