



"In the beginning, I tried to buy everything and do it all myself. You quickly realize it's more efficient to hire a subcontractor."
— Ed Laflamme, who built Laflamme Services into a leader



"Word-of-mouth is often the best way to find a good subcontractor."
— Les Lightfoot, president, Lightfoot's Landscape

make or break relationships with subcontractors. "If he says he's going to be there a certain day, he's got to be there," Laflamme says. "He's got to be good about communicating that. If it looks like he might run a couple of days long, he's got to let us know."

10. The all-important contract. Contracts should promote efficient cooperation to accomplish the objectives of both parties, not entrap the unwary, landscape contractors say.

They should prevent the "That's not MY job" arguments that inevitably crop up on job sites. "As long as we're living by what I call the 'golden rules of the spec,' it helps us all," Tollefson says.

Watch for carelessly worded language and ambiguities in contracts. Understand clauses that give companies the right to with-

hold a specified percentage of progress payments as a way to ensure the work will be completed. Watch for clauses that allow for avoidance of (or compensation for) interference, specify insurance requirements and address damages incurred by either party. Does the contract address submittals, changes, site inspections, notices, claims and disputes? Does contract language adequately deal with payments, performance time, scheduling and waivers?

Contract examples to consider include the Standard Form of Agreement Between Contractor and Subcontractor (Document A401, American Institute of Architects) and the Associated General Contractor of America Standard Subcontract Agreement. **LM**

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Property at a glance

Location: Boise, ID**Staff:** St. Luke's Regional Medical Center grounds department**Category:** Hospital or Institution**Total budget:** \$118,000**Year site built:** 1906**Acres of turf:** 4**Acres of woody ornamentals:** 3.5**Acres of display beds:** 8,000 sq. ft.**Total paved area:** 2 million sq. ft.**Total man-hours/week:** 280

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Old site/new growth
- ▶ Project spread out over large area
- ▶ Constant construction

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ Hazard tree program
- ▶ Five-year pruning program
- ▶ New color program

On the job

- ▶ 5 full-time staff, 2 seasonal employees, 1 licensed pesticide applicator

St. Luke's Regional Medical Center

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

St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, Boise, ID, has grown from a single Victorian-style building constructed in the early 1900s to a regional medical center with over one million sq. ft. of buildings, covering 27.5 acres and 18 city blocks. Its grounds department has grown right along with it, and now cares for 800 trees and 4,000 shrubs on campus, including a 150-ft. giant sequoia unique to Boise's high desert environment.

The last two years have been particularly challenging to members of St. Luke's grounds department. They have supported two major construction projects by reviewing landscape designs and recommending changes as needed, providing support to contractors and keeping work sites clean and safe — with no addition to staff or reduction of other responsibilities.

Grounds Maintenance Lead Russ Harbaugh takes his job seriously. "When

patients and visitors arrive on our campus for medical services, their first opinion of the quality of care they will receive comes from the appearance of our grounds and buildings," he says.

Workers deadhead annuals near one of the hospital's directional signs.



PGMS
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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 2001 Awards, contact PGMS at:

720 Light St. • Baltimore, MD 21230 • Phone: 410/223-2861. Web site: www.pgms.org

The sandstone and brick and ivy covered walls of one of the oldest buildings of St. Luke's are surrounded by immaculately trimmed bushes.





More flexibility

BY VICKY POULSEN

These grounds professionals discuss why utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity

Small enough to get into tight spaces but tough enough to do the job of their big truck counterparts, today's utility vehicles have greater power, payload and traction abilities that give landscape professionals more flexibility in their day-to-day operations.

An increasing number of landscape professionals are finding that utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity, especially in areas like university campuses where parking is a problem. We talked to university grounds managers and others to find out just how useful these utility vehicles are, and here is what they had to say:

▲ PHOTO COURTESY: THE TORO COMPANY

MEDIUM PROPERTY

Name: Greg Burriss

Title: Grounds manager

Company: Furman University

Location: Greenville, SC

2000 budget: \$1 million

Company profile: "We have 80 acres of turf on the athletic grounds and 80 acres on campus grounds. The total acreage we maintain is 400 acres. We have nine grounds workers for the athletic areas, 12 with campus grounds and two on the



Burriss

Many grounds operations have Club Car's Carryall, which is adaptable to light and heavy work.

PHOTO COURTESY CLUB CAR



nine-acre president's estate. We perform total grounds maintenance care and landscape implementation.

Equipment arsenal: "We have 10 half-ton Chevy trucks, a one-ton Ford dump truck, two five-ton Ford dumptrucks, seven golf cars, one Cushman sprayer, one kromer painter, one 4x4 Club car, and three John Deere Gators.

Purchasing decisions: "We buy new except for the golf cars."

Dream vehicle: "A three-quarter ton 4x4 with turf tires, heavy duty dumpbed, winch and weather band radio — and 40 miles to the gallon!"

SMALL PROPERTY

Name: Chris Fay
Title: Grounds manager
Company: University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Location: Greensboro, NC
2000 budget: \$873,400

PHOTO COURTESY BERT VANDERVEEN



Company profile: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is located on a 197-acre campus in the Piedmont Triad Region with 3.1 million gross sq. ft. of building space. The grounds department performs services such as maintenance of the golf course and soccer stadium, moving, commencement decoration and set-up, placement and collection of extra trash receptacles for outdoor events, preparation of athletic fields for major events, coordination of utility excavations and special landscape design, excavation and installation. The grounds division also houses the Solid Waste Management Division. One supervisor, three full-time and seven part-time laborers care for the athletic fields.

Equipment arsenal: "Ten pickups (Dodge/Ford half-ton), three two-ton dump trucks and two Cushman trucksters (gas) with spray tanks. We also use a John Deere Gator (gas) to haul and dump clay and mulch to sand fields/golf course and a John Deere (gas) infield Groomer. We drag baseball and softball infields and groom sand traps with a Tenant litter vacuum unit (gas). We have three used golf-type Club cars (electric) and one used six-passenger Club car (electric) to give tours of campus grounds and transport seasonal workers across campus."

Purchasing decisions: "We buy new units based on a bid process because we're a state institution. We've had good luck with used units from golf courses, too."

Chris Fay drives one of his Cushman trucksters.

LARGE PROPERTY

Name: Michael Lynch
Title: Account manager
Company: Environmental Management Services, Inc.
Location: Columbus, OH
2000 revenue: \$10.8 million
Business mix: Mostly commercial
Company profile: Mark Wehinger started Environmental Management Services, Inc. in 1992 as a commercial landscaping company. Installation services were added to complement maintenance contracts. "Since that time, we have grown into a full-service landscape contracting company that performs such services as design build, installation, irrigation, seasonal color, bird aversion and snow removal. We have 160 employees, and our business mix now consists of 70% commercial maintenance and 30% installation."

Equipment arsenal: "The utility vehicle we get the most use out of is the Exmark Lazer converted turf tractor, a zero-tum tractor with a dry fertilizer hopper added to the front and liquid tanks added to the back with both hand wand and boom spray applicators."

Purchasing decisions: "We have three of these Exmark vehicles in our fleet. Two were purchased new in 1998 and one in 1999. We plan to purchase another next year."

Dream vehicle: "These machines take care of our needs, but we're going to have a large boom added to our next purchase."



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Muscle up

Manufacturers of utility vehicles keep making them stronger, more versatile and more efficient

Vehicles with more horsepower and greater payload capacity are what contractors are looking for, and manufacturers are responding by putting more muscle in their products. We asked several manufacturers what the driving force was in their design of these products, and here's what they had to say:

ASV, INC.,
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Brad Lemke, director of new product development
Utility vehicle: RC30 all-surface loader
Key trends: "We'd been building larger rubber-track vehicles for a number of years, then
ASV RC30 ▼

heard more people talk about smaller machines. In response, we developed the RC30."

Best features: "Our rubber-track technology allows our machines to go anywhere."

On the horizon: "I think there will be multiple models of rubber-track machines to choose from, and more choices in size and horsepower."

JOHN DEERE,
TRIANGLE PARK, N.C.
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Collis R. Jones, product marketing manager, vehicle group
Utility vehicles: Gators
Key trends: "Landscape professionals need a versatile vehicle that will allow them to efficiently

haul and tow needed supplies."
Best features: "John Deere Gators are popular because of the engine options and varying payload capacities."

Finance/purchasing decisions: "Most landscape professionals own their units, but for large jobs and immediate needs, Gators have become a popular item with rental companies."

THE TORO COMPANY,
BLOOMINGTON, MN
612/888-8801

Jody Hinkle, marketing communications manager
Utility vehicle: Toro Twister, Toro Workman 2100 and 1100 mid-duty vehicles
Key trends: "Utility vehicles are becoming more popular within the landscape marketplace. The new breed of vehicles have greater power, payload and traction abilities."

Best features: "Toro utility vehicles offer the highest horsepower and payload available, and the Toro Active In-Frame suspension and traction system allows for the vehicles to easily and comfortably get to a work site."

Finance/purchasing decisions: "Vehicles are typically owned.

Landscape professionals will primarily shop their local dealers. Larger, national landscape companies are more likely to have a distributor relationship."

On the horizon: "More vehicles in this class will offer more power, which means more advancements in attachments."

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