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This next-generation technology combines performance and comfort features that make it stand head and shoulders above the competition.

**A/W Independent Suspension** – our coil-over-shock design, with its maximum spring and damping rates, gives you unparalleled vehicle handling and driver comfort over any terrain.

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Circle No. 109

## business ideas

BY ED LAFLAMME / GUEST COLUMNIST

Owners pay for a lack of systems or processes by working harder and longer hours and by not getting the returns they should from their companies.



# Working hard, going broke

**A**fter working with dozens of landscape companies throughout the United States during the past year, it has become unmistakably clear to me why some companies make money and other don't.

Companies with processes make money. Companies without processes have to work harder to make money. Sometimes, they can't even work hard enough to earn a profit.

"The harder I work, the broker I get," is how one owner described it to me recently.

### Create processes

Processes mean organization. No processes in place means lack of organization, which inevitably shows itself in too many unbillable hours. When you can't (or don't) charge for every hour that you or your crews are on the clock, profits disappear.

Can small companies make money without processes? Yes, but they can't grow beyond a certain size because they don't have the processes to grow. They're stuck. They can't take on more work to build revenues because there are no processes to get the work done in a logical, efficient manner.

Typically, the entire process of a small com-

pany revolves around the owner or one key manager, and without those key people directing everything all the time, things start to fall apart.

### Unbillable hours

Curious about whether you have the systems we're talking about? Here's a quick test: Look outside your shop tomorrow morning when your workers arrive. Are they scurrying around like ants on a sidewalk full of crumbs, loading trucks, finding out what jobs they're going to, getting directions, repairing broken equipment and getting fuel — all seemingly at the same time?

These wasted minutes each morning are unbillable and eventually add up to hours. To make matters worse, they can lead to overtime hours by week's end.

As companies grow and crews multiply, the problem usually worsens. Unbillable hours can run out of control and then companies begin to lose money.

Owners, indeed everybody within an organization, pay for a lack of systems. Try as they might, and work as hard as they can, they can't overcome these inefficiencies.

So if you're "working harder and getting broker," try to figure out how many hours you're paying each week that are unbillable. That will get you to start thinking about ways to eliminate them.

Create processes that will simplify your operation. Then, instead of working harder, you'll be working smarter. Growth and prosperity will soon follow.

— *The author built and operated the largest landscape company in Connecticut before selling it in 1999.*

*He now operates Grass Roots Consulting, Inc.*

*He can be reached at [ed@grassrootsconsulting.com](mailto:ed@grassrootsconsulting.com).*

## A.M. fast-break process

- ▶ Prepare work schedules the day before
- ▶ Load trucks the night before
- ▶ Hire a night mechanic to service trucks, equipment
- ▶ Fuel trucks the night before
- ▶ Set a time when all trucks must be off

# industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE



The Joint Color Guard at last year's Day on the Hill at Arlington

## Special year for PLCAA's Legislative Day on the Hill

**WASHINGTON, DC** — There may be no more appropriate time to participate in PLCAA's Legislative Day on the Hill & Cemetery Project than this year. Mark July 14-15 on your calendars and lend your efforts to those of more than 100 other landscape and lawn care professionals.

The goal of the event is twofold:

- ▶ To help beautify Old Congressional and Arlington National Cemeteries.
- ▶ To meet with and educate legislators and regulators regarding the special issues facing our industry.

This is the 13th year that the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) has hosted this special event. It has expanded its focus substantially since then. For example, the inaugural event was almost solely concerned with responding to a proposal to enact national lawn care legislation. Since then, industry members, under PLCAA's banner and guided by the energies of lawn care company owner Phil Fogarty, have donated thousands of hours of their time to fertilizing, liming and improving the two national landmark cemeteries.

The following sponsors and contributors support these landscape and lawn care pros' efforts: BASF, Bayer, Dow Agro-Sciences, Imery's, FMC, Helena, The Andersons, The Scotts Company, Riverday - A Nufarm Company and LESCO.

## ANLA's biennial Legislative Conference set for Sept. 21-23

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The American Nursery & Landscape Association's biennial Legislative Conference is set for Sept. 21-23.

The theme is "One Industry, One Voice, One Future — Taking Care of Business." It will empower attendees to deliver to Congress a unified call for action on issues affecting the Green Industry and to learn the intricacies of bipartisan lobbying as well as the policy and political choices facing our industry and our country.

Here is a tentative schedule for this year's event:

### Monday, July 14

- 6:45 – 7:15 a.m. — Arlington and Old Congressional Cemetery
- 7:30 a.m. — Arlington Cemetery Project
- 8:00 a.m. — Formal program at Arlington
- 11:30 a.m. — Lunch
- 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. — Day on the Hill briefing at Holiday Inn Capitol
- 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. — Reception/dinner at Holiday Inn Capitol

### Tuesday, July 15

- 7:45 a.m. — Breakfast On the Hill at Rayburn Building
- 8:00 a.m. — Invited speaker
- 9:00 a.m. — Hill visits begin

To learn more about the event or to register (there's no charge), contact PLCAA at 770/977-5222 or visit the Web site [www.plcaa.org](http://www.plcaa.org). Registration deadline is June 30. Deadline to reserve a room at the Holiday Inn Capitol (202/479-4000) is June 20. The PLCAA rate is \$149 single/double.

ANLA has confirmed the following speakers: political insider Charlie Cook, Minnesota State Representative Denny McNamara (a former grower and landscape professional) and Political Action Committee (PAC) expert David Rehr. Attendees will also get a chance to meet with national political figures at the signature ANLA Congressional Reception.

For more information, visit ANLA's Web site at [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org) or call 202/789-2900.

## Gordie Bailey rides again . . .

**NEWPORT, MN** — Bailey Nurseries' Chairman of the Board Gordie Bailey will embark on the third and final leg of his coast-to-coast bicycle ride this June, raising money for the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), a division of the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA).

In the summer of 1999, Gordie celebrated his 64th birthday while en route from Oregon to Minnesota. The 2,100-mile ride was dubbed the "Tour de Hort" and raised over \$350,000 in contributions for HRI.

In the summer of 2001, Gordie set out from Bailey Nurseries' main office in Newport, MN, on the "Tour de Hort II" and rode over 1,200 miles to Cleveland, OH.



Bailey and the HRI Board of Trustees exceeded their goals by raising \$550,000 for industry research.

On June 30th of this year, Gordie plans to ride from Cleveland and arrive July 17 in Boston, where ANLA will be holding its annual conference. The goal for the "Tour de Hort III — The Finish Line" is to reach a combined total of \$1.25 million for industry research. Follow Gordie's progress and Jo's "e-mails from the road" at [www.baileynurseries.com](http://www.baileynurseries.com).

## Bayer retains fipronil rights

**MONTVALE, NJ** — Bayer Environmental Science, a business group of Bayer CropScience LP, recently announced the company can continue to market the active ingredient fipronil and its mixtures to the turf and ornamental market. The announcement stems from Bayer CropScience AG's recent agreement on the divestiture of selected insecticides and fungicides to BASF AG.

## HybriGene seeks APHIS permit

**HUBBARD, OR** — Bill Rose, President of HybriGene, says his firm has produced male-sterile bentgrass at its research lab in Kingston, RH, by introducing a gene into the grass. He says these male-sterile grasses produce pollen incapable of crossing themselves as well as other plants, eliminating the possibility that engineered genes can be transferred to other plants. HybriGene is applying for an APHIS permit to grow male-sterile glufosinate-resistant plants outside in field trials, says Rose.

*continued on page 16*

## LESCO opens three new hubs

**CLEVELAND, OH** — LESCO announced the opening of three new regional distribution hubs in Chicago, Atlanta and Plano, TX. The company says the state-of-the-art distribution facilities can each serve more than 70 LESCO Service Centers and 30 LESCO Stores-on-Wheels.

In addition, LESCO announced the opening of its Haverhill, MA Service

Center, its first Service Center grand opening since 1998. It was followed by the grand opening of five additional Service Centers in:

- ▶ Brunswick, GA
- ▶ Douglasville, GA
- ▶ Lawrenceville, GA
- ▶ Arvada, CO
- ▶ North Aurora, IL

[CLIPPINGS]



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## New Mellor lawn book available

David Mellor, master groundskeeper of Boston's Fenway Park, just finished his second book, "The Lawn Bible."

Mellor, a former editorial advisor for *Landscape Management* and *Athletic Turf* magazines, has been caring for some of the nicest lawns around for years for the California Angels, San Francisco Giants, Green Bay Packers, Milwaukee Brewers and now the Red Sox.

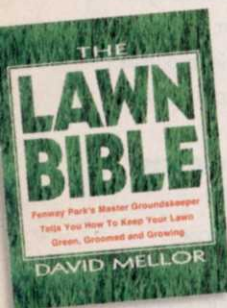
In "The Lawn Bible" (Hyperion Books), Mellor offers you everything you need to know about lawn care for your part of the country, including plant-

ing, mowing, feeding and troubleshooting, as well as tips, illustrations and anecdotes.

The Gospel of Grass, according to David, is:

- ▶ How to think like a lawn
- ▶ How to make a lawn child-friendly and a child lawn-friendly
- ▶ What combination of good soil, good seed and good sun adds up to a great lawn
- ▶ The mechanics and artistry of mowing
- ▶ How to win the war on weeds, pests and disease.

For more information about the book, which retails for \$16.95, visit the Web site <http://hyperionbooks.com/books/2003spring/lawnbible.htm>. To order the book, call 800/759-0190.



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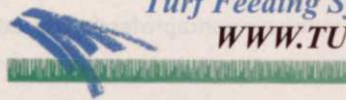
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Circle 111

*continued from page 15*

## New Weed Man in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI, OH — Weed Man Cincinnati North West recently began operating in Butler and Hamilton Counties. This branch along with Weed Man of Northeast Cincinnati, which opened last year, now service the entire Cincinnati metropolitan area. They're two of the more than 60 Weed Man sites in the United States.

## Toro preferred by Boston's Fenway

BLOOMINGTON, MN — The Toro Company recently announced that it has been named the Preferred Ground Equipment of Fenway Park. Turf Products Corp., the local Toro distributor, is also recognized as the Preferred Ground Equipment Supplier to the Boston Red Sox.

## Spindler acquires BioPro

LAKELAND, FL — Spindler Enterprises purchased the BioPro line of fertilizers, micronutrients, biostimulants, soil amendments and pond bacteria. The Toro Company originally developed BioPro. TerraBiotics, who acquired BioPro from Toro, has sold the product line to Spindler Enterprises.

## Symbiot partners with LESCO

CLEVELAND, OH — LESCO, Inc., one of the leading providers of products for the professional turf care and Green Industry markets, announced that it has been chosen as the preferred Purchase Power Partner (P3) to the Symbiot Landscape Network.

**CLIPPINGS**

**MEDIUM DUTY TRUCK. HEAVY DUTY ATTITUDE.**

A close-up, low-angle shot of the front grille of a red GMC truck. The grille is made of a silver, diamond-patterned mesh. The GMC logo, consisting of the letters 'GMC' in a bold, red, blocky font with a silver outline, is centered on the grille. The truck's body is painted a vibrant red, and the lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the texture of the grille and the metallic finish of the logo.

**GMC**

**GMC | TOPKICK™**



## STRONG, SILENT TYPE.

Sometimes actions speak louder than words. That's why the all-new GMC TopKick offers a choice of powerful diesel engines, including the Cat® 3126E, the DURAMAX™ 6600, and the DURAMAX 7800. You can also choose the Vortec™ 8100MD V8 gasoline, the only gas engine available on class 6 and 7 medium duty trucks.\* Together they deliver an impressive range of GVWRs from 16,000 to 61,000 lbs.† And they match up with a full complement of Allison®, ZF,™ TTC,® or Eaton® Fuller® transmissions. Amazingly, with its improved cab mountings and body sealing, the GMC TopKick remains incredibly quiet — whether you're idling or hauling. Once you experience the all-new GMC TopKick, you won't be able to keep quiet about it.

\* Excludes other GM vehicles.

† When properly equipped; includes weight of vehicle, passengers, cargo, and body equipment.

FOR MORE





## SEE WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

Take a look at the all-new professional grade GMC TopKick. Engineered with a dramatically sloped hood and larger windshield, it gives your drivers an impressive view of what lies ahead, like people and equipment. In fact, the GMC TopKick provides a forward field of vision as near as 13 feet from the front bumper. That's twice as close as its nearest competitor.\* Smartly designed with larger fold-in mirrors providing 126 square inches of surface area (including a 6" x 7" convex section), the new GMC TopKick offers a remarkable view all around. Add to that the tightest turning diameter within class 4,\* and your drivers can safely maneuver around things like loading docks and garbage dumpsters. Not to mention the competition.

\* Based on comparison of 2003 GMC TopKick C4500/C5500 to 2003 Ford F-450/F-550. Excludes other GM vehicles.

**INFORMATION, VISIT US AT GMC.COM OR CALL 1-800-G**



## WIDE LOAD, MEET TIGHT TURN.

You never know what the road has in store for you. That's why the professionals at GMC engineered the all-new GMC TopKick with the tightest turning diameter within class 4.\* With a setback axle and a wheel cut of up to 54 degrees, it helps give your drivers an edge on things like unexpected road work and poorly parked cars. Our engineers also designed the GMC TopKick with significantly reduced engine noise, vibration, and road harshness. That, along with a choice of powerful engines, makes the new GMC TopKick 100% professional grade. The road will always have its obstacles. But with the all-new GMC TopKick, your drivers will be equipped to meet them head on.

\* Based on comparison of 2003 GMC TopKick C4500/C5500 to 2003 Ford F-450/F-550. Excludes other GM vehicles.

MC-8782.

**GMC** | **TOPKICK**