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**Landscape Management**

**OUR MISSION:** *Landscape Management* — the leading information resource for lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build and irrigation professionals — empowers Green Industry professionals to learn and grow from their peers and our exclusive business intelligence. Serving as the industry conscience, we not only report on but also help shape news, views, trends and solutions.



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**LM MARKET MATCH** We've made your life a little easier by supplying icons that direct you to stories targeting your core business.

**B** - Business, **D/B** - Design/Build, **I** - Irrigation, **LC** - Lawn Care, **M** - Maintenance



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#### ON THE COVER

During a Feb. 11 raid, a Maricopa County (AZ) Sheriff's Office deputy arrests a suspected illegal immigrant working for landscaper Handyman Maintenance. Photo by: Joshua Lott/Getty Images

#### COMING IN MAY

*Landscape Management* spotlights "green" services that offer excellent revenue opportunities for landscape, lawn care and irrigation contractors. Learn easy-to-implement sustainable strategies designed to green your bottom line.

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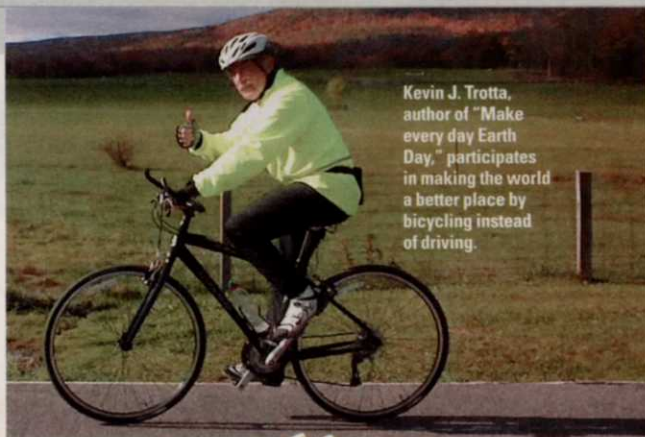
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INDUSTRY VOICE

## Make every day Earth Day

In life, as in sports, there are spectators and there are participants. As athletic turf professionals, we choose which role we play. Without question, the world would be a different and better place if more of us were players rather than onlookers.



Kevin J. Trotta, author of "Make every day Earth Day," participates in making the world a better place by bicycling instead of driving.

### WEB EXCLUSIVE

#### The 6 sins of greenwashing

Companies that promote eco-friendly services must deliver what they promise or risk being accused of "greenwashing."



### READERS RESPOND

What is the single biggest factor that would improve your workers' productivity?



» Next month's question: What's your education level?

Want to weigh in? Visit [www.landscapemanagement.net/survey](http://www.landscapemanagement.net/survey) to voice your opinion.

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### DIGITAL VAULT

Select stories from our e-newsletters. Visit [www.landscapemanagement.net/newsletters](http://www.landscapemanagement.net/newsletters) to sign up or view.

#### LMdirect!

There will be a light at the end of this recessionary wormhole. It won't be bright, but it will shine stronger in some markets.

#### Athletic Turf News

When you get right down to it, as an expert baseball grounds manager, the two things you have to know about are water and dirt. And that's not just any dirt.

#### LD/B Solutions

Spring is in the air. It's time to remind consumers how valuable landscape design-build services are in their daily lives and communities.

#### Get Growing

Just in time for spring, the Missouri Botanical Garden identifies 13 new "Plants of Merit" for the Midwest in 2009.

LM Consulting Clubs

### ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Explore recession-busting ideas with *Landscape Management's* seven inaugural **LM Consulting Clubs** — a brain trust of business coaches proven to help Green Industry contractors, industry suppliers and associations bolster everything from customer and employee relationships to revenues and margins to strategic planning and overall business valuations.

Visit the **LM Bookstore** and peruse our experts' offerings. Jeffrey Scott will teach you to increase your business with "The Referral Advantage," Harvey Goldglantz explains why "Marketing Matters" and Jim Paluch's trio of tales including "Five Important Things," "Leaving a Legacy" and "Growing Dreams" also are available.

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## Is landscape licensing a good idea?

**O**ur society provides us with the wonderful opportunity to start a business — to run our own show, to be our own boss. We choose the profession we want to pursue, taking into consideration some professions are more difficult to master and to join than others.

Historically, the landscape profession has been one of the easiest to enter. In most locations, that remains true today. Slap a magnetic sign on the side of your pickup truck proclaiming yourself a landscaper, load up a mower and trimmer, and off you go, a landscaper. But you're hardly a professional.

Would you agree?

I don't want this to sound like I'm railing against the beginner or the small-time operator, because almost every successful landscape company owner I've met started out with little more than a willingness to work hard and the faith he or she could make a go of it in our industry.

The difference between those folks and the operators targeted by a landscaper licensing law under consideration in New Jersey (S-2302), however, is that these small-timers and beginners eventually got smart. There's no better way to put it. They acquired the proper insurances, became bonded, and they keep learning and improving both their business and technical skills.

Obviously, you can't legislate a person into doing the right thing. But most professions that can be legitimately referred to as professions have licensing laws. Some are good; some are probably not so good. The NJ licensing law, at least in the opinion of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA), falls into the not-so-good category — at least as it's written.

The NJLCA polled its 500-plus member companies on the proposal this past winter and most of them did not like it. They believe it needs changes. Plus, there's always the difficult question of enforcement.

The NJ licensing law proposal would establish

a 15-member Landscape Professional License Review Board, including six landscape company professional members and two from the nursery industry. It would require, among other things, applicants acquire 90 hours of classroom instruction from an accredited educational institution and that they work in the landscape industry for four years before they can be considered for licensure. It also establishes a canon of ethics that nearly duplicates, it would seem, what the NJLCA members have already agreed to abide by.

The NJLCA offers this quick look at the pros and cons of landscape licensing.

### Pros:

- › Establishes industry best management practices.
- › Enhances expertise and promotes safety through ongoing professional education.
- › Increases professional responsibility.
- › Provides greater consumer protection.
- › Enhances public perception of the industry.
- › Identifies those committed to a greater level of responsibility and higher quality of work.
- › Replaces individual municipal licenses.
- › May protect our livelihoods from future restrictions of regulatory authorities.

### Cons:

- › Increases regulatory requirements and governmental involvement.
- › Increases professional costs, including initial fee and renewals.
- › Exposes contractors to new regulatory compliance requirements.
- › Exposes contractors to disciplinary action.
- › Encourages professionalism that will be involuntary only.
- › Provides no guarantee that non-licensed contractors would halt business.
- › May require more documentation on each job or project.

What do *you* think about landscape licensing?



# NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

## Davey celebrates a century of education and training

In 1909, 20 employees of The Davey Tree Expert Company arrived in Kent, OH, to study at the first Davey Institute of Tree Surgery.

In 2009, 47 Davey employees came to Kent from across North America to participate in the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences (DITS) — and to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company's premiere training program. This year's graduates join the nearly 3,000 Davey employees who have taken part in DITS training over the century.

The curriculum has evolved over the years, but the intent is still the same: make sure that Davey employees are the best trained in the business. The early students studied botany, entomology and related sciences, as well as accounting, English and business ethics. Current students dig deep



Proper care of tools was part of the early Davey Institute curriculum.

into the biological sciences, but also sharpen their skills in climbing and safety procedures, tree and plant care, disease diagnosis and management techniques.

Greg Ina, general manager of The Davey Institute, points to DITS and the

*continued on page 28*

## CLIPPINGS

### ECHO, Shindaiwa to merge

TOKYO — Yamabiko Corp., the recently formed parent company of Kioritz Corp. and Shindaiwa Corp., announced plans to merge the two companies and operate as Yamabiko. Initially, Yamabiko was created as a holding company to take advantage of management integration, sourcing, engineering, manufacturing and other efficiencies. The new plan is to expand the scope of the merger to include streamlining all functions. All Shindaiwa operations will be merged with ECHO, a subsidiary of Kioritz Corp., in Lake Zurich, IL.

### U.S. Lawns nears 200 franchises

ORLANDO, FL — U.S. Lawns added 10 new offices in January, bringing its number of franchised offices to 198 operating in more than 30 states throughout the country. "Our continued growth proves that our affordable franchise model is successful even in a difficult economy," said Paul Wolbert, vice president of U.S. Lawns.

## WORD ON THE STREET

How much more percentage-wise are you paying for employees' medical coverage than you were five years ago, and what are you doing to try to offset these soaring costs?



"We review our medical plan each year and research alternative solutions. We face 18% to 22% increases per renewal year, based upon the age and health conditions

of our group. Because of this, we contribute a maximum dollar amount for a single plan, with incremental contributions after five, 10 and 15 years of service. We offer additional contributions for spousal and family plans after five years of service, with incremental increases every five years with the company thereafter."

— **Robert Smart** (CSP, OCNT), president of Smart Scapes Landscaping and Mr. Yard Landscape Supply, both based in Olmsted Falls, OH



"We cover 50% of our year-round, full-time staff's health insurance premiums. Our healthcare costs are running about 2% of our gross revenue. Four years ago, they were 1%. We've

had to change our coverage twice in the past three years because of significant price increases. With the rising costs of healthcare coverage, as well as several other segments of our operations, we have been forced to slow down the growth plan for our benefits package. We had planned to add a new retirement plan to our package last year, but have had to defer that until 2010."

— **Fred Haskett**, U.S. Lawns, West St. Louis, MO  
haskettusl@peoplepc.com




"Our medical insurance expenses have increased a minimum of 12% per year each of the past five years. We have cut our company's contribution from 80% to 50% in

the past year, and have scaled back certain areas of medical plan coverage. We shop for and compare several medical plans each year to obtain the best coverage we can for the dollars we invest. And, as always, we openly discuss with our employees the medical coverage choices available so they are part of the decision-making process."

— **Richard Wilbert**, president of Boulder, CO-based Robert Howard Associates, rhainc@msn.com



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