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The Chemical Company

*continued from page 10*  
volunteer programs.

The *Harvard Business Review* did a study of the linkage between employee attitude, customer relations and sales at Sears and found improving employee attitude by five points resulted in a 1.3-point improvement in customer satisfaction, which produced a 0.5% revenue hike. For a company like Sears, this amounts to \$65 million annually.

**Do unto others ...**

Heller admits he was a pretty shy kid growing up.

“I was a social moron,” says the outgoing president of PLANET’s Day of Service Committee. “It has taken years of my wife telling me to go and network for me to be comfortable speaking in public. She encouraged me not to talk about my business too much, but rather to take baby steps and be comfortable with each one. You can’t



The world on their shoulders: Mirrorscapes’ crew removes debris.

go straight from being shy to being a motor mouth.”

What helped Heller get over the rough spots was having a passion for what he was doing, including the various customer service projects his company supports. “It’s easier to talk about something if you really care about what you’re doing and whom you’re doing it for,” he explains.

When choosing a volunteer effort, passion is the most important criteria.

“You have to be excited about what you’re doing and feel good about helping someone who has a need,” explains Newman, the incoming president of the PLANET Day of Service Committee. “If you are excited and have passion, everyone you interact with — whether it’s your employees or vendors or the media — will feed off of your excitement.”

And that’s where one community service effort sets itself apart from another. Making a positive impact and growing employee and customer loyalty are all key drivers of volunteer efforts. But many Green Industry professionals who have had success here say none of this is possible by faking it. The primary rule of thumb: Believe in your project. “It’s more than just trying to make a good impression for the sake of making a good impression,” Newman says. “It’s about simply doing good because it’s the right thing to do.” **LMI**

PHOTOS BY: RON HALL



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# X MARKS THE SPOT

Mirrorscapes refreshes the surroundings of mysterious — and beautiful — Cross Mound Park.

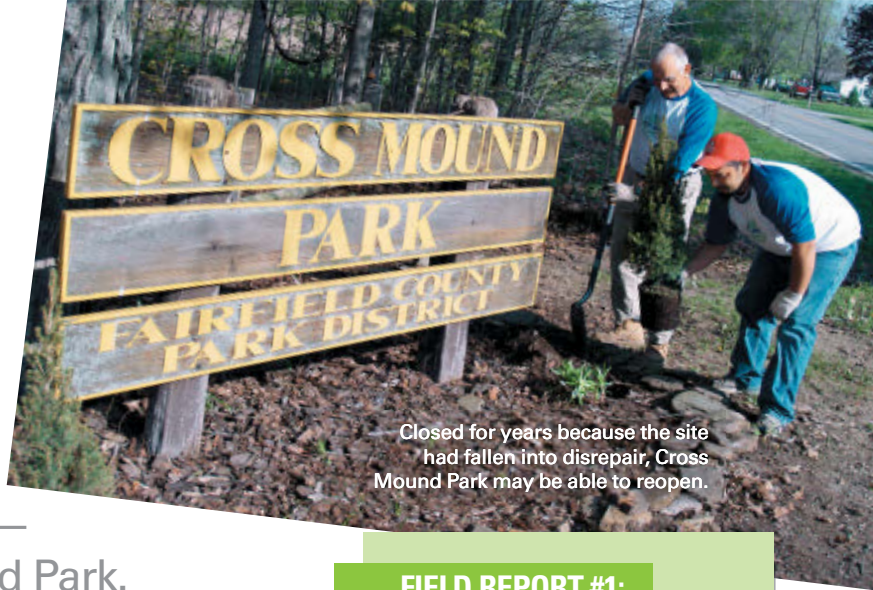
BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

NOBODY KNOWS the exact age of an ancient and mysterious Native American mound located at the summit of a wooded ridgeline in central Ohio. Most experts believe it was constructed about the time of the birth of Jesus. The X-shaped mound, whose circumference approximates the size of a Little League

infield, is the attraction at Cross Mound Park on the outskirts of the village of Tarlton (about 300 people), which is a 35-minute drive south of Columbus.

Chuck Miller selected Cross Mound Park as his company's PLANET Day of Service project. His company,

*continued on page 14*



Closed for years because the site had fallen into disrepair, Cross Mound Park may be able to reopen.

## FIELD REPORT #1:

**Cross Mound Park**  
Tarlton, OH

### Day of Service Mission:

Mirrorscapes team members repaired a split rail fence and cleaned debris from the Cross Mound Park.

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*continued from page 13*

MirrorScapes LLC, proves you don't have to be a big landscape company or one that's been around a long time to do something nice for your region. Miller, 52, founded MirrorScapes in nearby Lancaster, OH, three years ago as he was winding down a 30-year-career as a high school educator — much of it spent teaching agriculture.

His company has four trucks and employs “seven or eight” employees, adding part-time help as needed for bigger projects. Miller's top challenge this spring has been reining in his firm's rapid growth, thanks to its “follow-up and customer service” and, more recently, to winning a prestigious award for its display landscape at the Tri-County Home Builders Home and Garden Show in March.

“We've been going like crazy. The phone's been ringing off the hook,” says



On the bridge to recovery: MirrorScapes' crew brings new life to Cross Mound Park.

Miller, obviously pleased as he and his six-man crew load two work trucks for the morning's work at the park. “We needed a break. The guys needed something different to do. They've been putting in a lot of hours.”

His young crew (including “plant man” Lennie Conrad, a retired high school guidance counselor/coach and

several years Miller's senior) approaches the Earth Day project with unfeigned enthusiasm, fueled probably as much by the prospect of a working picnic in the park — as evidenced by the boxes of goodies being loaded into the trucks — as by the cloudless, bracing April morning.

Driving three trucks to Cross Mound Park, and after digging into pastries and

PHOTO BY: RON HALL



SPRINTER



orange juice, the workers scatter about the 29-acre site. Several employees hike across the bridge spanning Salt Creek, built in 1936 as part of the Work Projects Administration (WPA) program, and up a woodland path to the ancient Cross Mound. There, they replace a section of broken split rail fence and clear it of seasons of broken tree limbs, rotting logs and an ankle-deep layer of brittle, dry oak leaves.

The freshly uncovered earthen mound clearly reveals its perfect X shape that, in spite of being surrounded by mature eastern woodlands, has — through some treatment or process known only to its builders — remained, to the bewilderment of many experts, vegetation-free for two millennia or more.

Elsewhere in the park, other employees focus on the park's entrance, where they weed, trim, plant ornaments and put down dark, fragrant mulch.

Amid the roaring and whirring of blowers, mowers and trimmers, David J. Fey, director/secretary of Fairfield County Parks, stops by mid-morning to thank Miller and his team. Fey is the sole employee of the park system. Age 65 and a retired teacher himself (biology), Fey is tasked with maintaining five covered bridges, several historical buildings, nature preserves and a sculpture garden as well as Cross Mound. Even after 11 years on the job, he approaches his duties with an unabashed interest and love for the county's rich cultural history. He also welcomes any help he can get for the cash-strapped park system.

Unfortunately, because of a lack of funds and ongoing vandalism at Cross Mound, Fey has had to keep the park entrance gate closed. (You can still hike to the mound if you park just outside the gate. There's room for one vehicle.)

Miller, whose Day of Service project

in 2009 was at the county's Lockville Park, is pleased to be of help and obviously enjoying his half-hour chat with Fey. Then, it's back to work for the both of them.

"I'm really enjoying this 'retirement,'" says Miller, taking a short break as noon approaches. "Every once in a while, an acquaintance from the school will call and ask what I'm doing and I'll say, 'I'm outside and enjoying it.' And, yes, I work with the crews and then I come home and do the paperwork."

Miller says he has no plans for a second retirement, and he wants to continue to grow his landscape company as circumstances allow.

But we had to know: What exactly was the inspiration behind the company name, Mirrorscapes?

"It's our tag line. Your lawn is a reflection of you," says Miller with a broad smile. **LM**

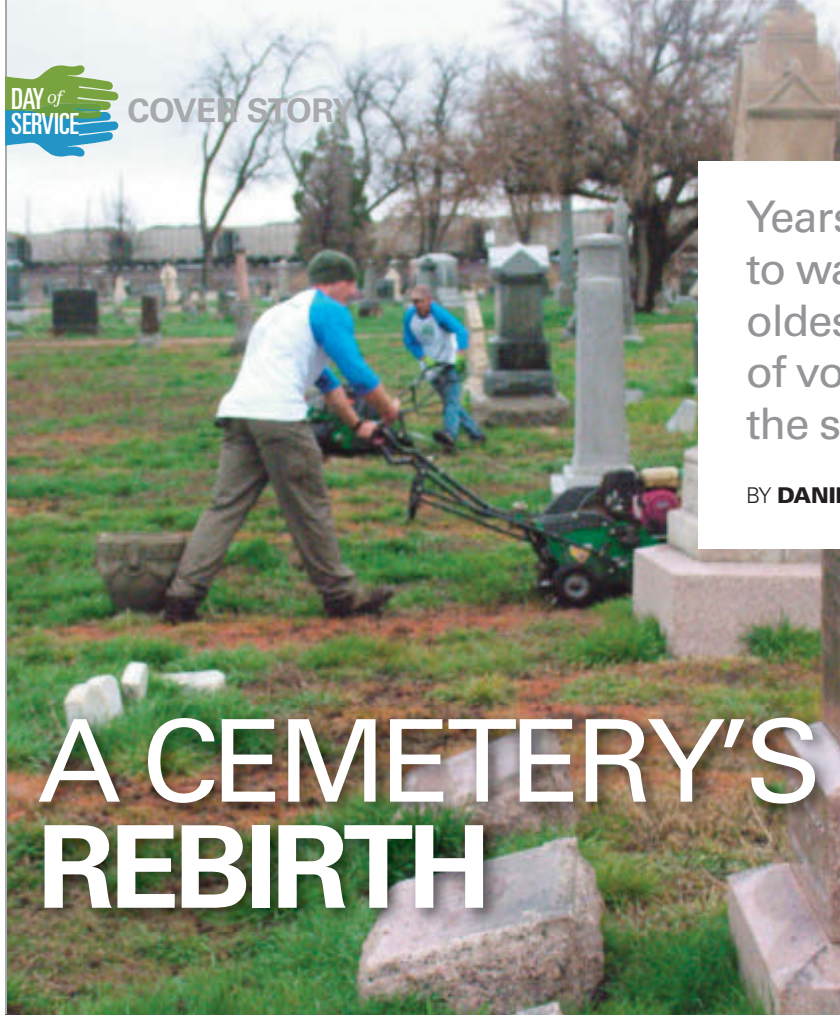


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\*Based on a comparison of the Automotive News classification of full-size commercial vans.





# A CEMETERY'S REBIRTH

Years after losing the ability to water one of Denver's oldest cemeteries, a group of volunteers works to revive the site with native species.

BY **DANIEL G. JACOBS** MANAGING EDITOR

PATRICIA CARMODY steers her white Subaru Outback wagon along the bumpy dirt and gravel road that winds its way through the 77-acre Riverside Cemetery, Denver's oldest operating cemetery. She muses about her desire to find a scout troop in search of a community service project, and a benefactor willing to donate some gravel to repair the many potholes dotting the road, now oozing with mud following the morning's cold shower. But the sun has

*continued on page 18*

PHOTO BY: DANIEL G. JACOBS



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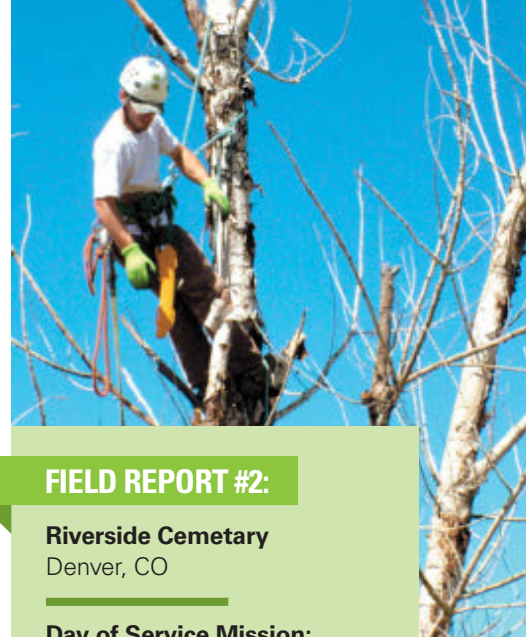
  
**Solitare®**  
HERBICIDE



*continued from page 16*  
since come out, and wispy clouds waft through a blue sky over the cemetery — through which volunteers scurry about, working on a number of projects as part of PLANET’s second annual Day of Service.

Carmody passes a small raised

planter and stops both the car and her conversation. She catches her breath slightly as she sees the work some of the volunteers completed earlier. Within a few hours, the planter went from weed-filled to tilled bed to beautiful display of native and specially selected flowers, all to please visitors coming to honor the



**FIELD REPORT #2:**

**Riverside Cemetery**  
Denver, CO

**Day of Service Mission:**

The Riverside Cemetery lost watering rights which left a number of plants and trees dead.

67,000 friends and loved ones buried in the 134-year-old cemetery.

“Look at that,” says Carmody, executive director of the Fairmount Heritage Foundation, which oversees the cemetery. Still wearing the plastic-garbage-bag-turned-rain-poncho, Carmody stares in awe at the transformed planter. “I am so grateful. It’s the revival of Riverside.”

Dozens of volunteers come courtesy of the Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals (CALCP) to prep and plant 2 acres of groundcover; install a variety of native trees, plants, and shrubs; plant a heritage iris garden; and remove a number of dead heritage trees — including an approximately 80-year-old American elm.

Though it will take years to complete, the goal is to make the cemetery sustainable. The only watering done will be until the plants are established.

CALCP committed to reviving the cemetery, which fell into disrepair after the organization overseeing the site lost a long court battle that went to the Supreme Court over water rights.

“This is one of my favorite days of the year,” says Andy Ferguson, president of CALCP and the district manager of the West Denver office of The Davey Tree Expert Co. “Our members show up in force.”

*continued on page 20*

PHOTO BY: DANIEL G. JACOBS

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Providing labor and equipment for half a day means those workers, machines and vehicles aren't doing work the company can bill for. But that's not really the point.

"It's a great way for us to make a big impact without impacting our ability to make some money," Ferguson says.

Companies from across the state and across the country participated in a variety of projects.

"We found out about Day of Service two years ago," says Bryan Gooch, marketing manager for Agrium Advanced Technology. "We jumped on the opportunity to be a lead sponsor. It is perfectly aligned with what we believe in. We saw Day of Service as not only a chance to give back to the communities that we live in, but also to donate products to people who can help extend the message, and let them use products



Workers install native plants at Riverside Cemetery. Lifescape Associates Troy Shimp and Michael Hupf (inset) create a healing garden at the Denver Children's Advocacy Center.

that are good for the environment."

Loveland, CO-based Agrium volunteers worked on their own project near the company's new headquarters (transplanting native plant seedlings to help restore wetlands and natural areas) and donated fertilizer to several more.

**Planting the seeds for healing**

While CALCP members toiled away at the Riverside Cemetery, about 20 min-

utes away Troy Shimp, senior designer for Denver-based Lifescape Associates, and his team started working on a healing garden between two buildings that house the Denver Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC). Though the rain only slowed the crew at Riverside Cemetery, it put a halt to the day's work at the DCAC. But that only meant the crew would be back at the next opportunity.

"We see giving back to the commu-

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