

IRRIGATION & **green industry**®

AUGUST 2019

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Creating a **BRIGHTER FUTURE**

Lighthouse Outdoor Lighting's Tim Ryan is spreading his passion for outdoor lighting to others by providing training and imagery with a goal of expanding while protecting the integrity of the art.

+ **INSIDE**

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- Making noise over gas blower bans, p. 26
- Not "smart" but still effective irrigation, p. 30

Do you know all there is to know about chemicals? Turn to page 36.

MICRO TOUGH

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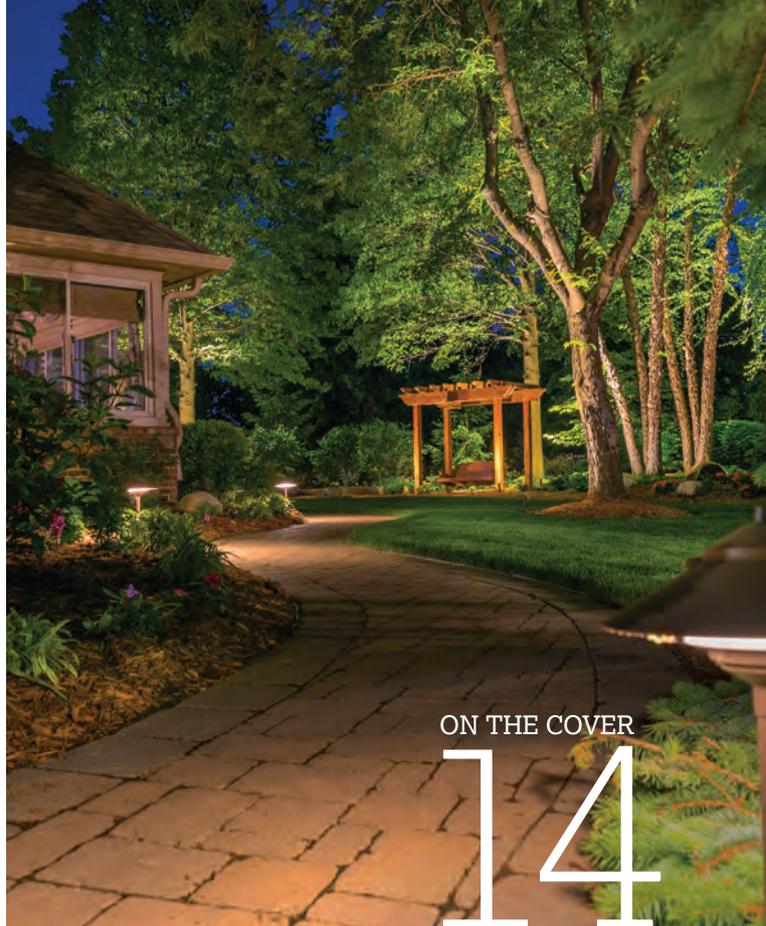
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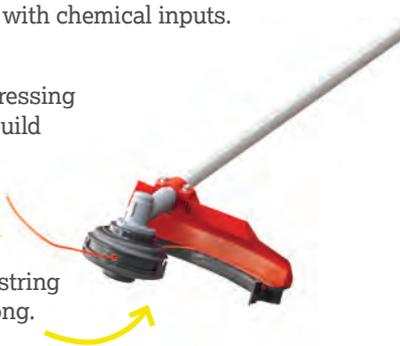
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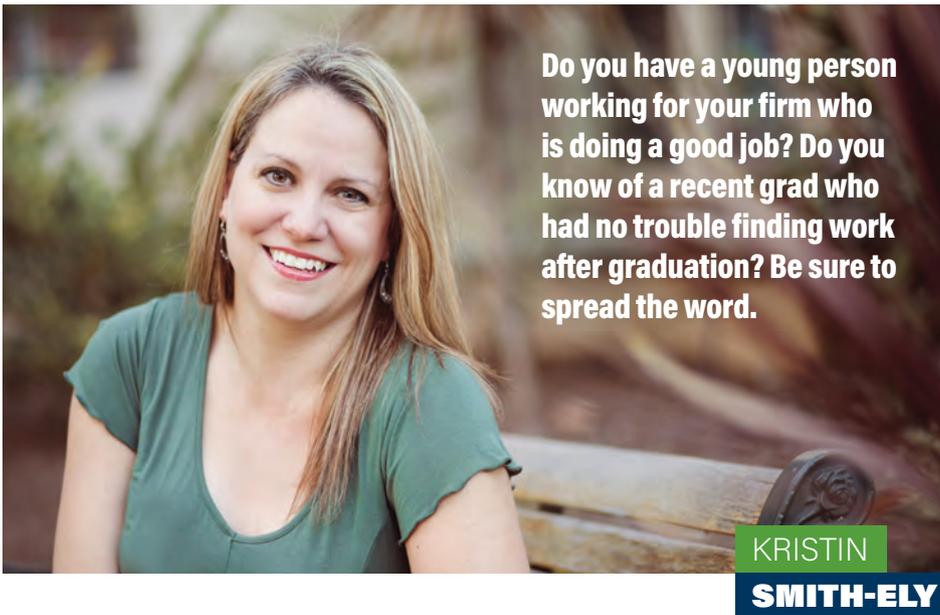
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Expanded coverage

Learn about one contractor’s success with battery-powered equipment in the online version of “Battle of the Bans” only at www.igin.com.





Do you have a young person working for your firm who is doing a good job? Do you know of a recent grad who had no trouble finding work after graduation? Be sure to spread the word.

KRISTIN SMITH-ELY

Let them know how great it is

A small community college in Mississippi is producing graduates in turf and sports field management who are having no problems finding jobs. An article, which recently appeared on *The Meridian Star's* website, featured three recent grads from East Mississippi Community College who already had jobs lined up before graduation at locations in Texas, Montana and Mississippi.

These graduates were either from the college's turf and landscape management technology program or its golf and recreational turf management program.

The success of these students got me thinking this scenario is likely played out at community colleges across the country. Why? Because qualified workers are hard to come by in the green industry.

Another alarming thought is that the number of people retiring from our industry greatly outpaces the number of people entering it. Even the vast majority of *Irrigation & Green Industry's* readers are over 40. It's just a reflection of the industry.

So how do we get more young people to enter our industry? *The Meridian Star* has

the right idea: by sharing the successes of Trey Sansing, Matthew Morse and Zachary Mozingo and others like them. Do you have a young person working for your firm who is doing a good job? Do you know of a recent grad who had no trouble finding work after graduation? Be sure to spread the word.

Maybe you hired a young person right out of high school and that person has worked hard to move up the ranks from crew member to supervisor.

Isn't it refreshing when you meet these gems who just want to work hard and do a good job? These are the ones who have a strong work ethic and don't gripe about having to stay late to finish a job the right way. These workers are hard to find, so when you do, make sure they know how much they are appreciated and share it with others.

Have that worker participate in a local career day and share with students why they decided to go into this line of work.

If you show young people that there is a career path in landscaping, that the opportunities are plentiful and the profession is rewarding, I guarantee there will be more stories like the one in *The Meridian Star*. 🌿

Editor's note: The author of "Beat the Bitters at Their Own Game," which appeared in the July 2019 print edition has requested we provide the original, unedited version. It is available in the July digital edition and online at www.igin.com/mosquito-prevention-for-landscape-contractors.



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Bayer to invest \$5.6 billion in nonglyphosate weed killers

Bayer has announced it plans to invest about \$5.6 billion of its research and development budget on alternatives to its glyphosate weed killer over the next decade, according to an article by *Bloomberg*.

The German company acquired St. Louis-based Monsanto, the maker of Roundup, for \$63 billion in June 2018. Roundup was the first glyphosate-based weed killer but is no longer patent-protected and many other versions are now available.

This announcement comes as the company faces more than 13,000 lawsuits claiming its herbicide causes cancer. In May, Bayer lost its third straight trial over claims that exposure to Roundup caused cancer.

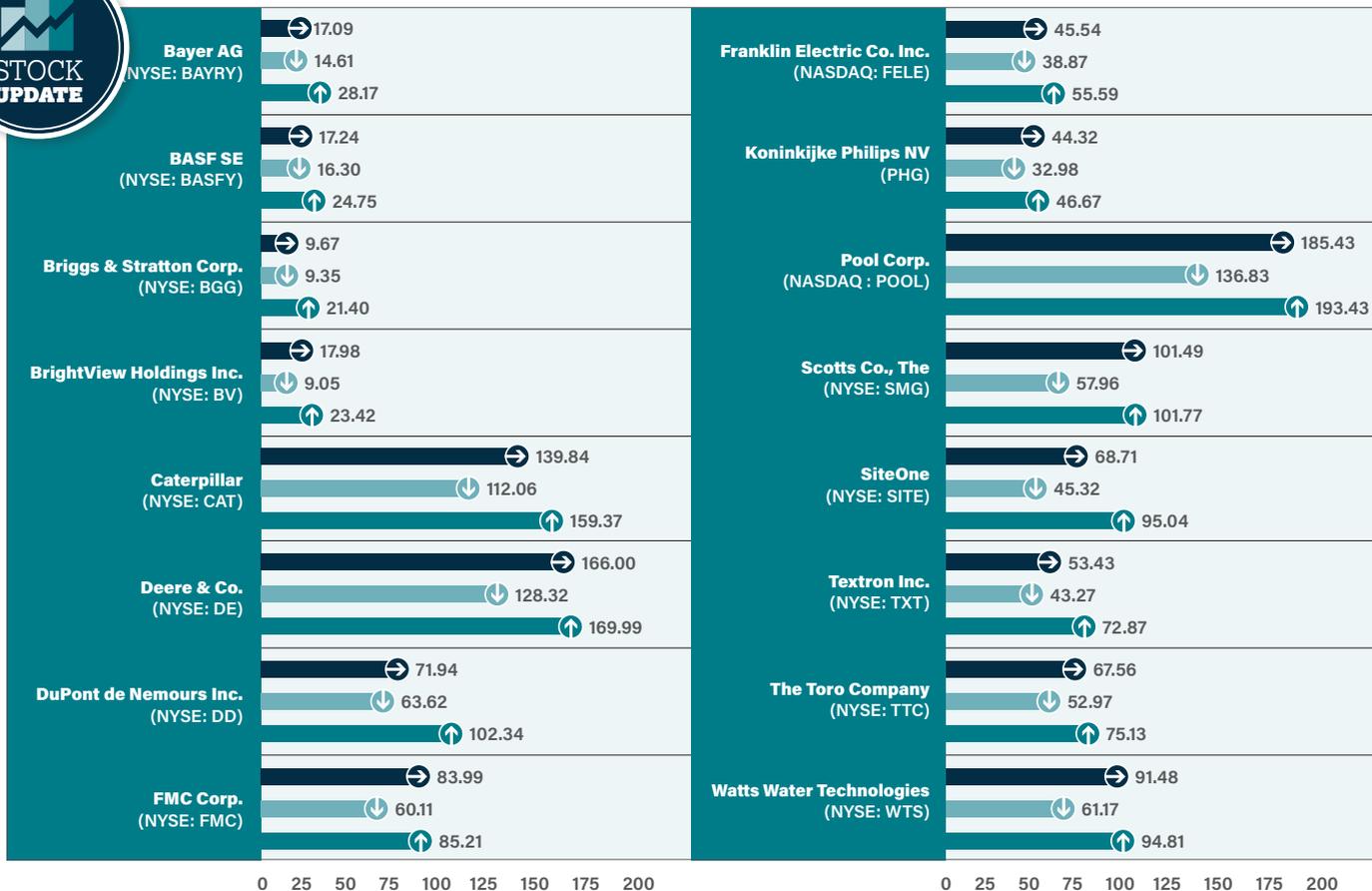
“While glyphosate will continue to play an important role in agriculture and in Bayer’s portfolio, the company is committed to offering more choices for growers,” according to a statement by Bayer on June 14.

“While glyphosate will continue to play an important role in agriculture and in Bayer’s portfolio, the company is committed to offering more choices for growers.” — Statement by Bayer



The \$5.6 billion (5 billion euros) in spending on new herbicides over the next decade is part of Bayer’s existing 2.5 billion-euro annual budget for crop science research and development, Bayer spokesman Tino Andresen said.

A U.S. judge overseeing federal lawsuits has appointed mediator Ken Feinberg to lead settlement talks over the herbicide litigation. The next case is set to go to trial in August in St. Louis. 🌱



↔ Last trade (7-15-19) ↓ 52-week low ↑ 52-week high; Source: Bloomberg.com

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Landscape

Boston's new Encore resort features 6-acre Harborwalk

Encore Boston Harbor officially opened its doors June 23, unveiling the integrated resort for to the general public. Totaling \$2.6 billion in single-phase development, Encore Boston Harbor is the country's most expensive resort development of 2019.

Many highlights of the 210,000-square-foot casino is on the outside: a four-season, six-acre Harborwalk, featuring pedestrian and bike paths, a picnic park, a gazebo, viewing decks, waterfront dining and lush green space with floral displays.



The Harborwalk and gardens feature lush plantings and turf lawns, and conveniently located walkways and biking trails are intentionally designed to keep open views and encourage exploration along the 6-acre Harborwalk Entry Garden.

Located along the southernmost edge of the resort, the Mystic Shoreline garden complements the resort's perfectly manicured landscape, offering a natural look at the river's shore. Oak Plaza anchors the center of the park-like garden with a 45-foot majestic red oak, surrounded by Scotch pines and lush weeping cherries. Spruce tree masses define the surrounding spaces with accents of dogwood, magnolia, serviceberry and Japanese maple sprinkled throughout for a diversity of color and seasonal variation.

The South Lawn Garden, designed to emulate a park, has the capability to accommodate events of various sizes, and an additional two intimate lawns are nestled closely near evergreen masses of spruce and magnolia trees. Visible to hotel and spa guests only, a 10,000-square-foot visual garden is set atop the podium roof, where over 6,000 seasonal blooms are planted in floral parterres shaped into geometric patterns and large flowers.

Equipment

Yanmar signs merger agreement with ASV

ASV Holdings Inc., Grand Rapids, Minnesota, a leading provider of rubber-tracked compact track loaders and wheeled skid steer loaders, has announced that it has entered into a definitive merger agreement with an affiliate of Yanmar Holdings.

Under the terms of the agreement, which has been approved by both the ASV and Yanmar boards of directors, ASV stockholders will receive \$7.05 in cash for each outstanding share of ASV common stock, for a total value of \$70.7 million. The ASV Board of Directors unanimously approved the agreement with Yanmar and recommends that ASV stockholders vote in favor of the transaction.

The ASV employee base, its manufacturing and distribution facility, international distribution network and supply chain creates a strong platform for North American expansion and will be a key part of Yanmar's long-term international growth plans.

The transaction is subject to approval by ASV stockholders and other customary closing conditions and is expected to close in the third quarter of 2019. In conjunction with the merger agreement, a subsidiary of Terex Corp., which owns 34% of the outstanding shares of ASV, has entered into a stockholder voting agreement in support of the merger.

Andrew Rooke, chairman and CEO of ASV says, "We are excited to announce this value-maximizing transaction with Yanmar. Yanmar is a strong strategic buyer for ASV. Yanmar shares our vision to provide the highest-quality products, values the long legacy of ASV and is committed to supporting its employees and distribution partners. In addition to maximizing value for ASV stockholders, the merger will create a strong platform for growth and expansion, bringing together two leading brands with similar cultures and creating value."

Giuliano Parodi, executive officer of Yanmar Holdings, says, "We believe that the ASV acquisition will significantly bolster Yanmar's compact equipment offerings in the loader segment, a product range vital for success in the all-important North American market. With its highly skilled workforce and quality CTL/SSL lineup, ASV is a great fit for both Yanmar's focus on quality and our growth and expansion plans in the North American and global markets global markets with virtually no overlap in distribution networks."



Pest Control

Massey Services opens service centers in North Carolina and Georgia

Orlando, Florida-based Massey Services, the nation's fifth largest pest management company and the largest privately held family-owned company in the industry, has announced the opening of three new service centers — one in Raleigh, North Carolina; one in Sandy Springs, Georgia; and one in Gainesville, Georgia.

"These new service centers in Georgia and North Carolina are part of our overall strategy to open service centers in local markets to enhance growth opportunities and better serve our customers," says Tony Massey, president of Massey Services. "Our expansion in these markets demonstrates our commitment to growth and total customer satisfaction."

All three service centers were opened in areas where customer penetration has significantly increased. In Raleigh, the service center is located at 10139 Division Drive. In Georgia, the Gainesville service center is located at 955 Interstate Ridge Drive and the Sandy Springs service center is located at 8601 Dunwoody Place. These service centers will provide residential and commercial pest prevention and termite protection.

Massey Services now has 15 service centers in Georgia and three service centers in North Carolina.



Suppliers

Ewing opens new Utah location

Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply has opened a new location in Lehi, Utah. Opened in April 2019, the new location will help the company better serve green industry professionals in Utah County and the Provo-Orem area. This new Ewing location will service a variety of green industry professionals, including irrigation and landscaping contractors, golf course superintendents and sports field managers.

This store's opening comes as Ewing is celebrating 27 years in the Utah market.

"Ewing is dedicated to serving green industry professionals in Utah, just as we have for nearly three decades," says Duane Richards, regional manager for Ewing in Utah. "The first Ewing location in Utah was established in 1992, so we understand the unique needs of our customers here and are dedicated to helping them grow their businesses."

The store stocks a wide variety of products for green industry professionals, including irrigation supplies, fertilizer and chemicals, tools and accessories, golf course products and sports field materials.



Equipment

OPEI predicts outdoor power equipment shipment growth

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Virginia, has released its spring quarterly forecast, which predicts growth in U.S. shipments of outdoor power equipment in 2019.

"After a slightly down year in 2018 due to an extended winter and late spring season, outdoor power equipment shipments have rebounded nicely in 2019 with year-over-year growth ranging from 2% to 7% depending on the product," says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI.

"Commercial products used by professionals and consumer battery-powered products are the highest growth categories," says Kiser, noting the continuing trends seen in the last several years as industry products diversify into electric power and the U.S. commercial landscaping sector continues to grow.



OPEI forecasted projections use the compiled monthly shipment data reported by OPEI members as their basis, which constitutes more than 90% of all shipments in the U.S. market. OPEI projections reflect shipments of products to include all power sources (e.g., gas, battery, corded [AC], diesel, propane). Among OPEI's predictions are the following:

- Consumer lawn mower shipments are forecasted to grow by nearly 5% in 2019, with 7.4 million units shipped.
- Commercial lawn mower shipments are forecasted to grow by almost 7.5% in 2019, with 330,000 units shipped.
- Handheld power equipment shipments are forecasted to grow by 2.5% in 2019, with 25 million units shipped.

Historically, OPEI has had a strong commitment to data collection and publication for the benefit of its member companies. OPEI industry data is collected, compiled and forecasted by contracted third parties and is accessible by only member companies. All OPEI members that ship the subject products in the U.S. are eligible to participate in this critical program, assuring that OPEI data in most cases constitutes near full market representation. Additionally, all OPEI forecasts are developed through a third-party working in consultation with OPEI member manufacturers.



QUICK TAKES

Munro acquires FloWater Irrigation

Munro, Grand Junction, Colorado, a manufacturer of pumps, pump controls and pump stations for the turf irrigation market, has announced the acquisition of FloWater Irrigation.

Engineered specifically for the turf irrigation industry, FloWater's basket strainer and self-cleaning strainer offerings are a natural fit for Munro's product line.

Colorado's Best Landscaping Management opens

There's a new player in the upscale landscaping services arena for northern Colorado. Colorado's Best Landscaping Management began services in early 2019.

Co-owner Brandon Bohn is a respected business owner and entrepreneur in the Ft. Collins area. He wanted to serve his community in additional ways and saw upscale landscaping services as a big need. He partnered with Chase Ellis who has a respected background in the landscaping industry.

Proposed ban on gas leaf blowers delayed

Officials in East Hampton, New York, again tweaked the language of a proposed code amendment curtailing the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the village, causing a delay.

The proposal would ban the use of gas leaf blowers by commercial landscapers from June 1 to Labor Day. The leaf blower prohibition has been paired with another measure requiring commercial landscapers to obtain a special license to work in the village. The law is expected to take effect in 2020.

BY JEFF CAROWITZ

Great Google reviews are earned



Today's contracting businesses survive and thrive based on customer reviews — word-of-mouth referrals and, increasingly, online reviews on Google, Facebook, Yelp and others. Ratings and reviews have become a significant influence on how consumers make choices.

Business leaders know that great reviews make their companies instantly more credible and appealing. They automatically increase your ranking on Google Local Business map-based search listings and other search engines, allowing you better opportunities to capture more potential new clients.

It's no wonder that the question contractors ask me most is: How do I get more and better reviews for my company on Google and other review sites?

Great reviews come from great service. Be worthy of receiving outstanding reviews by delivering service that justifies five-star ratings. Remember, excellent service is not solely a product of technical knowledge and the ability to get the job done right.

Your company can stand out as exceptional by improving clients' overall experience of working with you. It starts with thinking about how you answer the phone and the entire script your office staff uses to get customers scheduled. It's about how your technicians interact with clients: arriving on time and being patient, thoughtful and thorough.

Getting candid input from your customers is healthy for your organization. Nothing drives home the need for improvement than hearing about it from your top clients. When you turn negative feedback into positive changes, then share that progress with your customers — it builds incredible loyalty.

Asking for reviews ensures that you hear from happy customers. Angry customers know that posting reviews are an easy and semi-anonymous way to vent their frustrations. Conversely, content customers are less likely to take the time to share their feelings, so providing both reminders and motivations are essential. The more good reviews you

gather, the less impact one or two bad ones will have on your overall rating.

Provide reminders. Don't wait for reviews to come in, make them happen. There are plenty of ways to prompt customers to post reviews, so use several simultaneously. Here are a few of my favorites:

- **Use software tools.** Routing-and-scheduling software like Service Titan allows you to collect reviews while your technician is on-site. Satisfied customers are always happy to help technicians they like.
- **Follow up immediately via automated email.** Let your customers know when work has been completed. Many are away from home during the day and would like to know that tasks and projects are finished. Include links to Yelp, Google and others so customers can quickly click-to-review.
- **Give your technicians leave-behind cards.** These should include a headline that says, "Please share your feedback on my service" and instructions as to how the customer can post a review. Some companies provide bonuses to technicians who are mentioned by name in positive reviews. This motivates them to remind clients to write reviews.
- **Reconnect with past customers.** Don't forget to reach out to past satisfied customers and ask for reviews. You might get a twofer: a great review and a repeat purchase.

Avoid waiting too long to ask for reviews — the best time to ask is immediately after the transaction, when clients are enthused and memories are fresh.

Should you respond to reviews? Absolutely! Set aside time each week to respond to both positive and negative reviews. Responding to reviews demonstrates that they've been acknowledged and appreciated.

Having numerous positive reviews under your belt will be essential to your success in this endeavor. 🌱



When you turn negative feedback into positive changes, then share that progress with your customers — it builds incredible loyalty.



Jeff Carowitz advises landscape industry firms on marketing and business strategy. He can be reached at jeff@strategicforcemarketing.com.

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BY KEVIN SMITH

Spend your last bit of summer on fall



Well, here we are in the middle of August when many of our customers are off enjoying their summer vacations. Hopefully you've also had a chance to enjoy some well-deserved time off before the fall lighting season gets rolling. That's just around the corner, so I thought I'd offer a few ideas to help you prepare for it.



Your local distributor may be offering **seasonal deals on products** you use every day, such as lamps, fixtures, wire connections and cable.

Send out newsletters. Newsletters are a great way to stay in touch with your customers and let them know that you really care about them and their lighting systems. They should contain a brief update about what's going on in your company and information about any recent advances or improvements in the products you've been using and promoting. You may want to offer a discount coupon to the first 10 customers who make an appointment for fall service.

My good friend John Meadors, owner of MGM Outdoor Lighting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, sends out newsletters several times a year, co-signed with a paw print from his canine companion Noelle. This ongoing outreach to his customers with this delightful personal touch is, I suspect, one of the reasons why John has been in business for over 45 years.

Look for seasonal promotions. Summer is a great time for bargains. Your local distributor may be offering seasonal deals on products you use every day, such as lamps, fixtures, wire connections and cable. If they do, it's a good time to stock up on these items. Many promotions are offered at counter events at the stores you frequent. There's nothing like getting an extra discount and a free lunch to boot.

If a specific sales associate is responsible for your account, schedule a meeting with this person, and find out if the store is willing to provide additional discounts on bulk purchases. If your account is in good standing, you may be able to get special terms.

Get organized. Juggling a life and a business can be overwhelming at times, especially if you offer more services than just lighting. Being super busy leaves

little time to check up on the state of your lighting products and parts inventory. That's compounded by the fact that you may not have an employee to whom you can assign this task at this time of year.

However, among your summer staff may be teachers, seniors and college students who often possess outstanding organizational skills. Assign these part-timers to go through your warranty returns and send them back to the distributor for credit. Doing this on a regular basis helps both you and your distributor.

Your part-time employee can reorganize and clean your product shelves and do that inventory count. Who knows — you might just find your next star full-timer.

Service your lighting tools. A dead voltmeter is the beginning of a frustrating service call. This is a good time to change the batteries in your voltmeters, cable tracers and so forth. Check the condition of your cable strippers and other tools for wear and tear, and note which ones should be permanently retired. You might want to wait until fall to replace them, as that's when many distributors hold big sales where you can receive some substantial savings.

Go to summer school. This time of year is when many lighting manufacturers offer training seminars at their local branches. Why not get out of the heat and, at the same time, learn about the latest products and design techniques? You can also take advantage of any sample pricing on new products that manufacturers frequently offer to seminar attendees.

Afterward, if you want to learn even more, see if the manufacturer offers customized individual training for you and your staff. Education empowers you to do so much more. Attending a training session is also a good time to get to know and begin a relationship with your local manufacturer's representative.

Although the heat is upon us now, relief is in sight. I wish you all a great and profitable fall lighting season. 🌿



Kevin Smith is the national technical support and trainer at Brilliance LED LLC, Carefree, Arizona, and can be reached at kevin.smith@brillianceled.com.

Decor Smart Home

The Smith family wants all of their outdoor lights to turn on at 8 pm. They schedule the pergola and pool lights to turn off at 10 pm each night and the front, sides, and the rest of the landscape lighting to dim at 2 am. Then all lights off at 6 am. But Saturday night, they're having a party and schedule the pergola and pool lights to stay on until the party's over. All from the **decor smart app** on his phone.

Bluetooth control from the **decor smart app** includes individual settings for each group. Not only can lights be controlled with the push of a button but each group or individual light within the group can be scheduled to turn on/off, dim, or change colors individually, all at specified times.

Schedule lights inside or out for parties, birthdays, special occasions, your favorite team's colors on game days, holidays - the possibilities are endless!



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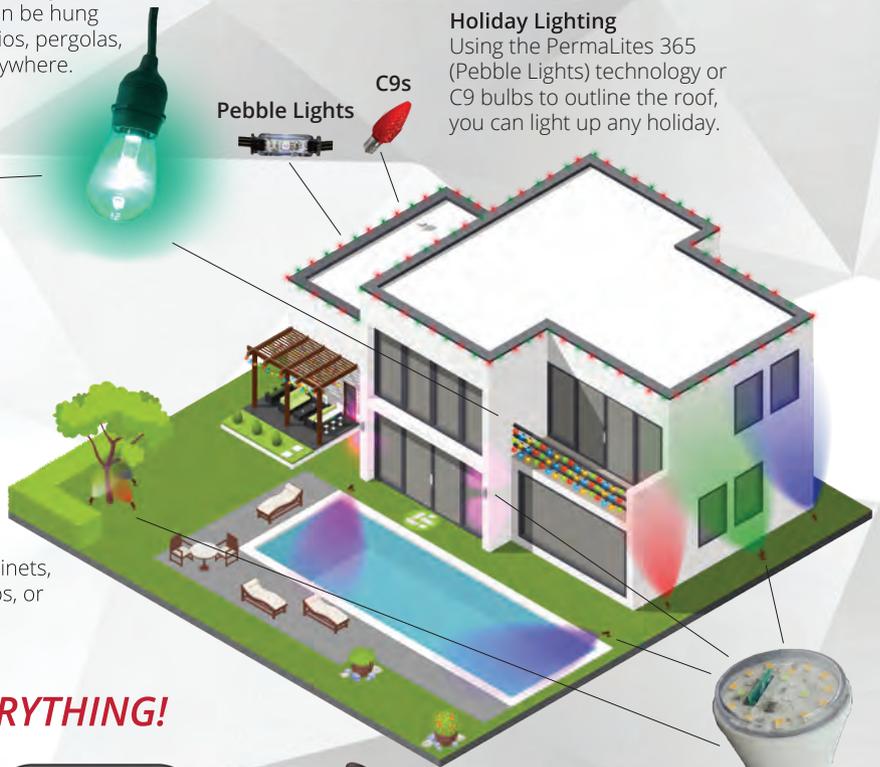
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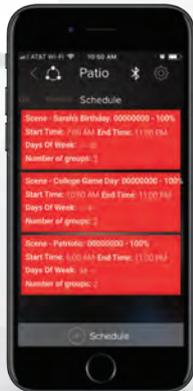
Strip lights can be mounted under cabinets, shelves, counter tops, or other applications.



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Photos: Tim Ryan, Lighthouse Outdoor Lighting

Creating a **BRIGHTER FUTURE**

By Sarah Bunyea

Lighthouse Outdoor Lighting's Tim Ryan is spreading his passion for outdoor lighting to others by providing training and imagery with a goal of expanding while protecting the integrity of the art.

Just like that, you're hooked. Talk to anyone in the green industry and they'll say there's something special about creating beautiful outdoor spaces that draws them to these jobs and entices them to stay for the long run. But to Tim Ryan, CLVLT, of Lighthouse Outdoor Lighting, West Chester, Pennsylvania, a career in outdoor lighting is the ultimate prize.

"I like to say that people who are lighting designers get the lighting bug," he says. "They become very passionate and fall in love with this because what we do is so incredibly transformational to properties. We get to go in, paint everything that we want to see and hide everything that we don't want to see. We're creating art every night."

Ryan's role at the outdoor lighting franchisor can't be summed up in a one- or two-word title. It would probably take one to two lines on a business card to

capture the multiple roles he plays. Ryan serves as the company's national director of lighting design, as well as the national director of training. Not to mention, he's also the company's photographer and videographer.

Ryan not only has a clear vision for his company but for the entire outdoor lighting industry. His passion for investing in the next generation of men and women beginning on this career path is contagious, even if you only spend a few minutes talking to him. But his journey to where he's at in his career today began years before Lighthouse.

Like many who work in outdoor lighting, Ryan started out in the landscape and hardscape industry. Since the beginning of his career in the green industry in 1996, he always saw the value of offering outdoor lighting and integrating it into projects. But it's taken quite a few years of trial and error and self-taught skills to become the outdoor lighting expert he is today.

"Like most landscapers back then, I really didn't understand what I was doing with lighting. I'd just go buy some lights and throw them out there and try and make it look nice," says Ryan. It wasn't until 2006 that he jumped fully into lighting, starting his first outdoor lighting business in Idaho. "When I transitioned from landscape over into lighting, I was confident I knew everything about it," he admits. "But once I really got over into lighting, I realized I didn't know anything at all about it. That was a steep learning curve for me."

In 2015, after several years of running his lighting business, Ryan was faced with a pivotal decision. "I was at a point in my career where I either had to grow my company much larger, or I had to look at the state of the industry and see if there was a way I could help make a lasting difference."

He opted to sell his business to Lighthouse and went to work for the corporate headquarters where he helped the franchise restructure. Since this time of reorganization, the company's vision has been to

create another generation of lighting designers who care deeply about lighting design and are interested in preserving the art.

"My goal is to have Lighthouse be synonymous with quality lighting design," says Ryan. "I got involved with Lighthouse for the opportunity to take what I have in my head and share it with 200 to 300 other guys so that they can pass it on to the next generation."

The company's vision has caught on, as it continues to grow rapidly. It currently has a mix of 23 corporate and independently owned franchises. Much of the company's success is due to how it fully trains and supports new franchise operators in all things outdoor lighting. This helps eliminate years of trial and error and the expense of figuring out how to be successful at operating an outdoor lighting business.

Taking on training

While Ryan still works on some of the company's specialty projects that require his design expertise, a big part of his job these days is spent training new franchisees and their employees that join Lighthouse. "When somebody comes into our organization, most of them are coming from different backgrounds. They might be coming from a landscape or hardscape background or from a completely unrelated industry," Ryan explains. "Being a trainer is really about trying to understand where they're coming from, what they have knowledge of, and then working from there."

As he personally experienced, learning outdoor lighting on your own involves a lot of trial and error. "There's a very large learning curve to try and get to the point where you are very competent and can set yourself apart from others."

Ryan and the Lighthouse team try and eliminate five-plus years of a learning curve by teaching new members the essentials they would otherwise have to learn in the field like proper design principles, how to load and balance transformers and balancing light.



"I like to say that people who are lighting designers get the lighting bug. They become very passionate and fall in love with this because what we do is so incredibly transformational to properties."

— Tim Ryan,
Lighthouse
Outdoor Lighting



BECOME ENLIGHTENED

Are you interested in furthering your knowledge and skills in outdoor lighting? Consider getting involved with a professional organization. The Association of Outdoor Lighting Professionals, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, offers many ways to further your career in outdoor lighting, like becoming certified as a certified low voltage lighting technician or a certified outdoor lighting designer. Visit www.aolponline.org for more information.

Another organization you can become involved with is the International Landscape Lighting Institute, Norman, Oklahoma. The ILLI offers a five-day intensive course in landscape lighting design. Instructed by a dedicated team of experienced professional lighting designers, installers, electricians and pruning experts, attendees are guided through a series of lecture presentations and manufacturers' demonstrations, while also participating in hands-on field work. Visit www.illionline.org for more information.



MIDWEST MEDITERRANEAN

Located on a lake in Indianapolis, this beautiful stucco Mediterranean style home sat in pitch black darkness, aside from a few carriage lights. It was challenging from a design standpoint but even more so by trying to get cable and power into all the places it needed to go in the three-story home. The finished project was absolutely beautiful and remains one of Tim Ryan's favorite outdoor lighting projects he's designed.



SPYGLASS FALLS

This manmade waterfall located in an Indianapolis housing development park originally had two floodlights intended to light everything, but they weren't doing the water feature justice. Tim Ryan and his team removed them and placed lighting in the waterfall itself. The project was a fun challenge for the team by making sure the placement of the lights was perfect so onlookers can see the water in action.

While the company's initial training program is one week, it provides ongoing technical support and assistance. "If somebody has a design question or if they take a picture of a project and ask 'How do I light this?' it's part of my job to help them come up with a solution about the right equipment and the right techniques to be able to illuminate those difficult jobs," Ryan says.

Aside from teaching technical know-how, Ryan's bigger mission is to get new team members to fall in love with the art of outdoor lighting design like he has. He also enjoys seeing clients' reactions. "The effect that we create on properties happens overnight. It's literally instantaneous. When you're on a property with a client and turn the lights on for the first time, to watch their jaw hit the ground when they see it is amazing. You get on a big emotional high."

A picture's worth a thousand words

Thirteen years ago, when Ryan started his own lighting business, he had to choose between either setting up time-consuming, labor-intensive live demonstrations or building a portfolio of high-quality photos of his work. Ryan jokes that he wanted the easier option, so he went out and bought a camera. A self-taught kind of guy, he's still sharpening his photography skills and today produces incredible images for Lighthouse.

Ryan says he believes in the power of good photography to attract new lighting customers, more so than other segments of the green industry. "If you're talking about a new patio or a type of a brick, or you're going to plant a tree or shrub in a certain spot, people can envision that much more easily," he says. "But I found when I started getting into lighting that it was very difficult for prospective customers to understand the nuances of the light, the shadows and the effects that I was trying to propose to them."

While traveling around the country as a corporate trainer Ryan also gets to photograph lighting projects at various locations where he's training new members. He's recently added videography to his responsibilities. Ryan explains that "static images are great, but we're moving into an age where communication is done through video. People want to interact with their subjects, with who they're meeting and the company they're working with, and that's done through video."

The keys to success

Having built a thriving outdoor lighting business himself and spending years helping others do the same has taught Ryan a thing or two about what it takes to be successful in this in-

dustry. He says that, just like in any business, having great customer service should be the most important focus. "You always have to treat your customers as your number one priority, especially in the public arena we live in with social media," says Ryan.

Along with that, you also have to be committed to working late at night, whether it's walking a customer through a design or putting the last few tweaks on a project. "Sometimes we're not home until 10 or 11, sometimes one o'clock in the morning because we're out adjusting things," he says. "You have to be prepared for that if you're want to be successful."

Like Ryan described earlier, having top-notch visuals and a strong portfolio are essential. "If you're not good at capturing photos, hire a professional photographer. Make sure you're getting good visuals because customers don't understand what light can do."

Ryan sees landscape and lighting companies all the time online who have poor-quality photos on their websites. "When you're trying to win over a customer, you're not helping them make the decision to hire you if don't have good images," he explains. "If you can show your customer what you can do in a meaningful way through imagery, that will make a huge difference in selling more lighting."

You also have to be able to market yourself, and part of that is getting in front of the right people. "With outdoor lighting, you're dealing with a very select customer that's very high end. So you have to be very directed with your marketing and specifically target this kind of customer."

The last thing is to be able to differentiate yourself from everyone else in the industry. "You have to be able to distinguish yourself, whether it's your style of lighting, your photography, your marketing or your message," explains Ryan. "You have to be unique and memorable, because if you're not, you're going to struggle in this business."

Professional development

Every year there's an increasing interest from consumers in outdoor lighting as people spend and invest in their outdoor living spaces. Even though outdoor lighting took off in states on the periphery of the country, like California, Arizona, Texas and Florida, where it's warm year-round, Ryan says, "We're now seeing that move more into the central states, the Midwest and the East where even though you don't have 12 months of the year to enjoy outdoors, you can still enjoy it eight to nine months of the year."

In addition to more people being aware of and desiring outdoor lighting, another positive trend Ryan has seen over the last five years has been the variety of outdoor lighting products available. And while the increase in product variety and technology is great for the industry, Ryan says there are some downsides. Once LEDs started coming on the scene around

2008, so many people, including landscape and irrigation contractors, handymen and electricians, had begun doing outdoor lighting that the quality of actual design has diminished over the years, according to Ryan. This has caused homeowners' expectations of what good lighting is to drop significantly due to how much poor lighting is out there.

"Because lighting products are accessible to so many people, there's not enough people taking the time to train themselves, learn proper lighting design and get involved with organizations," he says.

Ryan recognizes and commends the landscape and irrigation companies that are taking the time to learn about lighting and good design. "We welcome everybody into this industry," says Ryan. "But the art of what we do needs to be preserved. People that are doing this need to study it, learn it, and help maintain and raise the industry standard."

One of the best ways to do this he says is to get involved in organizations like the Association of Outdoor Lighting Professionals, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, or the International Landscape Lighting Institute, Norman, Oklahoma. These organizations offer courses, certifications and other resources to

help those interested in developing professionally in outdoor lighting. As a member of and volunteer with AOLP, Ryan is encouraged by the growing number of professionals wanting to learn and get involved with them, and he's hopeful this means the industry will see an increasing emphasis on design in the future.

With many years left in his career, Ryan is eager to spend them teaching and training the next generation of lighting designers. Some of the most fulfilling moments of his career are when he's with a new designer, spending time with him on the job site. "When I see the light bulb come on over his head and see that he absolutely has gotten the lighting bug, that's amazing," he says. "I love seeing him have that passion and knowing that what I've been able to give him is going to grow and improve over time as he becomes a good lighting designer."

While there's so much Ryan loves about his job, he says the most rewarding thing to him is "to see that the torch has been passed." 🌱

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"If you can show your customer what you can do in a meaningful way through imagery, that will make a huge difference in selling more lighting."

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BRUCE MOORE JR.

LIVING FOR LANDSCAPING

His commitment to the industry and exceptional customer service has helped Eastern Land Management become a leader in the Metro New York and Southern Connecticut commercial landscape market.

BY KRISTIN SMITH-ELY

You could say that Bruce Moore Jr. never knew a life outside of the landscaping business, and you'd be right. He grew up around the industry, as the commercial landscaping firm his father founded, Eastern Land Management, opened its doors just a few years prior to his birth. Not only did he grow up in the business, now at 36, landscaping is still a huge part of his life.

"Growing up, I just enjoyed being around my father and the business," he says. "It was truly always something I enjoyed doing and wanted to be a part of."

This wasn't just a childhood phase, a young boy wanting to be "just like Dad," then growing to develop other interests. For Moore, wanting to be a part of his father's business was a desire that always stuck with him. As soon as he was old enough, he began working part-time during summer breaks, going out to job sites with crews and learning about horticulture firsthand. "I got to establish relationships with our employees and customers as well," Moore says.

Having already garnered so much in-the-field experience, when it came time to go to college, he decided he would be

able to best serve the company by pursuing a degree in business management rather than one in landscape or horticulture.

"That ended up working out really well," Moore says of the business management degree he earned at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. He couldn't wait to start applying what he'd learned to the family business: Graduating on a Saturday in 2005, he was at work full time the following Monday.

Just last year, Moore was appointed president of ELM, taking over the role from his father, fulfilling part of the company succession plan. He was ready for the responsibility, having spent the previous 13 years performing just about every job imaginable in the company. "I've gotten to see pretty much every side of the business operationally and administratively," he says.

One of his first assignments as a full-timer was to help transition a major service category to an inside-the-company function. "We were utilizing an irrigation subcontractor for all of our properties, and we made a decision at one of our strategic planning events that we really should be doing it in-house," he says.

Doing so would allow ELM to control that aspect of the business and develop it into a profit center. Moore was tasked with

that initiative, becoming an account manager for a while, working with clients and responding to their needs. From there, he expanded into the role of director of landscape maintenance.

"I oversaw other account managers that were responsible for our clients on the maintenance side of our business. That later grew into being vice president of operations, where I oversaw all the day-to-day operations of the business in all the different profit centers: irrigation, landscape maintenance, construction — all of it."

Now, as company president, Moore oversees all the firm's corporate and operational matters.

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

Moore credits his father for the company being what it is today, a full-service commercial landscaping firm providing landscape maintenance, landscape construction, snow services, irrigation, turf and plant health care, and holiday decorating.

From its headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, and a branch office in Monroe, Connecticut, it serves customers in Westchester County, New York, and Fairfield and New Haven counties in Connecticut, with some employees working in satellite locations on client properties.



elm
eastern land management

Bruce Moore Jr., president of Eastern Land Management, Stamford Connecticut, has never known a life without landscaping, and he is perfectly content with that.
Photo: Leslie Kahan

CLOSE-UP PROFILE

Well over 80% of ELM's customers take advantage of all the many services the company has to offer. There must be a reason for that, and Moore has the answer.



ASPIRING TO ACCREDITATION

Eastern Land Management, Stamford, Connecticut, has been a successful commercial landscaping business for over 40 years. A big part of maintaining and growing this business has to do with investing in its employees.

Toward that end, the company holds weekly safety training tailgate talks. It also has a weekly training series for its foremen so they can become Landscape Industry Certified through the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

"We have eight to 10 people annually in that program," says President Bruce Moore Jr. "They have both classroom and hands-on training every week until the test, which takes place in October. Our goal is to become an accredited company through NALP."

"How we've been able to grow our business is to my father's credit," he says. "He was very passionate about developing long-lasting, trusting relationships with our clients and vendors alike. I learned from him and took that mantra on myself. We run pretty hard for our customers. That's one thing that differentiates us from the competition."

Moore knows that having successful client and vendor relationships starts with the front line, the employees. ELM has about 150 workers during the peak season, which

runs from March to November and employs about 50 in the off-season.

He describes ELM's culture as "family-based." "We're flexible as to everyone's personal needs and situations," he says. "We want everyone to have a nice work-life balance," adding that, "If we treat our employees well, then they in turn will treat our clients well and that goes a long way."

This approach has rewarded the company with many longtime clients and employees. For Moore, it all boils down to building those trusting, long-lasting relationships his father talked about, delivering exceptional customer service, maintaining good communication and having a passion for people both inside and outside the company.

While relationships are key to ELM's success, Moore says it's not the only thing that keeps the business thriving; it's also being excited about new challenges. "Every day is different. All of our business is based on what Mother Nature is doing."

Unlike manufacturing where there are a set number of widgets that need to be produced every day under a roof in a controlled environment, ELM, like other outdoor-based businesses, has to create



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estimates for projects based on certain conditions — particularly the weather, something that’s completely out of the company’s control. But Moore says that’s what makes it fun. “We have to adapt and change to whatever Mother Nature throws at us. Every day is different and gives us a new opportunity. You have to look at things in a positive light.”

HIGHER EDUCATION

One of ELM’s largest and longest-term clients — and one that Moore is most proud of — is Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. “We’ve been there for almost 10 years now,” he says.

The university had been self-performing all its exterior services, but as the years went on it outsourced more and more of the work. “Now we are pretty much the exclusive provider for exterior services, and the school has just grown tremendously.”

ELM is involved with day-to-day maintenance and landscape and irrigation installation for all the school’s buildings.

“The client has a true passion and appreciation for the curb appeal and the image of the properties, so it’s been a pleasure working with them. They



“THE MORE TIME YOU TAKE TO SIT BACK, TO PLAN, TO STRATEGIZE AND TO COLLABORATE, THE MORE SUCCESSFUL YOU’LL BE. YOU CAN’T DO IT ALL OVERNIGHT.”

have high expectations, but they understand what it takes to meet those expectations.”

It’s been a collaborative effort with Sacred Heart’s team of landscape architects and general contractors who oversee the construction of new facilities. Moore enjoys seeing the plantings ELM put in 10 years ago starting to mature and fulfill the vision the school and its architects have for the institution’s landscape.

One of the challenges of working with this property is that, compared to a typical Northeastern

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All the beautiful landscaping you see at Sacred Heart University is made possible by Eastern Land Management. This also includes seasonal flower changeouts and holiday decorating. Photo: Tracy Deer-Mirek

GETTING GREENER

In February, Eastern Land Management opened its 6-acre, 20,000-square-foot campus in Monroe, Connecticut, to serve as a hub for the company's zero-emissions, all-electric fleet.

"The facility houses our battery-powered crew," says Bruce Moore Jr., the company's president. It also stores the equipment used to service one of ELM's university clients that requires the company to use electric and battery-powered equipment only. Right now that's a mix of products from Mean Green Mowers and Greenworks Commercial.

The property also includes a salt storage area, an eco-friendly brine-making facility and a fleet of specialized vehicles and equipment used for anti-icing pretreatment, snow removal and post-storm liquid applications for winter weather events.

"Every year we make more and more progress on our initiative to reduce the amount of salt that we use in our winter operations," says Moore. "We make our own sodium brine at that facility and then distribute it to our other locations." Another sustainability project he hopes to accomplish in the future is installing solar panels on the building.

college campus full of large trees and rolling lawns, Sacred Heart's grounds are in a fairly confined, much denser space, according to Moore.

As the year progresses, ELM's crews adjust the landscape to mark the passage of time. "There is a seasonal changeout of color for every one of the four seasons," Moore says.

Sacred Heart is also among ELM's many holiday decorating clients. The company got into that business based on client requests. "It's mostly exterior work," Moore says, "wrapping trees with lights, putting wreaths on buildings and in lobbies, putting garlands and bows on light poles and things like that."

Holiday decorating has been a great business for ELM, so much so that the company's fall is bus-

ier than its spring. "Everybody kind of thinks of the landscape business as having that spring rush," Moore says, "and that's true for us too. We're definitely not slow during that time. But there is a lot of seasonal prep to prepare for winter, for the snow, the holiday decorating and the seasonal color changeouts. There are fall cleanups and construction projects we're trying to get finished up before the end of the year."

It's yet another case where Moore says Mother Nature comes into play, imposing a deadline on ELM's crews to get everything done before Dec. 1.

MORE FROM MOORE

Having only been company president for a year, you could say Moore's just getting started. "What I enjoy about my new role is it involves me in every aspect of the business," he says. "Deciding how I spend my time in each of those areas creates a challenge, but that's what I enjoy."

Meeting new challenges isn't the only aspect of the business Moore likes; he also savors the fruits of ELM's labors. "Stepping back and looking at some of the landscapes that we've either created or maintained, and the progress that has been made with them, is the overall thing that keeps me coming back every day," he says.

"WE RUN PRETTY HARD FOR OUR CUSTOMERS. THAT'S ONE THING THAT DIFFERENTIATES US FROM THE COMPETITION!"

And it's not just the progress of the projects that Moore likes to see, it's also the growth of the individuals who come to work every day at ELM. "It's amazing the different opportunities our industry presents for a lot of people. It's satisfying to see people come into the organization, grow, become successful, and then start families, beginning their own personal journeys."

Moore — should he ever find the time to do so — could look in the mirror and see how much he himself has grown in his own career. One of the things he's learned is that "sometimes you have to really slow down to go fast. The more time you take to sit back, to plan, to strategize and to collaborate, the more successful you'll be. You can't do it all overnight."

With that statement in mind, we're sure we haven't seen all we're going to see from Moore or ELM. He's got a long career as president ahead of him, and we can't wait to see what he and the company he leads do next. 🌿

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ARE YOU READY FOR CHANGING PARADIGMS?



How you think about your business may need to change to fit changing times.

BY TOM BORG

Are you waiting for that next green industry business growth opportunity to knock on your door? Funny thing about that — it may already be right there in front of you, and you just haven't recognized it yet because it doesn't fit your paradigm, the way you think about your business.

Paradigms are patterns or frameworks through which we view things and use to solve problems. As futurist Joel Barker states, "With an outdated or ineffective paradigm, your business could be headed toward extinction. With the right kind of paradigm, your small business will thrive in today's economy."

Every business owner or manager has a set of business paradigms that govern the way they think and act in the situations they find themselves in. But when the situations change drastically from what they were before, the old paradigms may not work anymore. It may be time to find some new ones.

NEW CHALLENGES

It's safe to say that many green industry business owners have never experienced anything like what they're experiencing in today's marketplace. For example, here are just a few of the challenges facing green industry business owners today:

- There's more competition than ever.
- It's become extremely hard to find and retain good employees.
- Recreational marijuana has been legalized.
- There are concerns about the effects of global warming.
- Customer expectations are changing.

WHAT BUSINESS AM I REALLY IN?

When it comes to looking for your next green industry business growth opportunity in the face of this, we need to ask ourselves a few questions.

The first one is: What business are you really in? Years ago, the railroad industry thought it was in the “railroad business.” Big mistake! So when the newly created airline industry wanted to form a partnership with the railroad barons, they scoffed at the idea. They didn’t foresee how this new industry was going to change things, and as history tells us, it was all downhill for the railroads from that point on.

They had the wrong paradigm, you see. They thought they were in the railroad business, when in reality, they were in the transportation business, the business of moving people and goods from one place to another. Today the railroads are barely surviving because they didn’t respond correctly to that challenge a long time ago.

One way to learn more about which business you are really in is to ask your clients. They’re the experts when it comes to what they want and need from a small business, yet too often the owners of small businesses only guess at that. As a result, they miss the mark and don’t really give the customer what they are looking for.

How about your business? Once you know what kind of business you’re really in, you can go to work developing a strategy to accurately fulfill your clients’ needs and wants. But you can’t do it if you’re working under outdated assumptions.

So how do you change your business paradigms? Have you ever heard the saying, “I’ll believe it when I see it”? That seems like common sense, but you could be operating from an unconscious paradigm that says the opposite: “I only see what I believe.” You might be unable to recognize a situation for what it really is, because you believe it must be a certain way.

Remember, there are several different ways to tackle any business problem. Be careful not to let your paradigm become “the” paradigm, the only right way forward. Paradigms too strongly held can lead to paradigm paralysis, a terminal disease of certainty.

OPPORTUNITIES IN DISGUISE

In challenging times such as these, it’s best to remain flexible and keep our paradigms pliant. Asking yourself action-oriented questions can help you change outdated thinking and develop more successful solutions to your business problems.

Are there recurring complaints you keep hearing from your customers or employees? That’s a clue that something needs to change. Ask yourself, “How can I turn those complaints into an opportunity to serve them better?”

As Thomas Edison once said, “Oftentimes, opportunity is missed because it comes dressed in work clothes.” An important moneymaking opportunity may present itself in the guise of a problem.

Let’s take a closer look at how this might play out.

Awhile back, I was consulting with the successful owner of a car wash chain. One of his operations was located on a very busy seven-lane street. His customers, who mostly came in after work, kept complaining that it was very difficult to make the left-hand turn into that location in afternoon rush-hour traffic. And it was harder still to make another left to exit into that traffic once they were done.

As we thought through this potential problem/opportunity, the owner found that he could make it easier for his customers to both enter and exit the car wash simply by opening up an hour earlier in the morning. His customers could wash their cars on their way to work and avoid fighting traffic on the way home. He also added a “happy hour” incentive: Anyone coming in between 7 and 8 a.m. would receive discounts or free additional services.

Success came from changing his paradigm from “my customers want to wash their cars after work” to “my customers want to wash their cars before work because the traffic is lighter.” It’s a great example of taking a recurring customer complaint and turning it into an opportunity.

How about you, in your green industry business or organization? Could there be something that needs to change in your approach to your clients, your employees or both? Here are some questions you and your leadership team can ask yourselves:

- Are we receiving repeated complaints?
- How can we turn those complaints into an advantage over our competitors?
- What problems are we having in hiring and retaining employees? With employee performance? With process or workflow?
- What creative new solutions could we try?

Before tackling your next business problem, ask yourself and your team: “What paradigms are we viewing this through and do they need to change?” Then you can unleash your collective creativity to turn the obstacle into a profitable opportunity. 🌱



ASKING YOURSELF ACTION-ORIENTED QUESTIONS CAN HELP YOU CHANGE OUTDATED THINKING AND DEVELOP MORE SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS TO YOUR BUSINESS PROBLEMS.



Tom Borg is a team performance and customer experience expert who works with small businesses and organizations in the green industry to improve customer acquisition and retention. He helps these organizations through his consulting, speaking, training and mentoring. He can be reached at 734.404.5909 or tom@tomborg.com, or visit www.tomborgconsulting.com.

Many communities are banning gasoline-powered leaf blowers because of the noise they make, but landscape professionals wonder if their battery-powered counterparts are a profitable alternative.

by Mary Elizabeth Williams-Villano

BATTLE OF THE BANS

We've all heard the expression "Silence is golden." But in the green industry, silence was never something we aspired to. Silence meant the absence of blowing, mowing and trimming and therefore, an absence of business.

But this is starting to change. As more communities ban or restrict the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers and other power tools, the demand for quieter machines to do our landscaping work has increased.

Manufacturers such as Stihl, Husqvarna, Ecko, Oregon, Greenworks and others have answered that need by making an array of battery-powered professional landscape equipment. These manufacturers are claiming that the battery-powered pro tools are now the equivalent — with some exceptions — of gas-powered ones.

Yet the acceptance of these new tools by the contractors that do landscape and landscape maintenance work has been slow. There are two main reasons for their hesitancy: the assumption that they don't have enough power and the claim that the batteries are too expensive.

OBJECTION 1: "They just don't have enough power."

That's the opinion of Anthony Molinaro, owner of Anthony's Landscaping, Springfield, New Jersey. He does a lot of work in the city of Orange, where they've just passed a summer ban on gas-powered leaf blowers.

"The tools just don't run long enough on those batteries," he says. "When you're trying to blow wet grass off a 200-foot driveway with a bunch of seedlings and other debris, you just can't do a quality job, the sort of job that my high-end customers expect."

As an alternative to using a blower, he's resorted to using his big lawn mowers with vacuum attachments on driveways and walkways. But he admits that isn't a great solution because it runs the risk of damaging his clients' bluestone driveways and walkways.

Not enough power means it takes longer to get the job done, and anything that slows down production eats into a contractor's bottom line. As Molinaro says, "I have 150 houses to do a day between three crews. And I can't lower my prices just because I'm not blowing."

Are the battery-powered power tools really up to the job? According to the manufacturers, the answer is yes — with qualifications. Roger Phelps, corporate communications manager for Stihl USA Inc., Virginia Beach, Virginia, says "The overall work that a unit can do is definitely now comparable to gas-powered equipment."

The biggest challenge for manufacturers, according to Andreas Rangert, vice president, product management and development for the Husqvarna Group, Stockholm, Sweden, has been powering leaf

"Yes, the initial cost is higher, but over time it can save a lot of money. It's a psychological hurdle that contractors must pass." — Andreas Rangert, Husqvarna Group

blowers with a battery, particularly the larger units that move great volumes of air.

"It's a run time issue and a charging issue in terms of getting enough up time," he says. "There is still some way to go. I think we are already there with hedge trimmers and string trimmers and to some extent chain saws, except for the larger saws used in forestry applications."

Smaller, battery-powered blowers are adequate for lighter jobs involving dry leaves. But for clearing the heavy, wet stuff that accumulates on yards and driveways in the Northeast and Midwest, like Molinaro was talking about, not so much.

Run times improved dramatically about five years ago when lithium-ion batteries replaced the old nickel-cadmiums. In addition, most of the major manufacturers have adopted a modular system for their pro equipment where one rechargeable battery pack runs all the tools and can easily be switched between them. Their solution to the run-time problem is to keep multiple batteries on hand, charged up and ready to go so crews can keep working. That leads us to our next objection.

OBJECTION 2: "The batteries are too expensive."

Angel Roman owns Greenscape in Cathedral City, California. It's in the Palm Springs area, which has just passed a gas leaf blower ban. Although he owns a professional-grade electric leaf blower, he says, "Within an hour, the battery's dead. Yes, you can change out the batteries, but those things are very expensive, a few hundred dollars apiece, and you need several. The blower itself costs \$1,000, where a regular gas blower is around \$400."

Roman says that for small operations like his, consisting of just him and his brother-in-law, the expense of going electric can be quite burdensome.

Manufacturers, however, contend that contractors need to look at the bigger picture. "That contractor is absolutely right," says Mike DeLuca, battery product manager at Stihl. "Compared to a gasoline backpack blower, the upfront cost of the batteries and the higher cost of the unit itself come into play. But when you look over the product life cycle, the total cost of ownership is far less than for a traditional gasoline backpack blower. You're not paying for the fuel or the mix oil that goes into the two-stroke engine. And maintenance cost is virtually zero." Nor does one pay for the windshield time should crew members lollygag at the gas station.

Batteries, says DeLuca, are the equivalent of a year's worth of electricity paid in advance, with no



BATTERY POWER PROS:

- + Quieter
- + Allow you to market company as sustainable
- + Zero maintenance
- + Zero emissions
- + No need to buy gas, oil, fuel filters or spark plugs
- + Continue working despite bans or hour limits

BATTERY POWER CONS:

- Tools are more expensive
- Battery packs are expensive, and you need several
- Generally not as powerful
- Shorter run times

HOW LOUD IS TOO LOUD?



That loud tool blowing leaves off a driveway may be annoying to bystanders, but the person wielding it may be the one it hurts the most. According to a blog post by Jackie DiFrancesco BA, COHC, Asha Brogan and Bryan Beamer PhD, PE, CSP of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health on the NIOSH website, chronic noise exposure can lead to hearing loss and tinnitus, the constant perception of ringing or buzzing in one's ears. For landscapers or other grounds management professionals who regularly use noisy tools on the job, the tinnitus may become chronic, which ranges from annoying to completely debilitating.

Workplace sound levels are expressed as dBAs, weighted decibels, which take into account the sensitivity of the human ear. A normal conversation is about 60 dBA and a jackhammer is about 130 dBA. Noise is considered hazardous when it is 85 dBA or above. If you must raise your voice when talking to someone about 3 feet away, the noise level is probably at least 85 dBA. You can download a sound measurement app to your smartphone to check noise levels, such as the NIOSH Sound Level Meter App (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/app.html).

maintenance or fuel spills and no emissions of toxic chemicals, volatile organic compounds or particulate matter. He says contractors need to factor in that they're paying for all their power up front, instead of per fill-up.

Bob Grover is president of Pacific Landscape Management, Portland, Oregon, a company that uses both gas and electric tools. Right now, his predominant use of the battery equipment is on the patios and green roofs of downtown high-rises. "We use them exclusively in those places because we don't want to be taking a gas-powered piece of equipment and a gas can into an elevator. But we've also been testing it to see where and when it could potentially replace our gas equipment entirely."

Does that mean he thinks it will work out economically for him? "I'm not sure," he says. "I'd still have to pay for charging, but I believe it'd be similar to the cost of charging an electric car. The equipment costs more at the outset, and the spare batteries are more expensive than filling up a gas can. And having my facility modified so that we'll have enough power to charge things is another capital expenditure. We've not done a cost analysis on that."

But he's still pretty pumped that there are battery-powered options available, as it doesn't look like bans on gas-powered equipment are easing up. "We're excited about battery technology because we're seeing regulations increasing. It's going to be a great resource in the future just because of that."

Ryan Walsh, owner of Capital City Groundskeeping LLC in Raleigh, North Carolina, owns both gas and electric tools. He foresees a day, maybe 10 years from now, when his operation will be entirely battery powered.

"We're excited about battery technology because we're seeing regulations increasing. It's going to be a great resource in the future just because of that."

— Bob Grover,
Pacific Landscape
Management

He buys mix oil by the 5-gallon bucket and goes through about 20 gallons a year.

"That's a significant cost, just for that, and then we also have to buy gas. With battery power, I wouldn't have that expense, and the crews wouldn't have to figure out how to start the things every morning. And they're quiet," he adds.

He figures that the return on investment would come in one-and-a-half to two years, depending on how many units he buys, but goes back to the cost of those batteries. "A backpack battery pack runs \$1,000, and I'd need several, so do the math on that. But I can buy four gas weed-eaters for a \$1,000."

Rangert says, as with all new technology, the price of the batteries will eventually come down. "The lifetime cost of battery power over gas is less and we have calculators on the web for figuring out how long the payoff period is. Yes, the initial cost is higher, but over time it can save a lot of money. It's a psychological hurdle that contractors must pass."

The American Green Zone Alliance, Studio City, California, is a nonprofit organization whose mission statement is "to transition the entire grounds maintenance industry from noisy, highly polluting gas-powered machines into quieter, zero-emissions electric equipment and sustainable operations."

AGZA clearly means business with a statement like that. As part of that mission, it has created a Green Zone education and certification program and recently entered into a collaboration with Stihl to promote the use of battery-powered equipment in pro landscape applications. Its experts are often called in to advise communities that are considering gas-powered leaf blower bans.

Although AGZA has a clear agenda, it recognizes the burden such bans can place on smaller companies like Greenscape. "The challenge we're seeing for small companies is the implication that they're going to take perfectly well-working gas equipment, scrap it and then put down \$5,000 or \$10,000 to replace it," says Luke Massman-Johnson, AGZA's chief financial officer and communications director. "If you can do that, you're going to save money in the long run and have a marketing advantage, but for a lot of people that's just not possible. It's the mow-blow-and-go crews that are stuck behind the eight ball on this issue."

Nuisance or health hazard?

Why is it that people sleeping or sitting in their kitchens trying to read the newspaper hundreds of feet away and separated by walls are still bothered by the sound of gas leaf blowers?

Daniel Fink, MD, a board-certified internist, has advised the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization on noise issues. He's also acting chair of the Health Advisory Council for Quiet Communities Inc., a Lincoln, Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization whose mission



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SUCCESS STORY

Read about the success one lawn care company has had with its all electric tools in the online sidebar available at www.igin.com/battle-of-the-bands.

is “to transition landscape maintenance to low-noise, zero-emissions practices with positive solutions to protect the health of workers, children, the public and the environment.” Like AGZA, it also advises municipalities on leaf-blower bans.

There’s something unique about the low-frequency sound produced by these tools, says Fink; it travels over long distances and penetrates walls and windows. “It’s this low-frequency component that’s uniquely annoying. That’s why there’s so much focus on leaf blowers and not lawn mowers or other power tools.”

He cites a pilot study co-authored by QC Executive Director Jamie Banks (available online in the *Journal of Environmental and Toxicological Studies*, Nov. 3, 2017). It found noise from commercial gas leaf blowers was over 100 decibels at the source and persisted as far away as 800 feet.

But Roman doesn’t understand why leaf blowers are singled out when jackhammers and chain saws are much louder. He adds, “We’ve got people driving super noisy Harley Davidsons through the passes but I don’t see them being banned.”

He suggests that the politicians who pass these bans “go out and try to clear debris from a big house with a little battery-powered blower to understand

where we’re coming from. They don’t get it because they’re not in our shoes, they’re sitting behind a desk making up these ordinances.”

Ready or not, here it comes

Is battery power the future? Rangert says “Yes,” unequivocally.

When you add up all the factors involved — the increasing bans on gas-powered tools, the finite nature of fossil fuels and the fact that battery technology will continue to advance, it certainly looks that way. Also, companies like Husqvarna and Stihl, which make both gas and electric power tools, are focusing significant marketing efforts on the electric side.

I asked Rangert when he thinks gas-powered landscape tools will become obsolete. “For light duty tools like hedge trimmers, five to eight years. For the bigger chainsaws and backpack blowers, it will take a bit longer, but it will happen.”

“As a general statement, eventually the tech will make the decisions for us. It has to be gradually implemented, but battery will take over at some point.” When that happens, will you be ready? 🌱

The author is senior editor of *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at maryvillano@igin.com.



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Meet our newest addition to the Brilliance Metal Works family: **Yosemite**. This well light is available in an angled or flat top, with a black finish. Yosemite comes with a stainless steel heavy duty adjustable gimbal and blackened brass cover with glass. It is compatible with any PAR36 or Chameleon PAR36 lamp.

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MEASURING THE NOISE

Just how loud are our industry’s tools? A recent study measured the sound levels of several common gas-powered landscaping tools and found that many produced a maximum level higher than 85 dBA.



Photo: Stihl

TOOL	NOISE LEVEL (dBA)
Push mower	86-92
Riding mower	88-96
Leaf blower	95-106
Edger	98-106
Chipper	102-106
Chain saw	105-109

Source: CDC/NIOSH

NIOSH says it’s important for those operating loud tools, and their managers, to be aware of the health risks and potential solutions. Learn more on the NIOSH noise and hearing loss page: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/default.html.

Basic can be

beautiful



The standard, strictly time-based irrigation controller may not be cutting edge, but it's the workhorse that many contractors depend on.

by Mary Elizabeth Williams-Villano

It seems like every day there's some shiny new gizmo that promises to revolutionize our lives, streamline our businesses and take 30 pounds off our bellies overnight. But at the same time, the breathtaking speed of technology creates a longing for the stripped-down, the tried-and-true, the classic; that's why there are nostalgia catalogs that still sell cassette players and manual typewriters.

Consider the standard, basic, plain-vanilla irrigation controller. Anyone who works in the green industry has seen a million of them, because there are millions of them still out there, turning on sprinklers and turning them off at the appointed times — and nothing more.

These little workhorses may not be terribly exciting, but they're hardly obsolete. And no one can argue that they don't do their jobs, keeping turf and planter beds green and thriving. Just don't ask them to make any complicated decisions, and you'll get along with them just fine.

At this point, you might be asking, "Why write about them at all? Shouldn't we be promoting smart control at this stage of the game?" Of course we should — and we do. But the fact remains, basic controllers still have an important role to play in landscape irrigation, and for certain types of applications, they're ideal.

The mere fact that so many of them are still being manufactured, installed and maintained is reason enough to talk about them. Yes, we now have ingenious smart controllers that use local weather information, evapotranspiration data and input from sensors to manage irrigation, but not everyone has those devices nor wants them, for a number of reasons.

Rick Arena, CIC, CID, CLIA, has spent over 30 years in irrigation. He's been a contractor and an irrigation designer and has worked in distribution and sales. Currently, he's irrigation training manager at SiteOne Landscape Supply LLC, Charlotte, North Carolina. He says, "Probably 75% or more of all controllers sold right now are still the old style."

James Harris, product manager for irrigation controllers at Rain Bird, Azusa, California, says, "The standard controller is still a great solution. It's worked well for many, many years. New technology like smart controllers always has an adoption curve, and not everyone is ready to adopt it at the same time."



"Simple, basic irrigation controllers have their place and it's site-specific."

— Rick Arena,
SiteOne

Standard controllers are well-suited for applications where water must be applied at regular intervals, no exceptions. “Growing new sod is a perfect example of where you don’t want any ET adjustments,” says Matt Hall, product marketing manager for Irritrol components at The Toro Company’s Riverside, California, irrigation division.

“You’ve got to water frequently and continually for 30 to 45 days, say, 10 minutes every hour, until the grass takes root,” he adds “In that situation you wouldn’t want an ET calculation to start ratcheting back your water because you need to give the turf a lot of it in frequent, short bursts.”

As he puts it, grass seedlings can’t wait for a buyer to close on a new home and start installing internet and Wi-Fi; the grass wouldn’t last. In a case like this, a standard irrigation timer will often be installed at least temporarily to keep up the curb appeal.

Making a basic controller smart

Thanks to today’s technology, a standard “dumb timer” doesn’t have to stay that way; it’s a simple matter to smarten it up by plugging in an add-on device. Hunter’s Rain-Clik, Mini-Clik, Freeze-Clik, Soil-Clic and Mini-Weather Station add-ons “are virtually ‘controller agnostic’ as they will work with virtually any controller, regardless of brand,” says Dave Shoup, product manager, central controllers. Irritrol’s Climate Logic works with any standard Irritrol controller and now uses on-site weather information to adjust schedules.

Rain Bird’s LNK Wi-Fi module brings weather-based water management, Wi-Fi access, smartphone and tablet control to ESP-TM2 and ESP-Me Series controllers manufactured after Nov. 2, 2016. Rain Bird controllers made prior to that can be made smart by installing a Wi-Fi-compatible replacement panel. “You can make our basic Rain Bird controllers EPA WaterSense-certified by just adding the Wi-Fi module and a rain sensor,” says James Harris, product manager for irrigation controllers at Rain Bird, Azusa, California.

Rick Arena, CIC, CID, CLIA, irrigation training manager at SiteOne Landscape Supply LLC, Charlotte, North Carolina, says practically every basic controller manufactured in the last 10 or 20 years has sensor terminals inside where a rain or soil moisture sensor can be connected. Even earlier models that lack those terminals can still be hooked up with a little field wiring; he’s done it.

It is possible to save water using a basic controller. “Our standard units have seasonal adjustment settings,” says Harris. “There are websites and other resources that will tell you, ‘for this part of the country your percentage of watering is 40% this month.’ You program for the

hottest, driest time of year and turn it down on a percentage basis depending on what time of year it is now. If you did that once a month, once a week or once a day, it would save a lot of water and money.”

Arena saved a homeowners association a lot of water with a simple tweak. “They were using about 2.5 million gallons of water a year. Looking at their system, we found they had virtually no working rain sensors. Just by adding them to their basic controllers, we cut their water use by a million gallons of water in one year.”

“Simple, basic irrigation controllers have their place and it’s site-specific,” Arena adds. “Maybe you have a lot of flower beds that need to be watered on a regular basis. There might be trees or bushes in big containers or plants that need to be sheltered under a covered patio roof because too much rainfall will kill them. You’ve got to treat those differently than you would if they were out in the field.”

Standard controllers have one more positive attribute that many contractors appreciate: They’re simple and easy to understand. “If I have people who I feel for some reason just aren’t going to grasp a more complex controller, then I probably won’t even offer it to them,” says Jim Lewis, owner and president of Lewis Landscape Services LLC, Beaverton, Oregon.

Lewis also appreciates the reliability of basic controllers, saying that there just aren’t that many parts in them that can go wrong, whereas a smart controller has a few different components that could cause system errors.

The last positive Lewis lists is cost. You can get a standard controller for a lot less than a smart one, and some of his clients find that appealing.

But shouldn’t every controller be smart?

At this point in time, with the scarcity of potable water becoming more of an issue around the world and more communities stressing the need for efficient irrigation, shouldn’t every irrigation controller ideally be a smart one?

“To be good stewards of water, our precious commodity, absolutely,” says Hall, “and selfishly, too, as a business matter, because all those smart controllers sell for a higher price. Is that going to happen? Not overnight, but if you ask me this again in five years, the number of standard timers being replaced by smart timers will be much higher.”

Hall adds that one of the challenges Toro and its competitors have is educating some contractors and end users to all of the many benefits smart controllers offer.

Arena says the idealistic side of him says, yes, every controller should be a smart controller, because they could save probably unfathomable amounts of water, while his realistic side says they’re not necessarily the best choice in all situations. “For the most part, yes, they should be. But the practicality of that, again, you have to go back to who’s installing the controllers and who’s maintaining them. Is anyone actually looking at them?”

Eric Bond, CIT, CLIA, is service manager at KC Irrigation, Kansas City, Kansas, a company with 1,200 clients, a mix of residential and commercial, only about 70 of which are currently using smart controllers.

Bond would prefer it if all of KC Irrigation’s 1,200 customers had smart controllers “for a multitude of reasons. It would allow us to help them



Basic controllers become smart when add-on devices such as Irritrol’s Climate Logic are connected to them. Photo: Irritrol

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program schedules remotely. If I'm just making a simple controller adjustment, I can do it from the office. When a customer texts me saying, 'You need to make this change,' I don't have to try and cram a service call into my day."

The "old-timers" and the old timers

If smart controllers are so great, why doesn't everybody have one by now? Ramzi White, key account manager at SiteOne Landscape Supply LLC, Lubbock, Texas, says most of the irrigation companies in his area have not completely adopted smart controllers — or even seem to know what a smart controller is, really. Basic units from Hunter or Rain Bird are still the primary controllers purchased by the contractors who come into his store.

When asked why he thinks that's so, White says, "It's the learning curve. They're just not really wanting to learn the new products; that's the main issue. These basic units are what they've always used, and they feel they do a good enough job. They're simple and easy, not continually asking them questions. They just want to put the thing on a time basis and let it go that route."

White says he's had contractors who've replaced smart controllers with standard units just because they didn't know how to use the smart ones and weren't willing to learn.

Hall can attest to that. "The Irritrol Rain Dial has been around for a long time. Most people in the irrigation business know it and understand it. A lot of contractors know what they know, and if it isn't broken, they're not fixing it. They'll say, 'I've been using the Rain Dial for 20 years and it's never let me down. I'm going to keep using it 'til they pry it out of my cold, dead fingers.' Even as new contractors come into the business, if they've learned the Rain Dial from an old-timer, they might just continue using it."

Not to be ageist, but the general perception is that most contractors over 50 — the "old-timers" Hall is referring to — are less receptive to new technology than the younger crowd. Lewis agrees, saying, "The younger guys are a lot more open minded to using the more modern controllers. Some of the older contractors can be sort of set in their ways and kind of grumpy."

Lewis is 47, but says he's always been more of a tech-curious kind of person. "If there's something new I'll check it out, and if I like it, I'll adopt it quickly because I can see the value in it. Other people will be like, 'I'm going to wait a few years and see it really works.'"

Older homeowners are often baffled by all the smart controller settings as well. "Sometimes these things are too complicated, in my opinion," says Matt Hinton, owner/operator of Irrigation Works, Knoxville, Tennessee. "A large contingent of my client base is older. They're just getting around to



A Hunter Rain-Clik added to any brand of basic controller will halt irrigation during rainstorms, saving water. Photo: Hunter Industries

emailing and texting, and the thought of trying to get a 70-year-old interested in a Wi-Fi controller is like, 'Are you kidding me?' The young kids in the starter homes like using their phones to change settings, but frankly, I think it's a novelty to them."

While Hinton can see the benefits of smart control for saving water, he's uncomfortable asking clients for Wi-Fi passwords and worries about the hackability of smart home devices.

Bond has also observed that many of his company's older clients are "a little bit pushed off" by technology in general and are overwhelmed by the complexity of smart controllers. Cost is another interfering factor.

As for the younger homeowners, true to stereotype, Bond has found millennials and anyone in their mid-40s or younger who've dealt with technology their whole lives to be "about as easy a sell for smart control as they come." They're excited about integrating it with all their other internet of things devices such as Alexa.

Companies like Rachio have capitalized on the "too many settings" problem by making simple, easy-to-understand yet smart controllers at a low price point. These devices are like a bridge to both worlds, encompassing all the water-saving features of smart controllers with the reduced complexity and price of basic controllers. Will devices like these point the way to the future? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, millions of standard irrigation controllers will continue doing what they do without a lot of fanfare, keeping lawns and bedding plants hydrated and alive. They may not make anyone's heart beat faster, but you can count on these reliable standbys to stay on the job like clockwork, day after day after day. 🌱

The author is senior editor of *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at maryvillano@igin.com.

"A lot of contractors know what they know and if it isn't broken, they're not fixing it."

— Matt Hall,
The Toro
Company

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HOW TO GET AN "A" IN CHEMISTRY

A turf and ornamental chemical firm manager shares how target identification and precise application is the key to success with chemical inputs.

EDITED BY KRISTIN SMITH-ELY



THE FIRST STEP IS IDENTIFICATION OF THE TURF SPECIES INVOLVED AND THE WEEDS, INSECTS AND DISEASES YOU'RE FIGHTING. IT'S VITAL TO UNDERSTAND YOUR TARGET.

If you are like me, chemistry was not your best subject in high school. Luckily for green industry professionals, there are many good "teachers" and "tutors" out there who know the subject matter well. They come in the form of distributors and chemical suppliers and long-time end users of these products.

One of the larger investments lawn care and landscape companies make on an annual basis is in chemicals. Fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides are essential concoctions for many contractors, aiding immensely in their efforts to keep their clients' lawns and landscapes looking green and healthy. But managing their purchase and application can also be complicated.

It is important to get your formulas for these chemicals just right and to apply them at the right times in the right places. Not following the directions properly could result in a massive waste of time and money. PBI-Gordon Corp., Shawnee,

Kansas, is well known in the professional turf and ornamental management industry. The company provides a proprietary line of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, growth regulators and other products for lawn care, golf course and landscape professionals. You've probably seen these products, which include SpeedZone, Q4 Plus, Segway, Atrimmec and others, at your local distributor or used them yourself.

As a member of the PBI-Gordon turf and ornamental management team with nearly 20 years of experience, Dave Loecke tracks emerging trends and develops new strategic partnerships as they relate to large key end users. "I employ tactics to create awareness of PBI-Gordon products and present effective solutions for large end users as well as provide technical support," Loecke says of his role.

He took the time to answer questions for *Irrigation & Green Industry* to help green industry professionals better understand how they can get the most out of their investment in chemicals.

Q: What is the best way for a landscape contractor to purchase chemicals?

A: Chemical landscape products are available through several national and regional turf and ornamental distributors. Larger operations or companies in a good cash position will sometimes participate in fall early-order programs allowing them to benefit from additional incentives from manufacturers and/or distributors. Other operations may tend to purchase closer to use-season, which aids in cash flow management, warehousing and inventory.

Q: Do landscape contractors typically prepare for the entire season, or do they purchase product regularly as needed?

A: For higher volume products that are part of a staple agronomic program, contractors may book a portion of these early to take advantage of program incentives, but the lower-use or specialty products will typically be purchased in-season as needed.

Q: What are some common mistakes landscape contractors make when determining how much of a product to apply and when?

A: I've seen a lot of mistakes over the years! There are many variables to obtaining effective performance of these products. The first step is identification of the turf species involved and the weeds, insects and diseases you're fighting. It's vital to fully understand your target. Choose products that will deliver the results you want to accomplish on the targets you've identified.

Not only is product choice and rate important but also application. The best product will not perform as expected if not applied correctly and at the right time. This may be related to stage of growth, environmental conditions and spray volume, to name a few. The product label is a great source of information.

Q: What types of training/support do you provide to distributors/contractors?

A: PBI-Gordon provides several ways to gain knowledge. Our website contains information on all our products including labels, Safety Data Sheets, product sheets, technical bulletins, sales rep contacts and more. We're increasing our activity on social media including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Soon we will have product-specific training videos available. The PBI-Gordon sales team can be a tremendous resource for product information and recommendations for local problems.

Q: What is PBI-Gordon's busy season for the landscape and ornamental industry?

A: I've been in the T&O market space for almost two decades. There used to be a slow time, but I've

not seen it for many years. The market and those that serve the market are moving at a much faster pace than ever. If you're not actively promoting solutions and conditioning the market, you're enhancing your strategy and planning for the future.

Q: What advice do you have for new lawn care/landscape professionals trying to find the right distributor and products?

A: Get to know your local distributors and manufacturer's reps. They understand your local conditions and the products that perform best in your area.

Q: What trends are you seeing in your operation and how are you responding?

A: Pest pressure is getting more challenging. In some instances, weeds and other pests are appearing in areas that never experienced these infestations. A lack of product rotation may have contributed to new resistance issues, or loss of an active ingredient may have removed an effective control option.

We're looking to bring new active ingredients to the market as well as discover new ways to control pests within our current portfolio.

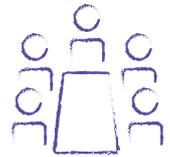
Q: What types of sustainable/environmentally friendly products do you produce? And what kind of growth are you seeing in that market?

A: While our portfolio contains mostly traditional chemistries, we continue to look for opportunities. Recently we reformulated several products to reduce our dependency on solvents and significantly reduce volatile organic compound emissions. We're also exploring new active ingredients that have much lower per-acre use rates.

There is definitely an increase in curiosity toward sustainable or environmentally friendly products and I don't see that slowing down. I see more sustainable or environmentally friendly products in the market, and as with any product, you need to clearly understand efficacy, tolerance, price, etc. and determine if it will fully meet your expectations. As an industry, we promote the judicious use of pesticides and encourage folks to make decisions based on education and sound science.

Q: What does the future look like for PBI-Gordon and the overall turf and ornamental chemical industry?

A: PBI-Gordon has an aggressive pipeline of new products and active ingredients and we are very excited for the future. The T&O market will continue to grow year over year, and there will be a greater need to control unique pests in regional areas. The term "resistance" will begin to appear more often and there will be a greater need for mode of action rotation to maintain effective product performance. 🌱



GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL DISTRIBUTORS AND MANUFACTURER'S REPS. THEY UNDERSTAND YOUR LOCAL CONDITIONS AND THE PRODUCTS THAT PERFORM BEST IN YOUR AREA.



Dave Loecke is a turf and ornamental management team member of PBI-Gordon Corp. More information is available online at www.pbigordon.com.

Trendspotting for **SUCCESS**

Taking note of broad cultural trends and addressing the concerns behind them is a great way to build your business.



BY
JUDITH M. GUIDO



Every business owner wants to be successful. But many, in fact most, don't get there. Of those that do make it, what is it that separates these leaders from the followers? In my experience working with, observing, researching and growing successful green industry companies, one thing consistently stands out, and that's the ability to identify trends and embed them into a company's business model.

Embedding trends into one's overall strategy shouldn't be an "OAYE" — a once-a-year-event conceived at an annual planning session but rather an ongoing process, part of an organization's DNA. If you don't believe in or understand the power of trends and the impact it has on your business, you may be headed down the path toward obsolescence. I can't stress this enough — trends consistently present opportunities, and it's the team that can spot and leverage them that will sustain its leadership position.

A trend is not the same as a fad, a short-term phenomenon that typically affects just a single industry. Think of the pet rock or the Tamagotchi, something that burns brightly then quickly fades.

Trends on the other hand, are longer-lasting cultural shifts that reflect changing customer needs, attitudes, behaviors or expectations and affect more than one industry. Consider sustainability, a trend that kicked off with the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. Its roots are deep and wide, and its tendrils have found their way into many industries, including health care, automotive and equipment manufacturing, food, fashion, real estate, landscaping and irrigation. The desire for sustainability continues to have a significant impact on the green industry and on your business.

LEVERAGING CHANGE

How are trends created and what drives them? Remember that trends happen as a result of a change in customer needs, attitudes, behaviors and expectations. Basic human needs, like food, shelter and safety don't change, but the means of obtaining them do. An organization's ability to address ever-changing customer demands by identifying the gaps that exist between what customers want and what the marketplace currently offers is where opportunities unfold, innovations are created and leaders are born.

What kind of innovations am I talking about? They include everything from creating new sales channels to new products, services, brands and pricing models, marketing campaigns and startups.



It's never been easier to spot trends nor a more exciting time in which to do it.

In order to analyze and identify change, you need to understand the shifts and triggers that drive it. Shifts are longer-term macro changes, whereas triggers are more immediate, shorter changes.

An easy-to-remember acronym for longer-term shifts that drive behavior is PESTLE, which stands for political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and ethical. Environmental shifts, for example, include the effects of climate change and the decline in the supply of natural resources such as water, food and energy.

Triggers are the more immediate, short-term forces that drive change and create trends. Think of the events that triggered the #MeToo movement or the data compromises that major technology companies have suffered that made people wary about sharing personal or professional information with businesses. Weather-related events such as hurricanes, fires, tornadoes and floods trigger changes in where and how people live and what they buy. Gather your team and ask how these shifts and triggers have affected your company and what you can do to leverage them.

This is your opportunity to shine, to differentiate your business by leveraging these trends. Offer new products and services, forge new partnerships and utilize social media tools.

Shifts in weather patterns have triggered concerns about health and safety, both basic human needs. There is a plethora of opportunities in addressing people's fears about the changing weather.

THINK DIFFERENTLY

Gather your team and start thinking differently. Is it possible to build a new business model while positioning your company as a thought leader? What new services can you develop that address these needs and concerns? Has your area been hit by wildfires or tornadoes? What if you launched new services such as “firescaping” (landscaping to mitigate the danger of wildfire) and post-tornado cleanup? Or perhaps your business expands into erosion control, stormwater management and engineering services all under the heading of “stormscaping.” You may just have created a new trend and the name of your latest brand. You get the idea — trends can be turned into tremendous opportunities for new partnerships and higher profits.

The sustainability megatrend encompasses several microtrends including “better business,” the concept that doing good things for people and the planet is good business. It includes the trend toward “betterment” that focuses on people’s aspirations toward self-improvement and living healthier lives. And it takes in the “local love” trend, where the key drivers are people’s need for safety in their communities, neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, workplaces and houses of worship.

This is the reason why brands like Seventh Generation and Patagonia are so successful. It’s why products like smart irrigation controllers, soil moisture sensors, drip systems, robotic electric mowers and chemical-free weed and pest solutions continue to climb in popularity and profits.

It’s never been easier to spot trends nor a more exciting time in which to do it. Simply read the latest stories about new innovations and companies that pop up in the news, both inside and outside our industry. More than likely, these new innovations and companies are newsworthy and successful because they’ve addressed an unmet need or catered to new behaviors. The combination of greater environmental awareness and the growing number of successful eco-friendly brands that address it are driving the demand for still more sustainable products and services.

NO MORE EXCUSES

With so much free qualitative and quantitative data available nowadays there’s no excuse not to look for trends. Jump on the web, of course, but don’t forget about traditional media such as magazines, newspapers, radio and television. Explore business and industry trade publications and niche media resources such as blogs, podcasts and newsletters, case studies and research reports. Discover new products via press releases and company news feeds, K-1 filings (schedule K-1, an Internal Revenue Service form issued annually for investments in partnership interests) and social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.



Explore business and industry trade publications and niche media resources such as blogs, podcasts and newsletters, case studies and research reports.

Set up Google alerts with targeted phrases such as “U.S. landscape company plans to launch” or “latest sustainable products in irrigation.” Build a trendspotter network inside and outside your company. Visit crowdsourcing sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo to see what’s popular there. Watch “Shark Tank” and note what products attract interest from the sharks.

Going to conferences and events will provide you with an abundance of insights. Attend talks by thought leaders and influencers and check out their websites, blogs and podcasts. Don’t forget that professional associations and universities provide compelling research, events and education, some of it free.

Use your eyes and ears to catch the buzz. Pay attention to what people are currently ecstatic over, complaining about or Googling — that’s where you’ll spot trends in the making. Remember, the teams that can spot, leverage and even create trends will be the leaders. They’re filling in the gaps and meeting customers’ changing needs, behaviors and expectations in unique ways that are not currently being met by the marketplace.

Which would you rather be — a follower, or a leader, an influencer and a trendsetter? I think you know the answer. 🌱

Judith Guido is the chairwoman of Guido and Associates, a company dedicated to helping companies grow their people and profits. Follow her on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Look for her upcoming educational podcasts, blogs and talks on how to profitably scale up a company at www.guidoassoc.com



If you don’t believe in or understand the power of trends and the impact it has on your business, you may be headed down the path toward obsolescence.

7 TIPS

to keep your string trimmers RUNNING STRONG

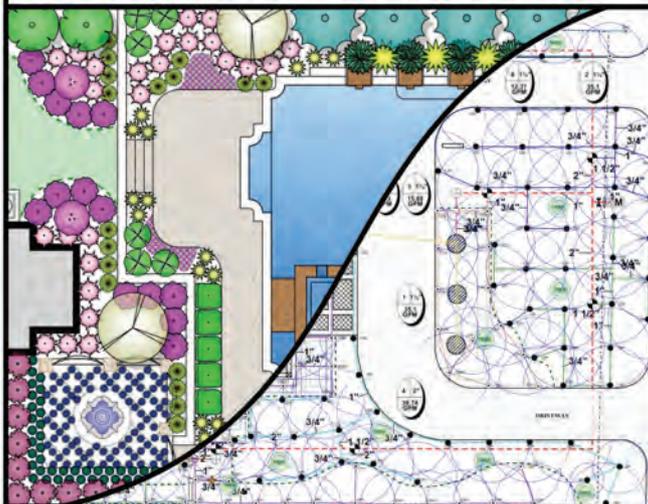
The gas-powered string trimmer, also commonly referred to as a weed whacker, is a common tool in maintenance crews' tool boxes. They may be less complicated than a lawn mower, but these handy devices can benefit from a tuneup from time to time. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Virginia, shares seven tips to help you tune up your string trimmers. These are good reminders for the seasoned vet or the new crew member.

- 1. Clean and visually inspect your equipment.** Wipe it down with a rag or cloth and remove any dirt or debris. Look for loose screws, missing parts or signs of damage.
- 2. Remove and inspect the spark plug.** If the electrode looks worn, replace the spark plug. Whether you install a brand-new spark plug or plan to use the old one, use a spark plug gapping tool to set the proper gap. Information on this should be found in your owner's manual.
- 3. Inspect and replace the line.** Pull the trimmer line spool out and remove any leftover line from last season. The line can get brittle over time. Rewind with new line and reinstall the head.
- 4. Examine the air filter.** Remove the cover and the air filter. Inspect the air filter carefully not only to see if it needs to be cleaned but also to make sure it does not have any holes in it. Holes will let dirt enter the engine, causing damage.
- 5. Check the controls.** Start with the on/off switch. It should click on and off. Pull the starter rope all the way out and check for cuts, nicks and frayed spots. Replace it if you see any signs of damage. Test the throttle for smooth operation and check the choke and primer bulb.
- 6. Drain any old fuel.** If you did not empty your trimmer's fuel tank in the fall, drain your tank now. Most fuels today contain ethanol, which can separate into alcohol and water and cause damage to your trimmer's engine. Follow safe handling procedures and dispose of old fuel properly.
- 7. Protect your power by using the right fuel.** Always use E10 or less fuel. It is illegal to use any fuel with more than 10% ethanol in any outdoor power equipment, including your string trimmer. Higher ethanol blended fuels may damage or destroy outdoor power equipment.

This article was provided by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. For more information visit www.opei.org.

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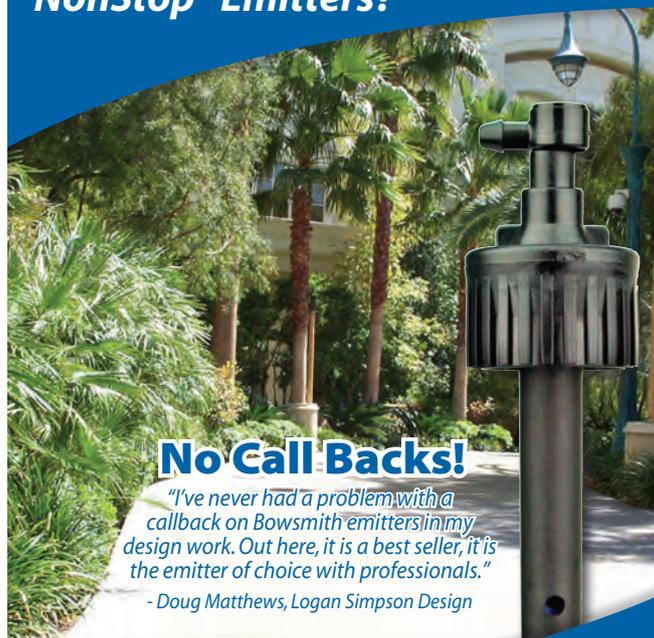


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CAN'T MISS OPPORTUNITIES AT GIE+EXPO 2019

GIE+Expo, a national landscape, hardscape and equipment exposition, offers attendees an experience like nowhere else. Sponsored by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Virginia; Professional Grounds Management Society, Forest Hill, Maryland; and National Association of Landscape Professionals, Fairfax, Virginia, this three-day event allows attendees to learn from industry experts, operate the newest equipment and connect with fellow contractors from across the country.

GIE+Expo 2019 runs Oct. 16-18 and will bring more than 24,000 landscapers, dealers, manufacturers and suppliers to Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to approximately 1,000 exhibits inside the Kentucky Exposition Center, the expo also has over 20 acres of outdoor demonstrations and test driving adjacent to the indoor exhibits.

"If you're in this business, Louisville is the place you have to be," says Kris Kiser, president of OPEI and managing partner of GIE+Expo. "Spend a few days at GIE+Expo, and you'll equip yourself and your business with the tools you need to succeed."

Highlights and new additions this year include the following:



Free parking: Solving one of attendees' most common complaints, GIE+Expo will offer free parking at the Kentucky Exposition Center. This means easy access for all attendees and exhibitors. Now at GIE+Expo there's no more waiting at the gate, which means more time on the show floor.



Climb trees, expand your horizons: The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio, will host eight live climbing and arbor care demonstrations taught by the Women's Tree Climbing Workshop during the show.



Hardscape house: Hardscape North America, which co-locates with GIE+Expo, will host this new outdoor space. Outdoor hardscape exhibitors, educational demonstrations and the National HNA Installer Championship will all be under one roof at this new facility.



Show dogs: Who knows your yard best? Your dog. Attendees can take a break from the show floor to visit and adopt rescue dogs at Mutt Madness, which returns to the show on Oct. 17. At last year's inaugural event, sponsored by GIE+Expo, TurfMutt, and the Kentucky Humane Society, 11 dogs found forever homes.



Exclusive Expo experiences: GIE+Expo has arranged for special free access to the Frazier History Museum on Tuesday and the Muhammad Ali Center on Oct. 17, 5-8 p.m. These extended hours are exclusively for GIE+Expo attendees and exhibitors.



Top-notch education: GIE+Expo offers 19 educational sessions hosted by NALP; the Irrigation Association, Fairfax, Virginia; and HNA. Sessions will cover estimating, snow and ice management, fleet maintenance, cash flow, and sales and marketing. Attendees looking to expand or improve their hardscape business can attend "Let's Build a Backyard in Two Days," a series of six demonstrations that will cover everything a contractor needs to know to create beautiful outdoor living spaces.

Early bird registration is \$15 through Sept. 5. For more information and to register online for the trade show and education program, visit www.gie-expo.com.

ASLA announces 2019 Honors recipients

The American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington, D.C., has announced its 2019 Honors recipients. The honors represent the highest awards ASLA bestows each year. They'll be presented during ASLA's annual President's Dinner during the Conference on Landscape Architecture in San Diego in November:

- The 2019 ASLA Medal: Philadelphia's **Carol Franklin**, FASLA
- The 2019 ASLA Design Medal: **Douglas P. Reed**, FASLA, of Cambridge, Massachusetts
- The 2019 ASLA Community Service Award: Philadelphia's **Kimberlee Douglas**
- The Jot D. Carpenter Teaching Medal: **Dr. Lee-Anne Milburn**, FASLA, of Redlands, California
- The LaGasse Medal – Landscape Architect Professional: **Julie Hensley**, ASLA, of Folly Beach, South Carolina
- The LaGasse Medal – Non-Landscape Architect Professional: Seattle's **Sally Jewell**
- The Landscape Architecture Firm Award: **Heritage Landscapes LLC**, Norwalk, Connecticut
- The Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence: **Landscape Architecture Foundation**, Washington, D.C.
- The Olmsted Medal: **U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse** of Rhode Island

In addition, ASLA will induct six honorary members for 2019. Honorary membership is among the greatest ASLA honors given to nonlandscape architects in recognition of notable service to the profession. Since its inception in 1899, ASLA has inducted only 231 honorary members.

The honorary ASLA memberships will be awarded to: Thomas Bradshaw of Raleigh, North Carolina; Candice Damon of New York, New York; Daniel Martin of Hudsonville, Michigan; Kitty Stoner of Annapolis, Maryland; Tom Stoner of Annapolis, Maryland; and Marc Treib of Berkeley, California.

Inescapable industry changes discussed during OPEI's 67th Annual Meeting

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Virginia, recently held its annual meeting in Park City, Utah, where attendees got a peek into the future of the economy, technology and issues impacting the outdoor power equipment industry.

Speakers included Dr. Lior Zoref, with a doctorate in crowd-sourcing, best-selling author, and TED speaker who has spoken at the White House, Google, MIT Media Lab and LinkedIn; Dr. Alan Beaulieu, president and principal at ITR Economics and a senior economic advisor to numerous U.S. and international trade associations; and Paul Zikopoulos, named one of the "50 Big Data Twitter Influencers" by SAP, a consultant for "60 Minutes" and multiple universities. They were all consistent in their message: inescapable changes are coming that will impact everyone, no matter who you are.

The OPEI Board of Directors also met in conjunction with the annual meeting and mapped out strategic plans for the coming changes in business. "In addition to what's occurring with the economy and technological shifts, the industry is facing a number of pressing issues with the emissions changes in California, impact of tariffs on trade and ongoing threats to the managed landscape," says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI. "The board discussed these issues at length and mapped out a game plan."

He adds, "We also discussed the continued mega-growth of GIE+Expo, the industry's signature trade show held annually in Louisville, Kentucky, which continues to break records. New this year is a partnership with Louisville Tourism on a 'Land in Louisville' campaign designed to educate the fly-in audience that coming to the show is easy and affordable when planned in advance."

In recognition of the extraordinary success of the association's TurfMutt education platform, now celebrating its tenth anniversary, the OPEI board moved to create the TurfMutt Education Foundation, which will take the program to the next level.

At the meeting, the board also elected two new members: Brian Melka, president, Kohler Engines, and Will Walton III, vice president, Honda Power Equipment. Ed Cohen, retiring OPEI board member from Honda, was thanked for his decade of service.

At the Park City meeting, attendees also got in some outdoor business time. Many members spent a spectacular afternoon on the mountainside golf course of the annual OPEI Propane Golf Classic.



From left to right: Warren Sellers, president, Sellers Expositions and GIE+Expo show manager; Karen Williams, president and CEO, Louisville Tourism; Kris Kiser, president and CEO, OPEI; Cleo Battle, executive vice president, Louisville Tourism.

Irrigation Foundation's future solidifies with Irrigation Association

To further strengthen their commitment to promoting careers in irrigation, the Fairfax, Virginia-based Irrigation Association and Irrigation Foundation have announced that they are joining forces. Together, with increased resources, they can ensure the sustainability of the workforce development programs directed by the Foundation over the past 20 years.

"Like our advocacy efforts, developing our future workforce is integral to the industry's success," says IA CEO Deborah Hamlin, CAE, FASAE. "Bringing these initiatives within the IA ensures that continuous funding will be provided through membership dues and not be solely reliant on direct donations. The structure will remain in place for those organizations or individuals who must donate to a 501(c)3 charitable organization."

With the support of its industry sponsors, the Foundation has delivered many successful programs over the years for students and faculty. These programs will continue and will be managed by the IA and its workforce development committees:

- faculty academies – providing teachers with tools to bring the latest irrigation content and technologies into the classroom
- E3 program – developing students into the future workforce through exposure, education and experience
- scholarships – helping students pursue their studies in agriculture and landscape irrigation management
- Excellence in Education Award – recognizing the best faculty teaching irrigation curricula
- Irrigation Career Link – providing information to job seekers and a vehicle for job makers to reach their intended audiences

"The 2019 member survey results indicated that finding and keeping qualified employees is the single greatest challenge our companies will face in the next three to five years," says Eric Santos, CAIS, CGIA, CIC, CID, CIT, CLIA, CLWM, 2018-2019 Foundation chair and vice president of irrigation services at BrightView Landscape Services. "Joining forces with the Irrigation Association will make the Foundation programs even stronger. The timing is perfect."

The IA says it understands the importance of ensuring the long-term health of the industry by working to recruit qualified candidates to irrigation careers. Through these valuable programs, the IA will continue the work started by the Foundation to increase awareness of irrigation careers, provide targeted education resources and supply the industry with educated, highly skilled irrigation professionals.

For more information on the IA's workforce development initiatives and how to get involved with its programs, visit www.irrigation.org/workforcedev.



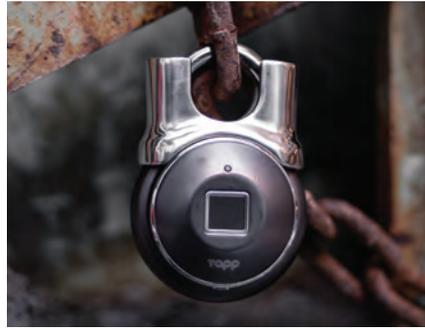


1 Multitool system. Stihl USA, Virginia Beach, Virginia, presents the KMA 130 R KombiMotor, a powerhead with a solid steel drive shaft and a brushless electric motor that powers 13 optional attachments for emissions-free trimming, pruning, edging, cleaning, cultivating and more. An external AP Series battery delivers quiet yet professional-grade power for early-morning usage. Instant starts allow quick movement from task to task. The variable-speed throttle has three performance levels.

Additional features include a multi-function control handle with one-handed adjustment and an ergonomic rubberized loop handle, and a toolless quick-release coupling system.

The virtually maintenance-free, water-resistant design comes with a vertical hanging slot for storage. Battery, charger and attachments sold separately.

 **Stihl USA**
www.stihlusa.com



2 Smart padlock. Tapplock Corp., Toronto, has introduced the Tapplock one+, the newest version of its smart padlock that reads fingerprints, eliminating the need for keys or combinations. An adaptive algorithm makes its capacitive fingerprint reader faster and more accurate with each use.

Up to 500 fingerprints can be stored. Through an app, a business owner can lock and unlock the unit remotely and track who opened it and when.

A reinforced stainless steel shackle and double-layered lock design with anti-shim and anti-pry features resists tampering. It has an IP67 waterproof rating and is functional between -4 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

One charge lasts up to a year or 3,500 unlocks, and it blinks red when its capacity drops below 10%. It comes in sterling silver, gunmetal and midnight black.

 **Tapplock Corp.**
www.tapplock.com



3 Rotary mower. The Toro Company, Bloomington, Minnesota, introduces the Groundsmaster 4000 rotary mower with a turbocharged 55-horsepower diesel engine, a patented parallel hydraulic traction system and an 11-foot cut width. It can mow up to 9.3 acres per hour.

The mower's tight 55.5-inch wheelbase and inner rear-steering turning angle of 53.5 degrees lets it maneuver like a much smaller mower. There are three welded steel decks, a center and two wing decks; a user can mow with one, two or all three decks engaged. The wing decks can be raised to give the unit a compact transport width of 71 inches.

Other features include four-wheel drive with automatic Smart Power traction assist that automatically adjusts ground speed when encountering heavy cutting conditions. Individual wheel brakes provide traction on wet turf.

 **The Toro Company**
www.toro.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Talbert cuts ribbon on expanded North Carolina facility

Specialized heavy-haul solutions manufacturer Talbert Manufacturing, Rensselaer, Indiana, hosted a ribbon cutting May 14, officially opening the 58,000-square-foot expansion of its Liberty, North Carolina, facility.



Talbert employees on hand included: President Andrew Tanner; Co-owner Russ Stern; Vice President of Sales and Marketing Troy Geisler; Vice President of Operations Jim Hall and Vice President of Purchasing Jamie Myers.

The expanded Liberty Trailers LLC plant, now 120,000 total square feet, will manufacture Talbert's Tag-A-Long Series, Traveling Axle Series and Hydraulic Tail Series trailers. The Liberty facility was originally home to Ferree Trailers, which Talbert purchased in 2014.

With the expansion, the manufacturer looks to increase dealer and customer support throughout North America with increased production capabilities and a support staff of 60 associates.

"In 1938, Austin Talbert set out to change the heavy-haul industry," says Andrew Tanner, president of Talbert Manufacturing. "With the expansion of Liberty Trailers LLC, Talbert Manufacturing is closer than ever to realizing his vision of customer-driven design that meets the ever-changing needs of the hauling industry."



4 Mini trenchers. The Kwik-Trench mini-trencher from Little Beaver, Livingston, Texas, is offered in two push-forward models: the KT 200B and KT 2400B. Both can trench up to 30 feet per minute even through tough surfaces such as compacted clay, asphalt and tree roots up to 10 inches thick.

Powered by a 5.5-horsepower Honda engine and four carbide-tipped teeth, the KT 200B can dig trenches 8 inches deep and 1 to 3 inches wide.

The KT 2400B has an 8-horsepower Honda engine. Its eight carbide-tipped teeth can dig trenches 12 inches deep and 1 to 4 inches wide.

Both units feature a “triple-V” belt drive system that can achieve rotation speeds up to 800 rpm. A locking swivel wheel ensures straight trenches. A slip clutch built into the hub of the cutter wheel protects the drive train.

 **Little Beaver**
www.littlebeaver.com



5 Slope mower. Harper Turf Equipment, Harper, Kansas, has announced the release of its new slope mower, the ATM72LC, with improved hydraulics, ground drive performance and serviceability in comparison to its predecessor.

It features a liquid-cooled, Kubota 4-cylinder 24.8 horsepower Tier 4 Final-compliant diesel engine with enhanced combustion efficiency to reduce vibrations and sound emissions.

The larger hydraulic tank, located near the back of the machine, increases capacity and runs cooler. A redesigned leveling circuit provides constant down pressure on the stabilizer arms to absorb rough terrain, improving traction and operator comfort.

Other enhancements to the mower include a servo-controlled hydrostatic foot pedal, inclinometer leveling, redesigned operator controls and improved deck service access.

 **Harper Turf Equipment**
www.harperturfequipment.com



6 Snow spreader, plow and accessory. Boss Snowplow, Iron Mountain, Michigan, has announced two new snow-moving add-ons: the new Forge 2.0 Long Bed spreader and the SK-R 6 compact vehicle plow. In addition, the D-Force accessory is now available for DXT plows.

The new 2.0 Long Bed spreader has a longer hopper and is designed to make filling the spreader with a loader bucket quicker and easier.

The SK-R 6 box plow joins the SK-R 8 and SK-R 10 to expand Boss' line of box plows for tractors, skid steers and other compact equipment. The new SK-R 6 features a reversible 1½-inch rubber cutting edge designed to protect sensitive surfaces.

The D-Force accessory improves scraping when back-dragging by maintaining a consistent hydraulic down force. It will be available on new Boss DXT 8-foot, 2-inch and 9-foot, 2-inch snowplows.

 **Boss Snowplow**
www.bossplow.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Textron partners with 'Tee It Up for the Troops' to aid veterans

If you happen to notice any veterans or active duty service members at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals riding around in what look like E-Z-GO golf cars or carts, rest assured they're not riding to the next tee. They're riding high because E-Z-GO's parent company, Textron Specialized Vehicles Inc., Providence, Rhode Island, donated the customized electric shuttles.

Patients at VA hospitals often have specialized transportation needs that make getting around the campuses difficult. The modified E-Z-GO vehicles ease these journeys.

For the last seven years, Textron and E-Z-GO distributor Versatile Vehicles of Prior Lake, Minnesota, have partnered with Tee It Up for the Troops, a nonprofit that's raised \$10 million for veteran's organizations, to deliver the vehicles to Fisher Houses around the nation. (Service members and

veterans being treated at VA hospitals and their families stay at Fisher Houses free of charge.)

“Electric shuttles that are quiet and efficient can take a whole family or an injured warfighter from a Fisher House around the campus to receive therapy or see a doctor,” says Brandon Haddock, director of communications at Textron Specialized Vehicles. “The vehicles can traverse facility paths and parking lots along with the entries of any VA hospitals.”



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Trending topics

THEY'VE BEEN SPOTTED

An insect from East Asia named the spotted lanternfly is the latest worrisome pest troubling parts of the Mid-Atlantic. The spotted lanternfly is a pest of agricultural crops and the forest industry, as well as a major nuisance for residential and commercial landscapes. The adult is mauve colored with black speckles and belongs to a class named the planthopper, a sap-sucking pest.

While not harmful to humans, its mass feeding can seriously weaken trees. Its preferred host is called the tree-of-heaven, but it's also attracted to oaks, black walnuts, maples, grapevines and fruit trees.

The biggest problem the lanternfly causes is the sugary waste it exudes called honeydew. Within a few days, honeydew draws a black fungus called sooty mold, which can discolor decks, patio furniture, play equipment, arbors and vehicles and can compromise plants' ability to perform photosynthesis.

MOWING AT RECORD SPEEDS

Honda's Mean Mower has set a brand-new Guinness World Record for a lawn mower to go from zero to 100 mph in 6.29 seconds. At top speed, the Mean Mower can reach 150.99 mph.

The record was set May 7 at the Dekra Lausitzring, a racetrack near Dresden, Germany, with an experienced racer and stunt driver, Jess Hawkins, in the driver's seat.

To meet the Guinness World Records qualifications, the mower had to record the same run in both directions, with the average acceleration of the two runs taken as the official time. Honda was also required to make sure the mower had grass-cutting capabilities and still had the look of a functional lawn mower.



Unfortunately for the lawn care industry, the Mean Mower is not commercially available for those hoping to cut grass at record speeds.



DID YOU KNOW?

A plant aptly named the skeleton flower (*Diphylleia Grayi*) has petals that turn transparent when wet and then revert back to white when dry.

4 methods for getting your business noticed in local markets

- 1 **Be everywhere online.** Create, claim and update all local business listings and profiles. In addition to your website, this includes an updated and active Google business listing, a Facebook page, and sites with local business profiles.
- 2 **Volunteer for the long haul.** The best way to be noticed in a local area is to be a great community member. Support causes that matter and make an impact over the long haul. People will notice you and, in the process, learn about your business.
- 3 **Encourage reviews from existing customers.** Feedback from existing customers is an opportunity to be seen and heard in your local community. People love to search for reviews before trying out new services.
- 4 **Use direct mail.** The traditional marketing method of using direct mail works on a local level to target specific customers and prospects. It's able to cover a significant territory for relatively little money and high return.



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