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Highlighting the industry's largest companies and executive strategies for growth.

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## Growth at the Top

Our annual look at the industry's largest revenue-generating firms – and the executives and strategies that helped them grow.

BY MARISA PALMIERI/SENIOR EDITOR

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Benchmarks are important in business, as most landscape company owners know. They provide touchstones by which others can measure themselves. They're useful for gauging achievement and setting growth goals, too. These are the reasons the *Lawn & Landscape* staff painstakingly researches the Top 100 list every year. It's not because we believe big means better, or that the largest 100 firms are necessarily the best. But their achievements in generating revenue are notable; and the list has perennially provided valuable information for those inside and outside the green industry – in terms of identifying market leaders, marking potential M&A targets and tracking trends that may trickle down. Consider:

- Top 100 companies scaled back growth in 2007. On average, Top 100 companies reported 7.7 percent growth over 2006; in 2006 average growth was 17 percent.
- Top 100 companies plan for an average of 6 percent growth in 2008.
- The aggregate revenue of companies on the list grew by \$370 million for a total of \$7.1 billion in 2007 annual revenue.

**BEYOND THE NUMBERS.** For the second year in a row, we looked beyond the revenue to get a picture of how some Top 100 firms got to where they are today. This report's profiles of six executives and their growth strategies reflect stories as diverse as the green industry – from snow-plowing giant Lipinski Outdoor Services in New Jersey (page S10) to the well rounded ISS Grounds Control, based in San Antonio (page S8). The executives we profile share their firms' thoughts on association involvement, creating value and making it through tough times, among other insights.

**HOW WE DID IT.** Starting in February, *Lawn & Landscape* began requesting Top 100 submissions via fax, e-mail, on our Web site and in print. We asked companies to report 2007 revenue and growth figures, number of employees, service/client mixes and additional data. We calculate and omit any reported revenue streams that aren't widely offered green industry services (structural pest control, for example). Some companies choose not to disclose their revenue and therefore are not included on the list.

Our goal is to provide the industry with the most comprehensive and accurate Top 100 List. We make every attempt to identify and contact firms we deem eligible for the list. If you know of a company we missed, please let us know. Contact Senior Editor Marisa Palmieri at 330/523-5375 or mpalmieri@gie.net.

# 100

TOP

Lawn & Landscape



Top 100  
profiles  
starting on  
page S8.

2008 Rank	2007 Rank	Company	Headquarters location	# of locations	Year-round employees	Seasonal employees	2007 Revenue	% Inc/Dec from 2006	Expected % Inc/Dec for 2008
1	1	The TruGreen Cos.	Memphis, Tenn.	286	N/R	N/R	\$1,510,872,000	1	3
2	2	ValleyCrest Cos.	Calabasas, Calif.	120	10,500	N/R	\$935,000,000	7	N/R
3	3	The Brickman Group	Gaithersburg, Md.	175	N/R	N/R	\$609,000,000	30	15
4	4	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, Ohio	N/R	N/R	N/R	\$506,138,000	8.3	10
5	5	Scotts LawnService - <sup>F</sup>	Marysville, Ohio	160	N/R	N/R	\$285,000,000	13	N/R
6	7	Bartlett Tree Expert Co.	Stamford, Conn.	98	1,500	275	\$160,000,000	12.7	7
7	6	Gothic Landscape	Valencia, Calif.	9	2473	0	\$133,000,000	-21	10
8	8	Ambius (formerly Initial Tropical Plants)	Buffalo Grove, Ill.	42	1200	0	\$125,000,000	10	5
9	11	Weed Man - <sup>CF</sup>	Mississauga, Ontario	N/R	N/R	N/R	\$90,806,800	6	5
10	10	Lawn Doctor - <sup>F</sup>	Holmdel, N.J.	420	N/R	N/R	\$86,000,000	-1	4
11	13	U.S. Lawns - <sup>F</sup>	Orlando, Fla.	187	1475	750	\$82,000,000	8	10
12	14	Vila & Son Landscaping Corp.	Miami, Fla.	7	727	0	\$64,450,000	6	10
13	12	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	Tampa, Fla.	13	1080	N/R	\$60,360,972	N/R	N/R
14	15	American Civil Constructors	Littleton, Colo.	7	300	300	\$58,000,000	2	10
15	26	Ruppert Nurseries	Laytonsville, Md.	6	500	29	\$55,000,000	34	15
16	19	ISS Grounds Control	San Antonio, Texas	6	700	0	\$50,350,000	10	8
17	-	SavATree (Nature's Trees)	Belford Hills, N.Y.	20	450	60	\$50,300,000	10	10.5
18	9	U.S. Maintenance	Norristown, Pa.	6	1,400	0	\$50,000,000		
19	17	The Care of Trees	Wheeling, Ill.	24	458	0	\$48,989,204	-2	10
20	31	Marina Landscape	Anaheim, Calif.	1	450	0	\$48,000,000	30	10
21	20	Acres Group Professional Landscaping	Wauconda, Ill.	5	105	645	\$45,900,000	16.9	-3.7
22 (t)	18	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	Woodbine, Md.	5	300	60	\$45,500,000	0	0
22 (t)	35	Jensen Corp. Landscape Contractors	San Jose, Calif.	7	325	0	\$45,500,000	10	14
24	23	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin	Middleton, Wis.	3	250	400	\$45,221,000	7	6
25	33 (t)	AAA Landscape	Tucson, Ariz.	2	520	180	\$44,100,000	10	-5
26	51	Mainscape	Fishers, Ind.	12	400	88	\$43,661,000	61	0
27	30	Tropics North - <sup>v</sup>	Homestead, Fla.	3	425	N/R	\$42,500,000	N/R	N/R
28	27 (t)	Teufel Landscape	Portland, Ore.	3	185	215	\$41,000,000	-5	-2.5
29	38	Nanak's Landscaping	Longwood, Fla.	5	450	260	\$40,500,000	9	10
30	21	Choate USA	Carrollton, Texas	8	200	N/R	\$40,000,000	4	0
31	24	Landscape Concepts Construction	Richmond, Ill.	1	30	260	\$39,500,000	1	0
32 (t)	37	The Groundskeeper	Tucson, Ariz.	6	700	120	\$38,000,000	13	6
32 (t)	-	Cornerstone Tree Farm	Dade City, Fla.	2	200	20	\$38,000,000	20	-20
34	33 (t)	McDonnell Landscape	Brooksville, Md.	1	133	21	\$37,000,000	-19	-7
35	54	Clintar Groundskeeping Services - <sup>C</sup>	Markham, Ontario	24	175	450	\$36,782,380	33	15
36	32	Denison Landscaping	Ft. Washington, Md.	3	140	240	\$36,200,000	-1.7	0
37	45	The Greenery	Hilton Head, S.C.	3	460	45	\$35,554,230	26	-5
38	29	Oak Leaf Landscape	Anaheim, Calif.	1	120	N/A	\$35,000,000	-10	-75
39 (t)	39	Mariani Landscape	Lake Bluff, Ill.	2	100	380	\$33,000,000	N/R	N/R
39 (t)	55	Mission Landscape Services	Tustin, Calif.	8	700	0	\$33,000,000	30	12
39 (t)	42 (t)	NaturalLawn of America - <sup>F</sup>	Frederick, Md.	60	400+	N/R	\$33,000,000	10	15
42	25	Dixie Landscape Co.	Miami, Fla.	4	220	0	\$32,700,000	-25	-25
43	44	Nissho of California	Vista, Calif.	4	300	0	\$32,600,000	8	-15
44	41	CoCal Landscape	Denver, Colo.	2	235	210	\$32,300,000	5	0
45	40	Cagwin & Dorward	Novato, Calif.	15	420	30	\$32,021,770	1	8
46	57	Ecoscape Solutions Group	Charlotte, N.C.	6	325	0	\$32,000,000	33	22
47	36	Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	Dallas, Texas	1	46	N/R	\$30,500,000	-5	6
48 (t)	48	Piedmont Landscape Contractors - <sup>V</sup>	Chamblee, Ga.	N/R	N/R	N/R	\$30,000,000	10	4
48 (t)	56	Scott Byron & Co.	Lake Bluff, Ill.	1	100	160	\$30,000,000	17	1
50	52	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp. - <sup>F</sup>	Plainfield, Ill.	77	N/R	N/R	\$29,942,492	13	8



2008 Rank	2007 Rank	Company	Headquarters location	# of locations	Year-round employees	Seasonal employees	2007 Revenue	% Inc/Dec from 2006	Inc/Dec for 2008	Expected %
51	49	Lipinski Outdoor Services	Marlton, N.J.	1	N/R	N/R	\$28,175,000	3.4	20	
52 (t)	22	Creative Environments Design & Landscape	Chandler, Ariz.	1	140	0	\$28,000,000	-31	-10	
52 (t)	47	Chalet	Wilmette, Ill.	2	100	250	\$28,000,000	5	5	
54	62 (t)	Countryside Industries	Wauconda, Ill.	2	69	360	\$25,900,000	17	10	
55 (t)	50	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	Portland, Maine	5	350	125	\$25,000,000	0	5	
55 (t)	-	Landscape Concepts Management	Grayslake, Ill.	6	110	825	\$25,000,000	18	15	
57	66	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping	Portland, Ore.	2	250	300	\$24,300,000	19	5	
58	60	LMI Landscapes	Carrollton, Texas	4	250	100	\$23,500,000	-8	10	
59	58	FAIRCO	Scottsdale, Ariz.	3	250	0	\$23,400,000	0	-25	
60	79 (t)	Sebert Landscaping Co.	Bartlett, Ill.	4	50	280	\$23,000,000	8	10	
61	72	McFall & Berry Landscape Management	McLean, Va.	6	180	120	\$22,600,000	15	0	
62 (t)	53	Reyburn Landscape Contractors	Henderson, Nev.	1	215	0	\$22,000,000	-12	13	
62 (t)	97	Heads Up Landscape Contractors	Albuquerque, N.M.	2	225	100	\$22,000,000	40	18	
62 (t)	79 (t)	Shearon Environmental Design	Plymouth Meeting, Pa.	N/R	N/R	N/R	\$22,000,000	0	10	
62 (t)	79 (t)	Clarence Davids & Co.	Matteson, Ill.	3	90	225	\$22,000,000	22	3	
62 (t)	76	Mariposa Horticultural Enterprises	Irwindale, Calif.	3	420	0	\$22,000,000	15	0	
67	71	Complete Landscaping Service	Bowie, Md.	2	140	40	\$21,910,652	17	13	
68	65	Benchmark Landscape	Poway, Calif.	3	250	0	\$21,661,000	0	-15	
69	59	Odyssey Landscaping	Stockton, Calif.	2	190	250	\$21,600,000	-15	-15	
70	-	Sunrise Landscape	Tampa, Fla.	1	120	0	\$21,000,000	-5	-10	
71	73	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	Germantown, Wis.	3	250	100	\$20,800,000	8	5	
72	-	Sun City Landscapes	Las Vegas, Nev.	1	220	N/A	\$20,753,600	-35	-25	
73 (t)	67 (t)	Stiles Landscape Co. - <sup>B</sup>	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	N/R	N/R	N/R	\$20,000,000	30	0	
73 (t)	67 (t)	Landscape Specialists	Lake Forest, Calif.	6	300	N/R	\$20,000,000	5	-7.5	
73 (t)	67 (t)	Moore Landscapes	Northbrook, Ill.	3	46	190	\$20,000,000	0	5	
73 (t)	84	Northwestern Landscape Co.								

## TOP 5 IN GROWTH MODE

In a market that's said to be ripe with acquisition potential, the Top 100 list's five largest players kicked into buying mode during 2007. Here's a rundown of the Top 5 firms' acquisitions last year.

1

### The TruGreen Cos. • Memphis, Tenn.

**2007 revenue: \$1,510,872,000 +1% from 2006**

TruGreen declined to disclose specific acquisitions, but a spokeswoman confirmed TruGreen closed 34 deals in 2007, purchasing approximately 36,000 customers and \$15 million in annual revenue. All of these transactions took place on the lawn care side of the business – the LandCare portion did not have any acquisitions in 2006.

2

### ValleyCrest • Calabasas, Calif.

**2007 revenue: \$935,000,000 +7% from 2006**

*Acquisitions in 2007:*

Scapes, Marietta, Ga. (Top 100 #96)  
Tropics North, Homestead, Fla. (Top 100 #27)  
Longboat Key Maintenance, Longboat Key, Fla.

3

### The Brickman Group • Gaithersburg, Md.

**2007 revenue: \$609,000,000 +30% from 2006**

*Acquisitions in 2007:*

- Control Landscapes (a Division of Control Environmental Services), Edison, N.J.
- Northwest Landscape Services of Oregon, Portland, Ore. (Top 100 #73)
- LandCare South, Hilton Head, S.C.
- Northwestern Landscape Company, Puyallup, Wash.
- Bozzuto Landscaping (a Division of Bozzuto Cos.), Laurel, Md.

4

### The Davey Tree Expert Co. • Kent, Ohio

**2007 revenue: \$506,138,000 +8.3% from 2006**

*Acquisitions in 2007:*

- Berquist Tree Experts, Burr Ridge, Ill.
- Oakley Tree and Landscape, Nashville, Tenn.
- Alpine Tree Co., Fort Collins, Colo.
- Alpine Hill Pruning Co., Fort Collins, Colo.
- Hayes Tree Service Inc., Boulder, Colo.
- Wye Tree Experts, Inc., Easton, Md.
- Applied Environmental, Fort Wayne, Ind.

5

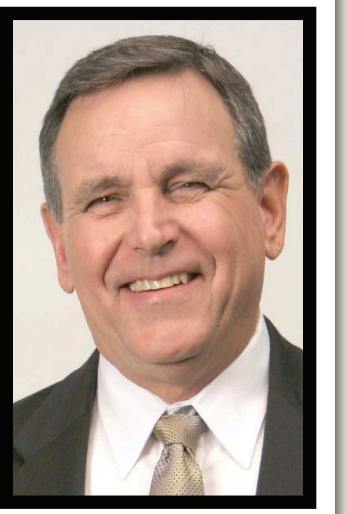
### Scotts Lawn Service • Marysville, Ohio

**2007 revenue: \$285,000,000 +13% from 2006**

Scotts declined to disclose acquisition details; however, the company's annual report says it invested \$22.5 million of capital in lawn care acquisitions in fiscal 2007. "While we expect to continue making selective acquisitions in future years, we anticipate the majority of the future growth in our lawn care business will be organic," the annual report says.

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## GROWTH UNDER CONTROL



### **ISS Grounds Control San Antonio, Texas**

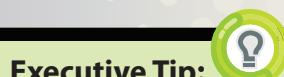
**President:** Dale Micetic

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$50,350,000

**Founded:** 1974

**Service breakdown:**  
40% maintenance  
50% design/build/installation  
10% snow

**Client breakdown:**  
100% commercial



#### **Executive Tip:**

"When it comes to finding valuable employees to add to your team, you have to remember that you can train them on skills but you can't train them on character and attitude. While you have to look for skills during the hiring process, seeking out people with a certain character is just as important. You should look for someone with the same character and mindset as yourself or others in your company who have excelled."

– Dale Micetic

*To maintain growth in a challenging economy, ISS Grounds Control focuses on service diversification and repeat relationships.*

**When Dale Micetic first began his business in 1974,** he never thought it would make more than \$1 million in revenue.

Fast-forward to today and Micetic is president of \$50-million ISS Grounds Control, to which he sold his \$15-million Terrain Systems in 2002.

"Early on, I started attending local association meetings and interacting with other contractors and listening to the owners of larger companies talk about the challenges of running their businesses, and from that I learned how to run my business," he says. "Any landscape contractor can learn from other businesses of various sizes if they are willing to listen."

The reason this growth strategy works is because "if a contractor keeps doing the same old things, he will get the same old results," Micetic says. "You have to be willing to change or you might be setting yourself up for failure."

For instance, take the current economic times into account, Micetic says. A contractor who only does work for home builders might be losing business today. That's why Micetic and his ISS Grounds Control team diversify service options so when a slowdown affects one sector, the company can rely on another to carry it forward. While the home builder market is weak right now, the general contracting commercial market is still very strong, Micetic points out.

Today, ISS Grounds Control's service mix is 55 percent maintenance and 45 percent construction for 100 percent commercial clients – a slight switch from last year's 49 percent maintenance and 51 percent construction mix, which Micetic says is a move that strengthens the company when construction work is harder to come by. "Though commercial maintenance has lower margins and is more competitive, it is a lot more stable than construction, so many businesses today will grow maintenance for recurring revenue and to carry the company through tougher times."

Another key to the company's solid, stable growth is something Micetic calls "repeat relationships."

"If you provide commodity-type services, adequate maintenance and nothing exceptional, and you have no relationships in the community, than you are more of a vendor to your commercial customers," Micetic explains. "The core of building repeat relationships is to become a value-added team player for your customers. One of the simplest ways to do this is to make yourself available to them when they have to discuss their outdoor needs so they look to you as a key partner and don't have to fight through a string of people who don't care to get answers to their questions. If you take good care of their property and are proactive in recognizing problems, then they look good to their boss and will fight for you when it's time for contract renewal. It's much harder for a customer to fire a friend than it is for them to fire a vendor." – Nicole Wisniewski

## PRIORITY NO. 1: PEOPLE

*Teufel Landscape hopes its continued growth will come from getting back on the CLT wagon.*

**As the first employee of Teufel Landscape,** Rick Christensen has weathered the division's growth from zero to \$41 million over the last 25 years.

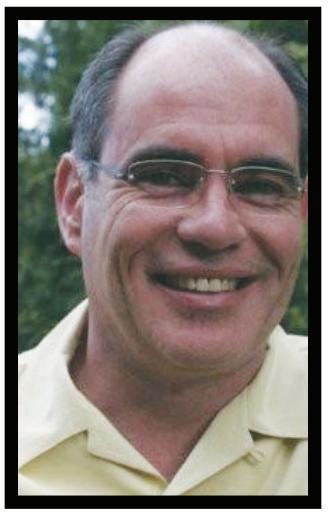
An offshoot of Teufel Nursery, the landscape division was founded during an economic downturn in the 1980s. Plant sales had dropped off, so the nursery decided to generate revenue through installation, says Christensen, who had to "do it all" back then. Today, he oversees up to 400 employees during peak season.

What's the key to this tremendous growth, all of which has been organic? "Our people," Christensen says. "You can always rent equipment, lease trucks, find new vendors – but not finding the right people is the limitation to your growth. It's ultimately what defines your destiny." To this end, Teufel Landscape has reevaluated its priorities over the last year, and has recommitted itself to a training platform it had strayed from: the Certified Landscape Technician program, an international certification program administered by state and national trade associations. The goal of this designation is to raise the standards of the landscape profession and provide the public with a way to identify qualified professionals.

Though Teufel had been committed to the CLT program in years past, the company "fell off the wagon" several years ago when a consultant encouraged the company to put its energies towards becoming a sales-driven firm. "I don't want to say that we ignored the CLT, but it wasn't our focus," Christensen says.

Unhappy with the results, Teufel leadership decided that educating employees from a technical and customer-service standpoint is the better approach. "If we look inside and put emphasis on employees, the result will be an emphasis on the customer and sales will come as a result," Christensen says. So, the company instituted a requirement that anyone who reaches the foreman position needs to obtain his or her CLT. At the end of a two-year grace period, foremen face a wage freeze until they obtain certification. Teufel covers the cost for employees to take the test and obtain necessary training. "The beauty of the program is it doesn't have to be costly," Christensen says. The test fees range between \$200 and \$400 depending on the organization administering it, the number of modules being taken and the number of employees from the company who are taking it. "The real cost is dedication because the employees do have to commit to studying and preparing on their own time."

Because Teufel's CLT "rededication" is relatively new, it's too early to tell what the return on investment will be for this policy, Christensen says, but he mentions that he looks forward to the critical-thinking skills employees will gain. "Anyone can teach employees how to do something, but we really try to work toward teaching them why we do something. Instead of following a road map or a recipe, they can make educated, informed decisions. We recognize that employee development is the key to our continued success and growth." – Marisa Palmieri



### **Teufel Landscape Portland, Ore.**

**General Manager:**  
Rick Christensen

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$41,000,000

**Founded:** 1983 (parent company founded in 1890)

**Service breakdown:**  
22% maintenance  
60% design/build/installation  
18% irrigation

**Client breakdown:**  
82% commercial  
18% residential



#### **Executive Tip:**

"If we as an industry used more common sense and educated our customers better, we could make less of an environmental impact. How many times do contractors install the improper plant material that results in unnecessary trimming and pruning, creating increased fuel use and emissions? We as an industry need to do better."

– Rick Christensen

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## MANY EGGS, MANY BASKETS

*Lipinski Outdoor Services places its faith in diversification to best serve its strong base of commercial clients.*

**Asked to define the key to Lipinski Outdoor Services success,** President Doug Cook sums it up with one word: diversification.

Take snow removal, for example, which accounts for half of the Marlton, N.J.-based full-service company's \$28 million revenue. Diversifying how it approaches its snow operation, which extends from Virginia through Maine, has allowed the company to prosper during low-snow winters.

"What we've been seeing over the past three years is that it's been more ice events than snow removal," says Cook about the mid-Atlantic region. "So while we're not getting a lot of plowable snow, we're getting a lot of activity."

Lipinski also diversified its commercial contract base between charging clients flat-rate seasonal contracts and on a per-inch plowed/per-application of salt basis.

"We've worked that based on average inches of snow in the various regions we operate," Cook says. "And we've found that we've got to have 30 to 35 percent of our revenue in seasonal contracts to give us an insurance policy in down years. Diversified contracts take some of the risk out of a bad winter."

Diversification also brings about new growth opportunities. Three years ago, in response to client requests, Lipinski added parking lot maintenance to its service mix. This service, which includes lot sweeping, sealing and restriping, represents about 12 percent of Lipinski's overall revenue, Cook says.

"Our clients are looking for more of a wrap service – snow removal, landscape maintenance and parking lot sweeping," Cook says. About 95 percent of Lipinski's work comes from commercial clients. "We have some strong opportunities on the table before us and we expect this service to grow pretty rapidly."

Most recently, Lipinski created a janitorial division, again in response to client needs. The company sees great potential for growth in this area – as much as 40 percent in 2008, Cook says.

"We have a lot of competitors in the retail market who offer all of the service lines, but in the corporate and industrial markets we're pretty unique," Cook says. "I believe we're one of the only companies that straddles so many different service lines."

Overall, Cook projects between 25 and 35 percent growth for Lipinski over the next year, and maybe more if this winter yields numerous snow and ice events. Regardless, the company's diversity of service offerings ensures profit will be more likely than loss.

"We're very optimistic," he says. "A lot of our growth is coming organically from our existing client base. Everything indicates strong growth. We're going to continue to work to improve our systems internally and it's giving us some strong opportunities into the next year." – Mike Zawacki

### Executive Tip:

"You can't get hung up on low-ball contractors. We've always had a philosophy of putting the best service out there in the marketplace. We earn our customer's business through that service. There will always be guys who will bid the job lower. You have to focus on being the best at what you do. You need to feel competitive with the services that you put out there in the market." – Doug Cook

**Lipinski Outdoor Services**  
**Marlton, N.J.**

**President:** Doug Cook

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$28,175,000

**Founded:** 1976

**Service breakdown:**  
31% maintenance  
17% design/build/installation  
1% irrigation

50% snow  
1% tree

**Client breakdown:**  
95% commercial  
5% residential



### Executive Tip:

"Every customer you have is your boss. Always look at any customer as being a long-term customer. You don't want that to be the first and last job. It's about needing them as much as they need you." – Stuart Reyburn

## ADAPTED ROLE

*After nearly 30 years in business, Reyburn Landscape Contractors knows how to adjust to deal with uncontrollable factors.*

**Stuart Reyburn is no stranger to the struggling economy.** But he also is no stranger to doing whatever it takes to keep a business strong.

Reyburn formed Henderson, Nev.-based Reyburn Lawn Maintenance in 1979, working during his days off from the fire department. "I started this company with a lawn mower and \$800," he says. "I never took huge salaries – just enough to live – and worked 80 to 90 hours a week."

While the company continues to service mostly residential clients, a lot has changed since 1979. Now called Reyburn Landscape Contractors, the firm posted revenue of \$22 million in 2007, and Reyburn has a lot more than a mower now.

But size can often create challenges, especially in tough times. Reyburn's revenue was actually down 13 percent in 2007 from the previous year. The economy slowed, and it didn't help that Reyburn's service area is Las Vegas, one of the markets hardest-hit by the housing crisis.

"In 2007-08, with the declining market, we had to make adjustments to people and equipment," Reyburn says.

As labor is always a top concern of landscape companies, Reyburn had to adapt early this year by answering the demand for union workers on the Las Vegas strip. An affiliate company, called LandPro Solutions, is comprised entirely of union laborers.

Even though union labor comes with its own challenges and can mean an increase in hourly wages compared to non-union workers, the company is able to get prevailing-wage work, which means it can bid the work at a price that will give the employees their wages and still allow the company to profit.

LandPro Solutions scored big in its first outing with a contract to install landscaping at M Resort, a \$1-billion casino being built on 80 acres on the strip. Projects of this scale will take some getting used to, Reyburn says.

"It's definitely a challenge having not done union work before and going into a space because customers were a little concerned about whether you can perform," he says. "You just have to convince the customer you're able to perform on the job. At the end of day they figure we're capable because we have a 30-year track record."

That reputation will help carry the companies out of the current slump. Reyburn is confident the housing market is on its way back up. He also has hope because the company is in the midst of a merger with a player in the market that caters to a slightly different customer base. The two companies are Nos. 3 and 4 in the market now, but the merger will bring them to the top, he says.

But if it wasn't for years of hard work and discipline, Reyburn Landscape Contractors wouldn't have gotten to this point. "You can't have a lot of the luxuries starting out," Reyburn says. "You have to crawl, then walk, then run." – Heather Wood



**Reyburn Landscape Contractors**  
**Henderson, Nev.**

**President:**  
Stuart Reyburn

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$22,000,000

**Founded:** 1979

**Service breakdown:**  
5% maintenance  
83% design/build/installation  
10% irrigation  
2% tree care

**Client breakdown:**  
10% commercial  
90% residential



### Executive Tip:

"Every customer you have is your boss. Always look at any customer as being a long-term customer. You don't want that to be the first and last job. It's about needing them as much as they need you." – Stuart Reyburn



## Hazeltine Nurseries Venice, Fla.

**President:**  
Stephen Hazeltine

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$19,000,000

**Founded:** 1983

**Service breakdown:**  
21% maintenance  
63% design/build/installation  
16% irrigation

**Client breakdown:**  
15% commercial  
85% residential

### Executive Tip:

"Focus on one priority at a time. Create processes and procedures to control your daily work load. Look to join professional management groups to network with other CEOs." – Stephen Hazeltine

## DOING MORE WITH LESS

*With a focus on efficiency and daily review of profit and loss statements, Hazeltine Nurseries has doubled revenue without increasing manpower.*

**Stephen Hazeltine is a rare example of a landscape contractor** whose business actually grew in the midst of the current housing slump. With sales up 47 percent from the first quarter of 2007, the president of Hazeltine Nurseries in Venice, Fla., knows how to make the best of a bad situation. "Not to go against the grain, but the slowdown in the housing market has done nothing but help us," he says. "It forced us to look in other directions to see what we could take on to keep things rolling."

Part of what helped Hazeltine Nurseries thrive during the housing slowdown was the addition of more commercial landscape work to its service menu. But Hazeltine credits most of the company's recent success to its new focus on efficiency. By streamlining processes and keeping a close eye on details, Hazeltine Nurseries has grown from \$8.5 million in 2001 to \$19 million in 2007 – all while working with the same 140 employees. "About seven years ago we were doing less than half the work we're doing now with the same amount of people and just felt we had no control over where our company was going," he says. "By focusing on efficiency we realized we could get a heck of a lot more work done with same amount of people, and our revenues have gone up drastically."

One task that has encouraged this growth is the review of profit/loss statements on a daily basis within each company division. Each day, a spreadsheet figures the amount of profit based on the level of job completion, then gives an option to correct any loss before it becomes a lost job. "If we're doing a 10-day job, we'll know two days into it if we're profiting or losing," Hazeltine says. "That gives us time to streamline or revise the job before it's lost."

To help employees adapt to the changes within the company, Hazeltine staff partook in a 25-hour, on-the-clock training program. The training started with the company supervisors and worked its way down to the crew members until every employee received the same training. While it was difficult to devote one hour each day for 25 days to training, Hazeltine wanted to establish and implement the new efficiency standards as soon as possible. The program is expected to result in a 50-percent efficiency correction by the end of the year, which Hazeltine says is well worth the investment. "We didn't like doing it the way we did because we know how much people cost to operate," Hazeltine says. "But we knew the return would be staggering."

Establishing such defined processes and procedures is what Hazeltine says grew his business to where it is today. Keeping everything on track is the next step. "After

25 years in business we finally realized we had to take control of what was happening around us in order to grow the way we wanted to," he says. "It took too long to get here, but it's our past experience that has pushed us to move forward." – Emily Mullins

## CITY GIRL

*Christy Webber Landscapes owes much of its success to its business dealings with the city of Chicago.*

**Christy Webber is a laborer at heart.** She prefers to be out in the field than behind a desk, and she'd rather be elbow-deep in dirt than swamped under paperwork. "I'm very hands-on and I'm always here, to the dismay of some of the people that work for me," she says with a chuckle.

But after building a landscape business from the ground up, Webber feels it's the duty of an organization's leader to take an active role in its success. Her Chicago-based firm, Christy Webber Landscapes, posted 2007 revenue of \$18.2 million, a 45-percent increase from 2006. A large design/build contract with the city of Chicago accounted for much of this spike. Heading into 2008, Webber predicts a more conservative growth rate of about 10 percent.

Despite a recent marketing effort to increase her commercial and residential client base, Webber attributes much of the company's annual revenue to the maintenance and design/build work that it does for the city of Chicago.

Webber says she's fortunate there's not a lot of competition in the Chicago market fighting it out for these city maintenance contracts, with maybe four or five other firms bidding on this business. There's a popular stigma among Chicago landscape professionals that this is less-than-desirable work, she says. In fact, Webber's industry colleagues warned her about delving too deep into city contracts, claiming the work could potentially ruin her business. "They gave me a lot of grief," she says. "They told me not to get too heavy into municipal work. They said I would only get burned from doing those types of contracts. Now I'm working and those suburban guys are not."

Two years ago, Christy Webber Landscapes moved into its new corporate headquarters located at the Rancho Verde eco-industrial park, located in a blighted former industrial complex in Chicago's East Garfield Park neighborhood. The move was the culmination of the firm's hard work, determination and nearly a decade of negotiations with the city. To make this dream a reality, Christy Webber Landscapes formed a development company, Chicago GreenWorks, to undertake development of the 12.5 acre parcel into nine lots that will house as many as six separate businesses.

This includes Christy Webber's headquarters, which features a number of green design elements, such as a green roof, geothermal heating and cooling and active and passive solar systems. Last fall, the building earned the U.S. Green Building Council's highest LEED rating. Webber says it was important that her company remain in Chicago and be a fixture in the area that many of her workers call home. "I felt like I was a fixture of this neighborhood and I wanted to give something back," she says. "I hope that the people who live around this company look at what we're doing and say to themselves, 'Hey, if Christy can do it then maybe I can, too.'" – Mike Zawacki



## Christy Webber Landscapes Chicago, Ill.

**President:**  
Christy Webber

**2007 Revenue:**  
\$18,200,000

**Founded:** 1990

**Service breakdown:**  
40% maintenance  
50% design/build/installation  
10% snow

**Client breakdown:**  
75% commercial/municipal  
15% residential  
10% snow



### Executive Tip:

"It's important to surround yourself with the right people who know what they're doing. For example, I don't know where I'd be right now without my CFO. He's taught me how to be smart when it comes to borrowing money and provided me with valuable insight when it came to the company's finances. I could have never achieved this success if not for these people around me. That's the key to running a business this size." – Christy Webber

# GEOGRAPHIC ROUND-UP

Tracking the state and regional trends of Top 100 firms.

## REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

*A look at the regional distribution of where Top 100 headquarters are located.*

REGION	NUMBER
NORTHEAST - ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI, NY, PA, NJ, VA, DE, DofC, MD, WV, KY	20
MIDWEST - MI, OH, IN, WI, IL, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS	20
SOUTHEAST - TN, NC, SC, AL, GA, FL, MS, AR, LA	21
WEST - MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, WA, OR, CA, HI, AK	25
SOUTHWEST - OK, TX, AZ, NM	12
CANADA	2



1. Illinois ..... 15 HQs
2. (t) California ..... 14 HQs
2. (t) Florida ..... 14 HQs
4. Maryland ..... 9 HQs
5. Texas ..... 6 HQs

## STATE-BY-STATE RUNDOWN

Arizona	5
California	14
Colorado	4
Connecticut	1
Florida	14
Georgia	4
Illinois	15
Indiana	1
Maine	1
Maryland	9
North Carolina	1
New Jersey	2
New Mexico	1
New York	1
Nevada	2
Ohio	2
Ontario	2
Oregon	2
Pennsylvania	3
South Carolina	1
Tennessee	1
Texas	6
Virginia	3
Washington	3
Wisconsin	2

## NEED A VISUAL? GO ONLINE.

View a map of the Top 100 firms' headquarters locations at [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com). Select the "Magazine" tab and then click on "Top 100" for an interactive map of the Top 100 headquarters locations, including links to all the companies' Web sites and additional Top 100 data.

