

Landscaper maintains fields, uses loader on turf

BY TYLOR BOLAND

Company founder and president Jeff Telgenhoff predicts a lush future for Pacific Landscape Inc. Based in Snohomish, WA, the 3-year-old company already has seen a sixfold growth in revenue over its first year. Telgenhoff has a goal of 20-25 percent growth per year.

What does he see as the engine for that kind of growth? Two things stand out: his company's increased focus on sports field maintenance and a piece of equipment to work on those fields.

"I was introduced to the ASV Posi-Track loader on a whim. It was recommended by our dealer to solve a problem we were having on a new 10-field complex for the North Snohomish Little League Association," says Telgenhoff. "The RC-50 we took for a demo worked wonders on that job, and the dealer never got it back. We sold our skid-steer literally the next day."

The problem Pacific Landscape had encountered is all too common for turf managers, especially in wet regions like the Pacific Northwest. "We were ready to install infield mix to the fields once they'd been final graded. But because of constant moisture the fields were wet, so bringing the mix from its staging area to each field with a skid-steer would have been impossible. ASV's suspended track undercarriage and low ground pressure was the absolute ticket," he says.

Telgenhoff began his work in landscaping and turf management at a young age. His father owned a commercial greenhouse business, and he began his career mowing lawns when he was a kid. When he was 18 he started maintaining high-end private residences and would go on to graduate from Oregon State with a degree in horticulture. His company brought in \$1.1 million in 2004.

Sports field maintenance currently takes up 5-10 percent of the company's business, with the remainder going primarily to commercial landscaping. Telgenhoff, however, is planning to aggressively grow that percentage to 20-25 percent as part of his overall growth plan.

"Part of the difficulty is convincing potential clients without their own equipment, such as school districts, city-owned facilities and sports associations, that hiring professional help is both affordable and worth the investment," he says. "Already, we've realized substantial boosts in efficiency since purchasing our RC-50, and I've begun centering our marketing plan around that added value.

"A perfect example," he continues, "was a soccer field someone had done drainage for when we were brought in to spread about 50 yards of sand. Before, our guys would have been wheelbarrowing or plywooding it out there. With the new machine we didn't even need to worry about driving over irrigation heads and were done in a fraction of the time."

Pacific Landscape has from the start relied on good people and good relationships to grow its business. Much of the workforce is made up of people he had worked with in the past and wanted to work with again. And he takes the same approach with outside relationships, partnering with Premier Field Development, a company that builds ball fields from the ground up.

"The founder of Premier Field Development is an old friend, and we've worked and will continue to work closely with him restoring and maintaining his natural grass projects," says Telgenhoff.

Tylor Borland is a writer with Carmichael Lynch Spang, Minneapolis. He can be reached at 612-375-8539.

