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» **IMAGE 3:** Cultivation equipment that remove excessive organic matter accumulation include implements such as the Toro ProCore (top) and Graden (bottom). Photos courtesy of Alec Kowalewski.

tion include core cultivation and vertical mowing (Image 3). When developing a cultivation program managers should affect 15-20% of the surface area annually.

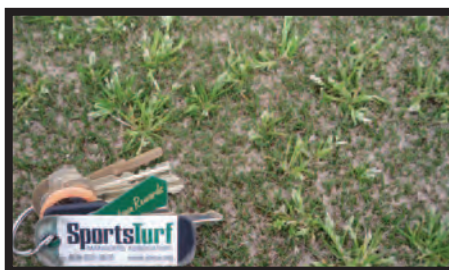
WEED MANAGEMENT

Annual broadleaves (e.g. prostrate knotweed and spurge) can be controlled with burndown products like carfentrazone because they lack the necessary root mass or carbohydrate reserves to reproduce the “burned” foliage (Table 1). These herbicides work very quickly and can be very useful on difficult to control weeds like prostrate knotweed, which thrives in compacted soils.

Annual grasses (e.g. crabgrass, goosegrass and foxtail) are most efficiently (low cost, highly effective) controlled with pre-emergence herbicides. However, the use of pre-emergence herbicides in cool season turf may not be an option if a manager is constantly interseeding to encourage full turf cover. With the loss of MSMA in turf, quinclorac has become a staple for post-emergence crabgrass control, but it does not provide the same control on goosegrass.

Annual bluegrass thrives in cool weather conditions (i.e. winter in the warm season zone, and spring and fall in the cool season and transition zones) and is a prolific seeder even at low mowing heights (Image 9).

Actively monitor for annual bluegrass infiltration on athletic fields as spring seed



» **IMAGE 9:** Annual bluegrass in hybrid bermudagrass emerging from winter dormancy in February, Tifton, GA (top) and annual bluegrass in Kentucky bluegrass at a minor league baseball field in April, Lansing, MI (bottom). Photos courtesy of Alec Kowalewski.

production will make this troublesome winter annual a troublesome part of the soil seed-bank if it isn't fought when it first infiltrates. For effective control of annual bluegrass, cool season turfgrass herbicides are usually applied in small doses and repeated at short intervals. Programs include more than one product type applied at differing portions of the growing season. For example, flurprimidol (a plant growth regulator) is applied in the spring, and then ethofumesate (postemergence herbicide) is applied the subsequent fall.

Herbicides provide excellent weed control, but timing, rate, and application intervals are of utmost importance. Application may interfere with cultural practices, turfgrass germination and growth, so learn to adapt and proceed with caution. Learn the traits of each active ingredient (AI) in herbicides as they are put in differing combinations more and more. Test new herbicides on practice fields or small portions of game fields to better understand their affects.

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Spring dead spot is a serious disease of bermudagrass, especially in the transition zone. Fall infections predispose turf to winter kill. In the following spring, circular patches appear to remain dormant, while roots, rhizomes and stolons are sparse and



» **IMAGE 4:** Foliar symptoms (top) and dark brown to black roots and rhizomes resulting from spring dead spot of bermudagrass. Photos courtesy of Alfredo Martinez.



» **IMAGE 5:** Circular brown patches (top) and necrotic leaves (bottom) resulting for brown patch infestations. Photos courtesy of Lee Burpee and Alfredo Martinez

dark-colored (Image 4). The cool and moist conditions in autumn and spring promote disease development. Management practices that increase cold hardiness generally reduce disease incidence. Maintaining balanced fertility and proper thatch management will reduce disease activity while promoting healthy turfgrass. Field managers should also avoid late-season applications of nitrogen and make fall fungicide applications (i.e. azoxystrobin (Heritage), fluoxastrobin

(Disarm), myclobutanil (Eagle), thiophanate methyl (3336) among others).

Brown Patch and *Pythium* blight are often the most serious diseases on cool season grasses. Brown patch is a foliar blight resulting in necrotic leaves and circular brown patches up to 4-6 ft in diameter (Image 5). High humidity and temperatures, combined with excessive nitrogen levels increase disease activity and severity. To minimize disease severity avoid nitrogen application when the disease is active, allow the foliage to dry between irrigation events, and remove excessive organic matter with cultivation. There are many fungicides that will provide excellent control of brown patch. Check the labels for information.

Pythium blight starts as small, irregular spots, which initially appear dark and water-soaked (Image 6). Affected turfgrass collapses, appears oily and matted and dies rapidly. White, cottony mycelia may be evident early in the morning. *Pythium* blight is encouraged by hot-wet weather, which correlates to increased stress on the turf. Cultural practices for control of brown patch will also help to minimize *Pythium* development. Note that correct diagnosis is important because *Pythium* control requires specific fungicides, such as fosetyl-al (Aliette, Chipco signature) and/or mefenoxam (Subdue MAXX) among others.

INSECT MANAGEMENT

White grubs are the larvae of several species of scarab beetles and are typically the injurious stage to turf. Grubs are white, C-shaped insects that have three pairs of legs and a distinct, brown head. Common grubs affecting turf include chafers, May beetles, June beetles and Japanese beetles. Grubs feed on the turf roots, substantially compromising the stress tolerance of the above ground foliage. In heavy grub infestations, roots are pruned to the extent that the turfgrass withers and dies and can easily be pulled up.

Because grubs tend to be in clumped populations, it is important to look in several areas using a spade to check the root zone in the spring and fall (Image 7). Typically, 5 grubs per foot in un-irrigated turf and 15 in irrigated turf indicate the need for treatment. Turf under heavy traffic will be less tolerant of grub injury.



>> **IMAGE 6:** Signs (top) and symptoms (bottom) of *Pythium* blight. Photos courtesy of Lee Burpee.

Effective curative products for late instar control include trichlorfon (Dylox) or carbaryl (Sevin). Preventive applications can be very effective using imidacloprid (Merit), thiamethoxam (Meridian), or chloranthaniliprole (Acelepryn). Effective combina-



>> **IMAGE 7:** Grub sampling using a flat edge shovel (top) and white grubs of Japanese beetle (bottom) collected in June. Photos courtesy of Alec Kowalewski.

tion products, designed to control soil insects and surface feeders include, imidacloprid and bifenthrin (Allectus) or clothianidin and bifenthrin (Aloft). Sports

Continued on page 45

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Water movement and repellency: putting wetting agents to work

Editor's note: Water movement in soils is influenced by three processes: chemical, physical and water repellency. Chemical processes include high electrical conductivity, high bicarbonates, high sodium and low calcium. Physical processes include thatch and organic matter, hardpan and compaction. We will be covering all three in the next three issues; water repellency and wetting agents will be discussed this month. The author is senior research agronomist for Aquatrols.



>> CONDUCTING a water drop penetration test; water drops on the surface of water repellent soil.

WATER REPELLENCY or soil hydrophobicity is the inability of soil to wet. The causes of soil water repellency are numerous; plant root exudates, fungal hyphae, and decomposing organic matter are just a few of the sources of hydrophobic coating on soil particles. This hydrophobic coating on sand particles prevents water from attaching to the particle and may interrupt the uniform movement of water through the soil profile. (To determine if soil is water repellent, a water drop penetration test should be performed. Take a core sample down to root depth. Air dry for approximately 2 weeks, then place water drops at one centimeter depths along the core and

time how long it takes for the water drop to penetrate the soil core. Water repellency is defined: non-wettable [<5 seconds], strongly water repellent [60-600 seconds] and severely water repellent [600-3600 seconds]).

In highly managed turfgrass environments such as sports fields, water repellency tends to be more severe at the surface and declines farther along the soil profile. Typically, the top 3 cm of a coarse textured soil are the most hydrophobic. This top 3 cm is enough to significantly disrupt water movement. Water repellency at the surface is evident when runoff, puddling and slow infiltration occur. Water repellency significantly reduces irrigation distribution uniformity. Although not visually evident, the delay in water movement into the soil in an arid environment also causes water loss to evaporation. This water repellency and loss prevents your turf from getting the water it

needs to survive and thrive and contributes to waste of water and run-off of soil directed chemicals such as fertilizer and pesticides.

Water repellency below the soil surface creates non-uniform distribution of water, and any material applied with water. Preferential flow paths or “fingered flow” are caused by physical and chemical processes but are also strongly associated with water repellency. Due to hydrophobic organic coatings, water molecules are repelled away from soil particles, decreasing access to numerous pore spaces. A re-occurring pathway of water flow to the bottom of the soil profile is formed. This preferential flow results in non-uniform distribution of water, fertilizers and pesticides, which can reduce turf quality and enable unsightly localized dry spots to develop.

Coarse textured soils go through numerous wet to dry cycles. It is challenging in a turfgrass environment to maintain soil at constant volumetric water content and prevent soil from falling below the critical water content or the soil water content where organic acids are prone to displaying hydrophobic coatings. Rewetting of soil particles is difficult when moisture is severely limiting. Acceptable moisture content, particularly on an in-play sport field, may be below this critical water content. A significant increase in applied water is needed to overcome the hydrophobic areas and achieve a goal of an even matrix flow of water.

Water repellency can be managed. Wetting agents are used to alleviate soil water repellency and improve water movement through the soil profile. The chemistry of a wetting agent is composed of a hydrophilic end and a hydrophobic end. The hydrophobic end will attach to the non-wettable organic acid on the soil particle. The hydrophilic or water-loving end of the surfactant molecule draws the water molecule closer to the soil particle, thereby successfully wetting the soil particle. By doing so, water is retained and soil volumetric water content increased. Plant available water is readily accessible in pore spaces. The wetting ability of the wetting agent helps to reduce preferential flow paths and rewets the soil readily.

Ask yourself if you have ever had difficulty getting certain areas of a field to absorb water, or if specific areas are always

quick to wilt. If the answer is yes, then you need to use a wetting agent to help maintain soils at a consistent volumetric water content and to improve distribution uniformity. Wetting agents can help you maintain healthier turf by aiding in the rewetting soils and preventing wasteful run-off of water and inputs to maximize use efficiency.

Another benefit of soil surfactants is their ability to break the cohesive forces of water, reducing surface tension which allows for faster penetration of water into the surface of the soil. This "penetrant" performance of surfactants prevents runoff, evaporation and puddling at the soil surface.

IMPORTANCE OF WATER

From both an environmental and economic stance, water is probably one of the most important components of your maintenance plan and budget. Wetting agents help water penetrate the soil surface and retain moisture in the soil profile. By doing so, less water is needed to maintain high quality turf, thus reducing both the cost of water and the costs associated with irrigating. Even in areas where rainfall is abundant or irrigation systems are used, wetting agents help maximize water use efficiency by improving distribution uniformity in the soil and enhancing water movement through the soil profile, reducing the amount of water you need to apply.

It is important to note that not all wetting agents are the same. Non-ionics are the most common surfactants used in turfgrass management. Numerous surfactant chemistries exist and performance characteristic as well as degree of phytotoxicity of each surfactant chemistry varies considerably. Some are better wetters and have no penetrant qualities, while others reduce surface tension but do not increase water content in the soil profile. Reduction in surface tension, induced rewetting, and hydrating soil particles are aspects of a wetting agent that vary based on chemical structure.

Rely on data from universities in your geographic area. Distributors should also be able to tell you the key components in the jug and how those ingredients work in the soil and at what rate phytotoxicity may occur. Simply stating a material is a block copolymer is not enough information. This term is generic and used to describe the majority of wetting agent chemistries.

As a turfgrass manager your job is to maintain quality turf. Water repellency can make your job more difficult leading to runoff, evaporation, LDS, and wasted water and chemical inputs, which result in poor turf quality and uneven turf surfaces. If you need assistance determining which wetting agent chemistry is right for you, discuss it with your distributor or a wetting agent manufacturer. Most will be able to determine your specific issue and find a wetting agent solution. ■

Mica McMillan is the senior research agronomist for the R&D department at Aquatrols Corporation. She handles all North American turfgrass research focusing on surfactant and soil-water quality product development. Mica is a graduate of Auburn University with a MS in Agronomy and Soils and is currently pursuing a PhD in Soil and Water Science at the University of Florida.

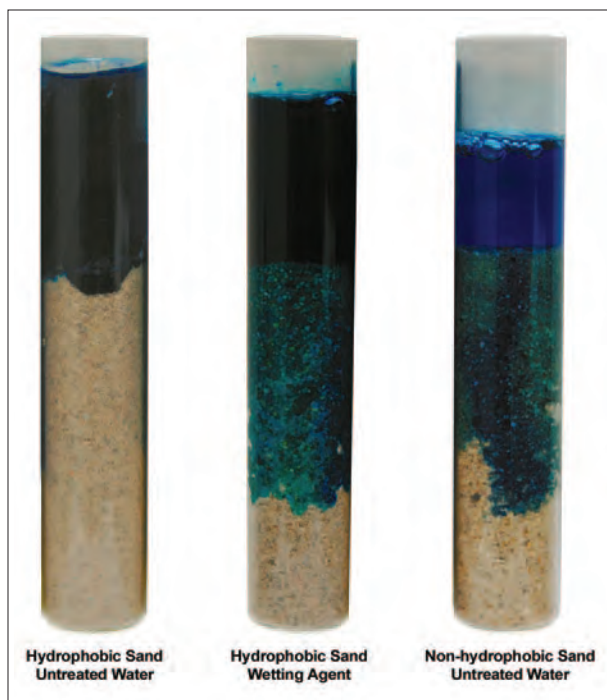
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Selecting the right wetting agent for sportsturf

Editor's note: Mark Howieson, PhD, is a technical team leader at Becker Underwood and Joe Lara is the turf and specialties product manager for the company.

KEEPING SPORTS TURF HEALTHY under stressful conditions is no easy task. Among the many challenges sports turf managers face, soil moisture management is a primary concern. Water repellent soils are common in sand-based athletic fields and can result in irregular patches of wilted and drought-stressed turfgrass, often referred to as localized dry spot (LDS).

Soil wetting agents reduce the surface tension of water, allowing it to penetrate and wet the soil more easily. Irrigation and infiltration surfactants are designed to help increase water infiltration and irrigation uniformity. Before deciding on a wetting agent product, you should check university or reputable third-party trial data to support product claims.

No one product is best for every sports turf management program. When selecting a product, consider efficacy, management intensity, intended use, product longevity and price.

LONG-TERM

Many turf managers prefer the convenience of making only one application in the spring without follow-up applications. Long-term wetting agents generally persist for at least 3 months in the soil.

An important note to keep in mind is that long-term wetting agents have greater potential for development of phytotoxicity and discoloration if the applicator is not cau-

tious. In addition, long-term wetting agents are more limited when it comes to tank-mix compatibility with other products (i.e. fertilizers, pesticides, plant growth regulators, etc.), in comparison to short-term wetting agents.

Long-term wetting agents are an excellent option for season-long prevention of LDS development on water repellent, sand-based fields in the Northern US. Using long-term products will minimize the number of applications needed during the growing season.

SHORT-TERM

Short-term wetting agents are typically applied at 2 to 4-week intervals and allow you to make applications only when environmental conditions demand treatment. Moreover, there is potential to incorporate the monthly application into existing turf management programs. Short-term wetting agents have greater flexibility with tank-mix options when compared to long-term wetting agents.

Because short-term wetting agents generally persist for only 28-30 days in the soil, more frequent applications are necessary, requiring more time and labor investment. However, short-term wetting agents typically reduce the risk of leaf discoloration and phytotoxicity during hot, dry weather, especially when compared to long-term wetting agents.

Short-term wetting agents are best selected for water repellent sand-based greens, especially in transition and warm season zones, although they are becoming more popular in cool season zones. An additional use for short-term wetting agents includes late season "rescue treatments" to correct symptoms of LDS.

Irrigation surfactants may be a low-cost alternative to conventional wetting agents to treat difficult-to-wet areas caused by thatch or low soil surface hydrophobicity. The cost is further reduced when the agent is injected into the irrigation system.

In general, irrigation surfactants

are not as effective as a stand-alone wetting agent product to manage LDS or alleviate moderate to severe soil hydrophobicity. However, these agents are useful in difficult-to-wet native soil areas.

Wetting agents cannot alleviate soil water repellency from the turf canopy, but need to be watered into the soil to be most effective. Water long-term wetting agents into the soil immediately following application. Most short-term wetting agents need to be watered in within 24 hours of application. Always check the label and follow directions.

It is proven that wetting agents can help increase the water infiltration rate into the soil profile in hydrophobic soils. However, in areas with excessive thatch (greater than 1/2 inch) or soil organic matter (greater than 3.5%) the soil surface may retain moisture. Core-aerating and top-dressing with sand to reduce thatch and organic matter content will help prevent moisture retention at the soil surface.

Moisture retention at the soil surface is exacerbated when wetting agents are not watered into the soil profile. If wetting agents are not watered in with a sufficient volume of water to penetrate the hydrophobic layer, a temporary "perched water table" may form above the hydrophobic layer that maintains excessive moisture at the surface.

If you know that you are dealing with hydrophobic soils or LDS, a wetting agent can help alleviate the symptoms and bring your turf back to a healthy-looking condition. Do some research to find out which products will work best for your situation. ■

Mark Howieson, Ph.D., is a technical team leader at Becker Underwood. Joe Lara is the turf and specialties product manager at Becker Underwood. Becker Underwood produces a variety of turf management solutions, including colorants, wetting agents, iron chelates and nutrient blends.

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

John Mascaro is President of Turf-Tec International

Can you identify this sports turf problem?

Problem: Brown lines leading up to brown areas on sidelines

Turfgrass area: NFL football practice fields

Location: Foxboro, MA

Grass Variety: Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass blend

Answer to John Mascaro's Photo Quiz on Page 33



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Green Media announces Most Influential People

GREEN MEDIA, A DIVISION OF M2MEDIA360 — publisher of Outdoor Power Equipment, Landscape and Irrigation, Arbor Age and SportsTurf magazines — proudly presents the 2011 selections for “Most Influential People in the Green Industry.”

Green Media’s “Most Influential People in the Green Industry” were nominated by their peers for their ongoing contributions to the Green Industry. Nominations were reviewed by Green Media’s in-house panel, and the 2011 selections for “Most Influential People” were chosen from throughout the Green Industry.

The six professionals honored here exemplify commitment to the Green Industry, and have exhibited a widespread influence on their peers. Green Media congratulates all of those chosen for this year’s list of “Most Influential People in the Green Industry.”

Dan Ariens

When notified that he was selected among the “Most Influential People in the Green Industry” in 2011, Dan Ariens, president and CEO of the Ariens Company in Brillion, Wis., said that he was “surprised” and “flattered.”

“There are a lot of very important and influential people in the OPE industry and have been for a long time,” said Ariens, the great-grandson of Henry Ariens, who founded the Ariens Company in 1933. “If I were voting, I think I would’ve picked some others.”

Given all that Dan has accomplished in the OPE industry and the Wisconsin business community, leading to numerous productivity and leadership awards, the honor should certainly come as no surprise.

In addition to enjoying tremendous success with the Ariens Company, Dan has served as chairman of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and twice as chairman of OPEI’s Green Industry and Equipment Expo Committee. He has received two gubernatorial appointments from two different Wisconsin governors representing two different parties, including his present appointment as the vice chair of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. He has served on several boards of directors for educational entities, for-profit companies and non-

profit economic development groups in the state, including the New North (an 18-county regional economic development board) and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce. Plus, he is one of only seven members on the Executive Committee of the Green Bay Packers’ board of directors.

“I’ve always had this philosophy to emulate or follow or learn from people that I would consider mentors,” he said, “and there’s a lot of people in business and outside of business that I’ve looked at as people that I wanted to shape myself around their character and ethics and their morality and their approach to life in general.

“One of those that crosses both business — this business — and life would be my father (Mike Ariens). He’s certainly been a very important influence on me from a long time back.”

“He’s a very strong moral authority in terms of what’s right and what’s wrong,” Dan said of his father. “He was always a great teacher of ‘No, we’re not going to do that. That’s just not the way we do things.’ I think the lessons that I learned from others were more about having my father as a guidepost.”

Based on the lessons learned from his father, and shortly after succeeding him, Dan quickly established his own company expectations by creating a set of five “Core Values”: 1) Be honest; 2) Be fair; 3) Keep our commitments; 4) Respect the individual; and 5) Encourage intellectual curiosity. “We talk about those multiple times a day,” Dan said. “I mean that’s just not something we just stick on the wall. That’s a conversation we have every day, around every decision.”

Dan, who with his wife of 27 years, Julie, has five children between the ages of 15 and 25, was asked how he would like to be remembered when he retires and what the future of the company holds for subsequent generations. He laughed and said, “I’m pretty young. You know I think just as kind of the way I hope people think of me now. I’m ‘just a guy from Brillion’ that likes to come in (to work) and loves this business. I think at the end of the day, if we achieve our 20-year vision, I’d like to be able to look back at that with my peers here and say, ‘We did alright. We created a lot of jobs. We built a nice company here, and it’s on a platform that’s sustainable, and it’s time to turn it over to the next generation.’”

— Steve Noe

Bill Harley

With 28 years of trade association management experience, Bill Harley was selected in late 1999 to follow in the footsteps of Dennis Dix, who served as president and CEO of OPEI for 27 years. Harley officially took over for Dix when he retired at the end of March 2000 and proceeded to make several notable contributions to the Green Industry before he too retired from OPEI at the end of August 2011.

A Chicago native who received a bachelor’s degree in marketing from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Harley worked for two-and-a-half years as a bond underwriter at the Hartford Insurance Company before beginning his association management career in 1972 with the Air Conditioning Contractors of America. In 1981, Harley was selected as the executive vice president of the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA). He served as NUCA’s CEO until 1999 when he was selected by OPEI to succeed Dix.

Harley recently reflected on his successful reign of nearly 12 years with OPEI during an interview with OPE.

OPE: With 28 years of association management experience in other industries, why did you decide to enter the OPE industry by joining the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) in January 2000, knowing that you would succeed Dennis Dix as president and CEO in March of that year?

BH: Eighteen of those 28 years, I served as CEO of the National Utility Contractors Association prior to joining OPEI. After 18 years, I was ready to explore new opportunities and challenges. At the time, OPEI offered both. Dennis Dix’s 27 years as OPEI’s CEO established a consistent, respected and stable organization. Dennis also built a financially viable international trade association. Having that strong foundation was a key factor in my decision to accept the CEO position at OPEI.

OPE: Having retired as the president and CEO of OPEI as of Aug. 31, 2011, and had a few months to reflect on your nearly 12-year run with the association, what are your proudest accomplishments, fondest memories and biggest regrets (if any)?

BH: I honestly don’t have any regrets. I was very fortunate to work with a dedicated and talented team in the OPEI staff. I’m most proud of building upon and maintaining the financial

viability of the organization. The industry faced — and continues to face — substantial regulatory and legislative challenges, which require a significant commitment of resources (finances and personnel). OPEI immersed itself in those challenges, and we were able to actively engage those issues and not deplete the financial reserves. Indeed, we increased those reserves despite the economic plunge that began in 2008. OPEI's senior vice president of finance & administration, Jean Hawes, is an exceptional steward of OPEI's finances.

The consolidation of OPEI and the Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association (PPEMA) in 2001 is also high on my list of accomplishments. Having the OPEI and PPEMA member companies under one umbrella organization was essential for the manufacturers and suppliers. A splintered manufacturer/supplier industry in today's business and political climate would have been very costly to the industry, and not just in financial terms. OPEI was strengthened immeasurably with the addition of the PPEMA member companies.

Achieving the merger of OPEI's trade show, the International Lawn, Garden and Power

Equipment EXPO, with the Green Industry Expo (GIE) is probably my major accomplishment, certainly the most visible to the broad Green Industry. Obviously, this achievement was not the work of one person. The key person in the merger was Warren Sellers, Sellers Expositions. Without his vision, perseverance, experience and knowledge, the combined trade show would have never become a reality. As you know, he continues as the show executive today. Warren and I and the Sellers Exposition team were a great partnership.

I must also salute several major participants who were essential to the trade show merger. Dan Ariens, the Ariens Co., served as chairman of EXPO at the time, and he played a major leadership role. Jerry Grossi and Rick Doesburg, representing PLANET, and Jeff Bourne, representing PGMS, were integral and essential to seeing GIE+EXPO become a reality.

I can't conclude any discussion of GIE+EXPO without acknowledging the support and active involvement of the Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) and the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau (LCVB). KEC President Harold Workman, and vice president

of sales and marketing, Linda Edwards, and LCVB President Jim Wood and executive vice president, Karen Williams, are committed to the continued success of GIE+EXPO.

Lastly, moving OPEI into a much greater level of government relations and public affairs activity is a source of pride. My two previous associations were heavily engaged in legislative affairs, and I knew what it took to be a respected player in Washington. I recognized Kris Kiser's quality reputation, experience, expertise and knowledge when I hired him in 2007. He deserves great credit for OPEI's accomplishments in those arenas and, of course, today he serves as OPEI's president & CEO.

OPE: Any final thoughts?

BH: I would like to thank you, Steve, and Outdoor Power Equipment magazine for this recognition. I would also like to congratulate the other "most influential people" selected by your respected publication. I would be remiss in not specifically congratulating Dan Ariens, president of Ariens Co. and a past chairman of the board for OPEI, and Kris Kiser, OPEI's current president and CEO.— Steve Noe

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Kris Kiser

The U.S. Congress and the state of Indiana's loss in 2006 became the gain of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and the OPE industry in 2007.

Inspired by a political upbringing and 20 years in Washington, D.C., Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI, decided to leave his job as vice president of state and international affairs at the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (AAM) in Washington, D.C., in 2005, and return home to Indiana to run for Congress in 2006.

Although the move backfired on him — he was defeated by the incumbent in the primary election — he's been able to draw upon that experience in fighting on OPEI's behalf.

"It's something I always wanted to do," said Kiser of running for Congress. "And believe me, you learn lessons you can't get in any classroom. It's very hard, it's very hard. It's a very tough environment nowadays. And today, it's the politics of destruction. It's destroy the other candidate."

Given Kiser's upbringing and background, it's easy to see why he was inspired to run for Congress, why he was disillusioned by the process, why he landed on his feet at OPEI, and why he was selected as one of the "Most Influential People in the Green Industry" in 2011.

Born in Indianapolis but raised in Seymour, Ind., a small agricultural town just north of Louisville, Ky., Kiser said that he was introduced to politics at a very early age.

"My folks were very active (politically)," Kiser said. "It was always part of the conversation, very aggressive debates. One of my two sisters actually married a politician. My brother-in-law is a prosecutor in Indiana. So, it's just always been a part of our lives."

Kiser was involved in campaigns as a youth, became a deputy registrar at age 18, and worked for politicians while earning his bachelor's degree in political science and history from Indiana University in Bloomington in 1981. Then, before joining the private sector, he had the great fortune of working nine years for noted international affairs expert and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, who represented Indiana's ninth district for 35 years before retiring in 1999. Kiser served as a special assistant in Hamilton's personal office and two years as chief administrative staffer with the Joint Economic Committee during Hamilton's chairmanship of the committee, affording him the opportunity to work his way through law

school at the University of Louisville. Kiser and Hamilton have remained in close contact and remain lifelong friends; Hamilton has met with the OPEI Board on two occasions and has even been featured as a speaker at the OPEI annual meeting.

"Lee is a very substantial man," said Kiser. "He was a highly respected guy and not a partisan. He was a problem solver. He was all about fixing things, and he would work across the aisle. He didn't see color. He didn't see party politics. He was a problem solver. He was a very substantial influence on my life."

After his failed run at Congress in 2006, Kiser said that he "fell into" becoming involved in the OPE industry. It started when a member of OPEI — who was familiar with Kiser's work with automakers and knew of his fuel expertise and Capitol Hill experience — informed him that OPEI was looking to expand into public policy by hiring a "Hill person," and encouraged him to apply. So, Kiser met with Bill Harley, president and CEO of OPEI, and was hired in the newly created position of vice president, public affairs in August 2007.

"It was good timing for me, and it was good timing for (OPEI)," said Kiser, "because the biggest thing that's happening that's going to affect every one of my members is this fuel business, the change in the fuel, whether it's ethanol or isobutanol or what have you."

Since joining OPEI, Kiser has sat at many tables, serving as the chief advocate for the OPE industry before the U.S. Congress and Administration on a wide range of issues related to fuels, emissions, manufacturing, environment and water, and he has won several battles. He has played an instrumental role in an ongoing battle with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over its WaterSense program, resulting in the EPA's recent removal of a landscape restriction that required only 40 percent of a building's landscape consist of turfgrass.

"I always want OPEI to be relevant. I want OPEI to be at the table," Kiser said. "If you're going to be talking about my industry, or something that affects my industry, whether it's a regulation or a piece of legislation, we need to be at the table. And we need to do the work that earns us a seat at the table, because you have to earn a seat at the table." — Steve Noe

Mark Chisholm

Mark Chisholm is a third-generation arborist with the Aspen Tree Expert Company,

Inc., Jackson, N.J.; a three-time winner of the International Society of Arboriculture's (ISA) International Tree Climbing Championship (1997, 2001 and 2010); and a highly sought-after consultant and industry spokesman for the world of arboriculture. He is a regular presenter at industry trade shows; he lectures at Rutgers University, Cornell University and Hofstra University; and he performs on-the-job training for professionals around the globe.

In addition, Chisholm has a daily influence on others via his industry website, Tree Buzz.com, which he launched in 1999 and now has more than 6,000 members and countless visitors who don't sign up as members. The site averages approximately 5.2 million hits per month.

"With every tree, every customer, and everyone I've spoken to about tree care, I have tried to display my most professional image to try to change the perceptions about the industry," he said. "I've always tried to touch them with the idea that I'm going to try to make a difference to the image that's out there, and show them that we're very skilled, we're very well thought out, we're very articulate, we describe what we're doing, we're scientifically based — and I make sure I display that."

Stephen Cieslewicz

With more than 30 years of industry experience, Stephen Cieslewicz has established himself as a leading expert in utility vegetation management (UVM). In working with utilities, regulators and service providers around the world, he has been directly involved in the bulk of tree and power line issues of note.

Cieslewicz, president and chief consultant at CN Utility Consulting, was a principal UVM investigator for the Joint U.S./Canada Power Systems Outage Task Force, a principal author of all UVM-related reports following the blackout on Aug. 14, 2003, and is currently a member of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) FAC-003 drafting committees. Cieslewicz has testified as an expert at many significant legal, regulatory and legislative hearings. He is a past president of the Utility Arborist Association (UAA) and a recipient of numerous awards, including the UAA Utility Arborist Award, UAA President's Award, and certificates of appreciation from the U.S. and Canadian governments.

"While I am extremely proud of the work I