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Okay, maybe you can't fight City Hall . . . but you can sure tell them what you think!

The Prescott Valley Tribune in Arizona recently carried a story reporting that the Prescott Valley Parks and Recreation Department plans to switch soccer and adjoining T-ball fields at a local park to artificial turf to save money on watering, other maintenance and labor.

The paper reported the town will save \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year in water, fertilizers and herbicides, according to the Parks and Recreation Director Brian Witty. Witty also said the (artificial) turf will be applied to a junior soccer field (100,000 square feet) and four T-ball fields (40,000 square feet).

The Town Council, voted unanimously on Nov. 19 to accept a bid for about \$1.4 million to install the artificial turf as well as lighting at the park. The town will pay for the project from impact fees collected from residential developers.

It may be a done deal but it seems some residents didn't hesitate to express their thoughts. The following are just a few excerpts of what the people had to say:

"Another blatant rip off \$1.4 million to last for how long (5-9 years?) versus \$40,000 a year x 10 years \$400,000. So where's the other million going?"

"This whole thing seems to be a lifetime money loser. How much will it cost, to tear it up and install new artificial turf twelve years from now? I guarantee it will be a lot more than today's cost ... and what will the cost be for disposing of the old artificial turf 12 years from now? The town got duped on this contract, first the council and then the public, we are all to blame."



"Most artificial turf fields have been installed in the past 5 years. So around the country and the world the rubber is just starting to hit the fan: citizens are finding they are facing half a million dollars or more to replace the plastic fields every 5 to 10 years in perpetuity. That is not even mentioned - instead they talk about grass replacement - which would only be necessary for the most poorly installed, heavily abused poorly maintained grass fields, even in Arizona. Well constructed grass fields with grasses best adapted to the site and state of the art storm water capture for later irrigation use will last indefinitely with appropriate attention to maintenance. And all at a fraction of the cost of an artificial turf field over the life of the field."

"\$1.4 million for lights and (artificial) turf. Let's say the lights cost \$400,000, leaving \$1 million for (artificial) turf. Saving \$30,000 per year, that means it will pay for itself in 33 years. But it will only last maybe 8-12 years. This is being presented as a good investment?"

"Even saving \$30,000 per year it would take 46.6 years to pay off the \$1.4 million (not figuring in any loan interest). The artificial turf comes with only an 8 year warranty. Perhaps 10-15 years from now the fields will need to be redone. How does this make financial sense? Ah, but it's being paid by "impact fees." Yeah, right!"



Holiday Greetings

During this special time of the year family and friends come together to celebrate the season and recall fond memories of holidays past and present with loved ones. It is a time to rekindle old acquaintances, reflect on that which is most precious to us, and share our joy with those we hold most dear.

Wherever your travels may find you; be it in the comfort of your own home or in the home of friends or family, the entire staff at *Turfgrass Producers International* wishes you the very best and extends our warm wishes for a healthy and prosperous New Year to you and yours.

A mower may just be a mower - - but stealing one . . . that's criminal!

The Georgia Supreme Court has ruled that a riding lawn mower is not a motor vehicle as defined by Georgia's vehicle code. Although a riding lawn mower is a "self-propelled" device and could be broadly defined as a motor vehicle, the court concluded that the purpose of a riding mower is to cut grass, not transport people.

Why would such a ruling be necessary?

Well, in 2006, a fellow named Franklin Lloyd Harris and two others stole a riding lawn mower from a retail store in Dalton, Georgia and drove it to Athens, Tennessee where, according to court documents, they sold it. As a repeat offender, Harris received 10 years in prison under the motor vehicle theft law.

But in a 4-3 opinion, the Georgia Supreme Court reversed the conviction. Why? Justice David Nahmias, writing for the majority stated, "To be

sure, a riding lawnmower is capable of transporting people or

property and of being driven on the street for short stretches, but that is not what the machine is designed for or how it is normally used -- there being little grass to mow on streets, and there being faster and less noisy ways of moving people and property around."

Although the "motor vehicle theft" conviction was over-thrown, Harris also had been convicted of "theft by taking". He will be resentenced on that charge alone.

The morale of the story: *If you steal a riding lawn mower some state's Supreme Court might cut you a little slack on a technicality, but one way or another, you're sure to get clipped.*



Folks in San Diego get caught in a "Catch 22" and discover that conserving water has its price!



Sir Isaac Newton had it right - for every action there is a counteraction and local residents in San Diego, California are getting that physics lesson firsthand. One would think that conserving water would save residents money, but that's not quite the case in the San Diego area where water rates are actually going up because, well uh, because water usage is going down.

You can call it Newton's third law of action-counteraction, or something of a "Catch 22", in fact you can call it whatever you'd like, but according to the San Diego California Metropolitan Water District, the Los Angeles-based wholesaler that supplies the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), their water conservation efforts have resulted in a \$200 million drop in revenue.

Here's the problem, the water authority and agencies that deliver water have fixed budgets to cover basic operating costs. For example, water revenue is used to pay off debts, handle repairs and cover employee salaries. But the much needed water conservation efforts that have been implemented have been so successful that water usage and related revenue have both plummeted. So much so that in order to meet budget requirements, residents will see close to a 20% rate increase in their water bill.

Making the situation even more unsettling is the fact that in addition to providing water for the county, the water district is spending nearly \$600 million to raise the San Vicente Dam and double the reservoir's storage capacity. The city of San Diego also plans to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on water treatment upgrades and infrastructure improvements such as new pipes and it's possible that billions more could be spent in the next decade on projects that would require yet more rate increases.

TurfSide-UP

"The Ecocise Lawnmower" A Cut Above The Rest



Professor Fester Goodbody demonstrates his revolutionary new invention called the **"The Ecocise Lawnmower"**.

During a recent interview Goodbody stated, "Now people can get some exercise, mow their lawn and help the environment, all at the same time."

Goodbody is currently looking for a manufacturer and distributor for his new invention. He has had discussions with Whacko Industries, I.C. Nuts, Inc. and Loona Tick Manufacturing.

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- Physical Health Magazine

"Sure to make you the envy of the neighborhood."
- Keeping Up With The Joneses Weekly

"Takes mowing the lawn to a whole new level."
- Outdoor Adventures Magazine

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Turf News Magazine Announces Advisory Team

Den Gardner, Editor and Lynn Grooms, Managing Editor of **Turf News** magazine have announced the formation of a **Turf News Magazine Advisory Team**, made up of turfgrass producers.

Gardner stated the advisory team will offer their insight and suggestions for story ideas so TPI can continue to provide the best magazine in the industry devoted exclusively to turfgrass producers. This new advisory team has the support of the TPI board.

The Advisory Team will participate in conference calls and meet together (for those who are in attendance) at the Summer Convention & Field Days and the Midwinter Conference. The meeting will take place during the Roundtable Forum.

A conference call is scheduled in early December with the first meeting taking place in Hawaii during the 2010 Midwinter Conference.

As of this writing the following members have agreed to participate subject to their availability:

Warren Bell - Biograss Sod Farm (Sandy, Utah)

James (or) Randy Graff - Graff Turf Farms (Fort Morgan, Colorado)

Eric Heuver - Eagle Lake Turf Farms (Strathmore, Alberta, CAN)

Marilyn Magwood - Eagle Lake Turf Farms (Strathmore, Alberta, CAN)

Danielle Marman - West Coast Turf (Palm Desert, California)

Sharon Nietzsche - Central Sod (Plainfield, Illinois)

Suzie Shearer - Coolabah Turf (Echuca, Victoria, AUS)

Scott Woodard - Woodward Turf Farms, Inc. (Nokesville, Virginia)

Ed Zuckerman - Delta Bluegrass Company (Stockton, California)

Our sincere thanks to these TPI members for agreeing to provide their time and insight.

A Tip of the Hat to Peter McMaugh



Congratulations to **Peter McMaugh** of Carlingsford, New South Wales (NSW), Australia for becoming the proud recipient of the 2009 Graham Gregory Award for Excellence in Horticulture.

In addition to becoming an Honorary Member of TPI in 2004, Peter's many achievements include creating the name for Australia's most recognized buffalo grass, Sir Walter and establishing Australia's first turf research organization.

As director of the Grass Research Bureau NSW renamed the Australian Turf Research Institute (ATRI) in 1970, Peter oversaw the discovery of a new species of nematode that was devastating turf in the NSW Hunter region, which led to its control. He also co-developed innovative machinery to improve turf maintenance and developed controls to eradicate invasive species in Bentgrass putting greens and Couch Grass fairways, thus helping to improve the quality of Australian golf courses.

Peter's scientific expertise, innovation and commercial accomplishments are reflected in the Sydney Football Stadium, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Royal Randwick Racecourse and Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. Peter also helped develop turf farms in a geographically challenging area in China, the model of which has been replicated throughout the country.

TPI extends its sincere congratulations to Peter for a lifetime of dedicated service and for such deserving recognition.



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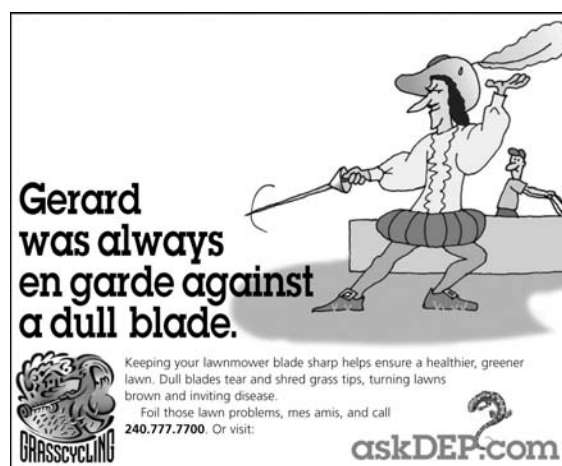
Maryland's Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection Gets an A+ for Effort

At a time when some local and state agencies use eye-appealing but misleading ads to convey their message to the public without any attempt to educate and inform; (i.e., Denver Water's 2009 "Grass Is Dumb" campaign and Southern Nevada Water Authority's 2008 "Sod. It just doesn't work." campaign),

it was refreshing to see that the state of Maryland's Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection packaged a series of clever ads that serve to inform and educate the public.

Rather than dismissing the many environmental benefits that natural

turfgrass has to offer, they designed a series of attention-getting ads that provide a public service. The following are a few samples of the ads in their "Grasscycling" series that we wanted to share with our readers.



[If you have unfilled space in your own publication Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection invites you to download and use any or all of their series of 18 ads. Visit their website at:](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/solidwaste/news/ads_grasscycling.asp)

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Turf News

SPECIALTY CROP FUNDING

How a little time and effort netted the **North Carolina Sod Producers Assn.** \$20,000 for marketing, advertising and a state turfgrass industry survey.



RALEIGH, NC — Federal grants worth more than \$1 million will help 20 groups and local governments, including Madison County, market specialty crops.

Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, Christmas trees, turfgrass and sod, and nursery and greenhouse crops.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture grants were announced by state Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.

Among the recipients was the **North Carolina Sod Producers Association (NCSA)**.

Laura Nakoneczny, the Executive Director of the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina reports that NCSA was awarded \$20,000 from the Specialty Crops Grant Fund. \$8,000 will go to marketing and advertising, and \$12,000 will be used for the development of a survey, its distribution, return and analysis. The survey will focus on our member growers, their interests in sod farm research, and supply and demand production.

Laura added that NCSA's former executive director, Gene Maples, prepared the grant request.

In a correspondence to the TPI E-Newsletter Gene offered the following information on the application process:

"The original project took me a little over six working days starting from scratch. The first four were primarily information gathering, planning & budget preparation with resource people and presentation considerations. The original proposal covered three major

interrelated initiatives and totaled the maximum \$100,000.

The NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services saw fit to cut our request to \$20,000 claiming they had many more applications than they had expected. Because of this it took me two additional days to edit, rewrite and resubmit our proposal.

I was pretty amazed at leadership's reaction. We have, of course, retained the omitted components for future inclusion or submission to other funding sources.

Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance. I would look forward to perhaps doing this for others if the need presents itself."

Gene Maples
E-Mail: gmaples@embarqmail.com

We would like to thank Laura and Gene for giving us permission to share this information with our readers.

SIDE NOTE:

The classification of turfgrass sod as a specialty crop was greatly influenced by TPI's active involvement with key government decision makers.

The following is an excerpt from a letter drafted by Kirk Hunter, Executive Director of TPI to the USDA:

"TPI submits that the Proposed Rule's regulations should clearly establish that turfgrass sod is agricultural and a specialty crop covered by the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Turfgrass Producers International appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Proposed Rule."

- Kirk Hunter, Executive Director, TPI



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CONGRATULATIONS on 50 Years!

Although the TPI E-Newsletter
rarely uses space to announce
non-TPI industry events we've
decided to make an exception in
light of the fact that the Virginia
Turfgrass Council will be holding
their *50th Annual Virginia Turfgrass
Conference and Trade Show* on
January 18, 2010 in Fredericksburg,
Virginia. Their theme for the
Conference is "**Fifty Years of
Helping You Grow Green.**"

TPI extends its congratulations to
VTC on reaching this historic
milestone and for their contribution
to our industry.



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TPI Member is Ready to "Play Ball!"

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona -- The Arizona Diamondbacks are one step closer to having a state-of-the-art Spring Training facility. A groundbreaking ceremony for their new complex recently took place on a dirt lot that will eventually be where baseball fans can watch the team train.

The new facility will not just be home to the Arizona Diamondbacks, but also to the Colorado Rockies.

The complex is the first ever to be built on Native American tribal land and the 140-acre project is being paid for by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. The estimated price tag is \$100 million.

The ballpark will seat a total of 11,000 people and 7,000 of those seats are in the bowl.

The architects of the project, who also designed the new Dallas Cowboys stadium, say the facility will bring Spring Training to a whole new level. Fans will have to wait until the 2011 season to catch the D-backs batter up in their new training facility. The new complex has not yet been named.

The turfgrass to be used is Tifway 419 which is being provided by West Coast Turf's Salt River sod operation and will tentatively include approximately 1.4 million square feet of total turf for 12 practice fields, two half fields and maybe several bunting areas. Installation - May 2010



Location rendering



Ground Breaking Ceremony - November 2009



Photos of ground breaking ceremonies courtesy of the Arizona Diamondbacks.



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Turf News

TPI Member Addresses Sports Turf Managers Sodding vs. Seeding

Leonard DeBuck of DeBuck's Sod Farm in Pine Island, NY gave a presentation to sports turf managers during the 2009 Sports Turf Managers of New York (STMONY) Conference & Trade Show in Syracuse, New York last month.

In keeping with the conference theme, "Going Lean, Going Green" DeBuck's presentation was titled, "Establishing a Turfgrass Surface – Sodding vs. Seeding" and was attended by over thirty sports turf managers. The presentation was designed to introduce those in attendance with cost savings measures that might be applicable to their business.

In addition to explaining what a great value turfgrass sod is (because the mature Kentucky Bluegrass plant is ready for use approximately eight weeks after installation) DeBuck also presented three distinct ways that sports turf managers could save as much as \$9,000.

His recommendations included the necessity of replacing only the middle 60 ft. of an athletic field where 80% of the wear takes place; introducing those in attendance to an above ground K-Line irrigation system, and making them aware of the First Products

AERA-Vator for aerating and overseeding fields.

DeBuck reported that he learned about the K-Line irrigation system during his visit to New Zealand on a TPI tour and added that this was a technique used by New Zealander's for watering sheep pastures, but now the technique is used by municipalities that have several fields that simply need some supplemental summer irrigation.

When asked to summarize the potential savings of as much as \$9000 DeBuck said there were 3 scenarios that all reflected potential savings:

- 1 - If you were to seed an entire field it would cost approximately \$13,000; but if you sodded only the middle of the field your cost would be cut to around \$4500.
- 2 - If you had to install an automated in-ground irrigation system it would cost close to \$10,500 whereas the K-Line moveable irrigation system would only costs around \$1,500.
- 3 - The third option, which is a little harder to quantify, but overtime, if you used the AERA-Vator, which is an aerator and seeder all in one, you could save close to \$9,000.

STMONY
Sports Turf Managers
of New York

At the close of his presentation DeBuck encouraged everyone to attend the TPI's 2010 Summer Convention and Field Days in Pine Island, New York in July 2010.



K-Line irrigation system used in New Zealand.

Photos provided by:
Kirk Hunter



Leonard DeBuck (left) with his son Greg and Greg's dog Sierra.

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