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One Step at a Time



Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) Scores Some Successful Strides with EPA's WaterSense Specifications

The efforts of TPI and other coalition partners to address the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "WaterSense" Program has been an on-going effort and continues even though the EPA has released its final *WaterSense Single-Family New Home Specification*.

As a result of TPI's efforts and those of our lobbyist we did achieve some measure of success as it pertains to turfgrass.

The landscaped design criteria now has two options: One option requires using the WaterSense Water Budget Tool and the other option suggests turfgrass shall not exceed 40 percent of the landscaped area. It was initially proposed that turfgrass shall not exceed 40 percent of the entire landscapable area. **The final draft now suggests this is only applicable to the front yard.**

It was initially proposed that plantings other than turfgrass shall be installed on slopes in excess of four feet of horizontal run per one foot vertical rise. **The final draft now uses the word "vegetation" which suggests turfgrass is acceptable.**

Kevin Morris of the National Turfgrass Federation (of which TPI is a member and TPI's executive director, Kirk Hunter serves on the board) has suggested the turf limit may be dropped in future iterations of the specs.

Although WaterSense is a voluntary program these efforts were taken because there is some apprehension that the specs may be mandated locally by some jurisdictions in the future.

In addition, the coalition feels there is much room for improvement as a "one-size-fits-all" approach for living plants isn't practical or scientifically feasible. In consideration of the before mentioned issues (mandated compliance and/or "one-size-fits-all"), TPI and the coalition will continue their efforts to have changes made to the specs.

To view the final version of the WaterSense specifications click on the link below:

[WaterSense Single-Family New Homes Specification \(PDF\)](#)
[WaterSense Water Budget Tool \(PDF\)](#)
[\(About PDF\)](#)



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Happy New Year 2010

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEW YEAR
 WITH THE HOPE THAT IT BRINGS

EXCITING CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN CONTINUE
 TO EXPLORE ALL THAT IT HAS TO OFFER.

YOUR SUPPORT OF TPI IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED.

The Officers and Trustees of Turfgrass Producers International and the entire staff wishes you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.



PLANET Names Sabeena Hickman CEO



Sabeena Hickman has been named chief executive officer of The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

Hickman came to PLANET in June 2007, and served as chief operating officer up until March 2008, when she became acting CEO of the organization.

Hickman helped launch PLANET's "National Day of Service" event. On Earth Day 2009, PLANET members volunteered to work on landscape and lawn care projects in their communities. Under Hickman's leadership, the organization also grew their annual "Renewal & Remembrance" event, a national volunteer project at Arlington National Cemetery.

Hickman is a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



2010 Scholarship Program

Administered by *The Lawn Institute*, the **Dr. Henry W. Indyk Scholarship Program** was established to honor a founding father of Turfgrass Producers International, while demonstrating the association's commitment to education and offering a valuable member benefit.

Since its inception in 2006, TPI has awarded up to \$10,000 in scholarships annually to some well-deserving recipients.

Past Scholarship Award Recipients

<u>Year</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>TPI Member Company</u>
2006	James McCurdy	McCurdy Farms, Dyer, TN
	Mindy Brandt	American Sod Corp., Palatine, IL
2007	Jaclyn Thorson	Todd Valley Farms, Inc., Mead, NE
	Nathan Bush	Bush Sports Turf, Milan, IL
	Michael Anderson	K'tucky Turf, Othello, WA
2008	Kevin Coombs	Coombs Sod Farms, LLC, Elmer, NJ
2009	Amanda Bush	Bush Sports Turf, Milan, IL
	Kelsey Lain	Pine Island Turf Nursery, Pine Island, NY

2010 Scholarship Application

The 2010 scholarship application is available online at www.TheLawnInstitute.org. From the menu, go to Programs and then Scholarships.

Application Submission Deadline Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Eligibility

- Scholarships are available to immediate family or designated staff of a current TPI member (Class A, B or C) in good standing.
- Applicant selected at the discretion of the TPI member company owner or designated primary representative.
- Scholarship applicants majoring in any given field must plan on attending or be attending an accredited educational facility as a full-time student.
- Limited to one applicant, per TPI member company, per year.

The 2010 award recipient(s) will be notified in late spring of 2010 and officially announced in July 2010 during the TPI Summer Convention and Field Days in New York, New York, USA.

Questions

Contact info@TheLawnInstitute.org or 847/649-5555



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Turf News

Might there
be some good
news on the
horizon?



New-home sales rise to highest level in a year because of a 6.2 percent jump fueled entirely by strength in U.S. southern markets.



WASHINGTON - Associated Press reported that sales of new homes rose to the highest level in more than a year as strong activity in U.S. southern markets offset weakness in the rest of the country.

The Commerce Department reported at the end of November that sales rose 6.2 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 430,000 from an upwardly revised 405,000 in September. Economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters had expected a pace of 410,000.

"If you're looking for a sign that builders will need to start swinging their hammers again soon, this is it," wrote Mike Larson, real estate analyst at Weiss Research according to the Associated Press.

The report tallies signed contracts to buy homes, rather than completed sales. Home shoppers in October were acting before lawmakers decided to extend a tax credit for first-time buyers and expand it to some existing homeowners. The credit now covers contracts signed by April 30, and analysts expect it to further the housing recovery in the coming months.

"It's all thanks to the government," said Jennifer Lee, an economist at BMO Capital Markets. Sales are up 31 percent from the bottom in January, but down 69 percent from their peak in July 2005.

TurfSide-Up

Good Ol' High Flying Entrepreneurial Spirit



Photo: Mike Lee Johnson

PORTLAND, Oregon

While demonstrating a prototype of his new high-powered lawn mower, amateur inventor, Jed I. Flyer discovered his secret formula for fuel may have had just a bit too much kick.

A witness at the demo site was quoted as saying, "One minute he was turning that puppy on and a few seconds later he was gone. It was like watching a greased pig shot through a cannon barrel.

The last time we saw Jed he had just cleared the roof of his equipment shed and was on a trajectory to clear Mt. Hood some fifty or sixty miles away."

TurfSide-Up is a satirical feature of the TPI E-Newsletter. Any similarity to persons living or dead is purely coincidental except in the case of prominent public figures, where actions and characteristics are used for the purpose of parody and satire. TurfSide-Up does not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of Turfgrass Producers International or its members. It is the satirical viewpoint of Jim Novak.



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TPI Board Member Dave Dymond Scores a Bull's Eye

In the November 2009 issue of **Landscape Management** magazine Ron Hall, Editor-At-Large wrote an interesting article entitled "Turfgrass in critics' bull's eye" that intelligently responded to the growing criticism that lawns "waste" water.

Hall acknowledges that the American lawn is under attack but questions whether such claims are justified. Throughout the article he conveys the thoughts of green industry researchers and professionals who take issue with such claims. Among the individuals quoted, Dr. James Beard, professor emeritus Texas A&M University, Dr. James H. Baird of the University of California-Riverside, Dr. Leah Brilman, of Seed Research of Oregon, John Farner of the Irrigation Association, Dr. David Chalmers and Dr. Kurt Steinke of Texas A&M, Kevin Morris, executive director of The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program and TPI board member **Dave Dymond** of H&H Sod Company in Kenansville, Florida.

Hall's article provides insight into what the industry is doing with regard to new technology, turfgrass breeding programs, drought tolerant research studies and the need for the industry to educate consumers on water conservation as it relates to turfgrass and America's lawns.



TPI's Dave Dymond is quoted as saying, "Turf has its place in the landscape like other valuable plants, and all plants use water. We know that people who have irrigation usually water too much. If we could just train and educate them better, we could provide the water savings our water districts are seeking."

Dymond admits in the article that educating the public is a tall order and a job that the industry needs to do better. Dymond is also quoted as saying, "People have to realize there's a big difference between keeping their lawns alive and keeping them lush especially when water is scarce. We try to teach our customers to teach their customers to irrigate the grass only when it needs water, to wait until the grass begins to wilt. It will tell you when it needs water. Don't water it because it's Tuesday or because the clock is set at a certain time. It's equally important property owners follow other proven cultural practices too. These include not fertilizing lawns too much and mowing them at the height most advantageous to each type of turfgrass."

To read Ron Hall's article in its entirety click on the link below:

<http://www.landscapemgmt-digital.com/landscapemgmt/200911/pg=39#pg39>



Washington State University gets funding for turfgrass professor

The Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission will fund an endowed professor position in turfgrass management at Washington State University. The gift of \$300,000 is intended to establish the professorship and will let WSU hire someone to focus on research in the turfgrass industry.

Rich Koenig, department chair of crop and soil sciences, said the endowment

will provide research and operating support for a faculty position, once it is fully funded. The professor will teach and conduct research in turfgrass seed production and turf management practices.

Board members of the Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission agreed to fund the endowment in large part to invest in the future of their industry and

to build stronger ties with Washington State University.

"Funding of this professorship ensures the future hire will continue to support the turfgrass seed and management industries in the state of Washington," said Koenig. "Distinguished endowments like this one allow WSU to advertise and attract world-class teachers and researchers to faculty positions."

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Dr. Stacy Bonos of Rutgers University receives Early Career Excellence in Plant Breeding Award

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Dr. Stacy Bonos, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology of Rutgers University has been selected by the multistate Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee (PBCC), to receive the inaugural **Early Career Excellence in Plant Breeding Award**.

The reward for her efforts will be the opportunity to present her research and anchor a roundtable discussion for graduate students at the 2010 meeting of the committee.

"Stacy has developed a 21st century breeding program in which she is doing it all," said Brad Hillman, director of cooperative research at Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station in Pittstown.

The PBCC includes plant breeders from land-grant universities in almost 40 states, as well as plant breeders working in the federal government and private companies. All types of crops are represented, including grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, ornamentals, turf and trees.

"Plant breeding is a key science for agriculture, and early-career plant breeders will shape its future," said Phil Simon, the PBCC chairman and a vegetable crop breeder with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's research service.

Bonos, who hails from Stockton, specializes in turf grasses — one of the top projects at the experiment station.

During her turf and biofuel research, Bonos uses diverse plant genetic resources to develop new plant types that are more tolerant of pests and poor or dry soils. Her varieties are robust without excessive use of pesticides and require less fertilizer and water compared to

earlier varieties.

These are important advantages that give lawns and golf courses smaller environmental footprints and help make biofuel production more sustainable.

Bonos has developed 14 new plant varieties, mentored many graduate and undergraduate students, written numerous extension publications about how to use the new varieties and published 36 scientific articles.

She has also garnered other awards, including the 2005 Young Crop Scientist Award from the Crop Science Society of America and the 2001 Musser International Turfgrass Foundation Award of Excellence.

For more information contact Jeff Weber:
jweber@MyCentralJersey.com.

Side Note:

Dr. Stacy Bonos has been a strong supporter of TPI as well as the recipient of funding through The Lawn Institute. We join others in expressing our sincere congratulations to Stacy for receiving such well deserved recognition.



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Turf News

TPI Editorial Advisory Team has their first conference call

Den Gardner (Editor –Turf News) reported that the TPI Editorial Advisory Team had their first conference call on December 7, 2009. Among those available to participate were **Warren Bell**, Biograss Sod Farm; **Marilyn Magwood**, Eagle Lake Turf Farms; **Suzie Shearer**, Coolabah Turf; **Scott Woodward**, Woodward Turf Farms; **Den Gardner & Lynn Grooms**, *Turf News*.

Gardner explained to the Advisory Team that *Turf News* has an editorial calendar that extends through mid-year 2011, but that suggestions are welcome at any time.

Managing Editor, Lynn Grooms, addressed the purpose of the *Turf News* Media Planning Guide and explained how it is developed to

provide topics of interest to both readers and advertisers.

It was proposed that after each issue of *Turf News* is published, editorial advisory team members will receive a short survey (via e-mail), asking them to rate articles/columns on a scale of 1-10. This will serve to get a better idea of what articles are of the most interest and/or value, or which articles proved most helpful to turfgrass producers. The proposed survey is expected to require only 5-10 minutes of time to complete. A survey will also be sent after each publication of TPI's *Business Management* newsletter.

Gardner also notified participants that the Advisory Team will be modified periodically so members do not have to serve indefinitely.



The first editorial advisory meeting will be held at noon on February 5, 2010 at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

Den Gardner, Editor,
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Lynn Grooms, Managing Editor,
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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Turfgrass Producers International wishes to extend a sincere thank you to all those industry associations, manufacturers, suppliers and TPI members who promoted the upcoming TPI Midwinter Conference in Hawaii.

It appears there were many supporters who helped spread the word and we wanted to give a tip of the hat to those of whom we are aware.

Thanks to **Summit Seed** for a full cover page in their December 2009 Holiday Issue newsletter promoting

the Conference ; thanks to **Betsy McGill**, executive director of the **Florida Sod Growers Association** who took it upon herself to mail TPI's promotional literature to all FSGA members, and our appreciation to **Ian True of Trebro Manufacturing** who notified their customers with a personal letter.

If you know of any others who made an extra effort to promote TPI's Midwinter Conference please let us know.

December 2009 | Holiday Issue

Won't be Winter Where We are Going... Visit us at the Mid-Winter 2010 TPI Conference in Hawaii

TPI will be hosting their mid-winter conference in Kailua-Kona Hawaii. Registration will be at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa Hotel from February 1st - February 5th 2010. Visit a 100 year old Kona coffee farm. The Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa is approximately 20 minutes from the Kona International Airport at Keahole.

Tour the farm, see how coffee is grown, farmed, processed and then taste a cup of 100% Kona Coffee! Enjoy lunch overlooking Kamahehane Bay and the historic temple of Ahuena Heiau. **TPI Show Information**

SUPPORT YOUR FOUNDATION! Add these Optional Activities* to your registration!

The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament:
Tuesday, February 2nd - 8:30 am to 4:00 pm The Makalei Golf Club was voted Golf Digest 2008/2009 Best Places to Play! This course offers challenging play for golfers of all levels by providing multiple tees that extend from 5242 yards to a championship length of 7091 yards.

The Lawn Institute Banquet & Fundraiser:
Thursday, February 4th - 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm A Hawaiian Luau is the ultimate celebration for the whole family! An ancient custom of favorite island traditions as well as modern-day amenities often times makes a luau the highlight of your Hawaiian experience.

*All optional activities require a minimum number of participants. TPI reserves the right to cancel any activity.

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The majority of our sod products are grown on 3mm washed sand, compatible with USGA root zone mixes, including 25 acres of greens sod; bentgrass varieties and Native Poa Annua. Our bentgrass fields are fumigated to eliminate unwanted grasses and other pests. Great care is taken to produce a top quality product for the discerning end user. We continually review and improve growing procedures, equipment developments, input products, cultural practices, and keep striving to raise the quality bar.

If there's one thing turfgrass producers have in common — it's their curiosity



Above photos: Lynn Grooms

This is one of those photo series that sits in a file waiting for the opportunity to be used. Being that it's winter in the northern hemisphere we thought this might be as good a time as any to reflect on the warmth in the southern hemisphere.

Background: Following a tour of the **Van Aken Sod & Tree Farm** in Bancroft, Michigan during TPI's 2009 Summer Convention & Field Days the tour busses came to a stop near an impeccable landscaped residence. One of the passengers asked if he

could exit the bus briefly to take photos. Within minutes the bus was empty as turf producers scurried to take photos.

Of particular interest was a petunia flower tree that was some 12 feet high. Curiosity being what it is, everyone wanted to see how the tree was constructed. It was later learned that the home was that of a Van Aken family member who took a great deal of pride in his landscaping and who was somewhat amused by the curious onlookers.



Photo:: Richard Schiedel



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Turf News

TPI trustees meet in Phoenix for their Fall Board Meeting

TPI Board members met in Phoenix, Arizona in late fall to visit the proposed site for the 2013 TPI Midwinter Conference. In addition to viewing the host hotel property they also embarked on educational tours that included the University of Phoenix Stadium, (home of the NFL's Arizona Cardinals). They also paid a visit to Evergreen Turf in nearby Chandler, Arizona where they were provided with insight into the company's business and operating procedures.



University of Phoenix Stadium
Retractable playing field positioned outdoors.



Jeff Nettleton describes Evergreen Turf's office procedures to visiting TPI board members.



Jeff and Tina Nettleton of Evergreen Turf, Inc. in Chandler Arizona hosted TPI board members during their Fall Board Meeting in Phoenix.



Board members view stadium interior after the natural grass retractable playing field has been rolled outdoors.

The University of Phoenix Stadium features a unique rollout natural grass playing field, contained in a single tray weighing 17 million pounds (234 feet wide, 403 feet long). It is the first completely retractable field in the United States. The playing field is positioned inside the stadium on game days and outside the stadium for the remaining 350+ days of the year to receive sunlight and watering. The field tray is powered by electric motors mounted on steel wheels riding on tracks embedded in the concrete floor and takes approximately 60 minutes to move completely. The flexibility of this unique design allows University of Phoenix Stadium to serve as a true multi-purpose venue.

SIDE NOTE: TPI Board members are responsible for covering the cost of their own transportation and personal expenses when attending a Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter Board Meeting. We appreciate the time and commitment they extend to TPI in an effort to serve the membership.



Photos provided by: Kirk Hunter

TPI Board members and their spouses during their on-site tour of the University of Phoenix Stadium. Among those in attendance were Chip and Shari Lain, Claus and Anne Zander, Randy and Betsy Graff, Duane and Dana Klunt, Mike and Luisa Selman, Dave Dymond, Fanus Cloete, Darin Habenicht, Tobey Wagner, Gary Wilber, Leon Dahle and Kirk and Lori Hunter.