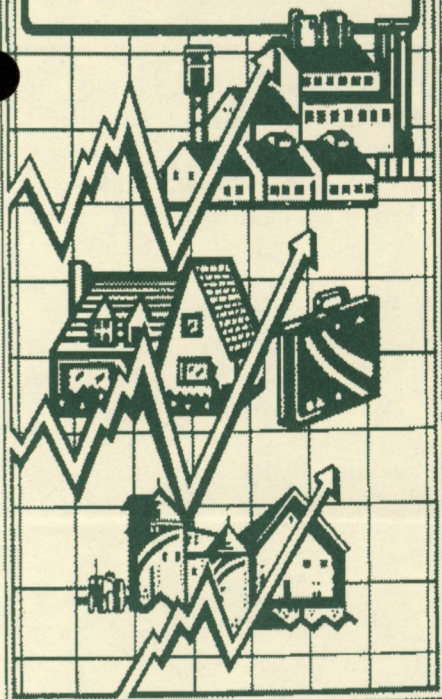


Oct / Nov 1999



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Computer News Briefs Page 3
Tips for Shrewder Computing.

Cultivating Customers Page 3
Effective Communications Make a Lasting Impression on Customers.

Financial Business Briefs Page 2
Big Ideas in these Short Articles.

Jest for the Fun of It Page 4
TPI's "funny business" Department.

Lansing Symposium Tape Page 3
Video of Recent Seminar Available.

Midwinter Conference Page 1
Brief Review of Conference Plans.

Safety Resource Center Page 3
Free Ag Safety Information is Just a Phone Call (or email) Away.

Taking Care of Business Page 2
Use Your Government, You're Paying for It!.

TPI Action Page 4
Housing-Start and Employment Statistics Available; Governmental Issue Update: FQPA, Immigration Reform, Crop Insurance and more.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

San Antonio, Texas--Feb. 8-12, 2000

Win-Con Offers Array of Events

More than just education and exhibits, TPI's redesigned and expanded Midwinter Conference will offer everyone an incredibly diverse array of events February 8-12 in San Antonio, TX.

Highlights include:

Golf Tournament -- Feb. 8, to have fun and raise funds for the International Turf Producers Foundation.

Turf Tours -- Milberger Landscaping open-house Feb. 8 & 9; Turfgrass America and Bladerunner Farms, Feb. 12

Pre-Con Seminar -- Feb. 10, focuses on "Issues and Challenges for 2000 and Beyond" for warm-season sod growers.

Tracy Byrd Dinner Concert -- Feb. 11 in a "Low-Down, Hoe-Down" with bar-b-cue, dancing and fun

Committee Meetings -- Feb 9-12, open to all members

General Education Program -- Feb. 11-12, "Turfgrass Sod Production for the

New Millennium," with "Meet the Future Head-On!" closing, keynote-address.

Exhibits -- Feb 10-12 with the latest in equipment and services, plus continually available food and drinks.

ITPF Silent Auction -- Feb 10-12, raising research funds for ITPF, through the sale of items donated by exhibitors and members.

Crawfish Party - Feb. 12 to close the farm tour and conference.

All of this is of course in addition to all of the wonderful tourist attractions already present in the city of San Antonio and its world-famous River Walk already has in place for visitors.

Details of time, date and costs, as well as registration / reservations forms are already in the mail. Call TPI if you did not receive your packet or have any questions about any of the events.

TPI Summer Convention Symposium Made Available on Video

Did you miss TPI's Summer Convention Symposium in Lansing, Michigan... and wish you hadn't? Or, did you attend the symposium, but wish you could see it again because it was so good?

Well, there's good news in either case because the day-long symposium was video-taped, and it will be made available in just a few weeks. This education session on turfgrass sod production agronomics featured some of the leading university researchers in the Midwest.

If you are interested in purchasing the TPI Summer Convention Symposium Video (on four VHS tapes) for \$55 (includes shipping), please contact the TPI office by Monday, October 18. The video-set will be reproduced in quantity based on member response...so to reserve your copy, contact TPI today! Call 847/705-9898, and ask for Stephanie.

ITPF Asks: Is Your Farm Worth \$2.00 Per Acre?

ITPF's Board of Directors has estimated that the cost of mowing turfgrass sod just once is \$2.00/acre.

In its Annual Campaign to raise funds for sod-specific research, ITPF is encouraging all TPI members to contribute at least the equivalent of \$2.00 per acre...and more if possible. Donations made before December 31, 1999 can be deducted from current year tax returns in the U.S.

ITPF uses these tax deductible contributions to fund short- and long-term research and other projects intended to provide answers to producers' problems and concerns.

"How will you face the increasing water crisis?" is just one of the serious issues being addressed by ITPF programs.

Taking Care of Business: Use Your Government, You're Paying For It

**Jack Meyers, Meyers Turf Farms,
Stilwell, Kansas**

Help Stop the Death Tax

You have always heard that two sure things in this life are death and taxes. This statement is often used with humor, but in the United States, these two certainties combine in a way that is certainly no laughing matter. What I am referring to is the U.S. estate tax that has become known as "The Death Tax"...and it is devastating to small business, families, and jobs. Building a successful business and passing it on to the next generation is the American Dream. Death Taxes rob entrepreneurs and their children of the dream. In short...the Death Tax is the nightmare of the American Dream.

The Death Tax requires your heirs to pay up to fifty-five percent (55%) of the value of your entire estate, in cash, within nine months of your death. The tax applies to all assets! Unable to pay the tax, many unfortunate companies are forced to close their doors. Those that do survive lose valuable resources for business growth.

So-called "sin taxes" penalize activities thought to be harmful, such as smoking or alcohol. What does the Death Tax penalize? The answer is: savings, investment, the creation of jobs, and economic growth. These activities should be encouraged not taxed out of existence. A vast majority of our

businesses in our industry are closely held businesses, usually family owned. Death Taxes strip them of their assets at the most vulnerable time.

Articles in the Associated General Contractors Construction magazine (June 1999) provide extensive information about the tax and its devastating effects on small business, families, and the economy. Construction contracting businesses, like those in our industry, are comprised primarily of closely held, family-owned businesses. Small specialty manufacturers and many other types of businesses fall in to this same category.

As individuals working to build a business it is difficult to fight the injustice of something like Death Taxes. But there are things you can (and should) do before it's too late. It is essential that TPI members take time to learn what this tax will do to their business and its succession to family members after your death. It is to our joint benefit to unite with other trade associations with similar interests to fight the Death Tax now.

Revenues from the Death Tax account for less than 1.4 percent of the U.S. Federal budget. This is more than off set by the loss of income tax and loss to the American economy. The tax is double taxation at its worst. It is levied on top of income, business, property, sales, and

capital gains taxes that have already been paid on business assets over a lifetime.

The Death Tax can only be eliminated by Congress. Legislation to eliminate the Death Tax has been introduced in both Houses of Congress. Bills ranging from gradual elimination to immediate elimination have received various degrees of support. Please contact your Congressman and U.S. Senators today. Grass roots letters, faxes, and phone calls are essential to winning the fight.

Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202/224-3121. Ask the operator to connect you to your Congressman's office. Make sure that your Senators and Representatives understand your position on the Death Tax...and find out how they view this important issue. The opinion you express on this issue may be the only constituent's voice they hear...so it's vital to let your voice be heard.

Much of the information reported here was acquired through Death Tax articles printed by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC.) To get a more complete outline of how this tax affects you and how you can help in the effort to eliminate the Death Tax, write: Associated General Contractors of America, 1957 E Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006. You may phone AGC at: 202/393-2040, or visit their Website: www.agc.org

Financial Business Briefs + Business Resource 'Freebees'

* Chances of being audited decline:

Small companies chances of being audited by the IRS are declining rapidly. Latest government statistics show that companies with less than \$250,000 in assets had a one-in-150 chance of being audited - down from one-in-83 risk in 1997. The same holds true for larger companies, for example: companies with \$5 million to \$10 million in assets had roughly a one-in-eight chance of being audited in 1998 - down from one-in-six the prior year. More good news... there is no sign that the trend will be stopped.

* Tax-free \$2,000 employee bonus:

An Individual Retirement Account (IRA) set up by the company. This is a way to thank new employees not yet eligible for company retirement plans... or part timers without enough hours to qualify for plan membership. Tax law allows a company to contribute up to \$2,000 to an IRA on behalf of an employee - as long as the employee would have been able to deduct the contribution if he/she had made it himself. You can also reward employees who are already plan members by

contributing to Roth IRAs for them. But this type of contribution is taxable to the employees.

* 2 Resources - Free for the asking...

Index Investing

What it is...how to invest...tricks + more. The Vanguard Group, 800/523-7731.

Organize Now!

A catalog of more than 500 products to help organize your business and home. Abbot Office Systems, 800/631-2233.

Safety Resource Center

Back Belts: Do They Prevent Injury?

● Pamphlet outlines current scientific knowledge on back belts as well as the importance of an overall ergonomic program. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 800/356-4674. Free.

Creating a Drug-Free Workplace When the Issue is Safety:

How to avoid drug-related accidents... reduce worker's compensation and medical costs... tardiness... etc. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, on the web: www.health.org/wpkitsafety.htm

Do You See What I See?

If your employees don't visit physicians regularly, they may have poor eyesight that could cause workplace accidents. Now you can check for signs of trouble and conduct simple vision tests using free information and charts available from: Prevent Blindness America
500 E. Remington Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
www.preventblindness.org

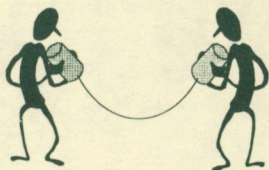
Emergency Vehicle Reminder

If emergency vehicles pass by, others may be in the area....and may approach from a different direction. Proceed with caution!

Communication Cultivates Customers

Communication is an essential ingredient of marketing...but there's more to communication than placing an ad in the yellow pages and picking up the phone to take sales orders. Try thinking of your customer and prospect communications as you would the grass in your fields...

Your yellow page ad (or your website) is the 'seed' you're planting. The sale is the harvest of your turfgrass sod. In between, lots of things have to happen for your crop to succeed. Mowing, irrigation and fertilization are a few elements of the sod production process.



is an informational 'newsletter.' We've put newsletter in quotes because there's a wide variety of newsletter formats - ranging from four-color, multi-page publications, to a single-sheet one-color piece (perhaps on your company's letterhead or with your company logo.)

Newsletters that are focused on your customer's needs (not on your company) have the greatest impact. Effective newsletters are also consistent in their design. So whatever format you choose... stick-with-it so that future issues build on the recognition of your firm created by your newsletter. Newsletter topics can range from areas of business, agronomics, equipment/technology, computers, etc.

When it comes to communicating with your prospects - and we'll call existing and prospective customers 'prospects' - there's a lot that can (but often doesn't) happen between 'seeding' and 'harvest.' By communicating with your prospects, you position your firm as not only the source of good information, but the source for turfgrass sod! This ongoing communication process cultivates customers, in that it prepares them to choose your firm when they're ready to buy.

● As it happens, your best communication tools are right at your fingertips... your computer (typewriter) and your phone. And perhaps the best way to get your company name in front of your prospects

You can begin the process by sending out samples of your newsletter to a few loyal customers, and inviting them to offer you feedback about the design and content. Call them after you mail the newsletter and indicate that you're interested in their opinion on how you can improve your new publication. In later issues, always invite feedback and ask for suggestions.

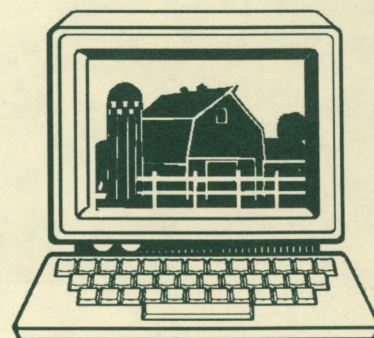
Keep focused on your prospects' needs, and you'll develop your reputation as a valuable source of information that results in a positive, lasting impression. By sending your newsletter on a regular basis, and using it as the focus of follow-up calls, you'll begin cultivating customers, and ensuring a rich harvest.

Shrewder Computing

P.D.F. for F.R.E.E.

One of the most useful programs around for viewing and sharing documents is Adobe Acrobat Reader. This program is free, and available for downloading from Adobe: www.adobe.com Instructions on Adobe's site give downloading details.

Text, graphics, spreadsheets and database files can be easily 'read' and passed along to other users in a format (pdf) that doesn't use-up tons of memory. For example, you can: download census information from the Department of Ag's website; transfer information to your website 'host;' or share large graphic files with your printer. This pdf format is so flexible, it may ultimately be used to put "Turf News" magazine on CD-ROM for reference. Try Acrobat Reader & let us know what you think.



Website Design Hints

- * Links are one of the most important elements of a good site.
- * Sites that offer text without design elements earn the highest user-satisfaction ratings.
- * Users rate sites with lots of white space as harder to read than those that are "busy."
- * Well-designed sites eliminate the need for internal search functions, that only succeed 50% of the time.
- * Site visitors don't mind scrolling.
- * Graphics contribute little to a site's success.

TPI Action

Free Housing-Start and Employment Stats for U.S. States and Major Cities, are available upon request from TPI. Compiled monthly by the National Association of Home Builders, a regular review of this information can help TPI members estimate market trends. Based on an analysis of these reports, producers can more confidently project planting needs, pricing, etc. While the information is deemed highly accurate, caution and personal interpretation must be incorporated into the farm's overall planning process.

House and Senate Begin to Address Several TPI Issues

Food Quality & Protection Act -- TPI presented testimony about the seriousness of losing necessary chemicals if the EPA continues to act as is has in registering and re-registering products before the House went on its Fall recess. Since returning to action, both the House bill 1592 and Senate bill 1464, titled, "The Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999" have gained important co-sponsors. Members are encouraged to have their elected officials sign-on and support the fast passage of these measures.

Immigration Reform Legislation -- perhaps while this newsletter is in the mail, the TPI supported Senate bill to address the temporary ag. employee problem will be formally introduced. While long-delayed, the bill has been promised rapid consideration in the Senate, with introduction in the House to take place almost simultaneously.

Federal Crop Insurance -- TPI is tracking multiple bills that have been introduced in the House and Senate, with a concern that they must contain specific provisions to include possible coverage of speciality crops like turfgrass sod, and offer coverage and marketing alternatives that create useful risk management tools.

Minimum Wage Increase -- probably not an "if", but a "when" issue, Democrats and Republicans in both Houses are likely to pass an increase sooner, rather than later. Expect a 50-cents per hour increase for this year and next. As producers know, minimum wage employees aren't available in this full-employment cycle, but raising the minimum also raises all other rates.

To Receive Additional Information On Any of These Items, Contact the TPI Office
Phone: 800/405-8873 or 847/705-9898
Fax: 847/705-8347 or E-mail to Turf-Grass@MSN.COM

Jest For The Fun Of It

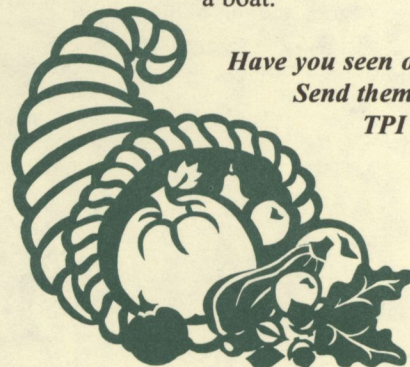
The Riddler...

1. What did the thief get for stealing a calendar?
2. When is a boy like a pony?
3. When is a cliff like a fish?
4. What five-letter animal name can be spelled using the letters P and A?

1. Twelve months, 2. When he's a little horse, 3. When it's scaled, 4. Panda (p+and+a)

Actual Bumper Stickers...

- * A fool and his money are soon partying.
- * Visualize whirled peas.
- * My other car is (fill in the blank)
 - a Mercedes.
 - a junker too.
 - a truck.
 - a broom.
 - a boat.



Have you seen others?
Send them to
TPI office

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International
1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
Permit No. 662