

**June/July 2007**



## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Taking Care of Business . . . . . Page 2

*How to Get Others to Take Ownership*

Beyond Satisfaction . . . . . 2

Safety Management . . . . . Pages 3-4

– *Light Duty Program Will Save You Money*

– *Light Duty Program Do's and Don'ts*

– *Communicating Safety Concerns*

– *Preventing Costly Back Injuries*

– *Safely Loading Trucks*

– *TPI Safety Tips*

Marketing Tip . . . . . Page 5

– *Getting Your Arms Around Marketing*

Shrewder Computing . . . . . Page 5

– *Group Your Photos by Event, Name, etc. with a Few Quick & Easy Steps*

TPI Action . . . . . Page 6

– *Have You Renewed Your TPI Membership?*

– *No Change in Contact for "Turf News," Membership and Exhibitor Inquiries*

Excerpts from *Facts About Artificial Turf and Natural Grass* . . . . . Page 6

## TPI Summer Convention & Field Days—July 23-26, 2007 Monday, July 23

The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament

TPI 40th Anniversary Reception

## Tuesday, July 24

Prayer Breakfast

Meet the Speakers

TPI Symposium

Madison City Tour

TPI Banquet

## Wednesday, July 25

Women's Forum

TPI Annual Business Meeting

Guest Speaker

Roundtable Forum

Family Night

## Thursday, July 26

TPI/WTM/MSD Field Day at O.J. Noer

## Friday, July 27

Working Group Meetings

# BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

## Turfgrass Producers International

## TPI Supports National Turfgrass Federation Lobbying Efforts

TPI serves on the National Turfgrass Federation (NTF) Board and contributes funding and support to their lobbying effort known as the National Turfgrass Research Initiative.

Now is the time to engage the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to actively conduct turfgrass research on a wide range of topics that will affect the turfgrass industry in the future. To accomplish this, the ARS needs financial support through congressional appropriations to the USDA budget for turfgrass research. To obtain this funding, NTF and TPI have been meeting regularly with Congress to educate and request an increase of funding for turfgrass research at ARS.

During the last five years, our efforts have increased USDA ARS funding from \$55,000 to slightly more than \$1 million. These lobbying efforts are expensive; however, the new funding for USDA ARS scientists is permanent and

is enabling redirection of valuable resources toward research on urban agriculture. ARS is now actively considering a strong and effective research program on turfgrass. The turfgrass industry needs to work closely with the USDA

—ARS because no company, university, or private funding agency has the resources available to solve many of the problems we will be faced with in the future. TPI is proud to provide contributions and support to help NTF's efforts to educate Congress and high ranking government officials about the importance of the turfgrass industry and the need to increase the USDA ARS budget for turfgrass research.



## TPI Annual Business Meeting

All members are encouraged to attend your organization's Annual Business Meeting at the Madison Marriott West, Middleton, WI, Wednesday, July 25, 2007 from 10:15 am to 11:45 am.

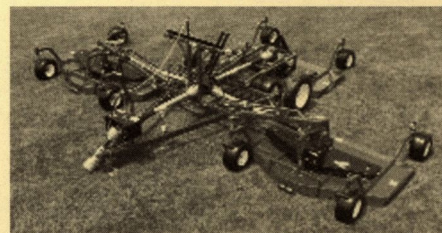
## TPI Summer Convention & Field Days Include:

- ♦ Progressive Mower Auction
- ♦ Chance to Win \$1,000,000!

Don't forget your checkbook when you come to the TPI Field Day on July 26th in Madison, WI. An auction for a Progressive TD 92 Rotary Mower will be held at the noon break. This mower was graciously donated by the manufacturer for one year's use in maintain the turf for the Field Day and to raise money for The Lawn Institute. This is a great chance to get a fantastic piece of machinery and contribute to The Lawn Institute. Our thanks to Progressive Turf Equipment Inc. for all of their help with making the Field Day in Madison a great success.

*Magnum*

Maybe by the time the auction starts you will have your pockets full of cash after playing in The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament, where four lucky raffle winners will have a chance to sink a Hole-in-One worth One Million Dollars! Entries into the random drawing for this opportunity are \$20 each or six for \$100, with all proceeds going to The Lawn Institute. Make sure to say a special thank you to Magnum (Bucyrus Equipment Co.) for providing the Hole-in-One contest.





## How to get Others to Take Ownership

Creating climates whereby individuals assume ownership of their actions, tasks, and the reputation of an organization comes down to a simple sequence of inter-linked actions. In working with profit and not-for-profit sector organizations over the past decade, a clear model has risen that differentiates the winners from the losers.

Winning organizations and individuals assume ownership and do not engage in the excuse game for not attaining performance expectations. How you go about assuming ownership and how you go about creating a climate whereby others assume ownership of their job, responsibilities, themselves and the organization over-all can be achieved by understanding how four factors are inter-linked, and thus where your first energies must be directed.

So the burning question in most leaders' mind is, "How do we go about getting others to assume a higher level of ownership?"

What has been learned is this:

1. When you know what the depth of your skill abilities are (formal and informal education, technical and non technical train-

ing, certification and credentialization work, accolade experiences) and you draw upon those and apply them appropriately, you experience success in accomplishment or a self VICTORY. When one experiences a VICTORY one's self esteem goes up!

2. When individuals are victorious, they become significantly more motivated about applying themselves, assuming more responsibility and becoming more excited about participating. At this point, the necessity to establish incentive and motivation programs and initiatives becomes less necessary!

3. When someone becomes motivated by seeing their victories and successes, he or she becomes significantly more passionate about life and the endeavors in which they apply themselves.

4. We take ownership of those things and people we are passionate about. 5. And to get people to take more ownership begins by setting them up for victory!

Doing a reverse analysis of some of the most successful (Southwest Airlines, Harley Davidson, Army National Guard, Office Depot, Wal-Mart, Clear Channel

Communications) is how this model was developed. People who assume ownership seem to be among the most passionate about what they do. Those who have high passion for what they do are continually motivated by what they do. And, this only happens when people are set up for victories by doing those things which they are best mentally and physically equipped to undertake. All of this feeds their self-esteem. When an individual operates from a level of high self-esteem, it is exciting to see what he or she can accomplish. It also reveals what they are willing to assume ownership of.

Any leader who creates a climate in which these four factors thrive will also see their business thrive.

*About the Author*—Dr. Jeffrey Magee, a leading "Leadership & Marketing Strategists" today, is the writer of the nationally syndicated "Leadership" column found in many daily newspapers, publisher of *PEFORMANCE Magazine* and author of more than 20 books. He is one of the country's leading managerial-leadership effectiveness trainers and coaches.



## Beyond Satisfaction

Think your customers are satisfied? Even if they are completely satisfied with your product and service, 40 percent of them will leave you for your competition. To increase customer retention and increase sales, you need to go beyond customer satisfaction and develop a rapport that will make them consider you first.

Here are five rapport-building tips to help you go beyond customer satisfaction.

### 1— Establish a Common Ground—

Customers relate to people most like themselves and they want to feel a connection beyond that of being just a client. Help them get to know you when they visit your office and see family photos, trophies, awards, certificates, travel pictures and other items that reflect your personality. Generally, they will find at least one thing that somehow relates to their own life. When talking with a customer over the phone, listen for clues such as a child or a dog in the background that indi-

cate the person's lifestyle on which you can make a positive inquiry or comment.

**2— Listen and Show Concern**—Your customers always want to talk about their favorite topic: themselves and their situation. Listening involves more than simply not talking; it requires full attention and a desire to understand which you can demonstrate by asking open-ended questions that prompt more than a "Yes" or "No" response. Remember the old saying, "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

**3— Use Humor**—One of the quickest ways to build rapport is through humor. When you get people to laugh with you, you've formed an instant bond. Adding humor within your comfort zone establishes a connection. Don't be afraid to let your funny side show.

**4— Keep a Positive Attitude**—When you're positive and upbeat, people naturally want to be around you and do business with

you. Unfortunately, in today's world, seeds of negativity are all around us, from traffic jams to 50+ hour work weeks. How we choose to look at those situations, however, determines not only our own mood, but also our customer's mood.

**5— Treat Customers Like Family**—Your customers want to know you have their best interest at heart. They want to sense a "We're in this together," attitude. You can accomplish this if you're genuinely happy and excited to talk with them. Get to know them, perhaps by keeping notes on their birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, illnesses, etc., and refer to those notes before your next contact or meeting. Your customers will be impressed with your concern for them, and you'll quickly surpass their expectations for individualized service.

You need to give every satisfied customer a reason to come back, while enticing new prospects to do business with you in the first place. *Source: Laura Michaud, MBA*



# Safety Management

## Light Duty Program Will Save You Money

An employee is busy loading and unloading sod. At the end of the day, his back hurts, but he ignores it and keeps up his regular pace the rest of the week. By week's end, his hurting back can no longer be ignored. He sees a doctor, who immediately prescribes pain medication and recommends that he not return to work for some time.

Do you let this employee sit at home thinking about how terrible he feels? Or, worse yet, thinking about how his back injury was really YOUR fault? A much better alternative—and much less costly for you in the long run—is to get that employee back to work as soon as possible in a modified "light duty" position.

A return-to-work or light duty program is one of the most important safety investments a turfgrass sod producer can make. A light duty program provides temporary work for an injured or ill employee that matches his or her doctor's medical restrictions. The idea behind the program is to get the employee back to work as soon as possible, yet not allow a return to full duty without a doctor's release.

One major insurance company estimates that the average cost of an insurance claim by an injured employee is \$37,000 when that employee has been out of work more than 720 days. This compares to an average cost per claim of \$1,500 to \$2,000 for an injured employee who returns to work within 90 days.

Where do you begin if you do not now have a light duty program? Here are a few tips:

- ✓ Approach a return-to-work, light duty program as a "win-win" situation for both management and employees.
- ✓ Tell injured or ill employees that you want them back at work as soon as possible because they are an important part of your operation.
- ✓ Make a list of all potential light duty tasks. Among the many tasks you might list are certain office tasks (such as answering the phones or filing), painting, performing errands (that don't require heavy lifting), sweeping or doing other "light" cleaning, inspecting equipment for the presence of undamaged safety guards and shields and/or conducting safety training sessions.
- ✓ Include in your list the basic physical requirements for each task (standing, bending, stooping, lifting objects that weigh a certain amount, etc.).
- ✓ Bring your list of potential light duty tasks and the physical requirements to the medical clinic where you send injured or ill employees. Ask that the doctor try to match any injured or ill employees with one of these temporary tasks.
- ✓ Train your supervisors to monitor injured or ill workers who return to light duty positions so they don't exceed their medical restrictions.

### Light Duty Program Do's and Don'ts

#### DO:

- ☐ Seek help from your insurer and/or clinic where you send injured employees.
- ☐ Ask your supervisors for their ideas on potential light duty tasks.
- ☐ Ensure that all light duty work is temporary in nature.

- ☐ Approach light duty work in a positive manner with the injured or ill employee.
- ☐ Let injured or ill workers know how glad you are that they are again part of the "team."

#### DON'T:

- ☐ Be deterred from setting up a light duty program if you have a small operation.
- ☐ Allow workers in light duty positions to exceed their medical restrictions.
- ☐ Use light duty tasks as "punishment" for employees.
- ☐ Neglect to let injured or ill employees' physicians know about your program.
- ☐ Allow a worker to remain in a light duty job after being released to full duty by a doctor.

### Communicating Safety Concerns

Do you ever feel out of the loop on what's happening with your employees? When it comes to safety, you shouldn't be surprised. Employees are often hesitant to relay safety concerns, including minor "first-aid" incidents or "close calls."

The reasons for this are numerous. Among them are: workers don't want to "tell" on other workers (for example, if a co-worker is acting in an unsafe manner); they don't want to draw attention to themselves; they may not want to go to a doctor; or they may be afraid of disciplinary action if they report an injury or a close call.

There are ways you can encourage your employees to report safety-related concerns. Here are a few ideas:

- ✓ Let your employees know WHY this is so important. Explain it from their perspective, not yours. Tell them that their families are expecting them to come home uninjured at the end of each workday—and not be in the hospital, or, worse yet, dead.
- ✓ Establish ways for employees to anonymously report minor incidents, close calls and other safety concerns. Have "safety suggestion" boxes in a number of locations. Identify trusted co-workers who understand the importance of safety, and have them bring up safety during lunch and breaks. Then ask these co-workers to keep you informed without revealing the reporting employee's name.
- ✓ Develop short forms (in languages your workers can read and understand) that can be dropped into safety suggestion boxes or in managers' mailboxes. These forms should include a line for the time, date and location of the observation (or safety concern); sufficient space to describe what is being reported; and space for the person to suggest improvements. You can also include a line for the OPTIONAL reporting of the person's name.
- ✓ Recognize employees who do report safety concerns. If you know who they are, praise them. Also consider rewarding them with small prizes (such a small gift certificate to a local restaurant or store).
- ✓ Make sure your workers know that they will never be disciplined for reporting safety concerns.



## Preventing Costly Back Injuries

Employee back injuries are one of the most costly types of injuries a turfgrass sod producer can face. One study by the Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital found that back pain results in more than 100 million lost workdays in the United States each year. Another study by the Duke University Medical Center revealed that in 1998, total health care expenditures by persons with back pain in the U.S. reached \$90.7 billion. And this doesn't even count lost workdays and other related expenditures in other TPI members' countries.

Workers at turfgrass sod farms perform many tasks that can result in back injury. Among these are loading and unloading trucks; lifting heavy bags of seed, fertilizer or other items; and jumping on and off of trucks or other equipment. There are steps that both you and your workers can take to reduce the risk of costly and painful back injuries. The following tips are for you, the employer. In our next issue of *Safety Management*, we will include a "proper lifting" safety training lesson with illustrations you can share with your employees.

- ✓ Identify all of the tasks your employees perform that could result in back injury. Then look for ways to modify the work environment or change how these tasks are performed in order to reduce the risk. Examples: Can you store heavy or awkward items on lower shelves to reduce the need for over-reaching (or for climbing a ladder) when retrieving them? Can you modify the work environment to reduce the need for twisting, bending or working in other awkward positions?
- ✓ Provide lifting devices, including forklifts and manual lifting devices, to assist with heavy loads. Require your workers to use these devices when available.
- ✓ Prohibit employees from manually lifting loads that weigh 50 pounds or more, by themselves. Research has shown that lifting a load weighing 50 pounds or more greatly increases a worker's risk of back injury.
- ✓ Reduce loads to less than 50 pounds when possible. Consider purchasing fertilizer or pesticides in smaller amounts, where practical, or in economical bulk containers that require a forklift.
- ✓ Prohibit employees from jumping on and off trucks and other equipment. Although this will be difficult to enforce, stress to both supervisors and non-supervisory employees the importance of this rule. Also, hold supervisors accountable for enforcement.
- ✓ Require employees to take short breaks when repetitive lifting is part of their job. Also, consider rotating workers to reduce the amount of strain on any one employee's back.
- ✓ Encourage employees to report job-related back injuries as promptly as possible. Early reporting will assist in getting medical treatment, where necessary, before the injury becomes worse. Early reporting and prompt medical attention will also keep your costs down.
- ✓ Train your workers in proper lifting techniques. Let them know that back injuries can be very painful, often recur and could last a lifetime—affecting their ability to provide for their families in the future.

## Safely Loading Trucks

How much time do you spend training your employees on how to safely load and unload a truck? Improper loading and unloading can result in serious accidents and injuries—both to your own workers and to others. Follow these basic safety guidelines:

- ☐ Load and unload trucks on level surfaces.
- ☐ Make sure the truck is parked and that the parking brake is fully engaged and functioning.
- ☐ Use wheel chocks to prevent the truck from moving while it is being or loaded or unloaded.
- ☐ Carefully check the surrounding area. Make sure other workers are a safe distance away. Use safety cones or other "warning" devices to keep bystanders away.
- ☐ Always block a raised truck bed that is supported by a jack or hoist. This protective blocking will help prevent the employee from being injured if the jack or hoist fails.
- ☐ Know the characteristics of the load. Some loads are likely to shift while being transported.
- ☐ Never overload a truck. An overloaded truck results in unusual handling characteristics and adds extra stress on tires and brakes.
- ☐ Make sure the load will clear power lines, overpasses and other overhead obstacles.
- ☐ Safely secure the load before moving the truck. This is critical so the load doesn't fall out on the road. Use tie-downs or other approved devices. Don't rely on a tarp alone. If you use a tarp, tie it down with proper straps or rope—making sure to use a knot that won't slip. If you cover a load of sod with plywood boards, be sure to secure the boards with straps.
- ☐ Only raise a loaded truckbed on level ground. Side overturns commonly occur on sloped ground or when a truck makes a turn with the bed raised.



### TPI Safety TIPS

- Investigate all accidents and close calls.
- Eliminate or reduce hazards wherever possible.
- Prohibit horseplay on the job.
- Use safety "mentors" for new employees.
- Involve ALL employees in your safety program.
- Implement a pro-active, written safety program.
- Lead by example.
- Train workers in safe equipment operation.
- Know the potential hazards of the chemicals you use.
- Follow all chemical label instructions.
- Reward employees' safe behaviors.
- Train workers in their native language(s).
- Prohibit jumping on and off of equipment.
- Identify safety "champions" within your company.
- Promote your safety program to customers and suppliers.
- Provide high quality personal protective equipment.
- Maintain safety signage in good condition.
- Enforce all violations of safety rules.
- Hold supervisors accountable for safety.
- Use personal examples in your safety training.



## Marketing Tip

By John Graham  
Graham Communications  
j\_graham@grahamcomm.com

### Getting Your Arms Around Marketing

Marketers have long believed they could influence the buying habits of consumers, defining and targeting consumer desire and taste. The Internet has changed how we market, in effect, empowering the buyers and sellers. Residential real estate is a good example as demonstrated by the homes "for sale by owner" indicates the realtor is no longer thought of as the "necessary go-through contact." The real estate industry is fighting a losing battle to control the buying and selling, as is anyone who tries to thwart the "taking charge of my life" movement.

An example of recognizing and marketing to consumer empowerment is Home Depot's "You can do it. We can help." Customers will not and cannot be held captive.

Facing such circumstances, what do marketers do to meet these challenges? Here are five principles to follow:

**Make everything transparent**—Over a three-month period, one copy equipment dealer offered a series of lease arrangements, each lower than the one before, a process that produced distrust. The company chose another vendor that provided a clear, simple, up-front proposal detailing all the costs.

Even when notified to pick up the old machine, the original dealer offered yet another proposal with an even lower price. A lack of transparency kills confidence and trust.

**Coach, don't sell**—An ad headline caught my attention, not because it was compelling but because it presumed to tell me what I was thinking. The ad was for a specialty hospital and the headline read, "The people you trust at the place you know." This is an example of the old marketing, of telling customers how and what to think.

How different are the TV ads for CDW, the on-line electronic warehouse: a slightly nerdy IT guy faced with seemingly insurmountable issues comes through every time, thanks to his empowering partnership with CDW. The difference is significant: *coach, don't sell*.

**Create a brand promise**—If there is no promise, there is no brand. While it seems simple, it's difficult to put into practice. With every cell phone provider making end-

less claims, how does one stand out from another in a way that resonates with the customer?

Cingular is particularly adept at using a brand promise strategy to connect with customers. It identified dropped calls as high on cell users' irritation lists. Seeing this as an opportunity, Cingular weds its tagline, "Raising the bar," to the brand promise, "fewest dropped calls." Although dropped calls do occur, even with Cingular, the branding reminds customers there are fewer with Cingular than with other providers.

**Personalize**—Today it is quite clear that customers want to be recognized and appreciated. To some extent, companies have taken advantage of "personalization" when it comes to communications. Personalized letters have long been a marketing staple and a giant leap beyond "Dear Valued Customer," even though such nonsense still persists. The content must be personalized today.

Amazon.com is very effective at data mining to deliver products that match customer interest. Those frequenting that website often say, "It's as if they know me." They do.

**Practice the power of persistence**—The 2006 holiday season was a challenging one for the Macy's brand. After acquiring Filene's, The May Company and Marshall Fields department stores, there was one major question: Could Macy's hold the customers? Throughout the Fall of 2006, Macy's discount coupons filled mailboxes, were featured in full-page print ads, and the pace was stepped up for Thanksgiving.

It was war: "Don't let the consumer go anywhere else." The owner, Federated Department Stores, reported a November sales increase of 8.5 percent (higher than most rivals). December sales forecast were increased from five to eight percent.

It was a strategy of staying in front of the consumer with a continuous stream of compelling offers designed to take them straight to Macy's. Persistence goes a long way to keep customers focused—and buying.

Getting out of the way is the overwhelming problem in marketing. The only way to get our arms around marketing is to get them around the customer.

## Shrewder Computing

### Group Your Photos by Event, Name, etc. with just a Few Quick and Easy Steps

Today's digital photography has made it easier than ever to take photos at or near professional quality. In fact, it's so easy and inexpensive that most of us take unlimited photos. Later, we're faced with the challenge of determining which photo is which, a time-consuming process because the saved images were automatically generated individual file names such as PICT001, PICT002, etc. Although you can rename the photos by individually right clicking on each file and selecting "Rename," there's a much easier and faster way to do it by groups. In fact, you can rename *and give each a specific number*, just by following these simple steps:

- 1- Open the folder containing your images
- 2- At the top of the screen, place your cursor on "View" and from the pull-down menu, select *Thumbnails*
- 3- Place your cursor on the last picture in the list that you want to group, hold down the "Shift" key, and then place your cursor on the first image you want included in the group—this should highlight all pictures within the group you want to create
- 4- With your cursor still in place, now right click to open the pull-down menu and select *Rename*
- 5- Key in the group name you wish to use (for example, "Test" or "TPI Pre-Conference Study Tour," etc.
- 6- Move your cursor to any white space between images and wait while all files within your selected group are automatically renamed and numbered—i.e. "Test-1," "Test-2," "Test-3," etc.
- 7- Move on to the next group of photos you wish to rename and number.





## TPI Action

### Have You Renewed Your TPI Membership?

Renewal notices for the 2007-08 TPI membership year have been sent to all current members. If you did not receive this important mailing, please contact the TPI office for a duplicate copy so you can ensure your uninterrupted benefits, including a listing in *TPI Membership Directory* and on the TPI website.

### Who Should You Contact for Inquiries About TPI Membership Dues, *Turf News* Advertising and Exhibitor Information?

TPI Membership & Marketing Manager Terri Berkowitz is leaving TPI to pursue another opportunity. The obvious question is, "Who do I contact with inquiries about membership dues, *Turf News* ad placements and exhibitor information?" To avoid confusion, please continue sending all such e-mail inquiries to [tberkowitz@TurfGrassSod.org](mailto:tberkowitz@TurfGrassSod.org) which is being checked and followed up on daily. A new e-mail address will be announced in the near future.

Terri certainly deserves a big, heartfelt "Thank you" for her nearly 20 years dedicated service with TPI. Her significant efforts were instrumental in helping this association grow to today's more than 1,100 members in over 40 countries.

### 2008 Study Tour Approved by TPI Board

The TPI Board of Trustees approved a 2008 Study Tour to Scandinavia. The tour will be about two weeks in length and is scheduled to begin during the second week in June of next year. A detailed itinerary is being developed. Check your mail and *Turf News* magazine in the coming months for more details.

To receive additional information on any of these items, contact the TPI Office at Tel: 800/405-8873 or 847/649-5555

Fax: 847/649-5678, or e-mail: [info@TurfGrassSod.org](mailto:info@TurfGrassSod.org)

Website: <http://www.TurfGrassSod.org>

## Facts About Artificial Turf and Natural Grass

### Financial Considerations

Since conditions and requirements vary, there is no one, definitive answer or figure to describe the costs of constructing and maintaining a natural turf field or a synthetic field. Therefore, consulting the experiences of other field builders and users provides a method of estimating costs.

MYTH: Artificial turf saves money because of its longevity.

FACT: While the factors influencing costs vary from field to field, construction costs for an artificial turf field generally far outweigh construction costs for a natural field.

### Dollar for Dollar

The Sports Turf Managers Association recently produced a guide to construction and maintenance of all field types that demonstrates the affordability of natural grass:

#### Synthetic Turf/infill

US \$7.80-\$10.75 per sq. ft.

#### Natural grass with sand and drainage

US \$6.50-\$7.95 per sq. ft.

#### Natural grass with sand cap

US \$3.50-\$5.25 per sq. ft.

#### Natural grass with native soils

US \$2.50-\$5.25 per sq. ft.

Natural grass with on-site native soil less than \$1 per sq. ft.

## Business Management

### Turfgrass Producers International

2 East Main St., East Dundee, IL 60118

e-mail: [info@TurfGrassSod.org](mailto:info@TurfGrassSod.org)

FIRST CLASS MAIL

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Dundee, IL 60118

Permit No. 2590