

Elections 2008

The logo for Turf, featuring the word "Turf" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for Tree Services, featuring the words "Tree Services" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf graphic is positioned above the letter 'e' in "Services". Below the main text is the tagline "Taking Tree Care to New Heights" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for DesignBuild, featuring the word "Design" in a black, sans-serif font and "Build" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. A small orange square graphic is positioned above the letter 'i' in "Design".The logo for PLOW, featuring the word "PLOW" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

I'm writing this on the day of the New Hampshire primary. I've managed to hold my tongue until now, but having lived in New Hampshire for many years (and now just over the border in Vermont), primary day sort of marks the beginning of the real election season, and I'm going to be writing about it a few times between now and November.

As always, there will be many of you over the next few months who will wonder why I choose to offer subjects of a political nature in this space. As always, the answer is this: We are a publishing company that (hopefully) brings you information (and, in the case of this little space every month, opinion) that will help you be more successful in your business life. What happens in Washington, your state capital and your local city hall has a profound affect on your business. If you doubt that national politics has a direct impact on your operation, just ask yourself:

- How much and which chemical products can I use?
- Do I rely on immigrant labor?
- If the green card my new employee showed me is a forgery, could I be prosecuted for hiring illegal aliens?
- Am I responsible for furnishing hearing protection for my crew? Eye protection? Other safety gear?
- Am I allowed to use this ant control product I bought at a retail store on a client's lawn?
- How much of my income will I have to pay in taxes and social security this year?
- I run my business out of my house. Am I allowed to take the cost of my home office as a business deduction?

– Am I going to be forced to offer health care benefits to my employees (or, will my employer be forced to offer me a certain health care program), and what will it cost me?

The list goes on and on. Who occupies the White House for the next four years will affect you and your business, so you'd better care about who we elect to live there.

I will not offer my personal opinion or advice on who to vote for. I am not now, nor have I ever been, a member of any political party. Those familiar with my ramblings will tell you that it can be assumed that I will come down on the libertarian side of most (but not all) issues. They will also tell you that I have problems with both major parties, so if I end up bashing your candidate in one editorial, just wait; I'll be sure to have something critical to say about his/her opponent soon.

At the outset, I have to ask the question: Is this the best we can do? In a country as large and diverse as the United States of America, is this slate of candidates—of both parties—really the best we can come up with? Has politics in America become such a game of partisanship over principle that our best and brightest refuse to offer themselves for public service?

We have some very difficult decisions to make as a nation; the war in Iraq (and the ongoing war against terrorism), health care (and the government's in it), immigration (legal and illegal), our relationships with other nations around the world (both our supposed allies, as well as less friendly nations), the coming social security system collapse (the first of the baby boomers started receiving benefits this year), the several issues surrounding the subject of global warming (both what to do about it if it's real, and what to do about it if it isn't). It's going to take a lot more than election year rhetoric about "a change is needed" and "bringing people together" to face these issues. It's going to take someone who can lead and represent our country around the world. It's going to take someone who actually has some ideas about what to do (and how to get others to agree with those ideas) and not just ideas about what they need to say to get themselves or members of their own party elected. It's going to take someone willing to take a stand for certain ideals, even if it means curtailing programs and spending that have used public funds to buy the votes of certain voting blocks.

I'm still waiting for such a person to emerge. So far, I don't see one coming from the current bunch of contestants.