

Executive Outlook

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Manufacturers share their thoughts on the upcoming year

Here's what some industry suppliers have to say about the green industry in 2011.



Joe Kucik
Owner of Real Green

"The green industry is as exciting as ever. New technology is streamlining production and office tasks to make time for more important things, like increasing profits. We have seen our customers' bottom line improve because of their integration of these new technologies. Online measuring shortens the estimation process to just minutes. Touch-screen netbook computers in each of your trucks allow for quick field entry and even quicker end-of-day data synchronization. Customer specific websites give them a place to go 24/7 to schedule new services, ask a question or learn more about your company.

"While we're a little biased as these are all of our products, we know they work. We use them in our own lawn care company, and our customers keep growing while using them, too. Why let another year go by before updating your business to the 21st century? Start today by taking the first step to add new technology to your business. You'll be glad you did."



Dan Lixie

General manager, Dynamic Marketing LLC

"With the recent changes in the economy and the expectation for companies to take a more responsible approach to environmental concerns, Dynamic Marketing LLC has rolled out a new concept for posting signs: all-natural bamboo stakes in lieu of plastic. Our stakes are less expensive, and they are better for the environment because they are biodegradable. Plastic is one of the largest sources of landfill waste in the U.S. Two and a half million plastic bottles get thrown out every hour (*cleanair*) and most plastic is not biodegradable.

"In addition to posting signs, we offer these marketing products: graphic design, direct-mail postcards, door hangers, trade show booths, website development, e-mail design and marketing, and prepay letters.

"Like our posting signs, we take the environmental approach with our printed products, offering FSC-certified paper and soy inks. Our interactive website eliminates the need for paper transactions and proofing. Go give it a try at www.dynamicmarketingllc.com. We also store all of our clients' artwork for free right on the site, so you never have to go searching for the latest documents that were used. Your documents can even be made editable for real-time revisions, and of course, this is offered as a free service to our customers."



Tom Rich

President of L.T. Rich Products

"2010 was our most successful year at L.T. Rich Products. The year started off strong and ended stronger, bringing over a 10 percent increase in machine sales and a 16 percent growth in overall revenue from 2009.

"The year has seen increased purchases from our current customer base, sales from startup landscape companies, as well as purchases from experienced landscape companies who have, in the past, used other manufacturer's sprayer/spreaders or aerators.

"We expect and strive to grow every year, but to grow 15 to 20 percent consistently for the last five years has been impressive. It has enabled us to add more staff for better customer service, and also allowed us time to focus on creating different products and new attachments for the industry.

"Being a company that has more than 45 years of combined industry experience, we know what it takes to achieve success. One key factor for our success has always been paying close attention to our customers' demands. Another key factor is our ability to understand and adapt to the constant changes with the industry and allow our company to thrive in the landscape market.

"We are thankful for the business and continued support of our past customers and appreciate the gained trust of our new customers. We look forward to many more years in this industry."



Jim Hasler

Vice president, North America, New Holland Construction

"Our outlook is bright for landscapers in 2011. Industry experts are projecting a 35 percent increase in housing construction. Overall, new construction starts are estimated at \$446 billion, an 8 percent increase over 2010.

"To get ready for the rebound, New Holland engineers have designed some of the most efficient, productive and comfortable compact equipment in the industry. We're introducing 22 new machines throughout 2011. This includes 10 all-new skid steer loaders and compact track loaders. We're introducing these machines in the first quarter at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2011.

"Since the introduction of the New Holland L35 skid steer loader in 1972, landscapers have recognized the value of New Holland equipment on the job year-round to tackle everything from grading and plowing to material handling. Our full line of compact equipment has been serving the need of our customers in the green industry for more than 35 years.

"New Holland has more than 300 dealer locations across North America to meet your equipment needs and help your business succeed in 2011. Stop by your local dealer to see what all the excitement is about. Whether you're moving rock, planting trees or pushing snow, New Holland has the machines and attachments to get the job done right."



Jim Stubbs

CEO of CDS-John Blue Company

"The demand for efficient application of nutrients will drive the high-tech equipment available today. This trend, of course, will continue, and thus, the turns on equipment and components will remain steady. Technology is here and evolving to make better use of our resources.

"Water issues increase every year as our need for water sources are strained. This is due in part to the current realization of how precious this limited commodity is, and thus, preservation and usage become litigated issues.

"With this comes the need for better usage and management of water. The days when you could find very inexpensive water and not worry about the efficiency of usage are ending. Cities, recreation and our habitat require our better use of this. Thus, looking forward, proper application to make the best use of the water will be most important."



Anne Behner

Sales manager at Visual Impact

"Visual Impact Imaging is the leading provider of professional software for the landscape industry. We are committed to providing the green industry the most advanced technological tools, user-friendly interface and widely compatible platform, making EARTHSCAPES an integral component for every landscape company. This exclusive advantage is based on Visual Impact Imaging's strategic partnership with the Corel Corporation. Together, we develop the ultimate software that enables designers to transform their ideas into professional results. Since 1993, the combination of vision, business management and focus on customer service has made Visual Impact Imaging the leader of the landscape design software industry.

"EARTHSCAPES Landscape Design Software provides for the creation of traditional drafting methodology with the efficiency of technology. EARTHSCAPES software includes both high-resolution photo-imaging capabilities and to-scale site plan drafting. EARTHSCAPES also includes an estimator to easily calculate bids, as well as a diverse plant library of 5,500 objects accommodating every USDA plant hardiness zone.

"Visual Impact Imaging's mission is to provide landscape professionals with the highest-quality landscape design software and technological tools. We are committed to customer service and development of innovations so that our customers can create extraordinary landscape solutions efficiently and triumph as leaders in the green industry."



David Sloan

Director of sales/marketing at Drafix Software, Inc./PRO Landscape

"The fact that the green industry has been negatively affected by the economy these past few years is not different than most other industries in this country. While a number of businesses have suffered greatly, and some have even gone out of business, most are finding ways to survive. But, it's taken working harder and relying on more creativity.

"One area we've seen change is shift in focus from landscaping new construction to renovation projects for existing landscaping. To help our customers, we've continued to enhance PRO Landscape design software to meet the market changes. As an example, we've enhanced our cloning tools, which are used to remove existing landscaping from photos they've taken of a customer's house. There's no better way to sell a renovation job than to show a before picture of an overgrown landscape and then an after picture of a new landscape design.

"A key benefit of using PRO Landscape is being able to be more professional in presenting bids, and responding faster. PRO Landscape allows landscape designers to produce buds faster, more accurately and with a professionalism in their presentations that impresses customers. There is business out there and we will continue to work together with our customers so that PRO Landscape can help them win the business."



Jeff Pierce

President of Pierce Arrow, Inc.

"We have seen a lot of changes during 2009-10, including the development of a new website, logo, promotional materials and YouTube channel. Tools like YouTube allow us to educate customers through step-by-step installations, while also showcasing our product line. Subscribe today by going to www.youtube.com/piercearrowinc.

"2011 rings in changes in the Pierce dump kit, including grease zerts for longevity and easy maintenance; the development of effective installation processes, manuals and videos; and added models to fit newer trucks.

"We are eager to utilize our GSA contract (GS-30F-0012W) to outfit federal trucks with our dump kit, winches and Lodar. The dump kit lowers equipment costs and repurposes existing equipment. That's why Pierce dump kits are the perfect fit for the solo landscaper, hobbyist or municipality.

"Each year we become more effective, efficient and systematic. The landscaping and GSA markets offer exciting possibilities. We hope to see you at a few trade shows to learn more about your business and how Pierce can help."



Stan Guyer

President of Grasshopper, Inc.

"Grasshopper is confident that our equipment will help contractors make their best use of time and labor in 2011. However, the economy is a wild card, with reports coming out today showing indicators up *and* down. Contractors need to make sure they are an asset to their customers, offering not the lowest-cost service, but the most essential.

"In 2011, outdoor power equipment must meet additional government regulations regulating air quality. We've reached the point where we are up against the law of diminishing returns. It is getting more and more expensive to make smaller and smaller gains.

"Contractors, keep this in mind in 2011: Regulations allowing fuel containing up to 15 percent ethanol for newer passenger cars and light trucks could become costly. Fuel variability is already creating service issues. Wide availability of E15 will just compound the problem and will create real challenges for repair by making it more difficult for a tech to determine whether a power failure is equipment or fuel-related. Many end-users do not make a point of using fresh fuel and are not going to realize they may need to use a different fuel for their small engines than they do in their vehicles."



Brent Renfrow

Turf and ornamental marketing manager, Monsanto Industrial

"At Monsanto, we strive to develop new and innovative products that meet customers' needs. An example of this is Roundup PROMAX. Launched recently, PROMAX has received exceedingly positive feedback for its value, including consistent performance on tough weeds, speed of control, 30-minute rainfast warranty and more concentrated formula (customers can use one-third less than Roundup PRO). The response we've received tells us these are all features customers are happy about.

"Another product that continues to exceed expectations is QuikPRO. Customers are raving about the speed of weed control from this dry formulation of Roundup—results are visible within 24 hours. It's also easy to measure, handle and clean up. Customers also appreciate the fact that the product weighs less than liquid formulations and doesn't freeze.

"We believe that to be successful, top-performing products and unique services must go hand in hand. And, with all the growing interest in the industry, it's critical to deliver new and innovative products and services. This year, we look to demonstrate value and exceed expectations through technical recommendations, environmental stewardship and providing information to the public."



Bob Fines

President and CEO of TBEI, Inc., Rugby Mfg. Co.

"While many of us are still feeling the effects of the difficult economic climate, we are hopeful that the overall economic recovery is underway, and the demand for landscape construction and lawn care will increase in 2011. "At Rugby, our strategy has been to better serve our customers by investing in more and better training for our employees, refining our production processes and increasing efficiencies. But, most importantly, we've worked more closely with our distribution partners and end users to design and deliver innovative products. Rugby distributors throughout the United States are well-prepared to discuss contractor needs and find individual product solutions.

"Because landscape contractors face diverse applications and difficult working environments, Rugby has designed dump bodies utilizing stainless steel and aluminum, as well as steel. In 2010, these new products have focused on features and design elements that help end users save money, become more productive and grow their businesses. These bodies provide increased payloads and fuel savings, higher durability and longer wear, and overall more cost-conscious designs.

"We look forward to delivering the highest quality landscape and dump bodies and hoists to our industry partners in the coming year and being a part of your success."



Fletcher Steele

president of Pine Hall Brick

"A year ago at this time, we were looking to close the door on what I was sure would be the bottom of the building depression. I certainly had no idea how bad the winter weather would be or how slow the home building business could be after a brief upswing in the spring when the home purchase tax credit ended. It's been another very difficult year, but we've survived and gotten better as a company. This year, we gave service awards to 56 employees with five to 40 years of service in multiples of five. That's over 19 percent of the workforce and represents a total of 620 years of experience.

"We're beginning to see signs of growth in a few markets that give us hope that next year will start the rebound from the building depression. We're also seeing signs in other industries that our economy is growing again. Hopefully we'll see our newfound economy start to grow at a fast enough pace to put this very difficult business slump behind us for good."

perma**green**

Tom Jessen

Owner, PermaGreen Supreme, Inc.

"Lawn care owners can expect increased competition in 2011. At the same time, gas prices are on the rise, which means product costs may soon follow. There are also increasing restrictions and regulations for lawn care companies. In short, times remain tight for LCOs, and profits are likely to decrease.

"Despite all these difficulties, there is still plenty of turf to be serviced and money to be made by smart businesses that invest in new equipment to improve productivity and cut waste and inefficiency. Now is not the time to hunker down. It's time to modernize, reorganize and meet the challenges head on."



Shaun Skinner

Executive vice president and general manager of Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc.

"For 23 years, Isuzu low cab forward trucks have been America's number one choice. An amazing 86 percent of all Isuzu commercial vehicles ever sold in America since 1986 are still registered today.

"Performance, practicality, dependability, durability. Whether you are a small business operator with a single vehicle or you manage an entire fleet, you need a truck that will do more, while costing less to operate.

"At Isuzu, that's the only kind of truck we sell. Our engines are legendary for their power, economy and long life. Our frames accommodate a wide range of body applications. Our low-cab-forward design provides remarkable maneuverability. Isuzu trucks are engineered to maximize driver productivity.

"Now, more than ever, these are the trucks that drive up your productivity while driving down your cost of ownership."



Eldean Bergman

Owner and founder of Boulder Designs

"Today's business owners are looking for unique products and services that attract the general public's interest, and Boulder Designs does just that. We have developed a simple system with a unique team atmosphere. Be productive regardless of the weather at your facility. Become part of a group who share product ideas and new developments. The flexibility of the Boulder Designs system allows you to integrate it easily into your business. Imagine the potential that exists around you. Businesses, churches, schools, parks, associations, municipalities, even memorials. Because of this, we see continued growth and opportunity. Last year was our best year so far, exceeding 30 percent growth systemwide, and we have set the groundwork into place for 2011 to exceed that mark."