

home construction, when there aren't many homes being constructed, is a waste of resources. Now is the time to see where there might be an opportunity and get some business there. I am amazed at how many business owner's just sit back. Now's the time to be ramping up the marketing, show your area you're alive and well and successful and want to help them.

Finally, assuming we all have enough work—and I really think we will—we need our government to pass the legislation to permit the H-2B Program to continue. Remember that at one time in our family's history, all of us were immigrants to this country. The H-2B program does not steal jobs from hard-working Americans. It fills the jobs nobody wants or that no one would do effectively. We pay our H-2B workers the same wage we pay others; there are no games. If this does not pass, it will be a major blow to our economy and anyone who thinks otherwise is just ignorant. Too bad the democrats and republicans can't seem to talk with each other; where's Ronald Reagan when we need him!

I am very optimistic for 2008 for many reasons. Not much has gone on for many green industry professionals the last 18 months, so I think there are some folks wanting to do things and with the money to do some things, but they don't want to be the first to move. If we get a little bit of good news in the economy, I think you'll see some spending. The tough economy has weeded out some of the poor performers in our industry and that's always a good thing.

Finally, the best reason to feel good about 2008 is that the

American spirit is also alive and well. And while some of the technology jobs are going overseas and south, we still are the best marketers in the world and possess some of the best business minds in the world. Look back in our history and you'll see this to be true. We are a resilient nation and most of us see the "sunny side of everything." So, my advice would be to work hard, be smart and be optimistic; it really won't pay to be anything else.

**JASON CUPP, CLP**

President & CEO  
Highland Outdoor  
Kansas City, KS

As a design/build and landscape firm focusing mostly on the residential market, we feel that 2008 will be a difficult year, especially for contractors focusing on new construction. With the housing market, and the credit market that serves it declining in the second half of 2007, builders and developers will likely continue the uphill battle of competing for the qualified new home purchasers. That will have a direct impact on landscaping, irrigation exterior design/build and sod/turf.

As homeowners continue to fight the tightening credit markets, small residential landscape jobs are fewer and far between, and have more competition for those jobs among qualified, as well as non-qualified contractors. We have already found that clients with a smaller job are already "price shopping" looking for the lowest price in the market—often times having up to 10 contractors fighting for their business.

The segment of the design/build industry that we feel will be the strongest in 2008 (yet still flat lined, or a slight decline) will be working with high-end clients. These homeowners will likely not move, and if they do, they will take advantage of the buyers' market of residential real estate at present. Often times, high-end clients' ability to make purchase decisions are not tied as much to the financial markets, or the credit market, they are more apt to spend monies on their home. We have already seen the higher-end clients in our area take longer to make a purchase decision, changing the backlog of our company as well as companies like ours—we are able to be more nimble to start a job than we were a year ago. Also, where competition for a high-end project was often against your own company, now there are two or three companies all submitting designs and budget proposals.

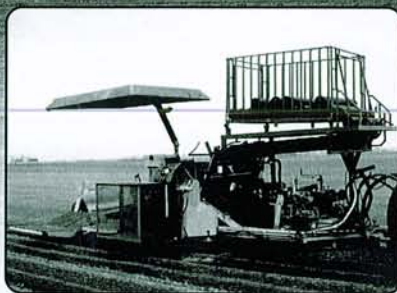
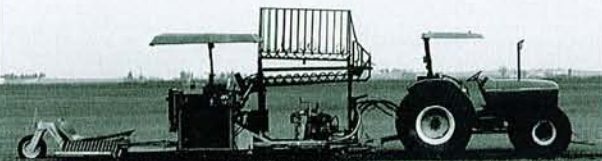
That said, the land-care industry will continue to see the trickle-down economics that other industries are seeing, and clients are likely to pay slower, be more demanding for service and quality, and be more fickle in making purchase decisions.

*Highland Outdoor is a premier exterior design/build, landscaping and maintenance firm serving the high-end residential market in the Midwest. President & CEO Jason Cupp serves as president-elect of the Professional Land-care Network (PLANET), the leading national trade association for lawn care, landscape management, design/build/install and interior landscapers across the United States.*

# Easy Roller

## for your Magnum

- Eliminates the need for metal tube inserts
- Cuts off sod
- Wraps roll with netting - No pins!
- Discharges roll onto tipper or ground
- Dispenses next tube
- All this without leaving the Control Station!



Also Available:

**Electric Depth Controls**

For Bucyrus and Brouwer Harvesters



**Shattuck Turf Equipment - 515-727-1455**  
Call for a video and more information