

# Clippings



February 2009

Winter '09  
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## Foley's Forum

By Dan Foley MCLP, CLP, President

### Make 2009 the Best Year Ever and Finish Strong!

As I write my column for this issue, I have heard the latest round of bad news about the economy. The endless media reports and gobs of information on the internet can pound the negative thoughts so firmly into our heads that it almost comes out the other side.

I was fortunate recently to get an email from my friend, author, motivational speaker and consultant, Jim Paluch. I am usually energized and invigorated whenever I hear from my good friend Jim. Lately, he has been reminding me to "make 2009 the greatest year ever!"

I certainly understand that we all are challenged with many things in life and that our current economy is going to require our best discipline and effort. However, I am writing this month to ask you to reflect on all the great things that can occur and that we can make happen in 2009.

Many of you know that I have "re-committed" to reading more starting a year or so ago. I have enjoyed the occasional comment or email that I have received from some of you about "EATING FROGS" (See the May 2008 Issue of *Clippings* within the In the News section at [www.dfoley.com](http://www.dfoley.com)). I realize that much of what I have learned in life is from the people that I meet and the books that I have read.

One of the sources of books

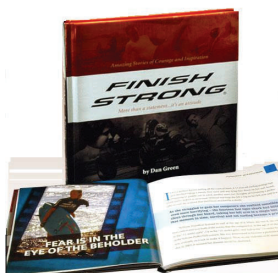
that I like is a company called Simple Truths. I have enjoyed reading about a dozen of their books to date. I recently read *Finish Strong* by Dan Green. I love the sub-title on the book where it says "More than a statement...it's an attitude." I would like to share one of Dan's opening quotes in the introduction as I believe it sums up an approach that I have adopted:

**"REGARDLESS OF WHAT CAME BEFORE OR OF WHAT IS YET TO COME, WHAT MATTERS MOST RIGHT NOW IS HOW I CHOOSE TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE BEFORE ME. WILL I LIE DOWN OR WILL I FIGHT?"**

**THE CHOICE IS MINE AND I CHOOSE TO FINISH STRONG."**

Please take a moment to enjoy a deep breath. Reflect upon where you need to focus your energies right now. I have found from our two year journey implementing Lean Management practices into our organization that very often; there a just a few simple things that you can do to make a positive impact. Rather than succumbing to the negative feelings that surround us, choose to respond in a proactive and disciplined manner. Take action and finish strong...you will be amazed at what you and your team can accomplish.

**Go make 2009 the best year ever and remember to have the time of your life!**



## DFL Awarded the National Pillar Award

D. Foley is extremely excited to announce that while attending a national summit in Louisville, Kentucky, we received the first annual national Pillar Award in recognition of implementation of Lean Management practices through a program called the Working Smarter Training Challenge (WSTC).

The WSTC was created and is administered by J. P. Horizons from Painesville, Ohio. It is a unique program that blends technology and a personal touch approach to deliver training on lean management, organizational development and leadership development enabling an organization to significantly improve performance and service to customers.

Jim Paluch, founder and President of JP Horizons states, "D. Foley is continually looked at throughout the Working Smarter community as an

innovator especially in the area of servicing its clients. They have used the program to not only help them serve its clients but have also introduced the lean management concepts and program to its clients in order to help them work more efficiently."

Dan Foley, President of D. Foley Landscape states, "We have learned a great deal over the first two years of our Lean journey. We also understand that Lean is the continuous journey to perfection and look forward to our third year of significant change in 2009. It is a journey that never ends and our team is excited to be eliminating waste and delivering more value for our clients."



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## WSTC Update - Info from our Lean Journey

As you may know from past issues of Clippings, D. Foley has committed to working smarter by implementing lean management throughout our organization. Lean promotes a culture of continuous improvement and reflective observation. We focus solely on what our company does to provide value to our clients. Here are some updates of our journey since our last issue:

### Kaizen Events—Updates

Since the last issue, we are happy to have successfully completed one more kaizen event and to have another event in the completion process.

#### Kaizen Event #8: Landscape Maintenance Renewal Process

A Team was selected to evaluate the current landscape maintenance renewal process and eliminate all unnecessary waste.

Team members observed and documented current conditions for two days. Some of their goals were to review management and administrative processes, to cut current takt time by 50% or more, to revise or create new Standard Work, to make sure data is accurate so client Work Order information is clear and updated and crews can act in synergy with how it is priced, and to improve estimating accuracy (costs).

Once the waste was identified on Day 3, the team created and trained on the new standard.

Overall the team cut down on the amount of paper being used for unnecessary reports, eliminated the need to verify data in multiple places, eliminated "wait time" from wasted walking, eliminated interruptions and cut the actual time spent preparing the renewal down from 2+ hours to 39 minutes. They estimated a total annual savings of approx. \$2,500 in labor alone!



*Kaizen Team 8 documenting current conditions, identifying waste, and training on new standard.*

#### Kaizen Event #9: Production Fueling Processes

The goal of this event is to standardize all of our production fueling processes, to minimize waste and to ensure that the new standard is sustained in a safe manner.

To date, the team has observed how our crews are utilizing their time by driving to, procuring and filling fuel rather than consistently using the "existing" standard work of our fuel service.

Team members have identified waste such as unnecessary "wait" time for other members of the crew during many of our fueling processes and "built in" waste to the existing process due to utilizing the wrong person or people.

The teams' goal is:

- To save at least 33% of total time for fueling processes.
- To ensure the standard work is clear, easy to follow and will be sustainable year round.
- Kaizen Team members are able to apply what they learn from this event to their daily lives; and
- Every player knows their role

#### **Completion of Fast Track Program!**

In an effort to get more of our employees involved in working smarter, we created a program called "Fast Track". This program consolidates 52 weeks of training into a fast paced 12 week training program.

Chip Sorblom, Operations Manager, said "The goal for the Fast Track program was to quickly train employees who had not participated in the initial training of Year 1. We wanted to get employees at all levels of the company from management to crew members involved.

Attendance was mandatory for all participants and each employee was required to sign a "Contract of Commitment" to begin their LEAN journey through the WSTC program!

#### **Completion of WSTC Year 2...104 weeks and going strong!**

We are extremely excited to announce that we have completed Year 2 of the WSTC. Our company has achieved many great successes not only professionally but also personally over the past year. We have acquired many new and useful tools in our never ending journey to provide value to our customers. We are looking forward to continuing our quest for success by continuing with the WSTC program Year 3.

#### **What is Next?**

They say "When one door closes, another one opens."

WSTC Year 3 will be a bit different than the past two years and we are privileged to be part of a select group of pioneers participating. The next 52 weeks will be broken down into learning modules and challenges centering on process improvements and focus on sustaining.

We've accepted our first challenge, "The \$5,000 Challenge - Take A Challenge. . . Sustain The Improvement", where we will try to net a \$5,000 return by eliminating processing hours through resetting or restoring the standard on Kaizen #3 Payroll Processing as well as implementing technology solutions.

We will have the benefit of community feedback and insight in which we will be able to share practices and metrics with the eight other participating companies from across the country who were selected to be in this new program.

## D. Foley Receives National Safety Recognition Awards

D. Foley recently received two national safety awards for “No Days Away from Work” and “No Vehicle Accidents” from The Professional Landcare Network’s (PLANET) Safety Recognition Awards Program and the STARS Safe Company Program (Safety Training Achieves Remarkable Success).



These programs are designed to reward green industry professionals who consistently demonstrate their commitment to safety, and reflects the dedication of these individuals and their companies to creating and maintaining safe work environments.

STARS is a safety initiative designed for companies to set the precedent for safety throughout the industry. The program

helps green industry service provider companies lower their total costs of risk by reducing hazards and injuries. With this initiative, PLANET works to connect all green industry companies in an effort to lessen the risks associated with the green industry. Participants of the program are asked to sign a Safe Company Pledge that commits their company to:

- Follow the guidelines in the Safety Program for Green Industry Companies (CD) for developing a safe company
- Establish an active safety committee within their company
- Conduct regular safety-awareness training
- Document, measure, and investigate every accident
- Meet OSHA posting and regulatory requirements
- Share their best safety practices with their fellow STARS members

As a result of our commitment to safety at all costs and our participation in the STARS program, D. Foley Landscape, Inc. has received 14 National Safety Awards.

## CampusCare® Corner: “Enhancing Enrollment Through First Impressions”

### Site Profile: Joe Morgan Little League Field

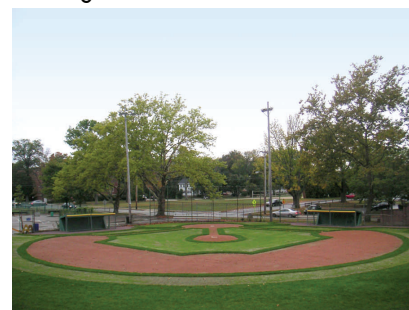
The town of Walpole hired CampusCare® to renovate the Joe Morgan Little League Field in the fall of 2007. The field suffered from poor drainage, holes, an uneven infield, and was in need of measurable repairs. In the spring and summer months, the field is used day and night for practice and games by little league baseball, tee ball, and softball teams. The wear from this extensive usage was beginning to show. Though repairs were clearly needed, the town wanted to ensure that the renovation was completed most cost efficiently for their budget. CampusCare® was able to work with the town to provide an acceptable solution at a reasonable price for the town's budget.



Using laser graders and other specialized equipment, CampusCare® made improvements to the both the safety and playability of the field. The scope of work for this field included:



- Developing a plan that outlined various options to achieve the desired results
- Removal of the existing grass infield and the immediate perimeter of the skinned infield surface
- Reconstruction of the pitcher's mound to specifications
- Add soil and regrade the infield and perimeter for proper elevation and improved drainage
- Add clay infield mix and laser grade to exact elevations for proper play and drainage
- Install partial sod in the infield to protect clay material during grow in
- Seed and fertilize to establish new turf
- Application of hydro-mulch



The improvement and impact of the results have been extremely positive thus far, and the finished product was re-opened for play in April 2008. Undoubtedly, this is an investment the youth athletes of Walpole will enjoy and use extensively.

CampusCare® is committed to providing exceptional exterior maintenance and sports turf services to academic campuses across New England. For more information about CampusCare®, please visit...

[www.CampusCare.com](http://www.CampusCare.com)



# Trade Secrets: Innovative Assessments and Planning

This section of our newsletter is dedicated to providing seasonal tips from the trade that you can utilize at work or your home. We have provided some of our typical tips at the end of this column.

However, we would like to start this article with the theme of "Innovation". Current **economic conditions** may require **different thinking** due to budget constraints. We feel that one of the ways a great service provider exhibits what we call "**client empathy**" is to understand what is going on and provide proactive and creative alternatives.



Your landscape is one of your largest **UN-insured** assets and the landscape management program and maintenance practices are

your only type of "insurance" that you can provide for this living asset. This is a great time of year for you to assess the landscape maintenance program that you have planned for the 2009 season (including your home landscape). What is one simple adjustment that you can make to help your budget for 2009? How can you be innovative and make carefully planned changes to the program. The savings can be utilized towards other expenses that you have, saved for future use or re-directed to more areas of prior-

ity within the landscape. As an example, several of our clients are working with us to re-align their program for this year to move some investment toward activities that will increase curb appeal and visibility to improve leasing activity within their properties.

In addition to assessing how innovative you can be with strategic adjustments to your 2009 program please consider the following:



- **Watch plants for damage from snow and ice.** The weight of snow and ice can often cause damage to trees and plants. Assess if structural pruning or cabling is needed. Schedule pruning of any broken branches prior to spring.
- **Watch for drainage issues.** Drainage is an important key to ensuring that your landscape thrives throughout the warmer months. Take advantage of the frozen ground to underscore any drainage issues you may be having. Record prob-

lem areas that may need repairs in the future.

- **Check newly installed plants for frost heaving.** Newly installed plants can be pushed up out of the ground due to alternating freeze/thaw cycles causing the exposed roots to dry out. If the situation cannot be remedied until spring (due to the frozen ground), consider adding mulch or monitoring the plants for periodic watering during dry times.
- **Watch for plants that you like for winter interest.** As you see plants that you like, make note of them now for possible additions to your landscape in the future.
- **Make a "projects" list for your property.** Identify and outline improvements and/or enhancements that you would like to make to your landscape during 2009.
- **Think SPRING...**it's not far away, so start planning early for cost effective and innovative spring projects.



## Employee Profile

**Mike O'Neill**  
Site Manager for Dean College



In March 2008, Mike O'Neill joined our team as a Site Manager for our CampusCare® division to manage and maintain the grounds and sports fields at Dean College. Dean College is CampusCare's® first client to benefit from a full-time on-site manager.

Mike graduated from the University of New Hampshire with an Associates Degree in Small Business and Turf. His previous experience includes landscaping, construction, maintenance, lawn care, and irrigation. In addition, he was the Plant Manager of a HVAC Distribution Center.

Mike's long term goals are to get his MCLP (*Massachusetts Certified Landscape Professional*) license and to become an Account Manager at D. Foley one day. Mike enjoys spending time with his wife, Gail and their two daughters, Amanda and Rachel, as well as attending truck shows, family camping trips and NASCAR races.

## Top Snow Contractor

Without a doubt, last winter had a profound effect on the snow and ice removal industry. That is why D. Foley is extremely proud that GIE Media's *Snow Magazine* September 2008 issue includes us in the annual ranking of top snow contractor in North America and that we have been able to attain this ranking, for the sixth year in a row!



We would like extend our gratitude to our clients for being loyal customers and for relying on us to provide snow services to them season after season. Without our customers to help foster our growth and expertise, we would not have achieved this honor once again.

**Our Mission Statement:**

**"D. Foley Landscape Is An Inspired Team With A Continuous Commitment To Phenomenal Results!"**