

# GreenSheet



**RUPPERT**  
LANDSCAPE

*Employee Newsletter*

1st Quarter 2014

## Moving the Needle from Good to **GREAT**

By Phil Key



**T**here is always a lot of information packed into our Management Development Days, and this year was no exception. This year's theme was geared towards incrementally

improving our behavior and habits to move us from being a good company to being a great company. Keynote speaker Larry Linne, a former pro football player who is an author and coach for business leaders on how to run world-class organizations, provided many tips for our team members on how to move the needle from good to great. A few of the key points included....

- **Pay attention to the details** and focus on the client's perspective and what he/she feels is important. With good communication (to have a solid understanding of where a customer's priorities lie) and then increased focus on those areas, we increase our ability to meet and exceed those expectations.
- **Language drives culture.** Remember that what you say and what you pay attention to will determine what your other team members believe. By talking about what you want to see happen and what your

expectations are with regard to core values such as safety, cleanliness and efficiency, the company's actions and language become more consistent, which will increase the odds of greatness.

- **Do what others won't do.** Always be willing to push past the hard stuff and volunteer to do what others might find hard or just not appealing.
- **Be more prepared than anyone else.** Have daily meetings to ensure that the team is prepared with what's happening on the job and what the expectations are. By taking the time to prepare, plan and communicate expectations, it will increase the odds that the task at hand will be done right the first time.
- **Manage your brand.** An individual can build a brand or damage it, so it's critical that each team member manage his/her own individual brand. This means actively managing what people think of you and behaving in a way that enables others to see you the way you'd like to be perceived. This can include cultivating a neat and clean appearance, expanding your knowledge, working on communication skills etc.
- **Have empathy and care.** It's important to remember that there are always others

who are worse off than you are. Invest in your community and give back in areas where you can, whether that's sharing your knowledge with team members or helping a community organization.

- **Don't give up.** Keep working to improve and focus on being the best person you can be and then collectively the best organization you can be. All people and organizations bring something different and unique to the table so just keep working on refining that gift and it increases your ability to take your company—and yourself—from good to great.

The investment the company makes in these two days is significant and the most important measurement of its success is if some part of what you learned is put to use. If you've applied a few key pieces based on what resonated with you in the sessions you attended, then we can say that the investment we made on your behalf has paid off. Please share what you learned with others on your team who were not present. By passing along ideas you took from those two days, you will help to maintain a company-wide dialogue and encourage a level of participation in the process, which will help to propel us forward in 2014 and beyond. Thanks to those who attended and we look forward to many more years to come!



2014 Management Development Day

# Ruppert Purchases **A R Star**

**W**e have recently purchased A R Star Services, a Maryland-based company that provides commercial landscape management services in northern Baltimore County. "A R Star has built a reputation as a service oriented company with customers who have been with them for many years," said President **Phil Key**. This purchase adds three crews worth of work in the Hunt Valley area.

A R Star has been doing business in the Baltimore area for over thirty years. Company owner Bob McElwain first approached Ruppert about acquiring his company in the summer of 2013. "I've always been a very hands on owner," said

McElwain. "When I decided it was time to transition out of my business, Ruppert was the only company I considered approaching knowing that they would carry my business forward in a way consistent with how I operated for three decades." McElwain will stay involved as a part-time consultant over the next six months to ensure a seamless transition with his company's very loyal customer base.

"While most of our growth comes organically and not from acquiring companies, their current book of business aligned geographically in the areas where we'd like to expand and add new customers," said Key. "With adding this second location in



*Scott Distasio (right), Baltimore Branch Manager, congratulates Bob McElwain of A R Star.*

the Baltimore market, we will be in closer proximity to many of our customers and therefore in a better position to service them."

## Ruppert Honored By Home Builders Care Foundation



**Isabel Vasco (CORP), Patty Brockmeyer (BAM), Shane Carmadella (MDL), Rich Schubach (MDL), Amy Snyder (CORP)** attended to accept the award.

**O**n January 23, Ruppert was honored by the Home Builders Care Foundation with the 2014 Community Builder Award. The award was presented in recognition of Ruppert's contributions and support with hosting the organization's first annual Bull & Oyster Roast on the company's grounds in Laytonsville, MD. The event, held in April of 2013 (and scheduled again for April 24, 2014), had about 240 industry professionals in attendance and was also used as a career clothing drive along with the Professional Women in Building, Maryland Chapter. Over 500 items were collected and donated to a career development center in Silver Spring. "Ruppert's involvement with our charitable construction program has long been cherished and they were the winner of our Tom Sawyer Award in 2009," commented Home Builders Care Director Patti Kane. "This past year, however, the Ruppert team went above and beyond their usual involvement by helping us host an amazing event on the grounds of their headquarters. Their signature service really proved to be extraordinary as they helped with nearly every aspect of planning the event."

The mission of the Home Builders Care Foundation is to complete shelter-related construction projects by utilizing the building industry's specialized skills and collaborating with existing community service and care providers, such as other non-profit agencies and care providers, serving the homeless and other at-risk families and individuals. Since its inception, HBCF has donated over \$15 million worth of time and materials to worthy projects in the Maryland communities it serves.

### Career Opportunities

Looking to move up the ladder or know someone in the industry seeking a position? Ruppert Landscape has the following positions immediately available:

#### **Landscape Construction**

**MDL** – Project Manager (1), Field Manager (1), CDL Driver (1), Crewman

**VAL** – Field Manager (1)

**GAL** – Field Manager (1), Crewman (1)

**NCL** – Project Manager (1), Field Manager (1), Crewman

#### **Landscape Management**

**LAM** – Field Manager (2)

**GVM** – Field Manager (1), Crewman

**TOM** – Field Manager (1)

**GAM** – Field Manager (2), Asst. Field Manager (2)

**FOM** – Field Manager (2)

**FRM** – Business Developer (1)

**CHM** – Field Manager (2)

**BAM** – Area Manager (1), Field Manager (5), Admin. Assistant (1)

**RIM** – Area Manager (1), Field Manager (1), Crewman

**LOM** – Enhancement Field Manager

**KOP** – Field Managers

#### **Corporate**

**CORP**– Facilities Manager (1)

**CORP**– Public Relations Asst. (1)

*For more information or to apply, please contact the department noted.*



# Facing This Year's Spring Challenges Head On

When working in an industry that requires you to be outside, you're going to face weather challenges from drought and rain to snow and ice. As spring rolls around, we are still dealing with some of the residual effects of our challenging winter while busily planning and working to get all of our spring tasks and jobs complete.

On our landscape maintenance projects, the late season snow means we are getting out of the gate late with our mulching and will be working well into May to get all of our jobs completed. On our landscape construction projects, the other contractors who need to complete their piece of a project before the landscape can be installed, are running behind as well. So we will be working with very compressed schedules on many projects in order to meet our deadlines. Internally this means a very busy company with Ruppert team members working hard and putting a lot of thought and effort into how we will accomplish what needs to be done for our customers without over-taxing our team in the process.

As with most of the adversities we face in life, the specifics of how we tackle those challenges determines our success. But with increased focus on planning, agility, innovation and communication, we are working hard to proactively deal with the challenges we face. Here are a few of the ways we are applying our knowledge, creativity and manpower to ensure that our customers' projects are ready for the spring and summer....

- **Utilizing subcontractor relationships as a resource**—By cultivating a network of partners who have specialized personnel and equipment, we have an array of resources to enlist when needed. Our network consists of long-term partners who can step in to fill short-term needs and include resources in everything from mulching and snow removal to hardscaping and irrigation.

- **Investing in innovation**—We are accelerating our investment in some innovative equipment and technology we've been piloting in the last few years including a mulch distribution device, a mulch reconditioning program and a system of equipment including a loader, conveyor and telebelts to move hardscape material great distances (to name a few). These innovations enable us to incrementally—and sometimes dramatically—improve our responsiveness and productivity and give us the ability to work around obstacles (like distance or inaccessibility) that might exist on a jobsite.



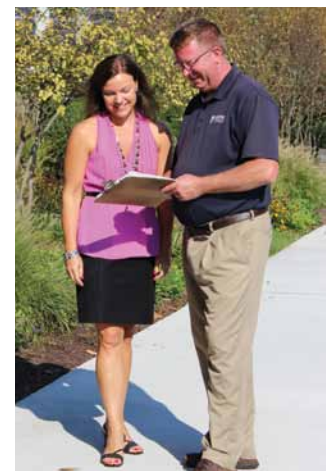
*Reconditioning mulch instead of removing the existing and reapplying it provides both a cost and time savings.*

- **Efficiency training**—To ensure that company-wide knowledge on quality and efficiency is effectively communicated and passed down, we are dedicating top managers' time to training. They are sharing ideas and tactics that have worked in the past and are

helping to think through new processes proposed by younger team members. As a result of these sessions, several branch teams have opted to streamline tasks with the idea of increasing efficiency and have one crew perform site preparation followed by another who mulches (versus the traditional model of having one crew do all the work on a job)

- **Creative scheduling**—While scheduling is always imperative, it is critical during particularly busy times. Performing out-of-sequence work is one way to accomplish the tasks at hand when schedules become condensed. This can mean using tenting and heaters to complete a temperature sensitive hardscape project, shifting personnel to work at night when the space is in less demand, or allocating a lot of manpower (called fast-tracking) to complete a project.
- **Sharing divisional resources**—One of the unique aspects of working with a company who does both landscape maintenance and landscape construction is that there are many internal resources from which to pull. When one branch may have a delay on a project and team members who are not as busy, another branch can use those team members on a job with a tight deadline that requires additional personnel.

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate**—When the workload gets busy, communicating with all parties is critical. Within our organization that means having conversations about shifting resources and sharing information, and it means discussions up and down the chain of command about extra hours and how it's impacting the team. With our customers, that means sharing information about schedules (i.e. "How would you feel about us mulching your site on Thursday evening after your staff goes home?") or asking for input about priorities (i.e. "How would it work for you if we got to A, B and C task done this week and then next week we accomplished X, Y and Z?")



*Matt Kennedy (GVM) speaking with Kellie Perry of COPT about her priorities for the Washington Technology Park in Chantilly, VA.*

The thoughts shared in this article are some of the more forward thinking ideas we are using to tackle our weather challenges. And while they offer some creative approaches to the challenges we face, they don't let us off the hook with some of the basics like starting the work day on time, keeping meetings to their allotted time, listening to our customers to not only hit—but exceed—the mark, and performing top-quality work. With increased focus on scheduling and resources and emphasis on innovation, efficiency, communication and "the basics," we increase our odds that we will be successful in meeting our customers' needs even when Mother Nature throws a wrench in our plans.



# Movin' On Up

Each employee should know that we are committed to his or her growth and development." ~ Ruppert Values, p. 2



Garth Jorgensen

**G**arth Jorgensen has been promoted to the position of branch manager in the Toughkenamon (Philadelphia) Maintenance branch. He has over 30 years of industry experience and has been with Ruppert for 12 years where he's served in multiple positions including area manager, enhancement manager and business development manager. Garth holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural economics from the University of

Delaware and is a Certified Nursery Professional. In 1997 and in 2005 Garth was recognized with Ruppert's Branch Impact Award for his outstanding dedication and contributions made in the Toughkenamon Landscape Management Branch.



Jim Tuzzolino

**Jim Tuzzolino** has been promoted to the position of branch manager in our **Virginia Landscape Construction** branch. Jim, has over 15 years of industry experience and has been with the Ruppert organization for eight years, where he began as an intern and worked his way through progressively responsible positions the most recent of which was operations manager. He graduated from SUNY Cobleskill with a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management, and

he has been honored with a Branch Impact Award (2005), Achievement Award (2008) and with the Clyde Vadner Merit Award (2012).



Mike Felts



Sean Davitt



Trevor Mann

There have been several promotions within the **Maryland Landscape** branch; **Mike Felts** has moved into the role of operations manager from production manager. **Sean Davitt** has taken over the role of production manager, leaving room for **Trevor Mann** to step into the assistant production manager position, and **Gregory "Shep" Hurst** has filled Trevor's shoes as field manager. **Stacy Fryfogle** has moved from branch



Gregory "Shep" Hurst



Stacy Fryfogle



Charlotte McGehee

administrator to the position of purchaser and **Charlotte McGehee** has moved into the position of project manager.

**Paul Pestun** has been promoted to the position of national sales business development manager. He has been with the Ruppert organization for two years, where he worked as an assistant production manager and has over 10 year of industry experience, which includes owning his own landscape company. He was recently accepted into Associated Builders and Contractors 2014 Leadership Development Program.



Paul Pestun



Wayne Taylor



Jimmy Garrett



Jerry Brown

**Wayne Taylor** of **Forestville Maintenance** has been promoted from field manager to area manager and **Jimmy Garrett** has been promoted from asst. field manager to field manager. **Jerry Brown**, also from **FOM**, received a promotion from crewman to asst. field manager.

**Martin Sanchez**, originally a field manager from the **Toughkenamon Maintenance** branch, has been promoted to an area manager position for the **Baltimore Maintenance** branch and **Rob Horton**



Martin Sanchez



Rob Horton

# More Movin' OnUp



Octaviano Flores



Drew Doty



Ryan Rote



Edwin Reyes



Pedro Pina



Perry Greto

of the **Frederick Maintenance** branch has also moved to **Baltimore Maintenance** with a promotion from crewman to field manager. Also from **BAM**, **Octaviano Flores** has been moved up from his position as crewman to asst. field manager.

**Drew Doty** and **Ryan Rote** of **Laytonsville Maintenance** were both promoted from their positions as field managers to new roles as area managers.

**Martin Martinez (GAL)** has been promoted from assistant field manager to the field manager position (photo not available).

**Edwin Reyes (VAL)** has been promoted from assistant field manager to field manager.

**Pedro Pina (LOM)** has been promoted from assistant field manager to field manager.

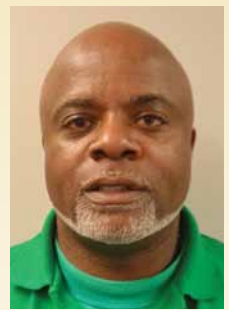
**Perry Greto (KIM)** has been promoted from field manager to area manager.



Jonathan Ansari



Travis Tretterton



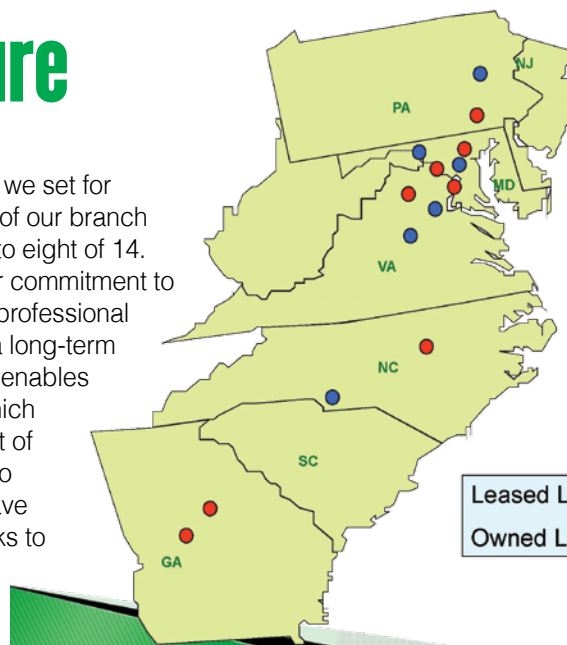
Victor Weaver

**Jonathan Ansari (CHM)** has been promoted from the position of crewman to field manager.

**Travis Tretterton** from the **Raleigh Maintenance** has been promoted from field manager to area manager and **Victor Weaver** from asst. field manager to field manager.

## Building for the Future

In order to continue to live up to the standards that we set for ourselves, we have recently purchased four more of our branch facilities, bringing our total of owned locations up to eight of 14. Owning versus leasing allows us to demonstrate our commitment to one of our core values: creating and maintaining a professional image. "When we own a facility, it signifies more of a long-term focus in that market," said **Phil Key**. "Additionally, it enables us to customize the facility to fit our exact needs, which increases our efficiency, and it has an added benefit of increasing employee pride in that branch." Thanks to the Ruppert team for your daily contributions that have made these purchases possible and a special thanks to the Ruppert Properties team for their help in acquiring, zoning and developing these facilities.



## 2014 Branch Locations

Leased Locations (6)

Owned Locations (8)



# Employees Recognized



**O**n February 28th, employees were recognized for outstanding achievement in 2013 at Ruppert Landscape's annual awards banquet.

Congratulations to the following recipients:

## **Crewman of the Year:**

Congratulations to the following employees who were honored as "Crewman of the Year" in their respective branches. Each was selected for their superior self-motivation and exceptional field production:

**Hector Gutierrez (BAM)**  
**Heriberto Alonso Gomez (CHM)**  
**Jimmy Garrett (FOM)**  
**Kyle Snyder (FRM)**  
**Roberto Herrera (GAL)**  
**Francisco Carranza (GAM)**  
**Freddy Velasquez (GVM)**  
**Isidro Lopez (LAM)**  
**Jose Bernardo Ventura (LOM)**  
**Eduardo Buel Rostro (MDL)**  
**Javier Reyes (NCL)**  
**Felipe Zarco Avalos (RAM)**  
**Stephen Gurganus (RIM)**  
**Miguel Lopez (TOM)**  
**Cesar Zavala (VAL)**

## **Branch Impact Award Winners:**

Congratulations to the following employees who were honored as Branch Impact Award Winners in their respective branches. Each was selected by their peers for their outstanding dedication and contributions that have made a positive impact on their branch:

**Joe Mangano (BAM)**  
**Bob Spencer (CHM)**  
**Mark Kaercher (CORP)**  
**Wayne Taylor (FOM)**  
**Derek Kohler (FRM)**  
**Paul Brooks (GAL)**  
**Lee Grisko (GAM)**  
**Kimberly Rodriguez (GVM)**  
**Elmer Mancia (LAM)**  
**Tom Flint (LOM)**  
**Stacy Fryfogle (MDL)**  
**Stephanie Carrillo (NCL)**  
**Jeff Sosa (RAM)**  
**Regina Brydges (RIM)**  
**Dave Wakeling (TOM)**  
**Brad Matthews (VAL)**



*Back row L-R: Bob Spencer, Regina Brydges, Brad Matthews, Tom Flint, Derek Kohler, Elmer Mancia, Wayne Taylor. Middle row L-R: Paul Brooks, Mark Kaercher, Stephanie Carrillo, Lee Grisko. Front row L-R: Joe Mangano, Dave Wakeling, Stacy Fryfogle, Kimberly Rodriguez, Jeff Sosa.*

## **Achievement Award Winner: Darrin Middleton (field manager, MDL)**



*L-R Lisa Middleton, Darrin Middleton, Bettejane Middleton, Dale Middleton*

## **Clyde Vadner Merit Award Winner: Jack Jones (region manager, CORP)**



*L-R: Chris Ruppert, Allie Jones, Jack Jones, Sue Jones, Bob Jones, Phil Key, Craig Ruppert*



# Major Milestones



A HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS  
AND BEST WISHES:

## JUST MARRIED



**Becky (Demler) Horton (CORP)** and her husband, Justin, were married on October 5, 2013.

**Kevin Jones (LOM)** and his wife, Natalie, were married on February 15, 2014.



**Andy Pedonti (RAM)** and his wife, Sarah, were married on February 15, 2014 (photo not available).

## PROUD PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS



**Justin Gibson (GVM)** and his wife, Casey, welcomed their first child, Haley Marie, on February 19, 2014.

**Kimberly Rodriguez (GVM)** and her husband, Alex, welcomed a girl, Sophie Michelle, on January 24, 2014. Sophie has an older brother, Damien, who is 6.



**Victor Rosado (GAM)** and his wife, Maria De Laluz, welcomed their third child, Brandon, on February 26, 2014. He is little brother to Antonio (4) and Leslie (3).



**Matt Jones (RIM)** and his wife, Niccole, welcomed a daughter, Ashton Elizabeth, on December 26, 2013.



**Joel Bravo (RIM)** and his wife, Veronica, welcomed a daughter, Belen Bravo, on February 3, 2014.

**Sean Davitt (MDL)** and his wife, Nina, welcomed their first child, Fiona Marie, on March 5, 2014.



**Chris Dempsey (RIM)** and his wife, Melanie, welcomed a daughter, Carlea Elizabeth, on January 15, 2014.

## NEW HOME

Congratulations to **John Zwijacz (CORP)** and his wife, Kim on the purchase of their new home in Mt. Airy, MD.

## On the Move



**Mike Monde** (branch manager) is moving from the Toughkenamon PA branch to the new King of Prussia PA branch.



**Alex Brooks** has moved from his position as an area manager for the Forestville Maintenance branch to business developer.



**Carl Weber**, originally of the Laytonsville Maintenance, has moved to the Frederick Maintenance branch to resume his role as area manager.



# New Faces

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING  
NEW LEADERS TO RUPPERT'S  
GROWING RANKS:



**Joshua Araujo**  
(LOM)  
Enhancement Mgr



**Hector Bermudez**  
(LOM)  
Asst Field Mgr



**Bryan Beshiri**  
(GAL)  
Project Manager



**Cole Bull**  
(RIM)  
Field Manager



**Kirby Burrows**  
(RAM)  
Field Manager



**Charles Cassick**  
(RIM)  
Field Manager



**Justo Garcia**  
(BAM)  
Asst Field Mgr



**Joseph Gonzales**  
(RAM)  
Field Manager



**Ryan Harding**  
(FOM)  
Field Manager



**Wilson Harpe**  
(FOM)  
Field Manager



**Jenna Hicks**  
(LAM)  
Area Manager



**Frank Konetzka**  
(LOM)  
Shop Manager



**Scott McQuiston**  
(RIM)  
Field Manager



**Chad Madison**  
(RIM)  
Shop Manager



**Francisco Montano**  
(RAM)  
Asst Enh Field Mgr



**Trevor Oyler**  
(VAL)  
Estimator



**Francisco Pineda**  
(BAM)  
Asst Field Mgr



**Tim Riser**  
(RAM)  
Asst Enh Field Mgr



**Patrick Ramplin**  
(BAM)  
Field Manager



**Zach Roscoe**  
(VAL)  
Asst Field Mgr



**Donna Savory**  
(MDL)  
Branch Admin



**Crystal Savoy**  
(FOM)  
Admin Assistant



**Shaun Snodgrass**  
(VAL) Project  
Manager

## Bob Jones Appointed Chairman of ABC Metro Washington



*Bob Jones*

Bob Jones has been appointed 2014 Chairman of Associated Builders and Contractors of Metro Washington. The board, which is comprised of several of the Washington, D.C. area's top construction professionals, works to protect and enhance the merit shop philosophy within the construction industry, identify pressing industry issues and provide valuable solutions to other professionals in the field.



"Bob's participation with ABC involves a significant commitment of time and energy to an association that provides great benefit to our industry," said Craig Ruppert. "We are honored that Bob is helping this great organization that has assisted us in so many ways over the years."

"We are fortunate to have Bob at the helm of our association and look forward to supporting his goals to grow our association and engage our members in the political process," said Metro Washington Chapter President Debra A. Schoonmaker.

## Farewell Friend

**Gene Robinson** passed away on April 8th after a year-long battle with cancer. Gene had been with the company for five years as our facilities manager and his presence will be missed here at corporate and throughout the company.



*Pictured L to R: Omar Sanchez, Kyle Meissner, Gene Robinson, Sean Sullivan, Jack Ruppert and Francisco Flores*