

# Oregon Landscape

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2017



## *Oregon's Landscape Professionals*



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## President's Message

Matt Triplett, LIC, CLIA, OLCP, Willamette Landscape Services, Inc.



How fortunate we are to work in such an amazing profession! Leaving the Northwest Landscape Expo, I am struck by the great group of folks that make everything work. Networking with our members shows the depth of wisdom and abilities within our ranks. Chatting with the vendors in the exhibition hall makes it clear that what we do requires expert support with equipment, materials, supplies, and general knowledge. From our educators to the guest lecturers to the fine keynote address, it is uplifting to see our fellow industry members enriching their lives through continual learning.

When one stops to consider what it takes to perform the transformative work of our profession, we can only be filled with pride of ability, knowledge, and accomplishment. From the most complicated of projects to the simplest of jobs, there is an underlying requirement of hard work and capability that is often taken for granted outside of our spheres of influence. What we do isn't always easy – even though we frequently make it look so.

Compelled by the desire to give back to the industry that has given me so much, I hope I have helped inspire and assist others to find success in their careers. It was the

challenges and rewards of the work we do that led me back to a second term as president of OLCA. Through strong legislative advocacy, production of an amazing certification program, amazing chapter meetings, newsletters, the expo, website, and much much more, OLCA provides a wealth of opportunities to those eager for self- and industry-improvement and it has been my extreme pleasure to have helped in whatever small ways I have been able.

Before I ride off into the sunset, I'd like to give thanks to our amazing staff, board, committees, and chapters for all of the diligent work you do on our profession's behalf. Adam, Ken, Bob, Peter, and of course Jim, you all did yeoman's work this year and I'm grateful to you. And, finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't give an extra-special shout out to Stacey Barrett for her amazing work ethic, putting up with me, participating in epic meme wars, and just generally being a solid human being.

And with that I bid you adieu and wish you good health and prosperity in 2018 and beyond!



# Using Landscape Awards To Advantage Your Company

By Rod Bailey – Consultant, Alder Springs Enterprises, LLC

Wow, you won an award in the 2017 OLCA Landscape Awards Program! That's great but how do you use this fact beyond the plaque you can hang on your front office wall and the notice you got in the Oregon Landscape Magazine?

Winning an award is something special. It is a tribute to your company, the employees who did the work and to the customer(s) who gave you the opportunity.

You should thank and reward the employees by ordering and presenting extra copies of the award plaque. Order a special plaque with the names of the employees who contributed to the work and make a special presentation of it to them at an all company meeting. A special plaque commemorating and expressing appreciation to the customer should also be presented to the customer with as much fanfare as possible. This is heady stuff for the recipients and recognition you give to solidify and enhance your relationships.

Don't forget your vendors either. Were the plants, the stone, the pavers, the timbers, the lighting a big contribution to your award? Every opportunity you have to recognize contributions to your success should not be overlooked. This builds loyalty and relationships.

Another thing you should do is prepare press releases for the newspapers in your market area showing the landscape and the presentations. If you have never done a press release check out [www.publicityinsider.com](http://www.publicityinsider.com). This site has

great advice on how to make Press Releases that feature your company easy. Garden editors of your local papers really appreciate the contributions and will be happy to feature your company. Invite them out to the site (with customer approval) for photo opportunities to include in the publication. We call this "Free Ink" as it gets your name out to the public at no cost to you. You can't buy advertising this effective for you. We used to put a special sticker on our trucks which proclaimed "Award Winning Landscapes". Getting your name out to the public is important and featuring your award winning performance at every opportunity is

critical. Don't pass up the opportunities that winning awards presents for you.

Make sure that you include the words "An Award Winning Company" in all your literature and marketing pieces, your web site and any of your internet social media publications or anywhere your name appears. Again, this is "Free Ink" that will pay great dividends for your company.

If you didn't submit a project for an award for the 2017 Program you missed a real opportunity to move your company forward. See you this year for the 2018 Awards Program!!!

## *Welcome New Members*

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# Getting Found Online

By Vic Carlson, RiverCityReach

In order for your business to be found (show up in search results) by online searchers, your content first needs to be found, collected, stored and made available to searchers by Google and other search engines. Those activities are in general referred to as “Indexing”.

As powerful as Google and other search engines are they lag behind modern technology in their efforts to collect and index data – so we are currently experiencing limitations on the availability of information that is out there and the information search engines provide. Indexing shouldn't be confused with Ranking.

Content needs haven't changed much:

- Know and use industry and location keywords and phrases in all your content – whether that content is for site, mobile, video, or social media application.
- Your keyword and phrases should also include the terms a customer would use to find your business and its services and products – not the just words you would use to describe what it is your company provides.

## Where content shows up...

Aside from content on their website a business is also “found” through content provided in:

- Words contained in Reviews and Testimonials
- Text in social media networks
- Information appearing in online search result “Knowledge Panels”
- Terms and phrases in Voice-activated search results
- Words used in videos

Today, I'd like to explore two of the above tools, Knowledge Panels and Voice-activated search.

To illuminate – a “Knowledge Panel” appears when people search for a business on Google. That panel shows to the right of a search result. In that box you will see information about a specific business. The information in the Knowledge Panel is provided to help customers discover and contact a business.

Surveys show searchers often pull up a “Knowledge Panel” rather than a website itself – and due to that results ranking is slowly shifting from websites to Knowledge Panels.

Then, Voice-activated searches – the number of voice searches is growing rapidly as people become more comfortable with technology and as device prices drop and functionality increases. Within the last year over 40% of mobile searches (all searches that are not done on a desktop or laptop) have been voice-activated ones... with no keyboard involved. It has been suggested voice-activated searches will increase about 130% this year.

Voice searches take place two ways, either using a digital assistant through a smartphone, like Siri or Cortana, or voice-activated speakers like Amazon's Echo or Google's Home. Amazon leads the charge of voice-activated speaker usage with an estimated 70% of voice-activation users engaging with Echo – with Apple recently unveiling a voice-activated speaker as well.

Make sure your information showing across the Internet is correct and consistent

A report reveals that 90%, of the world's online data was created in the past two years! – and most of that content exists without URL's.

With the growing popularity of voice-driven searches and the utilization of Knowledge Panels, one might wonder if the days of the website are numbered, which would not be true. Websites are the centerpiece of your online presence, and voice-searches and Knowledge Panels are useful in driving searchers to your business.

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# Benefits Buzz

Benefits Tips Brought to You by LaPorte

## Senate Rejects ACA Repeal Efforts

In the early morning hours of July 28, 2017, members of the U.S. Senate voted 49-51 to reject a “skinny” version of a bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), called the Health Care Freedom Act (HCFA).

This was the final vote of the Senate’s 20-hour debate period, and effectively ended the Republicans’ current efforts to repeal and replace the ACA. However, the skinny repeal bill may be reintroduced at some point in the future.

### What did the HCFA propose?

Similar to the American Health Care

Act and the Better Care Reconciliation Act, the HCFA would repeal the ACA’s individual and employer mandate penalties, effective Dec. 31, 2015. However, the employer mandate repeal would only be effective through 2024.

In addition, the ACA’s reporting requirements under Sections 6055 and 6056 would remain intact.

The HCFA would have also:

- Extended the moratorium on the medical devices excise tax.
- Increased the contribution limit for health savings accounts up to the maximum out-of-pocket

limits allowed by law for high deductible health plans.

- Amended the ACA’s existing Section 1332 State Innovation Waivers, added stricter requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services in approving waivers, and extended waivers to eight years (instead of five), with unlimited renewals.

### What are the next steps for employers?

Because the Senate was unable to pass any ACA repeal or replacement bill, the ACA remains current law, and employers must continue to comply

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 6*

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**Benifets Buzz Continued from Page 5**  
with all applicable ACA provisions.

Following the vote, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell indicated that Republicans now intend to focus on other legislative issues, although they remain committed to repealing the ACA.

### Did You Know?

On July 28, 2017, the Department of Treasury announced that it will be shutting down the my Retirement Account (myRA) program. The program was put in place by former President Barack Obama as a means to help those who did not have access to a retirement account at work to save for retirement.

Jovita Carranza, the United States Treasurer, explained that the program

is being discontinued because it cost too much compared to the demand for the accounts.

For more information, please see the Department of Treasury's myRA press release announcement.

### Updated Form I-9 Required Beginning Sept. 18

On July 17, 2017, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, issued an updated version of Form I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). Under federal law, every employer that recruits, refers for a fee or hires an individual for employment in the United States must complete a Form I-9.

The updated form replaces a version that was issued in 2016. Employers may continue using the 2016 form until Sept. 17, 2017. Exclusive use of the updated form is expected by Sept. 18, 2017. The new form expires on Aug. 31, 2019.

The updated Form I-9 includes revisions to the instructions and to the list of acceptable documents, but does not include substantive revisions for completing the Form I-9. Visit the USCIS website for more information regarding USCIS or the new Form I-9.

*Benefits tips brought to you by LaPorte. September 2017. © 2017 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.*



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# Unlicensed Contractors Circumventing the Law

By Irrigation & Green Industry Magazine - Latest News May 31, 2017

The Internet is the first stop these days for most American consumers looking to get a job done, and this is often good for landscape companies and clients both--but not always. Some property owners looking for help finding a landscape company online turn to websites like Thumbtack or Taskrabbit, assuming that whoever they hire will be a professional. However, some unscrupulous actors are taking advantage of the lax vetting procedures on these websites.

That was the case for Carrie Paulik, who owns a home in the Bay Area of California, and recently tried to hire a company through Thumbtack to do some installation work. She settled on a business, and paid the owner nearly \$8,000 to landscape her front yard, but he left before the job was done. "I just feel like he stole from me, that he ripped me off," Paulik said.

In a number of states—including California--landscape contractors must be licensed and bonded.

The man Paulk hired had been a licensed landscape contractor in that state more than a decade ago. Then, in 2007, the state revoked his license for abandoning a job after collecting most of the money, the same thing he did to Paulik. According to Thumbtack, professionals signing up for the site "agree to abide by the law, including licensing laws," but without a strong vetting process, there's little to stop fraudsters from hanging a shingle.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



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**Unlicensed Contractors Continued from Page 7**

“Unfortunately, that’s what we’re finding all too often,” said Rick Lopes, chief of public affairs with the California Contractors State License Board (CSLB). “We know that they’re getting jobs because of these websites, so we’re out there

looking for them, too, trying to put them out of business.” The CSLB uses Thumbtack and sites like it to set up undercover sting operations.

Currently, if a client wants to be sure they’re hiring a licensed contractor, they have to get the license number, then go to the

CSLB website to check and see if it’s valid, but many don’t bother. Lopes wants Thumbtack and similar sites to include a link to their license look-up page, to make that process easier. “We’d be more than happy to sit down with them, and show them how they can easily put the license check right over to us,” he said.

Thumbtack has said that it does verify the licenses of some contractors, but offered no explanation of how or why only some companies are selected. However they do it, it isn’t enough to prevent frauds, which tarnish the reputation of our industry. Paulik did eventually find another company to take on the planned landscape installation, and another \$9,000 later, the job was complete. “It’s been very painful,” she said, “but I’m glad it’s done.”

*Article reprinted with permission from Irrigation and Green Industry Magazine.*

## OLCA 2018 Upcoming Events

### JANUARY

**3** Portland Regional Chapter Meeting

### MARCH

**13** NW Youth Careers Expo 2018

*For more information about these events go to [www.oregonlandscape.org](http://www.oregonlandscape.org)*

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<b>Vehicle Description</b>	<b>MSRP</b>	<b>\$33,830</b>
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# OLCA Expo a HUGE Success!

By Adam Harris and Ken DeSantis, CLP, CLT – Expo Committee Co-Chairs

What an EXPO! This year's event sold over 10,000 square feet of exhibitor space! Attendance was also up this year, with a total of 40 attendees representing over 120 companies! Each year this event becomes stronger and more relevant for our industry.

Before recapping 2017, the committee would like to let you know we are in the market for some fresh talent! Many of the current members have been at it for quite a while and an infusion of ideas would be beneficial. The meetings are productive, engaging, and usually come with delicious lunch, so please let us know if you'd like to be a part of the team!

Looking back at the 2017 expo, the feedback from both exhibitors and attendees was great. With positive feedback, both groups felt like they accomplished their goals and appreciated the organization of the event. The exhibit hall was filled with friendly, familiar faces as well as a handful of new exhibitors that we were happy to welcome. Big hits throughout the day were the cash give away's, the quality of education, a fantastic Expo Portland Chapter Kick-off Party and the flow of traffic through the exhibit hall.

Mark your Calendars for 2018! OLCA is planning on expanding the show to include demos!

Thank you to all who participated and we look forward to an even bigger production next year!



## Thank you to our Expo Committee

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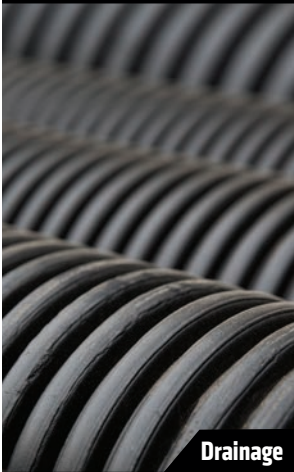


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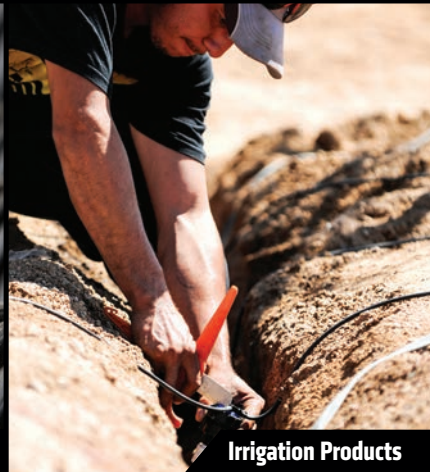
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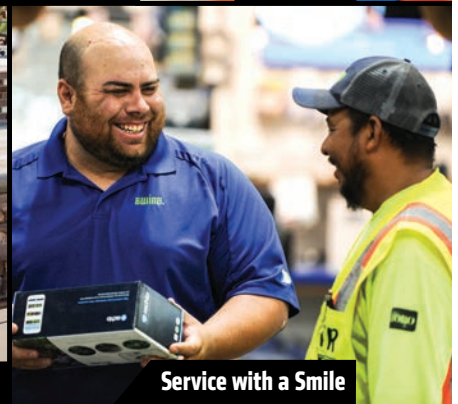
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# OSHA's Top 10 Safety Violations

Courtesy of Safety Northwest - [safenorthwest.org](http://safenorthwest.org)

Clients throughout the Northwest are always alert to OSHA's "TOP 10" safety violations. Nobody's perfect... learning from the mistakes of industry colleagues and competitors is smart business that results in better safety and cost savings.

And despite most firms in the Northwest not having full-time safety personnel, we consistently find sincerity and interest in achieving a better "Safety Month" every day.

The 2017 list shows several great improvement trends in safety na-

tionally. If you aren't seeing similar results, give Safety Northwest a call – we are happy to lend a hand where we can.

## The TOP 10 list for 2017 – and tips for better safety results.

1. **Fall Protection.** Violations decreased by 12% in the construction industry - this is great news! But fall violations were still at the top of the list – mostly failures to guard edges and open sides.

**SAFETY TIP:** keep up those

daily worksite inspections that reveal fall risks of six feet or higher especially from cut holes in floors and walls. If not in construction, make sure your general industry fall protection written program has the updated "walking surfaces" regulations.

2. **Hazard Communication.** Citations in 2017 decreased an outstanding 26%! The more straightforward GHS standards

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implemented several years ago have proven effective.

**SAFETY TIP:** keep your written hazard communication program and SDS binder/database up to date. Hazard awareness and response training for new folks is important too.

3. **Scaffolding.** Violations in the construction industry in 2017 were down by 15%. Violations mostly were issues with scaffold assembly, safe access, and guardrails.

**SAFETY TIP:** safe scaffolding can be difficult depending on a worksite's layout. Avoid acquiescing to even temporary safety shortcuts.

4. **Respiratory Protection.** Violations declined 13% in 2017 but with the new silicosis prevention rules companies may find themselves in fresh trouble next year.

**SAFETY TIP:** keep your written respiratory protection program updated and conduct those required medical examinations for workers who use respirators!

5. **Lockout/Tagout.** Violations dropped by 15% here too – a terrific trend given that lockout violations most often cause severe injuries. Lockout/tagout safeguards employees from hazardous energy during maintenance and repair work.

**SAFETY TIP:** there are simply no substitutes for consistent lockout training and enforcement.

6. **Ladders.** Another great downward trend, improper use of ladder citations fell (no pun intended) by 15%. Surprisingly, ladder injuries are often quite serious – broken bones, shattered feet, paralysis. Rehabilitation takes years.

**SAFETY TIP:** (1) firmly secure ladders; (2) don't over extend your reach – do the right thing and reposition the ladder.

7. **Powered Industrial Trucks.** Forklifts are true workhorses and their drivers must be trained, certified and reevaluated every three years. Citations were down 24% so employers are doing a much better job.

**SAFETY TIP:** SLOWDOWN! Keep pedestrians away from active forklift areas and retrain operators as required.

8. **Machine Guarding.** Machine guarding protects workers from the nasty “pinch points,” rotating parts, flying chips and sparks dangers. Although citations were down 21%, point-of-operation hazards still account for most violations.

**SAFETY TIP:** regular inspections and diligence putting guards back on after clearing jams and repairs.

9. **Fall Protection Training Requirements.** These category violations are new to the TOP 10 list. Fall injuries are almost always severe – hence the enforcement priority on training.

**SAFETY TIP:** fall protection training is proven effective and is straightforward: fall hazard recognition and proper PPE.

10. **Electrical Wiring.** Although down by a fantastic 27%, faulty electrical wiring violations are being issued in regular office and warehouse settings more than ever before. The big concern is fire from extension cords being overloaded and substituted for permanent wiring.

**SAFETY TIP:** don't “daisy-chain” your power strips.

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