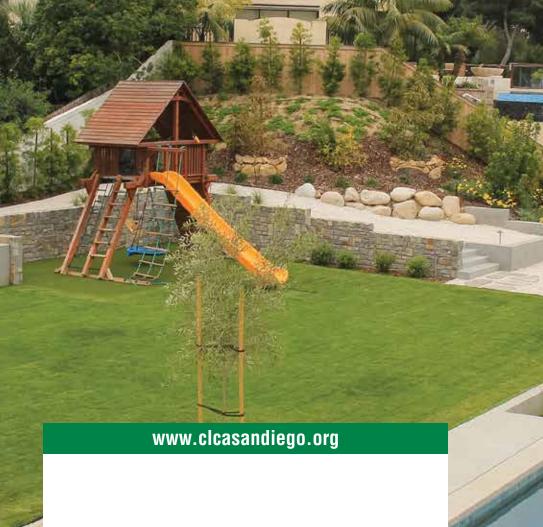




The Official Publication of the California Landscape Contractors Association San Diego Chapter



Offshoot P.O. Box 242 Beaumont, CA 92223

Cover Photo: 2023 President's Award winning project, La Jolla - Contemporary, by multi award-winning contractor Torrey Pines Landscape.

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#### President's Message

<u>Marybeth MacNaughton</u>

The votes are in!

Warmest welcome to our new and returning CLCA board members for 2024! Your commitment is the backbone of our organization, and we look forward to your continued support in enhancing the membership experience.

#### President

Marybeth MacNaughton, MSE Ldscp Professionals

#### **Immediate Past President**

Willie Valdez, Free Flow Products

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Jeremy Hanson, Milwaukee Tools

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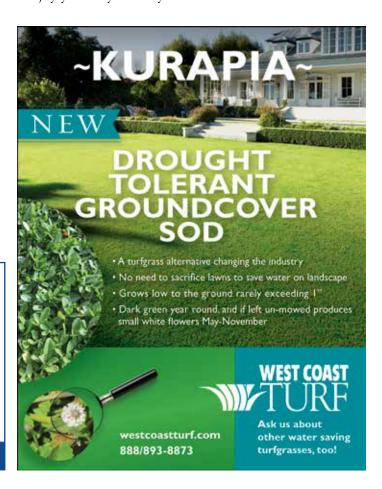
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As landscape contractors, it's essential to recognize that fall has arrived, and with it comes a host of opportunities to enhance our service to clients. Now is the time to turn back irrigation systems, preparing landscapes for the cooler months ahead. Scalping and overseeding lawns will ensure lush, vibrant greens come spring. Applying pre-emergent chemicals helps combat those pesky weeds, keeping properties pristine. Don't forget to discuss the installation of holiday color, lights, and beautiful poinsettias with your clients – it's a great way to spread seasonal cheer. Remember, our vendor partners are always ready to support us with top-notch products and innovative ideas to make this fall a success for all.

Enjoy your day! ~Marybeth



## San Diego Chapter Member Milestones

Congratulations to the following companies for reaching membership milestones this month.

20 Year Member

Belle Terre Landscapes

5 Year Member

Greenway Irrigation Lawn & Landscape

2 Year Members

Calsense Dirty Marketing Group

## **Update Your Onboarding Paperwork: The New I-9 Form is Here**

Mandatory as of November 1, 2023



Now that the new Form I-9 is available, all employers must update their onboarding paperwork by November 1, 2023. And, for the first time ever, employers participating in E-Verify now have the option to review employees' I-9 documents remotely on a permanent basis. Keep reading for all the details!

#### The New Form

The new Form I-9 has a version date of "08/01/23" and has been available for use since the beginning of August. However, employers have a grace period to use the old form (with a version date of 10/21/19) October 31. Starting through November 1, 2023, employers must only use the new form. As a best practice, we recommend updating your onboarding paperwork now, to ensure you don't accidentally use the old form after the deadline.

The good news is the revised form is more user-friendly. Particularly, Sections 1 and 2 have been reduced down to a single-sided sheet, while the instructions have been reduced from 15 to 8 pages.

#### **I-9 Self Audits**

Even simple errors or omissions on employees' I-9 Forms may result in extensive penalties of up to thousands of dollars. Therefore, CEA recommends that employers conduct annual I-9 audits to be in the best position should they receive a Notice of Inspection (NOI) from ICE. In addition to catching and correcting errors, audits can be a great way to demonstrate the employer is acting in good faith. CEA Members can use a free I-9 self audit toolkit after logging into their account on the CEA website. Members and Non Members who are feeling pressured for time, but want to get their audits done quickly and accurately, can email ceainfo@employers.org to schedule time for ČEA to handle your I-9 audit virtually or on-site.

#### **E-Verify Users**

Even more good news for employers participating in E-Verify: going forward you have the option to review employees' I-9 documents remotely. As a reminder, the default rule is that the employer (or their authorized representative) is required to physically examine the employee's documents in the employee's presence to ensure that the documents reasonably appear to be genuine and relate to the employee. (While some employers were able to review documents remotely due to the COVID-19 flexibilities, this rule expired on July 31, so this is no longer an option!)

In-person review can be a challenge remote hires, particularly in California, as the authorized representative must be a company employee (hello travel costs!) or the employer must pay a licensed immigration consultant or attorney to perform the review. As such, this permanent remote option is a welcome change for many employers.

To be eligible, an employer must be enrolled in E-Verify and in good standing, and:

- obtain/examine clear, legible copies of documents
- conduct a live video interaction with the employee presenting the documents to assess genuineness
- check the box to indicate that you used an alternative procedure in the "Additional Information" field in Section 2
- retain copies of the documentation
- complete an E-Verify case and follow the procedures

Find more information at https:// www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/remoteexamination-of-documents

This information was provided by the California Employers Assocation (ČEA). CEA is the voice of CLCA's popular HR Hotline member benefit.



**David Diehl** 

**Product Consultant** Licensed P.C.A.

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#### November 8-11

**CLCA Convention & Trophy Awards.** 

More information at www.clca.org/convention.

#### **November 14**

San Diego Chapter General Meeting, 9 a.m.

All welcome. This will be a virtual meeting. Email bronwyn@eyescapes.net for the link to attend.

#### November 30

San Diego Chapter Holiday Party, 5 p.m.

Celebrate the holidays with your green industry friends at the CLCA San Diego Chapter Holiday Party. Plan to bring your holiday cheer and be ready for a fun time.

Register at www.clcasandiego.org.

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**Bradley Herzog** 

Milwaukee Tool (346) 467-0212

Bradley.Herzog@milwaukeetool.com

#### **Secretary/Communications Manager**

Not a voting position on the board.

**Bronwyn Miller** 

Eyescapes (949) 466-1222 bronwyn@eyescapes.net

www.clcasandiego.org (866) 699-2512

## 10 Email Marketing Messages to Send Customers

If you pay for a bulk email platform, you definitely want to make sure you're getting your money's worth from the service. Also, making a point to stay in contact with your customer base regularly will help you stay top-of-mind.

#### Types of Emails to Send

#### 1. Welcome

It's always a good practice to send a confirmation email to let your new customers know they have successfully signed up. You should also send this out if you have a blog or newsletter that even noncustomers can sign up for. With this email, you can introduce your business, your services and what types of emails they can expect to receive from you.

You want to make a good first impression with your welcome email, so make sure you have a compelling headline, content recommendations, custom offers and clear opt-out options.

#### 2. Monthly/Quarterly Newsletter

Depending on how much time you have to spare, you can craft a monthly or quarterly newsletter that shares everything from your company's latest community involvement to blog posts about the latest landscaping trends.

You can use this newsletter to convey company news, highlight an employee of the month or request your clients vote for your business for a local award. Because everyone's time is limited, make sure this newsletter is interesting and provides value for your readers.

#### 3. Upcoming Service Reminders

While you may already call and/ or text clients about an upcoming



service visit, sending them personalized email reminding them can be just one more touchpoint to help them prepare properly for your crew. If it's a normal landscape maintenance visit, you could have a quick checklist of things to make sure the job runs smoothly.

For installation clients, you can walk them through what to expect as far as the noise level, how long the project will take, and who to contact if there are any issues on the jobsite. Being proactive will help set proper expectations and avoid miscommunication.

#### 4. Answer FAQs

If your customer service team is constantly having to answer the same questions time and time again, sending out a FAQ to your subscriber list could be extremely beneficial. Chances are there are other clients who have the same questions as others, but they have chosen not to reach out. This is another proactive effort that can mean a lot to clients.

#### 5. Thank You

When a project or service is done, you can send out a simple thank

you email that lets clients know you appreciate them for choosing your company. You could include a link to a survey that allows them to provide feedback on how they think you did.

#### 6. Upsell Clients/Offer Discounts

If you are regularly contacting your clients, then sending out the occasional email to upsell them on

an additional service or new service line you've started won't come across as too salesy. Also, while you're well aware of what all your company offers, sometimes clients may not know the full breadth of your operations.

You can also send out emails when you are offering discounts for certain services if clients lock in by a certain time or sign up your annual plan.

#### 7. Local Updates

a regular newsletter isn't something within your bandwidth, choosing to address your customer base when there are local concerns, such as a drought, an infestation of armyworms, or a significant

Continued on next page...

CLCA's mission is to serve and protect the interests of its members, promote professionalism, and advance public awareness of the landscape industry. **LEARN MORE AT WWW.CLCA.ORG** 

## 10 Email Marketing Messages to Send Customers

...Continued from previous page

blizzard, can help communicate you are aware of these threats and how you are responding. You can also provide some DIY tips to the customers as a way to provide value to them.

#### 8. Share Curated Content

Plenty of the projects you do can serve as inspiration for your other clients. If you have your customer base segmented by their interests, you can send those who have expressed interest in adding a fire pit pictures of some of your latest and greatest fire pit projects. This can help them think of the possibilities at their own home.

#### 9. Request Reviews

Online reviews carry weight and can impact your company's reputation and whether new leads will choose you over another landscape business. After a job is complete, you can send out a request for the customer to complete a review on Google, Yelp, Facebook, or anywhere else you're trying to increase your reviews.

Reviews can also help improve your website's SEO, so don't be afraid to reach out to loyal customers who haven't written a review in the past.

#### 10. Launch a Referral Campaign

Another way to utilize strong customer satisfaction is to launch a referral campaign. You can experiment with different referral incentives, such as discounts on their next service, to encourage clients to spread the word about your company. You can email your clients a summary of the program.

This article by Jill Odom was originally published on the National Association of Landscape Professional's blog at https://blog. landscapeprofessionals.org/.

## DEVIL MOUNTAIN IS IN **SAN DIEGO COUNTY!**

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## **Verde Equity Partners Acquires Steven Smith Landscape**

Verde Equity Partners, a San Diego-based private equity buyout firm, is thrilled to announce the acquisition of Steven Smith Landscape, a prominent name in commercial landscape and property maintenance in Southern California for over 40 years.

Verde Equity Partners operates a vertical roll-up strategy for commercial landscaping companies. This approach involves consolidating owner-operated businesses with strong reputations, deep roots in the community, and exceptional teams. The investment strategy respects the legacy of the founders while building a sustainable platform that supports employee growth and superior customer service.

This is the second acquisition for the firm this quarter, aligning with the recent appointment of Tom Heaviland as CEO and operating partner of the platform. With over 40 years of industry experience, Heaviland enhances the leadership team and brings a track record of successfully executing similar strategies in the region.

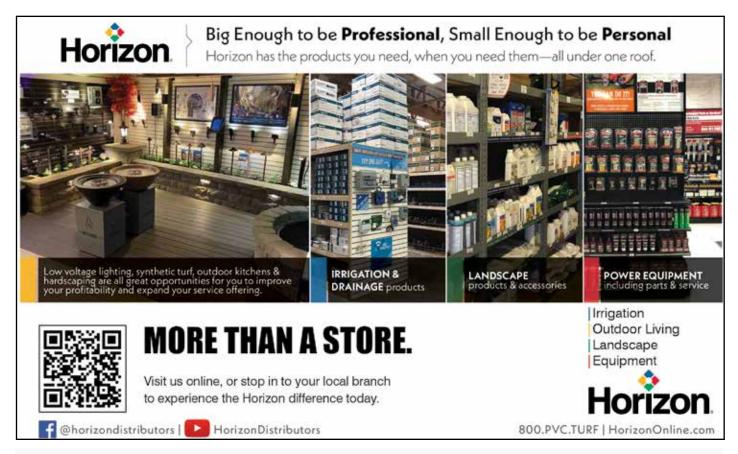
"We are committed to delivering exceptional service at a fair price," stated Heaviland. "Our robust pipeline of potential acquisitions reflects the growing interest of sellers in achieving the right value for themselves, their teams, and their loyal customers. We are enthusiastic about the opportunities in California and the U.S. Southwest and remain dedicated to serving the landscaping needs of our customers throughout the region."

Steven Smith remains on the executive team, and works with Heaviland to integrate operations, update technology and seek opportunities for growth. Smith expressed his excitement to continue to provide the same stellar service his team has provided for almost 40 years in the San Diego area.

"The Verde team has the talent and tools to take our firm to the next level and our employees and clients will benefit from the scaled efforts under Tom Heaviland's leadership."

Verde Equity Partners will continue to actively pursue investment opportunities with the support of its investors while continuing its planned acquisitions of additional commercial landscaping companies located in and around the Southwest states.

Verde Equity Partners is a minority and US military veteran owned private equity firm specializing in control buyouts of great commercial landscaping companies across the Western U.S. For more information, visit www.verdecompanies.com.



The Offshoot is the official publication of the San Diego Chapter of CLCA. Opinions expressed within the context of this publication are not necessarily those of the CLCA or its members.

The Offshoot is designed and printed by Eyescapes, P.O. Box 242, Beaumont, CA 92223. Email: Bronwyn@eyescapes.net, phone: (949) 466-1222.



# 2024 Annual Sponsorship Commitment Form

Annual Sponsorship Level		Platinum \$2,750	Gold \$2,000	Diamond \$1,450	Ruby \$400	\$750 Contractor Members Only!
Company Name and Logo in Offshoot, on Chapter Website and all General Meeting Emails with hot link	Priceless	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recognition at all Chapter Events on Sponsor Banner	Priceless	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sponsorship of Beautification Award Plaque	\$675	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes**
Hole Sponsorship at Golf Tournament	\$245	Yes	-	_	-	-
Advertising Discount in Offshoot (cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts)	Dependent on Use	10%	5%	-	_	-
Golf Tournament Player(s)	\$195	4	2	1	-	1
Kick Off Dinner Ticket(s)	\$95	2	2	1	1	1
Beautification Awards Dinner Ticket(s)	\$165	2	2	2	-	2
Holiday Dinner Ticket(s)	\$115	4	2	1	1	1

<sup>\*\*</sup>Contractor receives one entry into Beautification Awards competition in lieu of award plaque sponsorship.

Contact Bronwyn Miller at (949) 466-1222 with questions.

## 2024 CLCA San Diego Chapter Sponsor Form

- Please complete and return this form by Jan. 14, 2024 with written sponsorship commitment to: CLCA San Diego, c/o Eyescapes, 16769 Bernardo Center Dr, Ste 242, San Diego, CA 92128
- 2. Please remit your check\* made payable to CLCA San Diego Chapter by Jan. 31, 2024 or sooner to: CLCA San Diego, c/o Eyescapes, 16769 Bernardo Center Dr, Ste 242, San Diego, CA 92128

## We MUST receive your commitment by January 14, 2024 to put your name on the sponsor banner.

The San Diego Chapter of the California Landscape Contractors Association has my support. For the 2024 calendar year, I/we are committing to be sponsors at the following level (please check one):

	Platinum	Gold	Diamond _	Ruby	Contractor	
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Please email your digital logo to Bronwyn Miller at bronwyn@eyescapes.net by Jan. 14!

Contact Bronwyn Miller at (949) 466-1222 with questions.

<sup>\*</sup>If desired, payment may be divided into two equal payments due January 15 and March 15, 2024.

## 2023 WaterSense Award Winners Announced

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California among those recognized for their partnership with the California Landscape Contractors Association.

Earlier this month, the 2023 WaterSense Sustained Excellence, Partner of the Year, and Excellence Award winners were announced during the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas, NV. WaterSense and its more than 2,000 utility, manufacturer, retail, builder, and other organizational partners make it possible for consumers and businesses to save water, energy, and money by producing and promoting waterefficient products, homes, and programs. Since 2006, WaterSense partners have helped save 7.5 trillion gallons of water and \$171 billion on consumer utility bills.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized 13 Sustained Excellence Award winners, 9 Partner of the Year Award winners, and 25 Excellence Award winners for their support of WaterSense and water efficiency in 2022 and contributing to annual savings of 1.1 trillion gallons of water!

Of those recognized, the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California was presented the WaterSense Excellence Award for their partnership with the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA).

MWD partnered with the association to offer a dual certification course that combines QWEL and CLCA's Certified Water Manager Program. By offering the combined curriculum, audit and exam, MWD and CLCA created a unique program combining two WaterSense labeled certifications and is accelerating water-efficient landscape training for industry professionals.

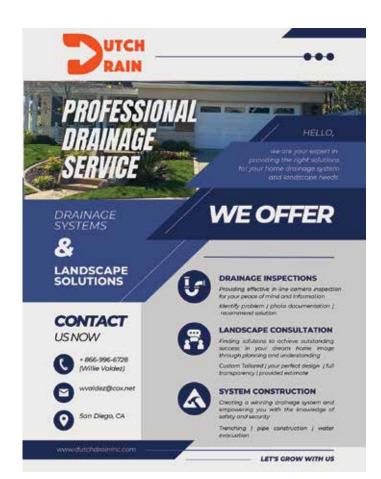
"The award was in recognition of the fantastic outcomes of our program in having so many green industry professionals earn CLCA's Certified Water Manager certification and the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper certification," said CLCA Executive Director Sandra Giarde, CAE.

Other WaterSense Excellence Award winners include:

#### San Diego County Water Authority

The San Diego County Water Authority won its fourth WaterSense Award, this time for Excellence in Promotion and Outreach. The Water Authority has offered the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification program free of charge to people who live and work in the Water Authority's service area since 2015.

Continued on next page...





## 2023 WaterSense Award Winners Announced

...Continued from previous page

When COVID restricted in-person meetings, classes transitioned to virtual to keep the program active. This also provided new flexibility for those unable to attend in-person classes. In 2022, nearly 300 new participants were certified through the program. Fifty percent of their QWEL certified individuals attended webinars to renew their certifications, and after conducting more than 25 inperson and online exams, there were nearly 460 certified participants for the year. To reach San Diego's Spanishspeaking residents, the Water Authority recruited and trained bilingual instructors and offered virtual training in Spanish, attended by more than 40 new participants. The Water Authority's Irrigation System Auditing video, available with English and Spanish captions, received over 700 views in 2022.

#### The Toro Company

The Toro Company won its ninth WaterSense Award, for Excellence in Engagement and Outreach. To engage contractors, The Toro Company supported nearly 40 training events in 2022 and promoted WaterSense via catalogs, sell sheets, trade shows, online, press releases, social media, and its "Take Five" newsletter distributed to over 3,500 professionals. With the help of a student at Texas A&M University, The Toro Company began collecting data in the region on soil moisture variability and irrigation scheduling for turf applications. Toro also began a new project at the University of Minnesota's Turfgrass Research, Outreach, and Education Center to evaluate thresholds for sensor-based irrigation scheduling to reduce water use while preserving turf quality. Company representatives attended several local events at schools and in the community to educate the public on water conservation and the benefits of WaterSense labeled products.

#### San Dieguito Water District

Winning its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products, San Dieguito Water District helped customers save water, energy, and money with WaterSense labeled plumbing and irrigation fixtures. To encourage customers to expand their water conservation efforts during drought season, the District distributed drought kits, which included information on WaterSense labeled products, at the City of Encinitas' EcoFest. The District gave multiple presentations to local community organizations about the drought and actions to save water, including installing WaterSense labeled products and using a QWEL certified landscape professional to increase outdoor irrigation efficiency. The District also participates in the SoCal WaterSmart rebate program for turf removal, WaterSense labeled toilets, WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers, and other water-saving fixtures to help their customers save water at home.

#### Hunter Industries

Hunter Industries has won its third WaterSense Award. an Excellence Award for Increasing the Visibility of WaterSense Labeled Products. In 2022, Hunter added two new models to its suite of WaterSense labeled products, bringing its total to 12 labeled spray sprinkler bodies and 54 irrigation controllers.

To promote the WaterSense Labeled Homes Program, Hunter worked with EPA to create a 16-minute video for developers and others on its website and YouTube channel. To accompany the video, Hunter emailed a quiz to customers with a chance to participate in a rewards program. The quiz was taken by over 230 people!

In 2022, Hunter hosted over 1,600 customers at its headquarters and manufacturing facilities in San Marcos, California, and promoted WaterSense labeled products as part of an efficient irrigation system. Hunter also donated these products and funds to students at the University of California Davis' California Center of Urban Horticulture SmartLandscape program for testing water consumption of varying turf species.

For a complete list of 2023 award recipients, visit https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-awards



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## **CLCA San Diego Chapter Life Members**

Thank you to the following Life Members for their continued support of the association.

Jerrie Beard Steve George Tom Heaviland Stephen Jacobs

Alfred Lehmann John Mohns Randy Newhard Daniel Olson

Kim Rusing Steven Smith William Schnetz Mark Schroeder

Gary Weems Keith Wilhite Glenn Wilhite

## 25+ Year CLCA San Diego Chapter Members

Thanks to the following Chapter Members for their continued support for over 25 years.

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