

PLANET NEWS

THE NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE PROFESSIONAL LANDCARE NETWORK

LandcareNetwork.org

FEBRUARY 2010

Landscape Industry Certified

*“I’m certifiable
and so are you”*



ALSO INSIDE

- PLANET and TCIA consider unification 11
- PLANET starts 2010 with a new CEO 12
- Use media relations to promote certification 23

Landscape Industry Certified

“I’m certifiable and so are you”

This year marks the beginning of a new era in PLANET’s certification program. Now, instead of having a myriad of letters to signify an individual’s certification, there is one brand. That brand is Landscape Industry Certified. If you’ve previously been certified in a specific area of lawn care or ornamental maintenance (CTP, CTP-CSL, or COLP), or held the PLANET Certified Landscape Professional (CLP) or Certified Landscape Technician (CLT) designations, your new designation is now Landscape Industry Certified.

Michael Becker
Landscape Industry Certified Manager

Photo: Jon Husted



“Our No. 1 goal with the branding effort was to come up with a brand that would fit the needs of all certification stakeholders,” says International Certification Council (ICC) Chair Michael Becker, Landscape Industry Certified Manager. “This was no easy task.”

He goes on to explain how, three years ago, PLANET conducted a Certification Strategic Planning session. In addition to bringing all PLANET certifications into compliance with the best practices of the certification world, the meeting was designed to find an effective way to market certification to the end user. Adds Becker, “The result of the meeting was a mandate to eliminate the alphabet soup of the different certifications and bring them under a single, marketable banner. Equally important, we had to find a solution that was agreeable to all certification stakeholders, including PLANET membership, PLANET leadership, state associations, CNLA (the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association), certified individuals, educators, and both ALCA (Associated Landscape Contractors of America) and PLCAA (Professional Lawn Care Association of America) legacy members. This strategic plan was voted on and approved by the PLANET board.”

Tell everyone

“Now that we have a single, marketable brand, how can we take advantage of it?” asks Becker. The answer, he explains, is twofold:

1. To create demand for having certified individuals on projects and
2. To build an inventory of Landscape Industry Certified Managers and Technicians to meet the demand.

“Creating demand involves telling everyone by proudly displaying your Landscape Industry Certified logo on the sides of your trucks and on business cards, stationery, brochures, any printed material, Web sites, and e-mail signatures. The logo can be requested through the PLANET Web site, and used virtually everywhere. By creating awareness and answering questions about what the certification means, you are creating demand.”

The word *everyone*, he emphasizes, means any prospective customer, including landscape architects and designers, homeowner associations, and builders. The list also includes current customers who may not already appreciate the value that Landscape Industry Certified contractors,

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Michael Becker, Landscape Industry Certified Manager

Two years later, after literally thousands of hours of meetings and phone conversations with the stakeholders, the new brand emerged. “In some ways, we patterned the new brand after ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certification in the auto repair industry,” Becker recalls. “A technician’s specialty could be air conditioning, brakes, transmissions, engines, and so forth, but no matter what it is, he or she has a single certification of excellence, ASE. The same holds true for being Landscape Industry Certified. Your specialty falls under a single brand that presents the holder as an expert in a chosen field. All certifications now fall under the Landscape Industry Certified banner as either a Technician or Manager, leaving it up to certified individuals to describe the specific designations that best fit their companies’ marketing efforts.

He continues: “The focus was to have a brand that would cover as much square footage as possible, immediately communicate something meaningful to our end user customers, and accommodate both current and any future certification designations. Landscape Industry Certified fits the description.”

interior plantscapers, and lawn care operators bring to the table.

The second part of the equation is to get the industry to “buy-in” to certification. “We have several thousand certified industry members, most of whom are PLANET members,” Becker notes. “But the number is relatively small compared to how many green industry service providers are capable of becoming certified. Certification as a true marketing vehicle won’t work until customers who want to specify Landscape Industry Certified service providers actually have access to them.”

This is not a chicken and egg scenario, he emphasizes. Instead, the industry should work to create demand and build an inventory of certified individuals simultaneously. Working at both initiatives will, in his words, “shorten the time frame when critical mass is met and demand for Landscape Industry Certified individuals will become widespread.”

Becker calls this moment in time the “tipping point,” and he would like to see it happen within the next five years. “Once there are enough customers demanding



landscape industry certified



certified individuals on their projects, the floodgates will open, and it will become imperative for a top tier company to have certified individuals.”

David Snodgrass, Landscape Industry Certified Manager and incoming PLANET president agrees. “I think the stage is set for an avalanche of demand to have Landscape Industry Certified employees on projects. This could happen within five years or one year for that matter.

Simplifying the brand has been the last detail. All we need, now, is marketplace support. The truth is, the general public and many general contractors among other customers are unaware of our certification program or its significance.

“We’re in a great place, though, because the certification program has gone through several development stages with continuous input from experts inside and outside our industry. The nice thing, too, is that it already is a very strong program with solid participation and nationwide momentum in both the United States and Canada.”

One of the immediate challenges, Becker admits, has been the poor economic climate, where both demand for the industry’s services and the resources to train employees to become certified have been curtailed. “Contrary to the

Way to go!

A special thanks to the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) — in particular to Joel Beatson, CAE, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, and the CNLA staff — for their help in the development of the new certification logo and their efforts to make certification rebranding a success. What’s more, Cable Baker, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician, was named CNLA Liaison, a newly created position on the International Certification Council. ~



What are CEUs?

All landscape industry certifications with good-through dates of 12/31/10 or later require renewal through a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) system. This process, which happens every two years, ensures individuals continue to keep current on skills and knowledge in their area of specialization.

Visit PLANET’s online Recertification Center in the Certification section at LandcareNetwork.org for details. ~



thinking of some, this is not the time to cut training and certification efforts,” he emphasizes. “Now is exactly the time to outvalue your competition by getting employees certified. Certification has an internal value, as well. By helping employees become certified, you are complimenting them, adding value to their skill sets, and you’re telling them they’ve met one of the supreme tests of being a true professional.”

“Still, the real value of the new branding effort and certification is ‘what’s in it for me?’” adds Snodgrass. “It is such a great way to differentiate your company from competitors who are not certified and bring additional credibility to the industry. The program will set the industry standard and work to raise the level of professionalism, and that’s good for everyone.”



Next step

In addition to having a new brand, PLANET’s certification program has undergone important changes in the recertification process, and, as previously mentioned, the program adheres to the best certification industry standards. Becker says he is extremely proud of the ICC under the leadership of Joel Haffner, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician; the PLANET board and staff; the CNLA board and staff; and all the contributors from the state associations, not to mention countless other individuals who worked tirelessly to listen to and incorporate everyone’s input. “It was evident that there was no single answer that every individual or every group loved,” he adds. “Even though we did not achieve buy-in at first from everyone, we reached a consensus for backing the new brand, Landscape Industry Certified. We ask that whenever you use your certification efforts in marketing, you use the Landscape Industry Certified logo.

“Successfully marketing this new brand requires a grass-roots effort from PLANET members. If you’re certified, get out the message and tell customers why having experienced and trained Landscape Industry Certified employees on their projects adds value. If your company has yet to participate in the certification program, there’s no time like now to get on board. Training for the certification is valuable in itself, and having Landscape Industry Certified associates as part of your team underscores your commitment to professionalism. ~

Guidelines on using the PLANET certification designation

Individuals who earn PLANET’s Landscape Industry Certified professional designation are eligible to use the Landscape Industry Certified designation in conjunction with their proper name after successful completion of category requirements. Following are the guidelines on how to use the designation properly.

Usage guidelines

- No acronym of the words Landscape Industry Certified will ever be used.
- Certified individuals may continue to use CLP, CCLP, and CLT after their names (and CLD in Canada), but the preferred designation is Landscape Industry Certified Manager or Landscape Industry Certified Technician.
- Candidates still test for specific designations, such as Hardscape Installation, Softscape Installation, and Ornamental Maintenance, and then become Landscape Industry Certified with the proper designation and specialty endorsement.

Example uses

For signage, electronic media, print media, and public marketing use:

- Landscape Industry Certified
- Landscape Industry Certified Manager
- Landscape Industry Certified Technician
- Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician

Signature usage

Acceptable	Preferred
Joe Smith, CLP	Joe Smith, Landscape Industry Certified Manager
Jane Smith, CLT	Jane Smith, Landscape Industry Certified Technician
Jack Smith CLP, CLT	Jack Smith, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician
John Smith, CCLP	John Smith, Landscape Industry Certified Manager ~



Certification testing options

Convenient testing for the **Landscape Industry Certified Manager**, the **Landscape Industry Certified Interior Technician**, the **Landscape Industry Certified Ornamental Maintenance Technician**, and the **Landscape Industry Certified Lawn Care Technician** is available at a PSI/Lasergrade computer-based testing center near you. Choosing this option eliminates the need to wait for an industry event to test and saves time and travel expenses. Simply log on to *Lasergrade.com* and perform a ZIP Code search for a center in your area. A listing of

industry events at which written exams will be administered as well as a listing of hands-on exams for the Landscape Industry Certified Technician can be found at *landcarenetwork.org/cms/certification*.

The **Landscape Industry Certified Exterior Technician** (formerly Certified Landscape Technician-Exterior (CLT-E) test is administered by licensees both nationally and in Canada. Several test dates are planned for 2010 as noted below. ↻

Test Date	Location	Licensee	For more information
March 8	Kansas City, MO	Mid-America Green Industry Council	<i>magicouncil.org</i>
March 18	Toronto, Canada	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
March 27	Elmwood Park, NJ	New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association	<i>njlca.org</i>
March 27	San Diego, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	<i>clca.org</i>
March 30–31	Alberta, Canada	Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association	<i>landscape-alberta.com</i>
April 9	London, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
April 9	Milton, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
April 10	San Diego, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	<i>clca.org</i>
April 10	London, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
April 23–24	Truro, NS	Atlantic Region	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
May 5	Aurora, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, CO	Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado	<i>alcc.com</i>
May 22	Aurora, CO	Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado	<i>alcc.com</i>
June 3	Wheaton, MD	Landscape Contractors Association of MD, DC, VA	<i>lcamddcva.org</i>
June 5	San Diego, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	<i>clca.org</i>
June 12	Kailua-Kona, HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	<i>landscapehawaii.org</i>
June 18	Oak Brook, IL	Illinois Landscape Contractors Association	<i>ilca.net</i>
June 19	Kailua-Kona, HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	<i>landscapehawaii.org</i>
July 8	Milton, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
July 9	Milton, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	<i>canadanursery.com</i>
July 16–17	Langley, BC	British Columbia Landscape and Nursery Association	<i>bclna.com</i>



Test Date	Location	Licensee	For more information
July 17	Lihue (Kauai), HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	landscapehawaii.org
July 24	Lihue (Kauai), HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	landscapehawaii.org
July 30 (tentative)	Oregon City, OR	Oregon Landscape Contractors Association	oregonlandscape.org
July 31	Derwood, MD	Landscape Contractors Association of MD, DC, VA	lcamddcva.org
August 5	Oaks, PA	Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association	PLNA.com
August 6	San Jose, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	clca.org
August 7	Honolulu, HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	landscapehawaii.org
August 11	Aurora, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, CO	Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado	alcc.com
August 14	Honolulu, HI	Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii	landscapehawaii.org
August 18	Wooster, OH	Ohio Landscape Association	ohiolandscapers.org
August 19	Wooster, OH	Ohio Landscape Association	ohiolandscapers.org
August 20	Olathe, KS	Mid-America Green Industry Council	magicouncil.org
August 20–21	Reading, PA	Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association	PLNA.com
August 21	Joliet, IL	Illinois Landscape Contractors Association	ilca.net
August 28	Aurora, CO	Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado	alcc.com
September 11	Belleville, MI	Michigan Green Industry Association	landscape.org
September 16	Kemptville, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	canadanursery.com
September 17	Kemptville, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	canadanursery.com
September 17–18	Belleville, MI	Michigan Green Industry Association	landscape.org/
September 17–18	Boise, ID	Idaho Nursery and landscape Association	inlagrow.org
September 25	Petaluma, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	clca.org
October 2	Paramus, NJ	New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association	njlca.org
October 2 (tentative)	Stonewall, MB	Landscape Manitoba	landscapemanitoba.com
October 2	Petaluma, CA	California Landscape Contractors Association	clca.org
October 22–23	Langley, BC	British Columbia Landscape and Nursery Association	bclna.com
November 22	Halifax, NS	Atlantic Region	landscapenovascotia.ca
December 3	Milton, Ontario	Landscape Ontario	canadanursery.com



Meet the International Certification Council

PLANET's certification programs are led by the International Certification Council (ICC), a group of eight dedicated individuals. The purposes of the Council are to establish certification programs, administer exams, and enforce ethical compliance with all certification programs on behalf of PLANET.

Council members commit to three-year terms of service, starting on the calendar year. The composition of the group includes the Council chair, Council chair-elect, Authorization Panel chair, Test Revision chair, Exterior Licensee chair, Program Expansion chair, Exam Development chair, and CNLA liaison.

Members of the 2010 ICC who will continue efforts on behalf of PLANET's certification programs include:



**Michael Becker, Landscape Industry Certified Manager
CHAIR**
Estate Gardeners, Inc.
Elkhorn, NE



**Martha Hill
EXAM DEVELOPMENT**
Hinds Community College
Raymond, MS



**Tom Wambaugh, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician
CHAIR-ELECT**
Waterfall Gardens
Reading, PA



**Skip Thompson, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician
PROGRAM EXPANSION**
Tidewater Landscape Management
Columbus, GA



**Kevin Davis, Landscape Industry Certified Technician
TEST REVISION**
Gardeners' Guild, Inc.
Richmond, CA



**Dave Hupman, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician
AUTHORIZATION PANEL**
BRICKMAN – Ohio Division
Loveland, OH



**Kristen Fefes, CAE
EXTERIOR LICENSEE CHAIR**
Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado
Denver, CO



**Cable Baker, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician
CNLA LIAISON**
RCB Garden Service
Langley, BC, Canada

