

ONLINE NOW:

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE GREAT CUSTOMERS BY WATCHING THEIR VIDEOS AT: JohnDeere.com/worksitejournal

BUILDING HIS EMPIRE

A Kansas residential landscape business has come to rely on the productivity and flexibility of its 35G Compact Excavator.

PERFECT FIT

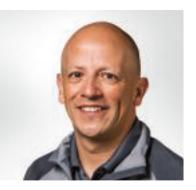
A fleet of John Deere compact equipment is an ideal fit for a growing Minnesota landscape partnership.

BLUE-COLLAR VALUES

A hardworking contractor tackles tasks including land management, property services, and snow removal with Deere compact track loaders.

LETTER FROM JUAN

HELPING YOU MOVE **FORWARD**



No matter the challenge, you find a way to get your job done. But in these uncertain times, it hasn't been easy. That's why we're committed to keeping you up and running.

To help you address every challenge and ease concerns about cash flow, we're offering no-payments, no-interest financing for 90 days on new John Deere Compact Construction Equipment until January 31, 2021.* Visit JohnDeere.com/NPNI or ask your dealer for details. And if you need help with current payments, contact John Deere Financial.

In addition to keeping you going with equipment and financing, we've pulled together with our dealers so there's no disruption in service and support. During this time of social distancing, most dealers offer online portals for ordering parts and scheduling service from a distance, along with curbside pickup of parts orders. You can also order new or used equipment online. And if you need information on a product, your dealer can provide walk-around videos and other materials electronically. Or they can arrange a videoconference to answer any of your questions.

Remote support and telematics are also important. Optional JDLink™ provides machine data and health alerts to help you decrease costly downtime. Through a JDLink connection, John Deere Connected Support™ enables remote machine monitoring so dealers can identify issues often before they cause costly downtime. They can even perform diagnostics and update software remotely without a technician visiting the jobsite.

Even as we keep a safe distance, we'll continue to stand behind you — as we all move forward.

Juan Raya

Manager, Global Compact Construction Sales

*Offer valid on qualifying purchases made between October 1, 2020, to January 31, 2021. Subject to approved installment credit with John Deere Financial, for commercial use only. Down payment may be required. Average down payment is 10%. No payments, no interest for 90 days, followed by fixed interest rate financing. See your dealer for complete details. Taxes, freight, setup, and delivery charges could increase monthly payment. Available at participating U.S. dealers. Prices and models may vary by dealer.





IN THIS ISSUE

4 COVER STORY

BUILDING HIS EMPIRE

Efficiency, comfort, and small stature make the 35G Compact Excavator the right tool for a "Little Apple" landscape company.

10 PERFECT FIT

Co-owners of a thriving landscape business in the North Star State found their groove by envisioning bigger and better things.

13 GET CONNECTED

Our hydraulic snow blowers are ready to help you productively master winter's white stuff.

14 BLUE-COLLAR VALUES

John Deere compact track loaders are a valued asset to a Minnesota contractor for land management and property services.



18 TECH TIPS

Winterize your compact equipment for cold-weather operation so you're ready before the snow flies.









Manhattan, Kansas, provides landscaper with a solid foundation for building a successful business

Dubbed "The Little Apple" as a play on New York City's "Big Apple," Manhattan, Kansas, may lack an iconic skyline of imposing skyscrapers. But it is home to Kansas State University and nearby Fort Riley, a United States Army post. "It's a really strong place to build a business," says Derek Taussig, owner of Taussig Landscape in Manhattan. "With the stability of a military base and a college, Manhattan has been pretty recession proof. Plus it's a limestone town. We build a lot of limestone retaining walls, so it's a good environment for landscaping as well."

CONTINUED →

COVER STORY

Taussig has fond memories of growing up in Manhattan. "It's a great community," he says. For 35 years, his father worked as a landscape architect at Kansas State.

When Taussig was 10 years old, he wanted a shiny new chrome Schwinn* bicycle. His father seized the opportunity for a teachable moment about the value of hard work. "He told me if you want something nice, you work hard and pay for it yourself," recalls Taussig.

The young boy began mowing a few yards in his neighborhood. By the time he was 14, he was mowing 30 yards, and by the end of high school, he had enough lawnmowing work to keep him busy full time. "I was homeschooled, so I had the flexibility."

Brothers in arms

After high school, Taussig wasn't sure he wanted to spend the rest of his life mowing lawns, so in 2003 he enlisted in the Army National Guard. It was at the beginning of the Iraq War, which meant he would spend a couple of years on combat duty there. "I was a combat medic," he remembers. "In the military, they say when you get hurt, you call for God, your mom, and your medic. It was a pretty cool thing to be there to help someone when they are in trouble. That brotherhood — that being part of a tight-knit family — was a big piece of it for me."

When he wasn't deployed overseas, Taussig would return to the U.S. and work for landscape companies.



"Each time I came home, I'd find a better job than before, moving up the ladder a bit and gaining more experience. That included a large commercial grading/seeding landscape company where I really learned bigger grade work."

A year before being discharged, Taussig was working at a nursery in Manhattan when he met his future wife, Shantel, a horticulture major at Kansas State. "We hit it off really well," he says. "Today she's a greenhouse manager." Taussig served in the National Guard for eight years before becoming a business entrepreneur major at Kansas State. He was just going to start a little mowing company to support himself while he got through school. In 2011, he hired another worker to help him on larger jobs, and then some really big jobs started coming in. Taussig Landscape was born. "I quit college and decided to really embrace this and get serious."



- Derek Taussig, owner, Taussig Landscape

Doubling down while scaling up

Taussig was determined not to seek work from his father, who hired landscapers at Kansas State. "I didn't want to create the perception that I got the work because I was his son. Only recently after his retirement have I bid for work there." In 2013, the fledgling company had three full-time employees. The next year, Taussig found two key employees who helped him expand the business, which doubled in 2014 and 2015.

Today the company has grown to 27 full-time employees. Approximately 80 percent of its installation work

and about half of its maintenance work are residential. "We don't do a ton of commercial. There's a lot of new construction in town, but that's not really our gig. I really enjoy working with the end user of the product. Homeowners really care about what bushes and plants we use and want a high-quality end product."

CONTINUED >

Taussig began purchasing John Deere mowers from his local dealer, PrairieLand Partners in Wamego, about three years ago. "What sold me is their service," he says. "The great part about working with PrairieLand is we're all on the same team. They truly want us to succeed. If we ever have an issue, they'll take care of us so we can keep making money. That's been a major reason we continue to buy all John Deere equipment."

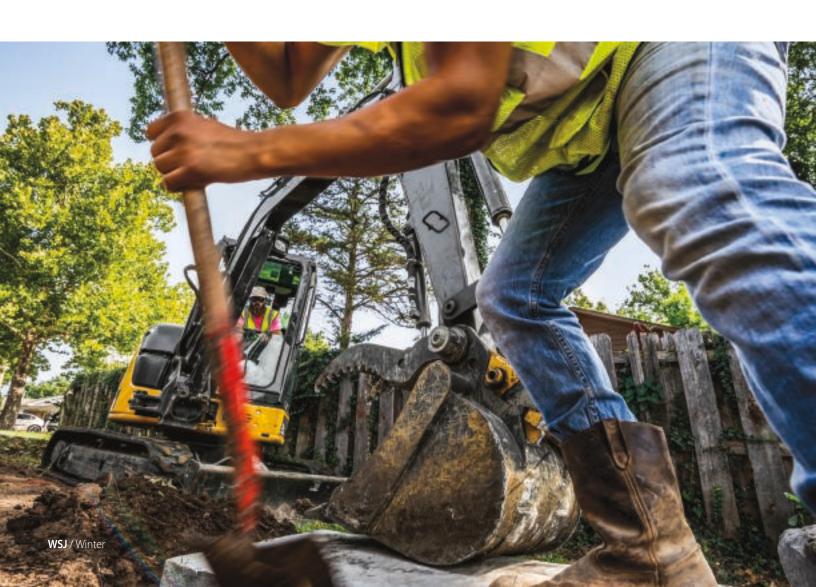
Taussig is a longtime user of a competitive brand of construction equipment. But two years ago when he asked the dealer for a quote on a compact excavator, they didn't get back to him even after four or five calls. And their service wasn't that great. PrairieLand Partners, on the other hand, responded right away on a quote for a Deere 35G. "The numbers looked great, and I knew we'd get excellent support, so I said, 'Let's do this.' And I haven't looked back since. We absolutely love this machine."

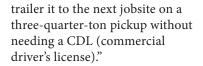
Right tool for the job

Before the 35G, the company used a skid steer with forks to build 14-inch limestone retaining walls.

A skid steer could easily set the first row of stone but had difficulty positioning the second and third rows. The process was frustrating, and progress was slow.

The 35G has proven to be a much more efficient tool. "With the thumb attachment on the 35G, we're able to grab and stack blocks faster than ever before," says Taussig. "Better productivity and efficiency make us much more competitive. Our operators love running the machine because it's comfortable and easy to run. And because the machine is small, we can work in tight spaces and then





In two years, the 35G has yet to need a repair, and it is easy to maintain. "It never breaks down," says Taussig. "Everything is easy to get to, and there's a simple-to-understand periodic maintenance chart on the machine that explains everything clearly."

Years ago when he first began purchasing John Deere equipment, Taussig toured the Deere factory





SNOW REMOVAL

317G

COMPACT TRACK LOADER

316GR / 318G / 324G / 330G

ST. PAUL, MN

THE RIGHT PARTNERS IN THE RIGHT MACHINES ARE AN UNMATCHED DUO, **NO MATTER THE SEASON.**



AMBITION IS THE PATH TO SUCCESS. PERSISTENCE IS THE VEHICLE YOU ARRIVE IN."

- BILL BRADLEY, FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR AND NBA ALL-STAR

In late 2012, Ryan Hunter, owner of Property Perfect, Woodbury, Minnesota, stood at a crossroads. Two years earlier, he had moved back to his home state of Minnesota from Wisconsin and formed a landscaping company. A year and a half later, his business partner wanted to dissolve the company. "It was a hard pill to swallow," he recalls. "But then I thought, I have all this equipment that's already paid for. I can go out on my own." And on January 1, 2013, Property Perfect was born.

FINDING THEIR GROOVE

Over the years, Hunter built a solid customer base of residential and commercial lawn-care and snow-removal customers. But he envisioned bigger and better things. So he called Josh Volbrecht. The two had worked together at a landscape company in Muskego, Wisconsin, not far from where Hunter was finishing a degree in economics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. "We actually talked about forming a business back then," recalls Volbrecht. "Fast-forward to 2018 and I get a call from Ryan. He said, 'Let's do this. Let's blow this thing up." So in 2018, Volbrecht and his family packed up and moved to Minnesota. Hunter knew he had found the perfect partner. Volbrecht had discovered his calling early in life, working for his father and uncle's landscaping company when he was growing up in southern Wisconsin. "When Josh came on, I found someone I could bounce ideas off and see what sticks," says Hunter. "We found our groove and haven't looked back. And we've been tired ever since (laughs)."

To help find their groove, Volbrecht spent two months making phone call after phone call to boost the landscaping side while Hunter managed the lawn-care business. Two or three months later people started calling back. With Volbrecht's help, the company began expanding more into landscaping work and acquiring several large commercial accounts. "Overnight the company became almost bigger than we could handle," says Hunter. "There's no shortage of work right now, which is great."

SNOW BUSINESS

Snow removal has been the company's bread and butter. There's no lack of snow, to be sure. The Twin Cities area gets an average of 52 inches a year. The last few years have been well above average. "Even in a light year, we're still working," says Hunter.

But 2019 wasn't a light year. Snowmageddon hit the Twin Cities area with a record 39 inches of snow in February. Operators worked round the clock to keep up. "We'd work 100 hours a week, finding a few hours here and there to sleep," remembers Hunter.

The company owns a John Deere 344L Compact Loader, its go-to snow-removal machine. "I love that machine," says Hunter.

continued



Ryan Hunter (right) discovered the perfect partner for growing his landscaping business in Josh Volbrecht (left).

IT TAKES ABOUT 15 MINUTES TO CLEAR OUT A TYPICAL GAS STATION, AND I CAN CRUISE DOWN THE ROAD TO THE NEXT JOB AT 25 MPH."

- RYAN HUNTER, CO-OWNER, PROPERTY PERFECT

"It takes about 15 minutes to clear out a typical gas station, and I can cruise down the road to the next job at 25 mph."

The company also owns a 317G Compact Track Loader (CTL), along with 316GR, 318G, 324G, and 330G Skid Steers. The 316GR, 324G, and 330G are equipped with special snow tires. "We can clear pretty much anything with these machines," says Volbrecht. "And during the summer, we use them all the time on landscaping jobs. We run a variety of attachments, including buckets and forks, brush cutter, tree auger, and stump grinder, with the ability to handle almost any task."

Property Perfect started using Deere equipment after hearing from a friend about the great service and support he had received from local dealer Frontier Ag & Turf. "We bought our first machine, the 324G, from them and had a few minor issues with it," says Hunter. "They quickly fixed everything under warranty, so it didn't cost us anything. When we picked it up, it was like a brand-new machine. We were super-excited but thought, what happens when we have multiple machines? Will we get the same support?"

The answer is yes. "They have the best service in town," says Hunter. "No one can match it. They're out there fixing machines in the snow, so we don't have

any downtime. And when you have zero downtime, you're golden. They do everything with professionalism and honesty. It is above and beyond anything I've seen, and they treat you like family."

Excellent service and support help Property Perfect focus on meeting deadlines and doing quality work. "I'm passionate about not only completing a landscaping job a customer loves but one they can take pride in for years," says Volbrecht, "such as patios, retaining walls, and softscapes that people really enjoy. That to me is the most satisfying part of my job — building great landscapes and taking care of people."

Hunter is similarly passionate about snow. "It's an emergency situation. You need to clear that lot quickly while creating a safe environment. Because when you've cleared all the snow, there's no greater feeling than having created a safe path for people."

Working together, the two partners have almost tripled the company's growth. "We're moving in the right direction, and that's been fun to see," says Volbrecht. "Our employees enjoy being here, and we try to get them the equipment they need to succeed. In the long run, it makes them happier and us more efficient."

Property Perfect LLC is serviced by Frontier Ag & Turf, Hastings, Minnesota.





Mike Savage from Frontier Ag & Turf (middle) checks in on Property Perfect to make sure the company's fleet keeps running no matter the weather.



GET-

- CONNECTED





Looking to tackle a new project or expand your operation's capabilities? Add a John Deere attachment. Our ever-expanding lineup includes over 100 models, so you're sure to find the right tool for the job.

Our two-stage hydraulic **snow blowers** are ideal for clearing snow from roadways, parking lots, driveways, or sidewalks. Eight models are available, including high-volume choices with 25- or 36-inch intake-shroud openings that enable you to work quickly. A new serrated-auger option on D-Series models cuts through the heaviest snow conditions.

Our snow blowers are capable of throwing snow up to 45 feet. The hydraulically controlled, poly-lined chute enables easy snow placement via in-cab controls. The chute rotates 270 degrees using a simple direct-drive hydraulic motor instead of a traditional chain-and-sprocket design or cables, delivering reliable performance with fewer parts. Skid shoes can be easily adjusted to set the cutting-edge height to accommodate different surfaces.

Like all John Deere attachments, snow blowers are optimized to work with Deere skid steers, compact track loaders, and compact wheel loaders. They're also compatible with most competitive models. See your local Deere dealer for details.







One of the company's biggest challenges over the years has been manpower. "We were always battling to have enough people to get the job done on time. Now we're able to get the same amount of work done with fewer people and do it safely. With all the attachments, the CTLs are very versatile. We can use them for erosion control one day, grade out a yard the next, and move logs and brush the day after."

FROM LAWNS TO LAND MANAGEMENT

Ryan founded the company in 2008 after mowing lawns on the side for eight years. "When I was 19, I started mowing lawns to earn a little extra cash," he recalls. "I found it more enjoyable than working in an office or doing sales, so I decided to form my own company."

Ryan started with 15 to 20 accounts, which was enough to keep the sole proprietor busy cutting lawns and removing snow. He grew up close to White Bear Lake in Oakdale, where he learned the value of hard work from his father. "It's a blue-collar area," he says. "My dad worked at the paper mill his whole life. He was into cars, so that became a passion of ours. I was always around automobiles, snowmobiles, or other machinery. That's why I became interested in compact construction equipment."

Ryan's father often worked swing shifts. "I was used to Dad working nights and weekends, so doing snow removal wasn't a big deal. No matter what day it is you have to get the job done."

Today the company employs 10 people and offers land management, property services, and snow removal in the Twin Cities North Metro area. Although it still



Matt Ryan, owner,
 Clean Cut Outdoor Services

runs a mowing crew, the company is transitioning more and more to erosion control and land clearing. "This side of our business has really grown," says Ryan. "We've learned to be fluid. Sometimes a contractor will call and say they need an area cleared out in a few days, so we have to be able to juggle things around."

PEACE OF MIND

Snow removal is an important source of revenue that requires reliable equipment along with dependable parts and service support. "We guarantee we're going to do the job, so customers don't care if a machine breaks down. We rarely have downtime with our John Deere equipment, but our local Deere dealer, Frontier Ag & Turf, keeps it running."

Dealer support has been a key reason that Clean Cut Outdoor Services continues to purchase Deere equipment. "That's been huge knowing that even at 2 a.m., they'll send someone out to fix a machine or bring a replacement so we can finish the job. When we need anything, they're on it."

Clean Cut Outdoor Services has been doing land management and property services now for five summers. "With good equipment and good employees, we're keeping customers happy, and we're ahead of where we were last year."

The hefty 333G can handle any trees under 16 inches in diameter. Larger trees are hand felled using a chain saw. "The machine has a significant amount of power to run the tree shear," says Ryan. "Balance wise, it has plenty of weight and a wide stance, so it is very stable."

WITH GOOD EQUIPMENT AND GOOD EMPLOYEES, WE'RE KEEPING CUSTOMERS

The 333G came equipped from the dealer with a forestry package (see sidebar at right). Side and rear screens shield the operator against branches, and a Level II FOPS plate helps safeguard against falling debris and limbs. A rear bumper guards the back of the machine from trees and other objects. Additional guarding protects the lift-cylinder hoses and hydraulic coupler.

The tracks on both CTLs exert very low ground pressure so the company can leave the sites with minimal soil disturbance. "These machines won't rut up the ground, so there isn't any conflict when the site is inspected."

The company obtained the 325G CTL about a year and a half ago, trading in a comparably sized competitor model. In addition to running the grapple, the machine hauls dirt, grades, and helps out with snow removal during the winter. "The power on the machine is great," says Ryan. "It's very user friendly to run, and the guys love the cab."

Ryan took ownership of the 325G CTL at the end of a Gold Key Tour at John Deere Dubuque Works. "We were able to meet people on the assembly line and talk with the engineers. They took time to answer our questions and thanked us for our support. It's clear they take so much pride in designing and producing a great product. The tour was one of the highlights of buying a new machine."

Clean Cut Outdoor Services

The 333G was a recent acquisition. "There was never any question about buying a John Deere — we didn't even shop other brands," says Ryan. "From the hardworking people in Dubuque to the outstanding support from our salesman Mike Savage and the technicians at Frontier, we knew Deere was going to take care of us."

Clean Cut Outdoor Services is serviced by Frontier Ag & Turf, Hastings, Minnesota.







Matt Ryan, owner, Clean Cut Outdoor Services (right), chats with a representative from his John Deere dealer, Frontier Ag & Turf. "That's been huge knowing that even at 2 a.m., they'll send someone out to fix a machine," says Ryan.



Instead of closing up shop, many landscapers and contractors take advantage of winter weather by using their compact equipment to remove snow. John Deere compact machines are designed to start and run reliably during the winter months. Still, cold-weather operation requires a little extra care, so be sure to winterize your machine.

Always refer to your operator's manual for complete details. And see your John Deere dealer for additional information and local availability of cold-weather aids. Here's what to keep in mind so you don't get left in the cold.

Switch to winter-grade fuel

Winter-grade fuel allows you to operate at the lowest temperatures. When temps fall below 32 degrees F (0 degrees C), use winterized diesel fuel (either a blend of No. 1-D and No. 2-D or straight No. 1-D in North America) for cold-weather operation.

Use a cold-flow improver

A cold-flow improver, such as John Deere Diesel Fuel Conditioner

for Cold Weather, can be used to improve cold-weather operability at about 18 degrees F (–8 degrees C) below the fuel cloud point. In very cold weather, it is best to use a winterized fuel. In cases where the fuel has gelled and the fuel filters are plugged with wax, John Deere Emergency Thaw liquefies the fuel and melts any ice that might have formed.

Use the proper oil and coolant

Use a seasonal-grade-viscosity engine oil and a proper concentration of low-silicate antifreeze, as required by your operator's manual. For most environments, Deere recommends a 50/50 CoolGard™ II-to-water ratio.

For extreme cold-weather climates reaching –62 degrees F (–52 degrees C), a 60/40 mix of CoolGard II-to-water ratio should be used. Important to note: When mixing coolant concentrate with water, do not use a less than 40-percent or greater than 60-percent concentration of coolant. Less than 40 percent gives inadequate additives for corrosion protection. Greater than 60 percent can result in coolant gelation and cooling-system problems.

Allow machine fluids to warm up prior to operating at maximum speed. Opt for an engine-block heater (also known as a coolant heater) to aid cold-weather starting.

Check grease zerks daily

Well-greased points keep out moisture and dirt, preventing rusting and freezing.

Inspect fluid and filters for water and sediment

This is especially important during the winter season when there is a greater buildup of condensation. Allow fluids to settle for several hours or overnight. Then drain a small amount of fluid from tanks, reservoirs, and oil pans to check for water, and remove any water and sediment that may have accumulated.



