



# THE IDEAL WAY

JAN 2021

## LETTER FROM DAVE

2020 was quite the year, to say the least. If you've been with us for some time now, you may remember our newsletter "Big Red". Well, we have decided to bring it back from the grave with a fresh new look and name. We wanted to be able to keep our customers & vendors up to date with everything happening at Ideal Landscape Group.

In anticipation and concern of not being granted the use of the H2B Seasonal Labor Visa Program by the federal government, the Maintenance Division had begun recruiting for crew members in the fall of 2019. We ultimately recruited an almost [entirely new workforce](#) for the 2020 season. Despite some difficulties, we have retooled our team and have committed to using an American workforce going forward.

Like many, COVID-19 presented many challenges that we had to overcome. For example, our Playground Division, along with their trailers full of equipment, traveled across the Midwest with campers to avoid unnecessary contact with others. When problems get tough, we must get creative to find a solution. Keeping our employees safe throughout the year was also top of mind. We provided masks for all employees and implemented temperature checks and frequent sanitization of high-touch areas. All of these protection measures will continue in 2021, as long as they are necessary.

The year was not all gloom for us, however. We were named a [2020 Top Workplace](#) by the St. Louis Post Dispatch. The Post-Dispatch identified 105 businesses in the small workplace category. Of the 75 businesses that were ranked, Ideal was #42! Out of the categories surveyed, our employees ranked interdepartmental cooperation and execution among the highest. When asked to describe our culture, our employees mentioned "caring", "friendly", "family", and "team" most often. ILG was one of only two landscaping and lawn care companies to make the list. This honor means a lot as we are constantly trying to provide a safe and fulfilling work environment for all our employees. We would not be where we are today without our dedicated employees, and to know they are proud to work at Ideal means a great deal to us.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue growing and providing our customers with excellent attention to detail. Whether that's keeping your landscaping looking top tier, improving a streambank, or building an inclusive playground, we are looking forward to doing it all in 2021!

All the best,  
Dave Buckel, President

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# THE IDEAL WAY

In the Ideal Way section, we are going to highlight how we strive to be “BETTER. FROM THE GROUND UP”. Each issue will center around topics that Ideal Landscape Group is focusing on and that may be valuable to you as well.

At our annual Strategic Planning Retreat in November, we spent a good amount of time discussing generational communication. At Ideal, we have employees of all generations, ranging from Baby Boomers to Gen Z. We believe that it is important to understand how different generations prefer to communicate. Being aware of this helps our team members communicate more effectively with one another. Below are some examples of generational differences in the workplace for you to keep in mind!

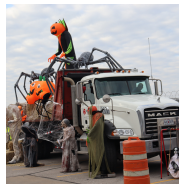
	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1976)	Millennials (1977-1995)	Gen Z (1996-TBD)
Work Ethic	Workaholic	Self-Reliance	Multi-task	Hard Work
Work is...	An adventure	A challenge	Fulfillment	An opportunity to contribute to meaningful social change
Leadership Style	Consensual	No layers	Now	Collaborative
Interactive Style	Team player	Entrepreneur	Participative	Inclusive
Communication	Face-to-face	Direct	Email	Constant & visual
Rewards	Money & title	Freedom	Meaningful work	Privacy & choice
Messages that Motivate	You are valued and needed	Do it your way	Work with bright, creative people	You make a difference

# AROUND THE OFFICE

Things have been busy around the office making sure everything is running smoothly. While many things have changed this year, we wanted to be able to continue some of our annual traditions. In October, we held our annual Family Fall Festival at our facility to recognize our employees' longevity at Ideal as well as award our crew members for their hard work. We always love holding this event as a way to enjoy one another's company and families while having a good time. This year we put a Halloween twist on things, having a trunk-or-treat and themed arts & crafts for the kids.



In November, we attended our annual Strategic Planning Retreat at The Lake of the Ozarks. We heard updates from each division and focused our attention on goals for 2021. We discussed the Ideal vision, quality, training, communication, and the Ideal way.



While we were sad we could not have our annual Christmas Party, we are still finding ways to be thankful and celebrate our successes throughout the trying year. 2021 will be off to a quick start with many of the challenges that 2020 presented, but we are ready to tackle them as a team.

## ★ EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: FERNANDO AGUIRRE ★

Fernando was a great addition to our team three years ago. Fernando only has one speed: “FAST.” But the two things I appreciate the most about Fernando is his focus on quality and the positive attitude he brings every single day. As one of our leaders, he does a great job setting an example for others on the team. He was awarded our Most Valuable employee for 2020 at our annual Fall Festival.



Outside of work, Fernando loves spending time with his kids. Any time he has a day off coming up and you ask him his plans, he always looks forward to hanging out with his children. We appreciate you, Fernando. Keep up the great work amigo!

Silas Dill, Operations Manager

## PLAY & SURFACING UPDATE Craig Sanders, Division Manager

The Playground Division was very busy in 2020 despite the challenges the year presented. Along with everyone else battling to stay safe with COVID-19, traveling became more difficult for us as well. For over three months our traveling installation crews lived in travel trailers to keep them safe and away from others. Never missing a day due to these challenges, we were able to complete many projects in 2020. Several of which were meaningful projects for our special friends at Unlimited Play.

Early last year we completed the Conner Prairie Ag Adventures Playground at Estridge Family Park located in Fishers, Indiana. We completed several other projects with Unlimited Play last year including the largest handicap-accessible splash pad in the state of Missouri along with another inclusive playground, both located at Hannah's Station Park in Raymore, MO. Hopping across the state line to Kansas, we completed the Wyandotte County Park inclusive playground. Working on over 50 different projects in 4 states, our playground team kept their foot on the gas despite all the challenges 2020 threw at them.

The Playground Division is gearing up for a big 2021, expanding operations outside of the Midwest. You can see some of the projects our team has completed on our [website](#).



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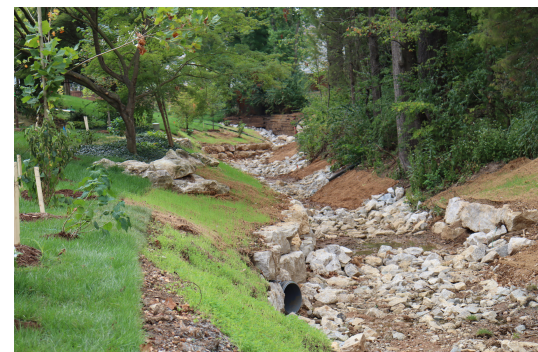


## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE Dave Buckel, President

Ideal Landscape Construction was very busy this year just as we have been the last three years. We were going sunup to sundown with a lot of overtime through about November 1st when construction activities began to slow in the municipal and public works sector. Certainly, the election and unsure waters ahead may bring hesitance and slow proceedings for the construction market, but we are hopeful the American economy will prevail.

During the 2020 season, we finished 36 projects and over 7 million dollars' worth of work. We were fortunate to not lose too many days due to COVID-19. During this time, we completed 1 trail project and we are currently working on 3 parks, having already completed 3 others earlier this year. We also did 13 streambank stabilization projects, 6 of them for the Metropolitan Sewer District, and 1 river stabilization project on the Meramec River for the City of Sunset Hills. We completed many other projects including a few residential landscape projects and smaller projects.

Despite what 2020 had to bring, the Construction Division prevailed and we look forward to doing the same throughout 2021.



## MAINTENANCE UPDATE Stephanie Leveling, Division Manager

Ideal Landscape Group's Maintenance Division started 2020 off with many new faces in our workforce. We also added a new Account Manager, Jeff Cassani, who brings 20+ years of experience in the industry to our team. You may have also noticed more of a presence on social media thanks to our new Marketing Coordinator, Justine Howell. Justine is a 2020 graduate in Marketing from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, MO.

Our Maintenance Division had some fun projects this season. We have done landscape projects for Forest Park Forever and some relandscape projects for our clients to update their properties.

2021 brings us a new year and it looks like some of the same challenges from 2020. We have navigated these waters before so we will be well prepared for what's to come.



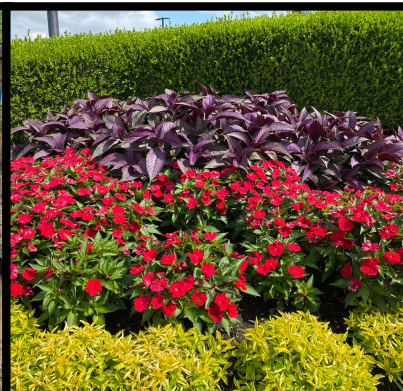
## IRRIGATION UPDATE Mark Howell, Department Manager

Over the course of 2020 our Irrigation Department technicians, Mark Howell, Jeff McConville, Nathan Howell, and Jeff Williams, passed the Irrigation Association test to become Certified Irrigation Technicians. The Irrigation Association is nationally recognized as the leading membership organization for irrigation professionals.

With a focus on training and elevating our irrigation services, our Irrigation Department became a Weathermatic Premier Partner. All of our service technicians were certified in the SmartLink System, meaning they are highly knowledgeable on water-conservation and irrigation efficiencies. As a Premier Partner, Ideal Landscape Group provides our clients with unmatched service, site beauty, and water management.

Looking into 2021 is an exciting time for the Irrigation Department. We are going to be adding more clients to the Weathermatic SmartLink System to help improve all aspects of their watering needs. We are also excited to get our service technicians enrolled in an Irrigation Association certified program with a focus on water audits. Stay tuned for more updates!

If you are interested in learning more about the Weathermatic SmartLink System, watch this [short video](#) or contact Mark Howell at [howell.mark@ideallandscape.com](mailto:howell.mark@ideallandscape.com).



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