



THE IDEAL WAY

APR 2021

WINTER RECAP

In the past, St. Louis Missouri could count on an average of 23" of frozen precipitation each year. Now, the average has dropped to 19" of precipitation. Two and three years ago we got our first snowfalls in November and then again in December. This last season we did not have our first event until January. And as I'm sure is still fresh in everyone's minds, February brought a deep freeze to the area along with our entire winter's snowfall in just two weeks.

In talking with several of you over the last couple of seasons, you are finding it challenging to budget for snow. We feel your pain as we try to be prepared for the worst-case scenario each year. I think as a property manager you must look at your snow removal contract like insurance. You have it if you need it. How do you budget for it you ask? Snow, like most things, is cyclical. We have heavy years with average or above-average precipitation and then we might have a couple of years with less than an inch of accumulation. I suggest using a 5-year average, so you incorporate one or two of those big snow seasons to balance out the low years.

Ideal Landscape Group has been working to find the best practices for dealing with unpredictable snow and ice events. This year we purchased a brine-making machine and another brine tank for our trucks. We feel the benefits of the brine enable us to pretreat for large and small events a couple of days in advance while avoiding the salt dust that occurs when cars drive over the treated ground. The brine can take care of small 1/4" events and hold off the first 1" or so of a bigger event. We also experimented with different sidewalk chemicals that will help us manage the varying types of storms. Some storms are cold and dry, while others are warmer and wet. These different coatings and blends work better under different conditions. Having these chemicals at the ready is very important as every storm is unique and will require specialized treatment.

We are excited for spring to finally be here and for a second season with our all-American workforce. We look forward to a successful season in 2021.

All the best,
Dave Buckel
President



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: ★ JERRY BRANDT ★



SPRING LAWN CARE TIPS & SERVICES

CLEAN UP YOUR LAWN

As the weather warms up and the snow melts, one of the first steps will be to clear any leaves, branches, and other debris that may have been sitting underneath all that snow or that came down during the winter. Leaves are excellent organic matter and can be composted or mulched and left on the grass to feed your turf. Following garden cleanup, you may want to aerate your lawn if the turf has become compacted over the winter.

WEED CONTROL

Spring is the best time to attack those weeds on the edges of your property that want to overtake your lawn. Apply a pre-emergent weed control that stops those annual weeds, such as crabgrass that grows well in lawns, from taking root.

EDGE BEDS

In early spring, soft soil makes edging beds a cinch. Using a sharp garden spade or half-moon edger, cut a 2- to 3-inch deep, V-shaped trench along beds to keep grass out. Maintain this edge with a string trimmer throughout the growing season, recutting only as needed.

APPLY MULCH

Wait until the soil has warmed to refresh mulch for the growing season. Shredded mulch provides a polished finish to planting beds, helps prevent weed growth by blocking access to the sun, and provides vibrant, year-long color.

LAWNMOWER MAINTENANCE

Since your lawnmower has been stored away all winter, it likely needs a tune-up. If you're handy, then this might be something that you can do yourself at home. Otherwise, you may need to take it to a small engine repair shop or a garden center to get your mower tuned up. Spring lawn mower maintenance can include things like an oil change, checking the carburetor and spark plug, adding gas, and sharpening the blade.

In January, we welcomed Jerry Brandt to the team as an Account Manager!

Jerry brings 34+ years of green industry experience to the Ideal Landscape team. Jerry comes to us from California where he spent 18 years as an Irrigation Production Manager and an Account Manager responsible for several large, high-profile accounts. Jerry's expertise and experience with irrigation system specialization, design, installation, and management make him an invaluable addition to the team. Jerry also has extensive experience designing, installing, and maintaining sustainable landscapes, rain gardens, bio-swales, and drought-tolerant landscapes.

Jerry is originally from the St. Louis area and spent the first 16 years of his green industry career working as a Supervisor, Account Manager, and then Branch Manager. During his time in St. Louis, he managed several large, local premier industrial and institutional accounts. Although it is fair to say that Jerry has just about done it all in the commercial green industry, he finds the greatest pleasure in account management. First and foremost, he considers himself a customer advocate, guiding his clients toward an understanding of the available options while working to balance the client's budgetary and beautification goals. Jerry is happy to be home again and in his free time enjoys riding sportbikes.



THE IDEAL WAY – COMMUNICATION

FOLLOW US!



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While the saying “communication is key” is widely used, it may seem like some people fall short of putting those words into action. Communication is a vital part of any successful organization. Here at Ideal, we value communication because we feel it sets a company-wide standard on how things should operate as well as ensures everyone is up to date and their voices are being heard.

As we talked about in January’s issue of The Idea Way, communication can (and should) vary between the generations involved. To ensure that we are keeping everyone on the same page, we employ a variety of communication methods which are detailed below.

If varying your communication methods is something you haven’t explored, it may be a good time to review what is and is not working best for your organization. Here are a few examples of methods that work for us and might for you as well.

**"Good communication is the bridge
between confusion & clarity."**

- Nat Turner

GROUPME

We utilize an app called GroupMe to reach all our employees at once. GroupMe is a messaging app that we require everyone to download. We use it often to share important information that needs to get to our crews immediately and Human Resources uses it to share announcements and send hours. It also allows our crews to send messages and photos to communicate quickly with one another.

BULLETIN BOARD

Due to Covid-19 and our growing workforce, we created an outdoor bulletin board to post company announcements, news, and information. The bulletin board provides a central location for our employees to check regularly and keep up to date with things happening at our company and in the community.



SMALL-GROUP VS. LARGE-GROUP

Providing opportunities for in-person communication is very important to us too. Most mornings our crews meet quickly with their supervisor and crew members to get prepped for the day ahead and go over any necessary safety precautions. These small group meetings ensure that all our team members have face-to-face time with their supervisors to voice any concerns or ask any questions. We also hold all-team meetings and trainings regularly. These large group meetings allow for all team members to participate, get hands-on training, and ensure everyone is on the same page.

ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

One method of communication that we have found very helpful has been annual engagement surveys. These anonymous surveys provide an opportunity for everyone to share their thoughts on the company in a productive manner. Topics such as

- Alignment
- Coaching
- Connection
- Engagement
- Leadership
- Performance
- The Basics (pay, benefits, training, etc.)

are covered in the survey. Providing a place where our employees can be heard is very important for our culture and growth. This allows our leadership team to focus on pain points from our workforce and continue to improve what is working.

SPRING TRAINING

MAINTENANCE

Training is very important to us here at Ideal. It not only ensures safe and efficient practices, but it provides an opportunity for our team members to gain experience using different equipment which instills confidence in their ability to get the job done correctly.

On March 3rd, we held our annual Spring Training for our returning crew members and leaders. We started the day by reviewing safety practices and then headed outside to get hands-on experience with a variety of equipment.

We were thrilled to see our employees continue to get out of their comfort zone and want to learn new things by asking questions and taking advantage of the opportunity to grow in the company. We are very excited about our crews and looking forward to all that we accomplish as a team in 2021.

CHECK OUT OUR RECAP VIDEO [HERE](#)



IRRIGATION

All of our irrigation team members go through routine training to stay up to date on important topics and the latest technology in the Irrigation and Water Management field.

Nathan H., Jeff M., Mark H., and Jeff W. have completed the necessary requirements, including a two-day class and 100 question test, to become Certified Irrigation Technicians (CIT) through the Irrigation Association (IA). Brad M. and Ryan G. are currently enrolled in the CIT course.

Our entire irrigation staff also recently completed the Weathermatic SmartLink training to receive their training certificates. Certification required a day-long course covering SmartLink technology and getting familiar with the app and installation.

Congrats to all of them on their continuous hard work!



IDEAL PLAY & SURFACING, ALL INCLUSIVE REC, AND UNLIMITED PLAY PARTNER TO BRING AN INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND TO PERRYVILLE, MO

Ideal's Play and Surfacing Division has worked closely with Unlimited Play for 10 years. While we have completed 15 playgrounds together, each one of them still means a great deal to us and the community in which it is built. The story behind Lucas & Friends Playground is no different.

KSDK News Channel 5 featured a story on the playground and the meaningful story of how an inclusive playground for children of all abilities is becoming a reality.

CHECK OUT THE FULL STORY [HERE](#)

Division manager, Craig Sanders, knows the importance of inclusive playgrounds saying, "Lucas should be an inspiration to everyone to do all they can to make it possible for everyone to be included. His energy, along with the support of his family, should be an inspiration to all".

A special thanks to the volunteers who have spent their nights and weekends doing the site and concrete work necessary to making Lucas' dream come true. Phase 1 of Lucas & Friends Backyard Adventures Playground is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2021 in Perryville, MO.

There are still sponsorship and donation opportunities available to help support this project and finish phase 2 of Lucas' dream. You can visit Unlimited Play's [website](#) to help children like Lucas see their dreams come to fruition and learn more about the work Unlimited Play does around the country. You can also keep up with progress on Facebook at "Lucas & Friends Backyard Adventures Playground"



BUSY SPRING AHEAD FOR IDEAL LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION

WESTGLEN TRAIL CONNECTION

 **Location:** Westglen Estates Neighborhood

 **Client:** City of Maryland Heights

 **Value:** \$1.3 million

 **Duration:** 9 months

This project will continue the development of hiking/biking trails in the City. This trail will provide an additional connection point to the recently completed Fee Fee Greenway (McKelvey Woods Trail). This project will require a pedestrian bridge and includes paving of an existing gravel trail.

The scope of work includes installation of multi-use asphalt trail, grading, drainage, bridge over Fee Fee Creek, and plantings. Construction began in early March and is expected to be completed by the year's end.



CITY OF FAYETTE SPLASH PAD

 **Location:** Fayette City Park

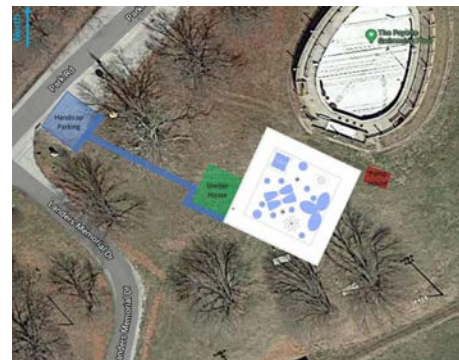
 **Client:** City of Fayette

 **Value:** \$275,000

 **Duration:** 2 months

Ideal Landscape Construction, along with SWT Design and Hydro Dramatics, was awarded the City of Fayette Splash Pad Design and Construction. Having worked on five splash pad projects throughout the state of Missouri, this team has the experience to create splash pads that are unique to the park setting, address the desires of the community, and incorporate a custom look while meeting project budgets.

Construction is scheduled to begin in early May with a target grand opening date of August 2, 2021.



IDEAL IRRIGATION & WATER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH WEATHERMATIC IN ST. LOUIS

BE PART OF THE CHANGE

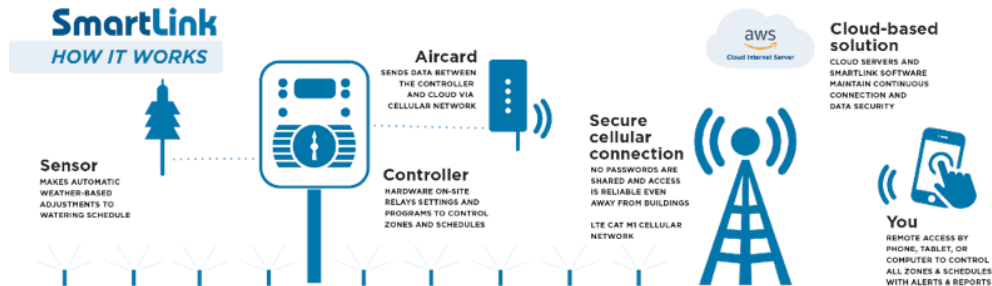
Ideal Landscape group is proud to be a Weathermatic Premier Partner! We at Ideal are moving forward in automating and upgrading our customer irrigation controller portfolio with SMART, cloud-based technology that allows us to have 24-hour access to your sites for optimum water management and cost reduction.

By upgrading your site with the world's leading technology, SmartLink, our goal is to reduce your irrigation water expense by no less than 25%. The reduction translates into a potential 10% savings in your service contract.

Conventional irrigation controls water on weekly schedules that once programmed are often only adjusted during occasional site visits. Because of this, they tend to over-water by 20-60%. They also do not consider the season, soil, plant, or weather conditions. Over-watering injures plants and creates runoff that can lead to liability hazards like icy walkways and roads, dead trees, broken concrete, and other structural damages.

The Smartline controller is the water-saving control system in SmartLink, with over 600,000 units in operation across 85 countries. Studies have shown an average water savings of 38% by considering all the necessary conditions to maximize irrigation efficiency as recognized by the US EPA WaterSense designation.

By upgrading your irrigation system, Ideal can make a programming change, monitor the health of the system, or even be alerted if a problem occurs. Ideal can instantly shut down your system if an emergency occurs and respond by the next day.



HOW THIS UPGRADE BENEFITS YOU!

- Dramatic Water Savings
- Landscape Beautification
- Real-Time Reporting
- Remote Control
- Freeze Prevention
- Reduce Hardscape Damage
- Immediate Compliance
- Web-Based Control
- Equipment Assurance
- Flow Sensing

GIVING BACK

As a client, your organization, stakeholders, and others will participate in the #SaveWaterGiveLife program that works in communities around the globe to provide clean, life-saving water. For every smart controller installed, one person will receive a lifetime supply of water. Please visit the Weathermatic [Save Water. Give Life.](#) website for more details.

Would you like to know more about how Ideal's Weathermatic Premiere Partnership will benefit you? Send us an email at info@ideallandscape.com.

