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Offshoot

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

www.clcasandiego.org

Offshoot
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Marybeth MacNaughton

President's Message

Happy New Year and a roaring welcome to our new and returning members of CLCA! Buckle up because 2024 is going to be a wild ride full of new possibilities, some old shenanigans, and undoubtedly a few dad jokes along the way.

To our newcomers, get ready for a landscape industry experience like no other - where we take our work seriously, but not ourselves. Your unique perspectives are more than welcome, and who knows, your sense of humor might just be the secret ingredient we didn't know we needed.

Returning members, welcome back to the circus! Your dedication is nothing short of heroic, and we can't wait to see what incredible feats and acrobatics you'll bring

to the big top this year. Let's continue turning challenges into opportunities and keep the laughter rolling.

As a united team, let us navigate the challenges, celebrate the victories, and together, shape the landscape industry into a beacon of excellence. The possibilities are endless, and with each member's unique skills and passion, we can create a lasting impact.

Here's to a year of growth, collaboration, accomplishment, and fun! May our combined efforts make 2024 a standout year for CLCA and the entire landscape industry.

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are." ~J.P. Morgan

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Devil Mountain has 4 locations in San Diego County, 8 in Southern California and a total of 14 across California. We are committed to stocking, growing, and sourcing the widest variety and sizes of plants. So when you shop at your local nursery, you have access to plants on the ground across the state.

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Our nurseries are open for you to shop and select plants for immediate purchase, delivery, or will call service. At these locations, you are welcome to drive through the nursery and fill your vehicle directly with the plants of your choice.



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Thurs., February 15, 10 a.m. - Noon

Little Barn at Native West
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Located directly across the street from their wholesale yard.



Join us at Native West's beautiful new retail/event space called "The Little Barn" for a presentation on California Native Plants. Lunch and a nursery tour will follow.

With California Native Plants making up a larger and larger portion of all new landscape projects, don't miss this opportunity to better understand why California native plants are being specified and how to successfully select, install and maintain them. A selection of particularly hardy native plants for many different design scenarios will be highlighted.



FREE TO ATTEND WITH PRE-REGISTRATION!

Register at www.clcasandiego.org by February 8, 2024.

Coming Events

Mark your calendar!

February 13

San Diego Chapter General Meeting, 9 a.m.

All welcome. This will be a virtual meeting.

Email bronwyn@eyescares.net for the link to attend.

February 15

San Diego Chapter Tour of Native West Nursery.

Plan to attend this FREE native plant presentation and nursery tour. Register at www.clcasandiego.org.

February 22

San Diego Chapter Kickoff Mixer, 5 p.m.

Embolden Beer Company, San Diego.

Reserve your spot at www.clcasandiego.org.

March 12

San Diego Chapter General Meeting, 9 a.m.

All welcome. This will be a virtual meeting.

Email bronwyn@eyescares.net for the link to attend.

JOIN US AT THE PREMIER NETWORKING EVENT OF 2024!

CLCA SD Chapter Kickoff Event
Thursday, February 22, at 5 p.m.
at Embolden Beer Co. in San Diego

California Landscape Contractors Association



*Attend to make new connections
and reconnect with industry partners!*

REGISTER AT WWW.CLCASANDIEGO.ORG

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Annual CLCA Leadership Conference Hosted at Hunter Industries



2024 STATE PRESIDENT Tom Sweeney (right) is joined by SD Director of Education, Mike Madewell, in welcoming leaders to CLCA's Leadership Conference, this year held at Hunter Industries in San Marcos on January 16-17.



CHAPTER PRESIDENT Marybeth MacNaughton and Director of Events Melissa Tetzlaff enjoy meeting and making new friends with CLCA volunteers from across the state.



SD LEADERS Briana Johnson, Kurt Markowski, Carly Montagne, Marybeth MacNaughton, Bromwyn Miller, Willie Valdez, Melissa Tetzlaff, Ian Campbell, and Mike Madewell pause from training for a team photo opportunity.



PAST CHAPTER PRESIDENT Willie Valdez catches up with Bromwyn Miller during one of the many networking opportunities.



BRAINSTORMING ways to get more member involvement in 2024 are SD leaders Mike Madewell, Shann Berry, Carly Montagne, Kurt Markowski, Susan Carlson (CLCA staff), and Briana Johnson.



CLCA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE is given by Executive Director Sandra Giarde. She provided attendees with a legislative and regulatory look forward into the new year.



BOARD TRAINING – CLCA leaders attend breakouts where they receive training for their specific board function. This is a great forum for them to meet leaders in the same role from different parts of the state.



2023 ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE YEAR recipient Gina Stanley is presented the prestigious award by 2022 recipient Mike Madewell.



2024 STATE BOARD, which includes past SD Chapter President Ian Campbell (second from left), is installed at the 2-day Leadership Conference.

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New Cora Collection Designed to Outlast Your Landscape

Looking for a budget-friendly landscape lighting solution that will withstand the elements? Introducing the new Cora™ Collection from FX Luminaire.

Built for long-lasting performance, these corrosion-resistant fixtures combine a durable, select brass construction with black oxide stainless steel hardware. They also feature a high-end, antique bronze finish that adds elegance to a range of outdoor applications.

Cora CA-51 Accent Light

This multi-directional fixture offers innovative up/down capabilities

and an accessory-friendly design for added flexibility.

Cora CW-31 Petite Wall Wash

This fixture's small size makes it the ideal choice for projects requiring a small footprint. Providing soft, filtered light, it's a perfect solution for tying in focal points in a lighting design.

Cora CW-51 Wall Wash

Offering superior light output and multiple power and beam spread options, this robust powerhouse gives you all the flexibility you need to take your lighting designs to the next level.

Cora CN-51 In-Grade

As an excellent source of up lighting from a low-lying position, this fixture blends seamlessly with its surroundings, maintaining the natural beauty of the landscape.

Especially well-suited for coastal environments and projects with modest budgets, these innovative fixtures were designed to outlast your landscape.

The new Cora Collection fixtures are available now at FX Luminaire. For more info., visit www.fxl.com

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NALP Foundation Builds Roblox Game to Reach Next Generation

The NALP Foundation recently announced their latest awareness initiative, which will focus on young people from ages 5 to 15 through the online gaming platform Roblox. The NALP Foundation is creating a game in partnership with Epic Reach, a global creative and advanced innovation agency.

This game, called Landscape Design Empire, will allow players to design, install, and maintain landscapes for a fictional neighborhood, purchase new tools, develop new skills, and open new areas by progressing through the game. Players can invite friends to help or share the experience.

What Is Roblox?

For those unfamiliar with the game, Roblox was launched in 2006. It serves as a platform where players can play other user-generated game genres like role-playing, puzzle-solving, and simulators. Players can socialize, earn and spend virtual currency, and create their own games. 59.3% of the daily active users are ages 12 and under.

It's free to create a Roblox account and it is available on numerous platforms, including mobile devices, gaming consoles, and the VR headset Meta Quest. Users can create an avatar and then play through the various games and experiences, as well as connect with others.

Roblox is the third most played game on PS4 and PS5

behind Call of Duty and Fortnite. Sixty-five million people across the globe play Roblox daily, with 28% of the user base located in the U.S. and Canada. The average playtime is 2.6 hours per day. The gaming platform experienced an explosion in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to Roblox's popularity and ease of crafting your own video game within the platform, multiple brands, including Nike, Walmart, Chipotle, Samsung, and Gucci have created their own virtual experiences.

One of Roblox's goals is to move into the educational space by having teachers utilize Roblox to teach subjects such as coding, animation, history, and economics. Educational institutions like the U.S. National Parks and The Museum of Science in Boston have crafted experiences on Roblox.

Core Game Mechanics

With the NALP Foundation's game, the general goal will be to create excitement and engagement with Roblox's core demographic and provide a better understanding of the landscape and lawn care industry.

"It's not intended to be forcing careers on them," says Jenn Myers, executive director of the NALP Foundation and senior director of workforce development. "It's really about plants and nature and being outside and the environment and beautification. Also, just an overall understanding of all the ways that landscaping impacts your life."

Players will be able to accept a job, design landscapes, maintain their landscapes and unlock new jobs and new areas as they progress in the game. By playing, users can also earn in-game currency to upgrade their equipment, like going from a push mower to a riding mower.

The game is designed for players to design and care for their landscapes, so they understand all the components

A black and white advertisement for Genuine Marathon Sod. The word "Genuine" is written in a cursive font at the top. Below it, "MARATHON SOD" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of grass. Below the grass, the text reads "When you want the Best", "1-800-532-3489", and "www.sod.com".

Continued on Next Page...

NALP Foundation Builds Roblox Game to Reach Next Generation

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of the industry. Myers says the most popular Roblox games are ones where players have something to care for and where they are able to complete and check off tasks, so Landscape Design Empire will tap into this by giving them plants to care for and NPCs (non-playable characters) telling them what to do. Horticultural facts will also be shared through the game's loading screen and other places throughout the game.

Myers says they want the game to grow and evolve over many years. A child who started playing it at 6 could still be playing it at 12 and they want to offer more sophisticated game mechanics as they gain experience.

In future updates of the game, Myers expects to branch out from residential landscapes and add commercial spaces for players. Another possible update will feature areas with different climates where the gamers will have to select plants well-suited for those conditions.

"All the plants would be available, but you might get more points if you use plants that grow better in that climate," Myers says. "Or if you put the wrong ones in, it might be harder to take care of. That way, they can learn and see the connection."

Myers says success with Landscape Design Empire will focus on whether kids are coming into the game, if they are staying and completing the landscape job loop, and if their friends are logging on to play as well.

Timeline

The initial game release is planned for late January, following the friends and family testing phase on Jan. 2. During the friends and family testing, Epic Reach will be able to see where kids go into the game, where they stop or restart, and where they engage.

After the release of the game, Epic Reach will be able to provide various metrics, including:

- Number of players (daily, monthly, all time), repeat players
- Time spent playing, average per session
- Most popular (challenges, times to play, items, skills, regions)
- Player location, native language
- Starts/completes (challenges, skills, tools)
- Play session paths, drop points

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

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CLCA's mission is to serve and protect the interests of its members, promote professionalism, and advance public awareness of the landscape industry.
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San Diego Chapter Member Milestones

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

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2024 Minimum Wage Increases & Exempt Salaries

Your hourly workers just got an increase, but what about your salaried managers?

The minimum wage for non-exempt employees increased to \$16 per hour for all employers, regardless of size, starting January 1, 2024. When employers are paying overtime at time and a half, this results in \$24 per hour.

This minimum wage increase also impacts white-collar salaried employees. Exempt employees (administrative, executive, and professional) must earn at least two times the State's minimum wage (times 2080 hours/year). Therefore the minimum amount a salaried employee is required to earn in 2024 is \$66,560 annually.

To be properly classified as "exempt," employees must satisfy both a duties test and the minimum salary requirement. *CEA members can access Exempt Analysis Worksheets for guidance on properly classifying employees on the HR Forms page at employers.org.*

There are a few outlying professions that require an even larger salary base. They are computer professionals, physicians/surgeons, fast food workers, and healthcare workers. *Visit employers.org for more information on these requirements.*

Some Cities Have Even Higher Minimum Wages

Depending on your city or county, some local minimum wages increase every year on January 1 and/or July 1. *CEA members can access all current local minimum wage requirements with ease by utilizing the Local Minimum Wage Fact Sheet on the HR Forms page at employers.org.*

Many jurisdictions in California have enacted their own minimum wage ordinances requiring employers to pay higher minimum wages for work performed within their geographical boundaries. Some ordinances require a minimum amount of hours (e.g., 2 hours per week) before this rule will apply. Remember to check local minimum wages where you have remote (hourly) non-exempt workers, and when you send workers to various job sites in different cities or counties.

Handling Changes With Empathy

What if this last round of increases means you can no longer afford to have salaried employees? If you are considering reclassifying employees from exempt to non-exempt, it can be challenging. Many employees often feel as though they are being demoted. Exempt employees exercise discretion and independent judgment not only in how they perform their work, but when they perform their work. They are not used to clocking in and clocking out, or remembering to take their breaks or lunch at a specific time. Handle this transition with empathy. It's often recommended to have employees "practice" for a couple of pay periods while they are still paid a salary to adjust to tracking time and taking breaks.

This article by Giuliana Gabriel, J.D., HR Compliance Director, was originally published on the California Employers Association's blog at <https://www.employers.org/blog>.

~KURAPIA~

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