



OVER 30 YEARS and Just Getting Started

Naturalawn of America has enjoyed over 3 decades of lawn care success, and has many more planned.



Technology is changing how business is done, and even though Naturalawn of America (NLA) has been more than successful for the past 33 years, they aren't living on past wins. The Frederick, Maryland-based lawn care company is ready to embrace the changes on the horizon.

"Our gasoline powered equipment and vehicles will change as technology in electric and solar power advances become more common place," says Jesse Catron, senior vice president.

NLA will also continue to pioneer the use of innovative organic materials and will continue to reduce any reliance on standard N-P-K products.

"The use of any synthetic control materials will be replaced totally and only organic, bio-logical, or bio-rational products will be used in our NLA system, says Theresa Smith, senior vice president."

But one aspect of NLA that will remain a focus is its customer service.

"Our business philosophy has always concentrated on providing a level of service that delivers more value than what customers perceived, expected, or requested and at an attractive and reasonable price," Jesse says. "That is one facet of NLA which will not change in the years to come."

A LOOK BACK. Being deemed an essential business helped propel NLA to a host of major victories. The company continued to increase its customers base, added two new franchise owners and revenue out-paced expenses.

"Even with the modifications to operations, customer communication, and training via online techniques, we were able to keep everyone employed and our customers well cared for," Smith says. "We adapted our operations to meet safety standards and we conducted innovative ways to communicate with our customers."

The end result was a 13% growth in the company revenues which now exceed \$80 million. NLA also added two additional states to its service area bringing the total to 26 states, and average revenue per



TOP: Senior Vice President Jesse Catron with Phil Catron Founder and President
ABOVE: Senior Vice President Theresa Smith

owner increased from \$1.8 million to \$2.2 million this year.

"We feel 2020 was a very blessed year for us all at NLA," Theresa says.

NEXT YEAR. And what's going to make 2021 so great? Afterall, the larger a company becomes the harder it is to achieve

double-digit growth, which is why the company will have controlled growth, focusing on helping current owners prosper.

"While many franchisors want to add as many new owners each year as possible, we look to bring on only 2-3 new independent franchise owners," Jesse says. "Support for a new owner is critical and in

WHY NATURALAWN?

NaturaLawn isn't a one trick pony. In fact, there's a number of avenues a franchisee could pursue.

"A NaturaLawn of America franchise has tremendous value from not only being the leader in organic-based, environmentally, pet and family friendly lawn care but you can grow into providing all-natural pet and family friendly flea, tick and mosquito services," says Blaine Young, vice-president of franchise and business development. "It is like getting the benefit of three franchises in one."

Having grown every year, that will not change in 2021 as NLA will open two new states, Mississippi and New Hampshire, and NLA wants to continue to expand in the years to come.

"We are looking for more people that have our values and beliefs to join our franchise family," Young says. "Service, focus and innovation is our mission statement, and we went from an idea founder Phil Catron developed in the basement of his home to the powerhouse in the green industry very quickly."

The company plans to continue growing its pet and family friendly services due to customer demand. Customers can enjoy their lawns the same day with no down time while knowing their 2- and 4-legged loved ones are safe. In 2020, NLA was named the Editor's Choice by Modern Dog magazine.

"Your pets want to go outside, and you want to be able to let them out with peace of mind," Young says. "With over 60% of households in the US owning a dog this is extremely attractive to our customers."



ABOVE: VP of Franchise and Business Development Blaine R. Young

order to ensure the best chance of success for a new franchise business, the franchisor should have a strong infrastructure."

NLA believes by limiting the number of new owners per year to a very manageable figure so they will not only receive the support they need, but the more veteran owners will also be supported and not get lost in the shuffle or neglected by the NLA Home Office Support Team.

THE NEXT GENERATION. While a successful 2021 is a priority for NLA, succession planning has been a main focus for several years.

With founder Phil Catron continuing to scale back on his workload, Theresa and Jesse are ready to lead the company. Over the past year, Phil has reduced his day-to-day involvement by more than 20% and this will continue to increase over the next 12-18 months.

"Our Department Heads and Strategic Team Leaders pretty much conduct the overall business operations without any direct involvement from me other than to answer questions or provide resource information which would help them in their areas of responsibility," Phil says.

He'll miss the interaction he has with employees at the home office and in the field, but he knows the company is set up for growth even after he steps away.

Succession planning is top-of-mind for everyone, and they've been in that phase for several years. At three different NLA owner meetings, Leaving a Legacy, Planning for the Future and Leaders and Leadership have been the topics on the agendas.

"One of the most important aspects of the transition I have is the mentoring of Jesse and Theresa and coaching them through the myriad of business decisions which take place during the business' operation," Phil says. "To help us through this process, we brought in an outside consultant to assist in developing the future organization structure and roles the three of us would play."

Turning the business over to family members can get dicey, but, when done right, it's a great benefit to the organization. It provides a continuity of culture and



Diego Antonio



Justin Sapp

NO TRAIN, NO GAIN

Growth is paramount at NLA.

Diego Antonio, who recently became a franchisee in Manchester, New Hampshire, said new owners training helped introduce him to the lawn care industry as whole.

"Getting to know the different teams I would be working with from purchasing, marketing, sales, IT, operations and senior leadership gave me the confidence to know there is always an expert I can reach out to," he says. "That is very powerful for a new franchisee."

Justin Sapp, a new franchisee in Oxford, Mississippi, said the new owners training was very detailed and prioritized the support NLA has designed to help make new franchisees successful.

"I was extremely impressed at the level of support I will get not only in the first three years of my franchise but for the life of my franchise," he says.

operating philosophy and will be the key to a successful transition.

"Both Jesse and Theresa have literally grown up in the company and have been a part of its evolution over the past 30-plus years," Phil says. "They have spent a number of years working in and around different areas of the business and developing relationships with the franchise owners."

Speaking of franchise owners, what can they expect from the next generation of NLA leaders?

"Overall, the franchisees, our customers, and the Home Office personnel can expect to see two bright and energetic profession-

als take over the reins of a 30-plus-year-old company and lead it into a new and innovative future, Phil says. "A future which will be exciting and beneficial for all involved."



NaturaLawn of America serves over 115,000 customers in 26 states & Washington, D.C.

The leader in organic lawn care since 1987.

NaturaLawn of America also provides all-natural flea, tick and mosquito services.