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San Luis Obispo Chapter
California Landscape Contractors Association
Representing the Landscaping & Irrigation Industry

Paycheck Protection Program Returns

CLCA Recommends: Act Now. Right Now!

"Act now. Right now!" That's the encouragement CLCA is giving green industry businesses seeking financial support from the Payroll Protection Program's just-funded third round.

In early January, the U.S. Small Business Administration released new guidelines on how small businesses threatened by COVID-19 can access the program's forgivable loans to keep their doors open and staff employed.

"The historically successful Paycheck Protection Program served as an economic lifeline to millions of small businesses and their employees when they needed it most," said U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Jovita Carranza. "Today's guidance builds on the success of the program and adapts to the changing needs of small business owners by providing targeted relief and a simpler forgiveness process to ensure their path to recovery."



Payroll Protection Program Highlights

- First-time PPP loans of up to 250 percent of your average monthly payroll are available
- Second-draw loans up to \$2 million are available for businesses that have used funds in their Round 1 or Round 2 loan
- PPP loans can cover additional expenses, including operations expenditures, property damage costs, supplier costs and worker protection expenditures
- One hundred percent of your loan could be forgiven

Key Take-Away: Act Now!

Legislation recently signed by President Trump allocates \$284 billion for a third round of PPP funding. The \$349 billion money in round one was gone in two weeks. Round two funding (\$310 billion) lasted less than a month. As such, CLCA strongly encourages green industry professionals seeking funding to take immediate action. Visit <https://bit.ly/2LaxU71> for more information.

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Human Resources File System Guide

Steven Cesare, Ph.D. The Harvest Group, Landscape Business Consulting | harvestlandscapeconsulting.com

A landscaper from Michigan called me overwhelmed with all the paperwork generated by Human Resources. I suggested the three-step system for managing Human Resources files.

Personnel File. Every employee must have a personnel file designed to contain job-related information capable of being reviewed by managers, supervisors, and authorized staff. Examples of documents that should be included in this file are as follows: job application; job description; selection test or interview results; acknowledgment forms (e.g., Employee Handbook, Confidentiality, Arbitration Agreement); driver's license with photograph; official DMV driving record and proof of auto insurance; Uniform Reimbursement Acknowledgment; Issuance Forms (e.g., cell phone, vehicle, equipment, computer); training records; performance evaluations; awards and honors (e.g., letters of commendation or recommendation); letters of reprimand or other disciplinary correspondence; Payroll Status Change Forms (e.g., change in salary, tenure, deductions, job title, promotion); Personnel Information Change Form; time off requests; Termination Form; and Severance Agreements.

Confidential File. Every employee must also have a separate confidential file that stores all personal information that could conceivably serve as bias against the employee. Examples of documents that should be included in this file are as follows: EEO information (e.g., Visa documentation); all information related to health (e.g., medical, dental, vision, LTD, life) insurance benefits; workers' compensation records (e.g., reporting forms, investigation notes, status/release forms); 401(k) payments, loans, and hardship state-

ments; W-4 Form; wage collections, garnishments, and any additional payroll deductions; physical examination results; drug testing results; FMLA documentation; disability leave information (e.g., short-term, long-term, permanent); sick leave documentation; emergency contact information; background check information; Direct Deposit authorization; investigative files for harassment or discrimination claims; grievance process documentation; unemployment insurance documentation; and reference check information

I-9 Forms. Though not required by federal law, it is strongly recommended that all I-9 Forms be kept away from either the employee's Personnel File or his/her Confidential File, in separate three-ring binders, one for active employees and another for inactive employees.

To preserve file integrity and minimize the potential for bias, discrimination, or grievance, it is recommended that the Personnel Files and Confidential Files for each employee be stored in separate file cabinets, or file drawers; never with both files for the same employee kept back-to-back in the same file drawer.



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Industry News

Tree Town USA Announces Rebrand

Jonathan Saperstein, CEO of TreeTown USA, announced recently that the company has rebranded and will now operate under a new name: Everde Growers. The rebrand follows nearly six years of strategic acquisitions to expand the company's footprint nationwide, with farms operating in Oregon, California, Texas, and Florida.

"We have spent several years refining our processes, combining our policies, and setting a strong foundation for the future" Saperstein stated. "Now is the time to truly bring the company together as one."

Since their purchase of TreeTown USA in 2015, Saperstein and his family have been focused on the company's strategic growth. Each of the acquisitions have shared several qualities: a positive reputation in the industry, a plant mix that adds value to the company's offering, inventory, land with a solid infrastructure, and an exceptional work force.

Everde Growers views the rebrand as an opportunity to build and fortify its relationships in the industry. "Our commitment to our customers, employees, and suppliers is stronger than ever," Saperstein stated.

"Having a single brand identity will help to streamline and improve our processes."

"The most rewarding part of bringing our company together as one has been creating best practices across the company based on rich experiences from our various backgrounds in the industry," stated David Kirby, Executive Vice President. "This year, we made great strides in creating a consistent customer experience. For example, by organizing our national customer service team, our customers across the country will now have one point of contact to access our fourteen farms, as well as access to an updated national availability list with a consistent look and feel. We know that executing the Everde Growers brand will take time, but our employees and customers will immediately see the benefit of having one brand identity."

About Everde Growers

Everde Growers is a privately-owned business headquartered in Houston, Texas, with 14 farms totaling over 6,700 production acres across Texas, Florida, Oregon, and California. The company has a coast-to-coast footprint for its broad mix of high-quality plants that includes over 5,000 unique selections. To learn more about Everde Growers, visit www.everde.com.

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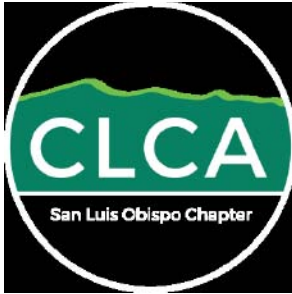


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CLCA San Luis Obispo Chapter

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Fishing Trip Ticket	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00		\$40.00
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Beautification Awards or Project Outstanding Achievement Sponsorship	\$200.00			\$200.00		
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Golf Tournament - Hole Sponsor	\$200.00		\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	
Golf Tournament - Single	\$200.00		\$400.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Golf Tournament - Foursome	\$700.00	\$700.00				
	Value:	\$2,800.00	\$2,070.00	\$1,170.00	\$930.00	\$840.00
	Discount:	-\$600.00	-\$570.00	-\$570.00	-\$480.00	-\$490.00
	Total:	\$2,200.00	\$1,500.00	\$600.00	\$450.00	\$350.00

We **MUST** receive your commitment by January 10 to put your name on the sponsor banner.

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Safety Info from CLCA Insurance Solutions

Using Small Equipment Safely

Lawn mowers, chain saws, leaf blowers, trimming equipment and grinders are all examples of small equipment used in landscaping. This equipment can cause injuries if it is not used properly. Common landscaping injuries include the following:

- Cuts, lacerations or amputations from fast-moving mower blades
- Bruises or broken bones from flying objects
- Burns from hot equipment parts
- Electrical shock from faulty grounding or defective electrical cords
- Back strain from improper equipment usage
- Slips, trips and falls

To avoid injuries when using small equipment while landscaping, follow these guidelines from OSHA and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) Alliance.

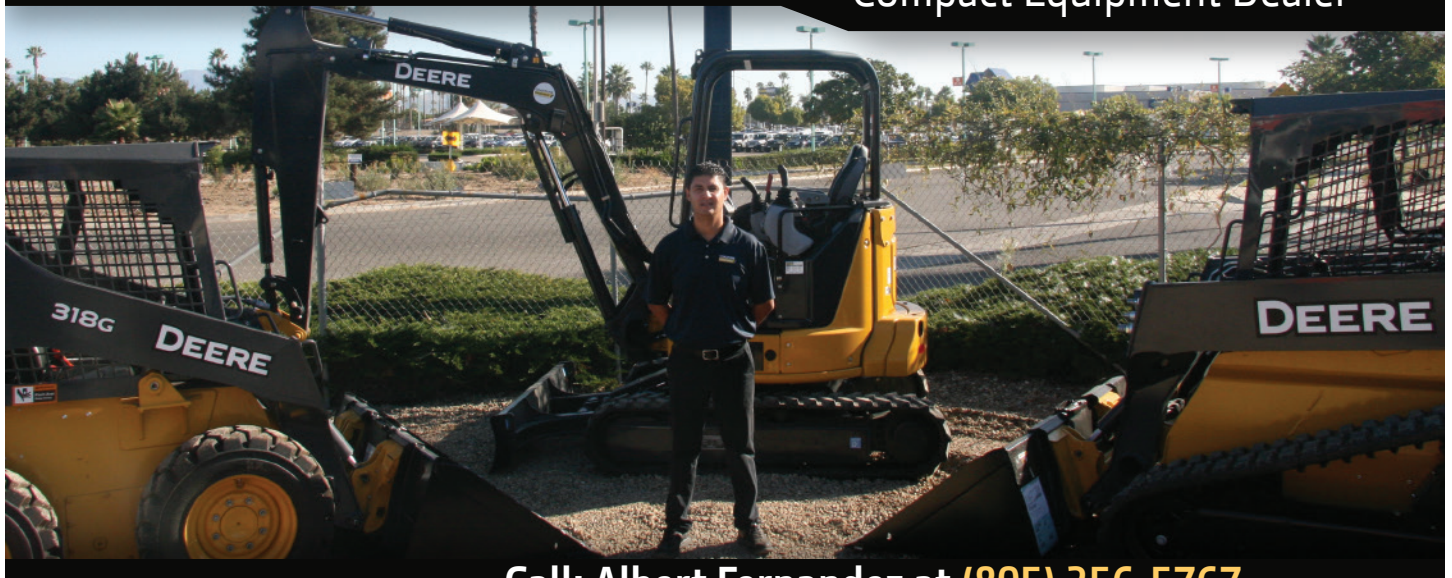
- Read and understand the operator's manual for the equipment you're using.
- If you have not been trained on a piece of equipment, do not use it! This is critical to your safety.
- Make sure all safety guards are in place and the equipment is in good working order. Do not alter or remove safety guards.

- Always wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE).
Eye and ear protection are especially important.
- Clothing should fit well and be free of dangling or ragged edges that can become tangled in controls or fast-moving parts.
- Don't use equipment when someone walks by. Aim blowers away from cars, people and houses. Flying debris can cause injuries.
- Don't operate small equipment when it's dark and you have limited visibility.
- Turn off equipment when it's not in use.
- Allow equipment to cool off before refueling.
- Never smoke when fueling a piece of equipment.
- Disconnect spark plug wires before performing maintenance.
- Keep your hands on the handles of all hedge trimmers and do not reach up into plants to clear debris until trimmers are shut off.
- Keep hands and feet away from mower chutes and blades.
- When using chain saws, make sure the chain brake works and the chain tension is correct.

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