



## Reflecting on the 2010 WAA/DNR Annual Conference as Your Vision for the Future



The 2010 Annual Conference and Trade Show has come and gone. The attendance at the conference was once again well over 500. An impressive group of speakers and events were led

by new and improved ideas. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate near the end, but a variety of learning and socializing opportunities were enjoyed by all who were able to attend.

This is that time of the year when we recognize our colleagues for their contributions to our organization and our communities. The awards program is always a daunting task. Will we receive any nominations? Will people care enough to look past their busy schedules and take the time to recognize the good that they and their friends and coworkers do? We had several nominations, including the Gold Leaf Award winners from Wachtel Tree Science, Johnson's Nursery, and Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners. Mid-State Technical College was also nominated for a Gold Leaf Award for their efforts. An Appleton couple was nominated for their foresight and generosity when working with Lawrence University. Scholarship awards were presented to two worthy candidates from a competitive group of applicants.

I would like to thank Brian Pelot, program chair, and the rest of the program committee for all of their hard work. The group put together not only a great annual conference, but outstanding events throughout the year. It takes a dedicated group of volunteers to put these events together, and to pull them off without any serious mishaps. The diversity of our organization is both a blessing and a curse, especially when trying to plan conferences that appeal to all of our members. The flow of ideas and learning opportunities we gather from each other are tremendous. The tree

in the exhibit hall was an outstanding addition to an already great learning opportunity for the climbers. The addition of the Introductory Track for the new members and for those looking for a review of some of the basics of our industry, was a welcome addition as well.

I would also like to thank the departing members of the Board of Directors. Josh DePouw completed his term as past president. His leadership and enthusiasm will be missed. Aaron Lehnert is leaving the position of certification chair, and Jeff Treu is moving on from his role as legislative chair. I would also like to welcome the new members of the Board of Directors. Nick Crawford is your new vice president and program chair, Ed Bodus returns for another two years as treasurer, and Ian Brown and Larry Axlen will be taking on the tasks of membership representatives. I am sure the transition will be a smooth one.

But the transition already finds me thinking about the future. Where will the next group of volunteers come from? Who will be the next award winners? Who will be the future of the Wisconsin Arborist Association? The answer to all of these questions is you—the members of the WAA. Your input and volunteerism helps to shape the future of our organization. If you like the direction the WAA is going, please let a member of the board of directors know, and maybe more important, let them know of changes that you would like to see and ways that you can help to enact those changes. Hopefully, you have participated in the survey that was sent out to see what the members of our organization want to see for the future. Hopefully, you attended the annual business meeting where the format was changed to a focus group session looking for ideas from members on what the future will hold for our organization. Please continue to express your opinions and have your voice heard.

I look forward to my year as president of your organization and hope to hear from you if you have any questions, concerns, thoughts or comments.

Mike Michlig, *WAA President*