

SIMA® Snow Business

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Looking back on a decade of stories, lessons and insights from the snow & ice management industry

Moose River Media

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 RICK KIER, OWNER
 PRO SCAPES INC
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 JAMESVILLE NY 13078-9620

THE BEST SHOW IN SNOW

SNOW & ICE SYMPOSIUM

SPECIAL SHOW SECTION
BEGINS ON PAGE S1

72% of our State of the Industry respondents reported less than/far less than average snow for 2005-06

Apple's iTunes store sold its 1 billionth song.

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was executed.

2006

PRO SCAPES INC.

SIMA founding member Rick Kier grows by embracing change, learning from others

Rick Kier, CSP, owner of Jamesville, NY-based Pro Scapes Inc., has been a member of SIMA since he helped found the association in 1996. In 2006, he shared his insights on how to survive the "big one" using his experiences from the blizzard of 1993, which dumped more than 40 inches of snow in a 24-hour period.

Kier says that event remains the defining storm as far as shaping how his company does business.

"More recent storms have provided many small changes that, when combined, have made a huge impact on how we do business. Every snow season teaches us something. It is up to our team to learn something from it and to make sure we adjust our practices to benefit from what we have learned."

Kier shared his blizzard plan with *Snow Business* readers, and while the essentials of the plan haven't changed, it has evolved with the company, which has doubled in size since November 2006.

"As we have grown and our operations changed to include more heavy equipment, the

plan has changed, too. The sites we service with our 30 loaders are much easier to deal with in the event of an actual blizzard."

Looking back, Kier says he's learned three key lessons:

Focus on the core business. "We had drifted off into some other related businesses, such as green roof construction [and] landscape design/build. We found that not only were these dramatically different kinds of businesses from commercial grounds care, but the energy required to learn and perform these specialized businesses was a drain and distraction from our core business."

Learn to delegate. "I can't do it all myself. I have surrounded myself with a great team and given them the tools they need. I get out of the way and let them do their thing."

Never be afraid of change. "I once heard the saying 'Every 100 years, all new people.' Change is going to happen, so why not look forward to change and stop doing everything because that's the way

we did it last year? Examine every operation, every procedure, every form you use, and see how you can make things better."

These lessons have paid off for Kier, who earned SIMA's Excellence in Business award in 2008 and 2010. Professional accolades aside, Kier says his marriage to his wife, Karen, is his crowning achievement since being featured on the cover.

"While I don't think she married me because I was on the cover, I'm sure it didn't hurt either!" he jokes. ❄️



➔ Rick Kier, CSP, is a founding member of SIMA and is a longtime member of the *Snow Business* Editorial Advisory Committee.