



BLUE PINE ENTERPRISES LTD.

Via commercial landscaping and infrastructure development, experts lay groundwork for a more beautiful British Columbia

BY JAMIE LUDWIG

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
SURREY, BC

FOUNDED:
2000

EMPLOYEES:
125

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
LANDSCAPE
CONSTRUCTION

ANNUAL PROJECTS:
1,000+

IF ONE WERE TO ASK MIKE LALONDE, PRESIDENT of Surrey, British Columbia's Blue Pine Enterprises Ltd., for the secrets to success, he would gladly share three simple rules: work hard, be honest with everyone you meet, and recruit the best employees (and treat them like gold). "Those are the keys to success for any company," he asserts.

A quick look at Blue Pine, which specializes in landscape-construction services, suggests that Lalonde has followed his own advice to the letter. Lalonde founded the company in 2000, and in just ten years, armed with an aggressive growth strategy, the company has blossomed to 125

full-time employees, a number that Lalonde expects could double or even triple in the years to come.

"Expanding is pretty easy right now—it's just buying more equipment, hiring more team members, and maintaining a good financial foundation," Lalonde says. "It's just a matter of focusing on some defined principles and the growth strategy."

Blue Pine Enterprises currently takes on more than 1,000 projects a year. Along with landscape-construction services, its specialties include fencing, erosion control,

irrigation, snow clearing and salting, demolition, land clearing, and more.

Its projects reflect a wide variety of the company's capabilities, but no matter what the task, one thing remains the same: "We always want to give the best service we can," Lalonde says.

Blue Pine's range of services, large staff, and flexibility means that along with its regularly scheduled work, it often is able to fill in the gaps for construction projects when other contractors have conflicts. "Typically, we can get there very fast," Lalonde says. "We try to make sure that we are there the next day. A lot of times for construction scheduling, that's the most important thing. We have an unspoken promise of superior service to all of our customers."

The bulk of Blue Pine's projects are split fifty-fifty between private commercial development and government or infrastructure work, with a tiny percentage going toward residential services. The price tag for most projects is in the range of \$10,000 to \$500,000, but a few—the landscaping work for the new Walmart in South Surrey or the extensive landscape work for the No. 3 Road in Richmond, BC—can reach \$1–4 million.

No matter the size of the project, every Blue Pine client always can expect top-notch results, due to the company's commitment to sourcing the best employees for the job. "All of our people are very skilled and specialized in what we do," Lalonde says. "We're a diverse company with crews who specialize in their respective fields. A lot of people we've hired come in with the skills, and there is also a lot of on-the-job training. There is lateral movement in the company if people want to get involved."

Given the extensive market in British Columbia, Lalonde is certain that his company will continue to thrive despite the recent economic problems. "The market has taken a bit of a downturn, but there is still a lot of work out there," he says. "There is a lot of room to expand in our local area. The sales we do in the area only represent 2–3 percent of the opportunities. Even if the market slows down, there is a lot of room to expand."

Beyond business matters, Lalonde, who began working in the landscaping industry while in high school, still finds personal satisfaction in his work. "It's always exciting, [there's] always a new challenge, and it's outside," he says. "I could never be stuck behind a desk all day." The future is bright. "We're surrounded by an ever-changing market and industry, with new products, new clients, and new challenges every day," he says. "We're also surrounded by a lot of great people in the construction world—in one of the best places to live." **CBQ**

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—Mike LaLonde, President

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Blue Pine installed a mix of hard and soft landscaping to create a peaceful courtyard for the residents of Laurel Place Care Facility in Surrey, BC.



A MESSAGE FROM PACIFICA NURSERIES

With operations in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, the owner spends most of his time on the road, hand-picking and securing plant material of the highest quality. Not only are we on the road collecting shrubs, we have keen and educated staff selecting specimen and caliper street trees to suit the highest of city standards. We're your grower, your buyer, and shipper. From our yard to your site, we are sure to have a competitive edge to suit any budget.