Sebert Landscaping Company
Student Intern Program
Creating greener environments and opportunities

Who Is Sebert?
Sebert Landscaping is an award-winning commercial contractor that has managed corporate properties throughout the Chicago area since 1985. Through conscientious maintenance, construction, and snow removal, we build long-standing relationships that make us a valued landscape partner.

Why Sebert?
At Sebert, we always work toward making our organization more environmentally responsible. One way we live out that commitment is by building green. Along with helping us “walk our green talk,” it enables us to provide a healthier and comfortable work environment for our employees.

Sebert Landscaping prides itself in offering unlimited opportunities to qualified students to learn how a full-service landscape management company operates. The goal of our 8-week Internship Program is to provide students with a structured, goal oriented, hands-on experience.

Internship Program Benefits:
- Professional work environment; people ready to help you learn the business
- Competitive compensation
- Fabulous Chicago Land Area work environment

Submit Resume to Adriana Mrizek.
HR Manager Sebert Landscaping
adriana@sebert.com
Grace Nursery

Sebert Landscaping owns and operates Grace Nursery, a 75-acre nursery outside of Marengo, Illinois, that grows quality trees and shrubs exclusively for our customers. Sound horticultural practices enable us to offer extended warranties that exceed industry standards. Our locally grown trees and shrubs are shipped directly from our nursery to your property and are guaranteed to exceed your expectations.

Grace Nursery is a horticultural incubator of sorts. In 2011, Sebert launched the Grace Nursery Scholarship Program to annually provide a full scholarship for an associate's degree in horticulture to an outstanding high school graduate with a passion for plants and the green industry.

Visitors to Grace Nursery might be surprised to see a small herd of American bison that graze the open, grassy areas there. Sebert is raising them as part of an effort to save this part of North American culture and natural history from extinction.

How Can We Serve You?

We welcome the opportunity to learn more about how Sebert Landscaping can be of service to you. How can we help to make your environment greener?
Sebert Landscaping is an award-winning commercial contractor that has managed corporate properties throughout the Chicago area since 1985. Through conscientious maintenance, construction, and snow removal, we build long-standing relationships that make us a valued landscape partner.

In 25+ years of operation, one guiding principle has crystallized as our core. It is lean management, an approach typically associated with streamlining manufacturing that involves carefully using resources to minimize waste. Sebert Landscaping is committed to practicing lean management strategies to achieve operational efficiencies that maximize value for our clients while supporting greener environments.

That also means we make extra effort to be environmentally responsible. We continually pursue more ways to green our company to benefit our clients, employees and communities. Your landscape is part of your corporate image. Sebert Landscaping is here to help you ensure that it always looks its best. In doing so, we continually strive to find ways to make our operations greener – and leaner.

Efficiency in Practice

Our time-keeping system is an example of our commitment to increasing efficiencies and reducing waste. It is a paperless, mobile production tracking system that uses barcodes and pocket-sized scanners to streamline the collection and flow of field information.

Similarly, with all of our trucks GPS-equipped, we can create the most efficient routes, which conserve fuel, and we can immediately locate crews anytime throughout the day.

"Your installation at The Landings apartment complex turned out great! Your team worked well in a situation that was less than ideal. And we are pleased with the results."

~Denise Petite, CB RE Group, Inc.

Reducing Costs and Environmental Impact

By adopting irrigation techniques that conserve water, relying on locally sourced materials, using propane mowers and battery-powered equipment charged by our solar trailer, and using other accompanied measures, we reduce costs and our environmental impact.

Our award-winning corporate headquarters, on track to be certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold by the US Green Building Council, demonstrates our ideals.

By example, we aim to inspire others in the green industry to commit to greening their operations too.

A Greener Alternative

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A Leaner Choice

Landscape Management

Maintenance is the foundation of what we do at Sebert. We enhance the beauty of your property and, through a number of green alternatives, can reduce your management costs. Whether a more eco-friendly lawn care program, more sustainable approach to seasonal color or other alternative to conventional landscape management, we consider the unique challenges of your property and work with you to develop the best plan for it.

Our lean-management approach ensures that we meet your landscape management needs in a timely manner and on budget.

Landscape Construction

Looking for landscape experience? Look no further than Sebert. We have completed over $100 million of construction work, including rooftop gardens on Chicago’s Magnificent Mile, animal habitats at Lincoln Park Zoo, and landscapes for a variety of buildings throughout the Chicago area, many of which are built to the US Green Building Council’s LEED standards. Among them are a Kraft Foods LEED-certified building and Sebert’s own corporate office.

As we continue to green our own facilities and operations, we seek to contribute to the sustainable qualities of more LEED-certified facilities through conscientious landscape construction.

Snow & Ice Removal

When you have snow and ice on your property, you want it removed – now. Sebert mobilizes before a storm hits to promptly provide a clean, safe environment for everyone who works at and visits your property and facility.

As with other Sebert operations, we manage snow-removal crew time, equipment and materials using our lean strategies for maximum efficiency and value. We use de-icing materials only as necessary, applying them at the right time and in the right amounts – always seeking to use the lowest-impact materials.

“We have been bouncing between vendors for a long time to get what Sebert is delivering. Working with you is quite an improvement.”

~Bryan Thomas, Heritage of Huntley
environment

noun
• the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates.

Our Green Building

At Sebert, we always work toward making our organization more environmentally responsible. One way we live out that commitment is by building green. Along with helping us “walk our green talk,” it enables us to provide a more healthy and comfortable work environment for our employees. These benefits translate into improved service for you.

Our 14,000-square-foot, Prairie Style-inspired corporate office, completed in 2010 along with our new 15,000-square-foot garage, is not only on track to be LEED certified, its eco-friendly landscaping has also been recognized with a Gold Excellence in Landscape Award from the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association.

Thanks to a variety of energy-saving measures, the electricity and natural gas consumption of our corporate office and garage is on par with that of the roughly 7,000 square feet of space we occupied before.
The Right Choice for the Environment

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Jeff Sebert, president of Sebert Landscaping, doesn’t hesitate to point out that the green industry has a long way to go to live up to its name. And he has no qualms about saying that it will be awhile before his own company, which he founded in 1985, is as green as he’d like it to be. So when the company outgrew the modular units that served as its headquarters and the pole barn that served as its shop, he decided to build green on the seven acres the company owns in Bartlett.

“In the process of greening our business, the building of our headquarters was one place we could start,” he says. “Who better than those of us in the green industry to make this sort of commitment?” As well as “doing the right thing,” Sebert viewed building green as something he could do to provide a more healthy and comfortable work environment for employees.

The result is a 14,000-square-foot, Prairie Style-inspired corporate office that is on track to be certified LEED gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the U.S. Green Building Council. It is accompanied by a 15,000-square-foot shop that maintains the company’s fleet, which includes vehicles based at the Bartlett office and four branch locations.
A few facility highlights include:

- **Reclaimed wood**: Logs retrieved from the bottom of Lake Superior – remnants of the 19th century Great Lakes logging industry – provided lumber for wood paneling, doors, a conference table, counters and other features throughout the building.

- **Solar panels**: Solar panels on the shop roof generate about a third of the electricity used by the adjacent headquarters building. Thanks to nearly $200,000 in a federal grant, and state and federal tax incentives, the payback on Sebert’s investment in the panels will be roughly five years.

- **Overhead radiant tubing**: Natural gas overhead radiant tubes in the shop efficiently direct heat to where mechanics are working, eliminating the need to heat the entire building. And in the dead of winter, when snow- and ice-caked vehicles pull into the shop, mechanics can more quickly begin work on them.

In the building for a year now, Sebert Landscaping has already realized significant savings. Jeff Sebert ticks off some examples:

- Over the first nine months of operation, electricity consumption of the new headquarters and shop buildings, totaling 29,000 square feet, is comparable to that of the roughly 7,000 square feet of space the company had before.

- Likewise with natural gas consumption: Current consumption is roughly equal to what it was when the headquarters and shop consisted of less than a quarter of the square footage they now occupy.

**Eco experiments**

The landscape on the site has a number of eco-friendly features, too. Sebert saw developing the site as both an opportunity to demonstrate green landscape approaches to clients and a chance to experiment. “It was somewhere for us to do some trial and error,” he says.

**From dry creek to water feature**

One example is the water feature. Originally designed to be a dry creek that would direct rainwater from the headquarters and shop downspouts into a detention pond, Sebert decided to turn it into a stepped water feature instead. St. Charles-based Aquascape served as a consultant, while Sebert crews did the installation. “It was a major learning process,” he says.

The challenge was to prevent storm water from instantly flowing out of the water feature, which holds more than 5,000 gallons, into the detention pond. Aquascape designed a well (continued on page 28)
Sustainable Initiatives

(continued from page 27) beneath the water feature that helps manage the outflow and prevents the structure from drying out and ruining the pump system.

The 70 tons of stone outcropping used for the embankment is hyper local, sourced within 10 miles. The supplier was Lafarge Fox River Stone in Elgin, which had harvested the stone from a Fox River creek bed on its property.

Once water is in the detention pond, it can be reused on site via the irrigation system Sebert installed. And crews can draw water from the pond and take it off-site to water client properties.

Other storm water management features at the facility are a 9,000-square-foot permeable paver parking lot, a 6,500-square-foot green roof, and extensive use of native species throughout the site.

Insulating green roof

Sebert installed a LiveRoof system, using four-inch trays of allium and sedum, and six-inch trays of grasses, which together detain roughly 1,500 gallons of water in a one-inch rainfall. One of the advantages of the LiveRoof system, says Sebert, is the instant color and texture. The trays sit on a four-inch layer of soil and a two-inch layer of Styrofoam, an insulating factor that he credits in part for the building’s reduced heating and cooling needs.

Wood decking on the roof is reclaimed wood, and a pergola helps the green roof double as an outdoor social space.

A $50,000 grant made possible by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, helped make the green roof possible.

(above) The building’s front parking lot consists of 9,000 square feet of permeable pavers. A patio and catwalk feature another 2,500 square feet of permeable pavers.

A raised bed made of reclaimed wood offers seating on the green roof, and a pergola provides a sense of enclosure. In the distance, solar panels on the shop roof for roughly a third of the electricity used by the headquarters building.
Green building tips

Four years after the inspiration to build green, Sebert has some tips for others considering taking the plunge:

- Get employee input: As part of its lean process management, Sebert regularly involves employees in problem-solving for a variety of business concerns. Early in the facility planning, the company held a full-day session to consult managers in determining space and layout needs to achieve the best building functionality.

- Prepare to educate: It is possible that your municipality may be unfamiliar with green building practices. That means part of your role in the review and approval process will be to educate reviewers.

- Hire an owner’s representative: As a liaison between you, your general contractor and the municipality, an owner’s rep can buffer you from some of the frontline activity, while keeping the project on track.

- Choose your experts carefully: Invest in a good architect and be sure to use a general contractor experienced with green building.

- Finalize plans before seeking approval: Be 100 percent clear about your building plan before you seek review by the municipality. Changes, even those you think won’t impact the approval process, will slow it down.

- Always expect the unexpected. As with most undertakings, building green is a learning process. But when all the pieces fall into place and the dust has settled, it’s one more tangible step toward walking the green talk.
Sustainable Initiatives

Solar Trailer –
Green Building of the Mobile Sort

While Sebert is using its new corporate office to experiment with and demonstrate various eco-friendly landscape features, building a prototype solar trailer is a step the company is taking toward greening its field operations. Along with propane mowers, which it is testing with intent to incorporate companywide, Sebert is also exploring the use of battery-powered handheld equipment.

Thus the company’s first solar trailer, which it recently built. Solar film covers the roof of the structure. A converter box sends the power to a row of battery chargers.

“This wasn’t the type of thing we could just go out and buy,” says Jeff Sebert, president. “So we built it here.

“We’ve been wanting to do this for awhile. But we’ve had to wait for the solar film to become available for this type of application.”

It’s all part of Sebert’s research process. “We don’t know, for instance, how long the battery-powered equipment will last,” says Sebert. “How will it hold up? What’s the life of the charge? So that’s the research we need to do.”

Sebert is working closely with STIHL, whose battery-powered equipment the company is using, to provide feedback on performance.

“If I can curb, say, $3,000 in fuel use per crew per year, and you multiply that by 70 or so crews, that’s some serious savings – both in dollars and emissions,” says Sebert. The payback could be as little as a few years.”

Sebert consulted with Bartlett Tree Experts to preserve this century-old bur oak, especially a concern due to the significant grade change.