



# GEORGIA CEMETERY ADVISOR

GCA's e-newsletter



## President's Message

Sign up for the Workshop Wednesday Webinar!

Learn what it takes to **GO DIGITAL** with our latest online webinar, *Workshop Wednesday*, in October. Read page 2 to find out how to seize this opportunity. Thank you for your membership!

Nick Startup  
*President*

### UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES



"GO DIGITAL"  
ONLINE WORKSHOP



ADMIN &  
COMPLIANCE  
SEMINAR



ANNUAL  
CONVENTION  
ATLANTA

1

PRESIDENT'S  
MESSAGE

GO DIGITAL ONLINE  
WORKSHOP

2

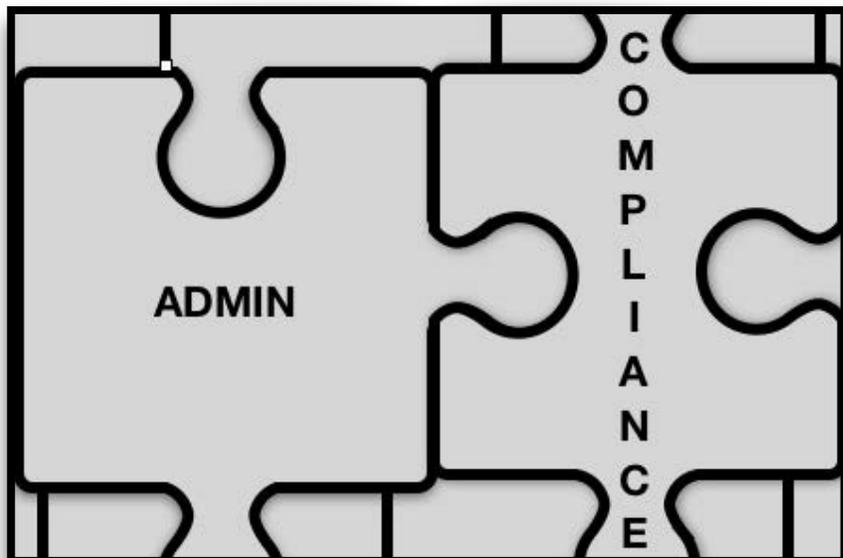
WHAT'S NEXT

ADMIN &  
COMPLIANCE  
SEMINAR

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ARTICLE

ROBOT MOWING  
G.O.A.T.



## Is your business missing a piece of the puzzle?

Join us **November 20, 2019** to learn what it takes to elevate your business practices to ensure you are protected from costly mistakes.

Watch your e-mail for more information on registration options and location of the Admin & Compliance Seminar presented by the Georgia Cemetery Association.

### ADMIN & COMPLIANCE SEMINAR

WEDNESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 20, 2019

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

#### WORKSHOP WEDNESDAYS - GO DIGITAL! CHOOSE YOUR DATE OCTOBER 23 OR OCTOBER 30

Your files are getting older, harder to read, and you have to drive to your cemetery anytime someone calls to check their arrangements. NOT ANYMORE! Register now to join the GCA for the **GO DIGITAL** workshop to learn how to preserve your files, make more efficient sales, and create digital documents that will take stress off of you and your staff.

Choose the date you wish to join our 2 hour Video Workshop:

Wednesday October 23rd **OR** Wednesday October 30th

We are going to *roll up our sleeves* and *get to work* learning how to streamline clerical processes and give you instant access to your records wherever you are. Included in the registration for this workshop will be a PDF Guidebook with step by step information on how to **GO DIGITAL**. Don't miss out on this opportunity!



Watch your e-mail for more information and registration options or e-mail [info@gacemeteries.com](mailto:info@gacemeteries.com)



## NASHVILLE ROBOT MOWING COMPANY HOPES TO BE THE G.O.A.T. OF LAWN-CARE TECH

By Alex Soderstrom Nashville Business Journal

[www.mygoat.co](http://www.mygoat.co)

On a quiet morning at Nashville's Harpeth Hills cemetery, you can witness a robot silently gliding across the grass around the headstones.

No, the robot takeover isn't here (yet). It's simply one of the machines used by Nashville-based company My Goat to trim lawns with more efficiency and less human labor. The company was founded by Neil Amrhein in 2018 and is gaining traction as an alternative to traditional lawnmowers for both businesses and residents.

In less than a year, My Goat has grown to four states using its subscription-based model, which allows clients to utilize the ease of robot-based mowing without having to worry about the nuts and bolts of the machine. At the same time, Amrhein said, the company is filling a void left by a labor shortage currently seen in the landscaping industry.

One My Goat mower, which are called "goats," can run for six hours on a one-hour electric charge. The mowers are able to steer themselves back to their charging station and recharge. Once My Goat employees, known as "herders," outline the mowing area with wires (naturally, this is called the "goat pen"), the machine can cut on its own until the job is done.

A single goat can handle between 1,800 and 2,000 square feet of grass an hour, Amrhein said.

My Goat employees can control the machines with an app, which allows them to change the blade height and monitor the mower's path.

Kevin Armistead, vice president of cemetery operations for Harpeth Hills, said the cemetery started its MyGoat subscription relatively recently, but already likes what he sees. In a cemetery, it is vital to keep grass well-maintained while limiting noise, emissions and dust. Traditional mowers create all of these nuisances, but the small, electric robot mower does not. Armistead said the My Goat mower can run while people are gathering at the cemetery's pavilion after a funeral and not disturb anyone.

Other My Goat clients include homeowners associations and golf courses, as well as private homeowners. The company also operates a business-to-business model, lending the services of the goats to other landscaping companies. Pricing for a subscription is custom to each client.

Amrhein said My Goat is first and foremost a technology company, not a landscaping company. The company does not manufacture the robots, but it offers expertise on how to set up and use them. The services don't necessarily compete with landscapers, Amrhein said. Instead, his company takes care of the mowing duties in a labor-strapped industry, enabling landscapers to focus more on the beautification aspects of their work.

The service expands past traditional work hours since the machine can operate at night and in the rain. Multiple golf course managers who subscribe to My Goat have utilized this benefit to keep their courses open longer, Amrhein said, not dependent on daylight hours to manicure their grass.

My Goat's greatest challenge is educating consumers, Amrhein said. Most are trying an automated mower for the first time. Additional concerns include run-ins with moles and mice while implanting wires and finding a plugin for the chargers.

Amrhein said he hopes to be operating in at least six states in the coming weeks.

CONTINUE READING PAGES 4-5 FOR AN UPDATE FROM SEAY MANAGEMENT



The Department of Labor has announced a final rule updating salary thresholds for exempt employees. The current minimum exempt salary, which has not changed in 15 years, is \$455 weekly. The new guaranteed salary level for an employee to be considered exempt from overtime is \$684 per week not subject to deduction. Employers may apply a portion of certain bonuses/commissions toward this total.

Some may recall that in 2016, employers braced themselves for a change in the exempt salary level. The 2016 change more than doubled the guaranteed weekly salary threshold. When that final rule was invalidated by the courts, the Department of Labor went back to the drawing board for the process of a proposed change offering listening sessions to obtain public input.

**When Does This Change Become Effective?** January 1, 2020

#### **What Will Be The Effect Of This Change?**

- Exempt employees earning less than \$684 per week will become non-exempt and must begin to keep a time record and receive overtime for all hours worked in excess of 40 per week.
- There will be no change to the duties test for classifying an employee as exempt.
- There will be an increase in the total annual compensation level for highly compensated employees (HCEs) from the currently-enforced level of \$100,000 to \$107,432 per year.
- Employers are permitted to use “nondiscretionary” bonuses and incentive payments (including commissions) that are paid at least annually to satisfy up to 10 percent of the standard salary level, in recognition of evolving pay practices.
- There will be special salary levels set for workers in U.S. territories and in the Motion Picture Industry.

#### **White Collar Exemptions**

Wage and Hour regulations identify five white collar exemptions. Employees who meet these qualifications are exempt from time keeping, minimum wage, and overtime.

- Executive – Employees who perform management responsibilities that involve supervision of other employees.
- Administrative – Employees who perform management responsibilities that may not involve supervision but do involve the management of assets or a specific management function.
- Professional – Employees who are generally regarded as professional in that they possess extended learning or a specialized degree, such as Physicians, Registered Nurses, and Certified General Engineers.
- Outside Sales – Employees who are engaged in sales activity outside of the workplace.
- Technical – Certain employees who have a degree in Information Technology or Management Information Services.

### What Should We Do Now?

This change is going to be effective in approximately three months so here are some things you can do to prepare.

- Review the current salary levels of your exempt employees to determine if they are under or close to the \$684 per week salary level. On the effective enforcement date, these employees will need to either (a) keep an accurate record of all hours worked and be paid overtime, (b) be held to under 40 hours per week or (c) have their salaries raised to the new guaranteed salary level of \$684 per week (\$35,568 annually).
- Review and restructure pay plans for exempt employees paid by a salary plus commission pay plan, such as automobile dealers and pest management companies. Pay plans must guarantee that these employees receive at least \$684 per week. There are provisions regarding catch up payments in a 52 week period.
- Review the status of your exempt employees to make sure they meet the current Department of Labor requirements,
- Make sure that you have written job descriptions supporting the exemption and that identify the position as exempt or non-exempt.
- Be prepared to revise your exempt/non-exempt policy in your employee handbook, so that it meets the new requirements.

More information about the final rule is available at [www.dol.gov/whd/overtime2019/](http://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime2019/).

Please contact your Seay Management consultant if you have any questions about the exempt/non-exempt regulations, or if you have any other question about Human Resources Management.



**CONTACT US TODAY**  
Toll Free: 888-245-6272  
Email: [admin@seay.us](mailto:admin@seay.us)

It is our goal to:

- Help ensure that your business is in compliance with all of the state and federal employment regulations and guidelines which affect your company and your employees;
- Help eliminate your financial exposure in these areas; and
- Develop the policies and systems which will help you employ and maintain a satisfied, happy and productive work force.

Seay Management provides Human Resources Management and Labor Relations consulting services. Seay Management does not provide legal advice and does not engage in the practice of law. If you need an attorney, we'll be glad to recommend one to you.