



GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

SMALL LANDSCAPE COMPANY MAKES BIG MOVE

Growing up on a farm in northeast Nebraska, Matt Wilke gained mechanical aptitude and familiarity with earthmoving by helping his dad work the land and keeping the equipment and machinery running. After graduating from Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Neb., he began his career in the construction industry, initially working for Nebraska Machinery Co. (NMC), and then eventually continuing on the same path when he joined the team at Bygland Dirt Contracting.

From there, Wilke spent 15 valuable years with Kiewit Corporation managing construction jobsites on the West Coast and in the Midwest. A runway and creek realignment project at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago is just one of many large-scale construction sites Matt was in charge of.

In 2008, Wilke made the decision to start a landscaping company in the northwest suburbs of Chicago utilizing

the knowledge and equipment he had accumulated over the years.

"I basically took all the years of training and experience I gained and put it to use for myself," he said.

His business, originally called All Seasons Property Maintenance (ASPM), took off from there and Wilke has never looked back. Eventually, life brought him back to Nebraska in 2012. Wilke initially questioned whether the Norfolk area could support the type of business he wanted to build, but his business grew quickly based on word-of-mouth referrals and a strong social media presence.

In 2018, Wilke decided that ASPM had outgrown its space and began an expansion on a 5.5-acre property in a highly visible location, constructing an 8,000 square-foot building for office space and equipment storage. This was also the perfect time to rebrand the business as

ASPM Landscapes, the focus was shifting away from property maintenance and more toward the construction side of the landscaping industry.

“Once we made those business moves, it took us to another level,” Wilke said. He also credits the rapid growth and success to the hard work and dedication of his employees, as well as to the hard work and support of his wife, Robin. He knows how important it is to take care of his employees and equipment to keep the business running smoothly.

“We’ve been able to do so much more,” Wilke says. “We purchased more equipment and bought another 40 acres across the road to stockpile topsoil, aggregate and other materials.”

Today, ASPM handles a wide variety of landscaping projects, including residential design-build, hardscapes, and grading and seeding. However, the majority of its work is centered on commercial projects. “We primarily handle big commercial jobs,” Wilke says. “We do a lot of finish-grade and hydro-seeding for large-scale erosion control projects in our area.”

In addition to the landscaping side of the business, ASPM’s snow and ice management operation utilizes an entire fleet of Cat® wheel loaders.

“We started out using just the Compact Wheel Loaders, then we began migrating to Medium Wheel Loaders—our largest right now being the 950,” Wilke says. “We actually use the machines all year long. We like the speed and the efficiency for handling snow and the landscape materials, and also for just loading and unloading trucks. The Compact Wheel Loaders are great for handling trees and heavy hardscape materials. Also, if our crews need to move aggregate or dirt around a jobsite, these are really fast load-and-carry machines.

“There’s no way anyone can match the parts and service support from Caterpillar and a Cat dealer. I’ve seen it from coast to coast, and they can’t be beat. They keep us running and doing what we need to do, and that’s moving dirt and other materials and making money.”



— MATT WILKE, OWNER
ASPM LANDSCAPES



“Attachments for us are like an addiction—if there’s an attachment, I think we probably have it,” Wilke adds. “I’m a big believer in not looking behind me. I like everything out in front. We’re more efficient and it’s much safer when we run that way.”

The technical advantage

Wilke continually taps into the latest technologies to help his business thrive.

ASPM utilizes 3D landscape design software that enables customers to see their personal design features come to life prior to construction.

“Clients can expect to work directly with our design staff and installation crews receiving straight-forward communication throughout the entire process,” Wilke says

All ASPM trucks and equipment have GPS installed in them, enabling Wilke to monitor and record progress as the vehicles move from one jobsite to the next. They have a Cat 306 Mini Excavator equipped with 2D grading for digging and grading, and a D5 Dozer that is equipped with 3D grade control.

“We started by adding 2D to the 306 with a rotator, and then we put the automatics on it—it just totally changes the way we do things,” Wilke says. “We can make a lot of things happen fast with it, such as backfilling curbs. As fast as the side dumps can feed it to us, we can put it in place.

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ASPM LANDSCAPES

Owner: Matt Wilke

Location: Norfolk, Neb.

Employees: 20

Cat® equipment: 259D and 299D3 XE Compact Track Loaders, 306 Mini Excavator, 320DL and 330 Hydraulic Excavators, D5K2 LGP Dozer, Compact Wheel Loaders: 906M, 908M, 908H2, 914K, 914M; Medium Wheel Loaders: 926M, 938K (2), 950K.

“We’ve done a bunch of granular subbase installations before concrete is poured. We set up the laser and the 2D works really well when we’re working inside of buildings and can’t get a satellite connection.

“The landscaping industry has evolved, and if you don’t evolve with it, you’re going to be left behind,” Wilke says. “While we have top-notch people at ASPM, we run pretty lean. With the help of technology, we can still be efficient.”

Top-notch dealer support

ASPM is covered by product support agreements (CVAs) on its machines, and receives notifications from its Cat dealer, NMC, when a machine is due for scheduled maintenance.

“If I have a wheel loader that’s close to requiring service, it will show up on Cat Product Link™, and they’ll call me to get it scheduled,” Wilke says. “That works really well because it’s another

set of eyes paying attention to our equipment’s service intervals.”

During his time at Kiewit, Wilke worked with various brands of equipment. That experience taught him that he prefers the type of support that Caterpillar and Cat dealers provide.

“I like taking my machines to the NMC branch here in Norfolk—they have really sharp technicians in shop and field service,” Wilke says. “As far as machine knowledge, when you have a problem with something, they can think outside the box. With the resources that Caterpillar has, they’re able to extend it to the dealerships—and it’s superior to the competition.”

Wilke adds that since returning to Nebraska, much of the reason he continues to do business with Caterpillar is because of his relationship with Ryan Craven, Director of BCP Sales at the Omaha NMC branch.

“He knows what I need and is always on the ball when it comes to finding me the right equipment at the right time,” Wilke says. “I’ve seen it from coast to coast, and it would be pretty hard to beat the Caterpillar sales, parts, and service support. They keep us running and doing what we need to do, which is moving dirt and other materials, and making money.” **OTJ**

