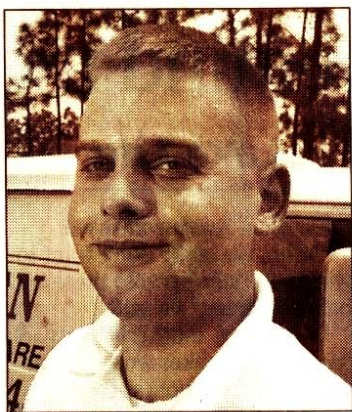
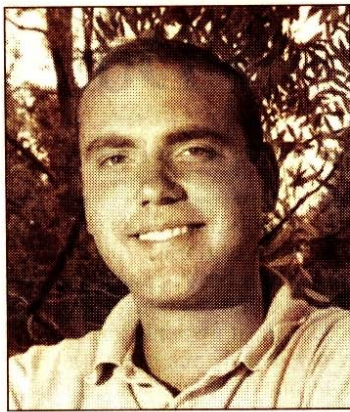


NEIGHBORS



TRACY GLANTZ/THE STATE

Mark Gill started working at Spring-Green at 17.



THE STATE

Robbie Stubbs, 23, owns the Lexington County franchise.

Young entrepreneurs work hard for success

Long hours, courage and determination paying off for businessmen

By MAURICE THOMAS
Staff Writer

Mark Gill and Robbie Stubbs don't consider the fact they own franchises of Spring-Green lawn care in Richland and Lexington counties extraordinary.

Although Gill has owned his franchise since he was 23 and Stubbs since 21, they don't brag.

Being involved in business is nothing new for Gill, now 26, who owns the franchise in Richland County off Two Notch Road.

His family owns a business, Gill & Associates, that was once run by his father and now is operated by his brother.

"I've always been around the small business atmosphere," Gill said.

Stubbs, 23, who owns the Lexington County franchise on Dreher Shoals Road in Irmo, has known Gill since middle school. They were schoolmates at Spring Valley High.

Stubbs had been working part time for Gill during the day and at Mack Truck in Winnsboro at night.

After he learned more about the business, he purchased the Lexington County franchise.

"I was actually 21 when I bought it," Stubbs said. "I was the

all-time youngest, and they were hesitant about selling it."

But he has since won several awards from the company, including Franchise Rookie of the Year, and has among the highest sales percentages for other franchises his size.

His business has tripled in two years. He employs one part-time and one full-time employee, Stubbs said.

Stubbs' area includes Lake Murray, Irmo, West Columbia and surrounding towns.

Stubbs said owning his own business has taken a lot of courage and determination to succeed. He took a chance and put up everything he owned.

"It was do or die, make it or break it," Stubbs said.

Stubbs said he has worked 12 hours a day since January. "Since I don't have a family, not married and no children, I can dedicate all my time to it."

While Gill showed Stubbs the ropes and his family has been supportive, Stubbs said it has been up to him to carry out his business.

"It's been on me," he said. "Hard work, dedication and research exploring different products."

But the main advice Stubbs would pass on:

"If you're not giving 110 percent, don't even try it. You have to give it all before you go into it."

Contact Mark Gill at (803) 256-2444 or Robbie Stubbs at (803) 407-7000.

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