

Lawn biz sprouts in native soil

March 15, 2011 by Amy David



A Richmond native has returned to his hometown to open a lawn care franchise.

Alex Abbott opened the first **Spring Green Lawn Care** franchise in Richmond in January.

After spending 11 years in the Outer Banks, working in his family's home repair business and managing a small lawn maintenance business on the side, Abbott decided to branch out on his own.

"I knew some others that did this side of it, and it seemed more interesting," said

Abbott, 33.

Spring Green is a lawn and tree care service franchise that started in Plainfield, Ill., in 1977 and has grown to 120 franchises in 26 states.

There are three other Spring Care franchises in Virginia, one each in Newport News, Madison Heights, and Centreville.

"People look at this kind of thing for their yards; it's kind of why I wanted to do the franchise," Abbott said.

Abbott and his wife have been back in Richmond for two months but started throwing the idea around a year ago, when his business began to take a hit.

"In the Outer Banks, it's harder to make a living. Things were up and down with the economy," said Abbott.

"It was time to move back home. I had more contacts here."

Abbott started looking into different franchises last March to get an idea of what kind of business he wanted to go into and where he should open one.

"We looked at an ice cream shop and sub shop, but those are more complicated. It's hit or miss with those, and I ended up liking this better."

Abbott said business is starting to take off.

"It's building up," he said. "It's coming in slowly but surely."

For now, it's just Abbott taking on a couple of lawns a day with his wife handling the finances, but he plans to add employees as business grows.

"I'm still learning the business and lawn care side, but next year I'm hoping to bring on a partner," he said.

Abbott has invested \$50,000 into the business and expects to grow it to 200 customers within the year.

"It's starting to come in now. I'm excited."