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By Tammy Adams

Rhonda James, president and owner of James Landscaping, Inc., is having a good year—a very good year. Her business has increased by nearly 50 percent in the last 6 months and she is expecting her first child this fall.

Bringing Gina Broussard on board about a year ago has turned out to be a good move for James Landscaping, Inc. A former corporate executive, Broussard has a 4-year-old son and enjoys the flexibility that her new career allows. She is also working on her MBA. The two women, already friends, make a superb team. Broussard's business sense coupled with James' passion for plants and an astonishing eye for detail, make this strong company even stronger.

And now, with increased business and revenue, James Landscaping, Inc. has been able to bring a third partner on board, Cassie Cole. As Director of Design and Information Technology, Cole brings strong architecture, design and computer-aided drafting skills to the table. "I've worked for Rhonda part-time for three years and she has really taught me the business from the ground up," Cole said from the Southlake-based office.

James Landscaping, Inc., now in its 13th year, is a multi-faceted business with an impeccable reputation for excellence of service and beauty of product. The primary focus for the hotter months of summer is on the installation of patios, landscape lighting, sprinkler systems, natural water features, and landscape design.

"Fall is the ideal planting time," said James. "Temperatures are usually mild and we typically get a lot of rain. This allows the plants to establish and the root system to grow even through the winter. Then in the spring, it has a head start on becoming well established before it has to deal with the Texas summer heat." In order to plant in the fall, James recommends that the design process begin in the summer.

One of James Landscaping, Inc.'s strengths is irrigation design and installation. Anyone who has had to hand water a lawn during a North Texas summer can appreciate the convenience of a sprinkler system. "Being the hottest time of year, now is really the best time to put in or modify an existing sprinkler system," said James. "And, it's much more efficient than hand watering because you can set it to come on at 4 a.m. when there is less wind and evaporation."

And a well-designed sprinkler system virtually eliminates wasted water. James Landscaping, Inc. designers and installers make sure that each sprinkler head in a system sprays only in the desired area with little excess spray on sidewalks, driveways or porches.

Many new homes come with a sprinkler system that was installed by the builder, Cole explained. But when homeowners put in additional landscaping down the road, the existing sprinkler system often needs some modification to allow for even water distribution to



matured or new landscape areas.

One of the most exciting things they install is a natural water feature with complete ecosystems. They can be designed for practically any area whether small or grand. Ponds, streams, waterfalls, bogs, plants and Koi are elements, which can be included in your special waterscape.

Landscape lighting is another area of expertise at James Landscaping, Inc. "It really allows you to enjoy your outdoor living areas even into the night," James said. "And it adds safety to your home as well," Cole added.

The type of lighting James Landscaping, Inc. installs is not even comparable to what homeowners can buy at a mega-store and install themselves. "What we use is a high quality professional grade fixture with a stainless steel transformer that works for years," James said.

Patio and deck design and installation is an area where James Landscaping, Inc. is seeing more and more business this summer. And they treat the design and installation of these outdoor living areas with no less integrity than any other aspect in their business.

"One of the most fantastic patios we do is the flagstone on decomposed granite," said Cole. "When you watch them installing the patios, you know you're getting something special." Each patio is a handcrafted, unique piece of art. The flagstones are fit together like a puzzle creating a beautiful, natural look with high durability. Since there is no mortar used in the installation, the flagstone can actually move with the soil as it contracts and expands so there will be no cracking.

The team at James Landscaping, Inc. prides itself in taking time to educate clients about the very best choices in landscaping, both economically and aesthetically, for their homes.

For example, many clients come into the design process saying that they want trees that will grow quickly to provide shade. "But," James warned, "most trees that are faster growing are weak-wooded and short-lived."

Live oaks, Red oaks and Chinquapin oaks, do very well here, she explained, "these hardwood trees have long life spans and add value to your home and property." James Landscaping, Inc. uses trees that have been container grown. This type is best because they have their entire root system intact. This allows them to grow at a good rate.

But, most importantly, James recognizes that there are as many different needs and desires from her clients as there are ideas from her team of experts, so her focus has always been working closely with each client to establish exactly what he or she wants.

"Our main focus is to make our clients' world a more beautiful place," she commented. "Our specialty is listening closely to their needs and desires and then making that come to life for them.

"Landscaping is one of the 'best return on investment' improvements you can make for your home," she added. "It actually increases in value as the plants and trees mature."