



Photos courtesy of Vizmeg Landscape

## Project Profile: Vizmeg Helps Realize Owner's Vision at South Franklin Circle

By James Arch, ASLA  
*Vizmeg Landscape*

**H**ow can we bring the spectacular natural beauty of the Chicago Botanic Garden to 88-acres of farmland in Chagrin Falls, Ohio? How can we come up with an entirely new concept of family clusters with an assisted living component?"

That question was asked by Bill Fehrenbach, vice president of South Franklin Circle in Chagrin Falls back in 2007. He found the answer with the landscape architecture firm of Oehme van Sweden, of Washington, D.C., and Vizmeg Landscape, of Stow.

OvS would be lead at South Franklin Circle by 25-year veteran and Principal Eric Groft. That firm had brought its New American Garden design concept to the Chicago Botanic Garden and other sites across the country. Installation was to be by 20-year-old Vizmeg Landscape, one of the major landscape contractors in Northeast Ohio.

### Green, green, green

OvS was to feature its renowned natural-look design – with large sweeps of perennials and four-season interest with native plants, perennials and grasses. Sustainability would be incorporated in everything. Meadows, for example, would be used instead of manicured lawns. Mature trees were to be protected. A full 28 acres would be set aside for conservation easement.

With leadership by Project Manager Dave Meehan, of The Albert M. Higley Co. and Vizmeg Landscape, construction

began in early 2008 and continued into late 2009 with the final seeding of wildflower meadows.

### Big, beautiful

Everything about the landscape construction, installation and planting was massive. Vizmeg screened, mixed and placed 45,000 cubic yards of topsoil in planting beds, lawn and meadow areas. For irrigation, there were 8,000 feet of pipe, 2,400 irrigation heads and 17,500 feet of electric wire. An on-site crew worked on the installation of that system for six months.

Work on existing wetlands included clearing of invasive species and replanting with 10,000 plugs of plant material. Vizmeg has been and continues to be responsible for grounds maintenance, snow removal and ice management.

### The outcome?

"It's all worked out beautifully," says Bill Fehrenbach of South Franklin Circle. "The architect's plans. Vizmeg's installation and maintenance. They were spectacular. And, most important, [our residents] just love it."

One very enthusiastic resident said she had never before lived with so many blooming, changing colors and textures

– with so many birds, foxes, squirrels, deer and all manner of wildlife.

Meehan, of The Albert M. Higley Co., was impressed with the landscape architect's design and with Vizmeg's planning, work flow management and resourcefulness. "There was no end of challenges – and we met them all. What we've created is outstanding," he says.

"Fantastic" is how Eric Groft of OvS describes the work by Vizmeg. "And, they continue doing an outstanding job with maintenance – snow removal, too."

### Success

Did Bill Fehrenbach succeed with a new model for a retirement community? One with residential living blending into a virtual botanic garden – with amenities like a clubhouse, swimming pool, indoor spa and even a Metro Park trail running through it? George Vizmeg, president of Vizmeg Landscape, says, "Yes."

"It's been a joy and an honor to help create something so unique, so splendid," he says. "One of the nicest parts is that we are continuing to care for the project as it evolves. We're very proud to be part of it." **P**

*James Arch is a landscape designer with Vizmeg Landscape. For info, visit [www.vizmeg.com](http://www.vizmeg.com).*