

OPEI Announces First Look At 2020 Market Forecast

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The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) has released its fall quarterly forecast, predicting a strong finish to 2019 and growth in U.S. shipments of outdoor power equipment in 2020. "Our forecast indicates that 2019 will finish with moderate year-over-year growth in several key segments, and the industry will post more gains in 2020," said Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI. "We continue to see advances in commercial-grade mowers used by professionals, and battery/electric equipment continues to pace growth in consumer segments. As an example, 2019 will be the first year of more than 1 million battery/electric walk-behind mower shipments."

Kiser added that key macroeconomic indicators – GDP growth of 2%, dropping interest rates, and historic low levels of unemployment – bode well for another year of steady growth for the outdoor power equipment industry. "As we look to 2020, we're predicting equipment shipments to post gains of 2% to 5%, depending on the category," he said.

Highlights of the fall OPEI forecast include:

- Commercial mower (e.g., zero-turns, intermediate walk-behinds) shipments will grow 7% in 2019 over 2018. Forecast for 2020 is another growth year of 5%.
- Handheld OPE shipments (e.g., chain saws, blowers, trimmers) will rebound in 2019, with 3% growth over 2018. Forecast for 2020 is another growth year of 2%. The driver of growth is cordless (battery-powered) products.
- Wheeled OPE shipments (e.g. walk-behind mowers, consumer zero-turns, tillers) will be down 1% overall in 2019 over 2018, but are forecasted to rebound with 2% growth in 2020. Notably, cordless (battery-powered) walk-behind mower shipments grew considerably in 2019, and are forecasted to do the same in 2020.

OPEI is an international trade association representing power equipment, small engine, utility vehicle, golf car, and personal transport vehicle manufacturers, and suppliers. OPEI forecasted projections use as their basis the compiled monthly shipment data reported by OPEI members, constituting more than 90% of all shipments in the U.S. market. OPEI started its shipment data collection in 1953, and has since expanded the program to include all power sources (e.g., gas, battery, corded, diesel, and propane).

The forecast was released at OPEI's Market Statistics Forum, an annual gathering open to all association members that fosters discussion and analysis of industry and macroeconomic trends impacting the business. The daylong event is held at OPEI's headquarters in Alexandria, VA.