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As the busy season approaches for many of you, I urge you to keep Swingle's philosophy in mind. Here at NAA, we will do the same, because we too are in a service business. You are our valuable customer, and we welcome your ideas on how we can better serve you.

Robert Felix, Publisher
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Pruning and the Symplast
By Dr. Alex Shigo

As trees age, the amount and frequency of pruning change with them. One of the nation's foremost experts goes beyond "how" to discuss "how much."

Urban Storm Damage
By Peter Gerstenberger

Don't lurch from one crisis response to another. Prepare for the next natural disaster now.

A Healthier Work Force
By Stephen W. Campbell
Reduce workers' compensation costs by following these eight steps to return injured employees to work.
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A Professional

By Dr. Alex L. Shigo

Tree pruning is a two-part treatment that demands a specialized knowledge of collars and dose. Knowing how to remove a branch without injuring the tree requires an understanding of branch anatomy and defense boundaries, whereas knowing how many leaf-bearing branches can be removed without injuring the tree requires an understanding of the symplast and the second law of energy flow.

Energy flow, cash flow

I asked a physicist friend recently what natural law he thought was the most important to sustain life. Without hesitation, he said it had to be the Second Law of Thermodynamics or energy flow, which states that no system will remain orderly, or survive, unless it receives a continuous supply of energy.

Next, I asked a business friend what law he thought was most important in business. Just as quickly, he replied "cash flow." He stated that a successful entrepreneur needs to know how to get money, what to do with it, and when and how to let it go. He added that cash-flow problems are central to most business failures in big and small companies alike.

We expect doctors, mechanics and others who call themselves professionals to understand the parts and processes of their business. We should demand no less from arborists. Below are some very brief comments that will make arborists more aware of a few neglected but essential parts and processes for correct tree pruning. I deal with these subjects in greater detail in my books.

Symplast, a living webwork

Two major myths have held back advances in arboriculture: Wood is dead, and decay is not a disease. These myths arose mainly from the lack of understanding of the symplast.

The symplast is the highly ordered, three-dimensional, connected webwork of living protoplasm in trees. It's like a webwork of jelly. The living protoplasm is contained in thin-walled cells called the parenchyma, which have small cell wall openings that act as tunnels where the protoplasm of one cell connects with the protoplasm of adjoining cells.

It is extremely important to remember that the symplast is alive. Energy reserves are stored within the living
I Understands Dose

As trees mature, the ratio of dynamic mass, or symplast, declines from 100 percent to 10-20 percent symplast, mostly as starch and oils. Twigs, branches, trunks and roots all have a symplast, which stores energy reserves. The greater the volume of the symplast, the greater the capacity to store energy reserves.

The symplast is very fragile and requires a rigid framework, the apoplast, to hold it in place.

The apoplast, on the other hand, is a dead framework. It is a highly ordered connection of dead cells and cell parts that act as a tough framework for the symplast. The apoplast stores water, mostly as bound water, which, unlike free water, is chemically bound to cellulose and does not flow. A unique feature of trees is that living and dead cells are connected in ways that support the heavy, woody framework while maintaining the biological processes essential for life. Wood is a highly ordered arrangement of living, dying and dead cells that have walls of cellulose, hemicelluloses, lignin.

So, how does this all affect tree pruning? Removing living branches, stems or roots from trees reduces the volume of symplast. Since energy reserves are stored in the symplast, the energy reserves of the trees are reduced.

For the living processes of the tree, there is a great difference between killing and dying—even though the end result is the same. As a branch dies, mobile materials such as nitrogenous substances have a chance to move back into the still-living tissues. When a living branch is suddenly removed, all of the nitrogenous substances are lost.

Dynamic and static mass

Young trees contain living cells throughout, and the wood is said to be 100 percent dynamic mass. In fact, the definition of a young tree is one that is 100 percent dynamic mass. Significant amounts of the symplast may be removed from a young tree without seriously disrupting the workings of the Second Law, since enough energy remains to keep the parts and processes of the tree system orderly.

As trees grow and mature, however, the inner and oldest living cells begin to die, and nitrogenous substances move outward toward the cambial zone into the still-living cells. When cells die near the inner margins of the symplast, the dead material is called the protection wood. Heartwood is one type of protection wood. Sapwood is wood that has a symplast. Protection is a static feature, whereas defense is a dynamic process. The symplast in the sapwood maintains a defense potential, because it contains living cells. Protection wood has very little or no nitrogen or energy reserves. Materials called extractives might also impregnate the dead cells.

As the volume of protection wood increases, the ratio of dynamic mass (symplast in sapwood) to static mass (protection wood with all dead cells) changes. Because the ratios are changing, the amount of symplast lost by removing living branches is also changing.

As trees grow and age, the demands of the Second Law become more pronounced. When wounds are inflicted and compartmentalized, the volume of dynamic mass decreases. If over-pruning, flush cuts, topping cuts or repeated deep injections are inflicted, the wood associated with the injuries is also compartmentalized. But again, as dynamic mass is walled off, the capacity to store energy reserves is decreased.

When not enough energy is left for a tree to maintain a strong defense, then pathogens attack. Usually, the roots are first to go, because they depend on leaves and living branches for their energy.

Core-skin hypothesis

By this time, you may be asking where all this information may be found.
Many researchers over a long period have contributed to what Dr. R.C. Hardwick calls the core-skin hypothesis, which states that as new growth increments or "new trees" grow over old increments or "old trees," the "young trees" become "skin" over the aging "core." As trees age, the ratio of "core" to "skin" increases.

Hardwick is must reading for anyone really interested in trees. I have used many of his ideas in my book "Modern Arboriculture," because they are very relevant to many tree treatments, especially fertilization and pruning.

What's the solution?

Generally, as trees get larger and older, the number of living branches you remove should decrease, while the number of dead branches that you should remove will increase. Of course, a branch should be removed any time it becomes a high risk for failure. And remember, always keep wildlife in mind when pruning.

I do not believe it is possible to give magic percentages for dose, or the number of living branches that may be pruned. Also, because of the forms of many trees, it is not possible to state how much should be removed and from where on the trunk. For example, American elms that are vase-shaped are still found in many cities, particularly in Canada. How you prune such a tree would be very different from how you would prune a round mulberry tree in the southwestern United States.

Each tree species has different mature forms and different ratios of dynamic to static mass. The collars on every branch will be different. Once these features are recognized and understood, only then can sound decisions be made about tree pruning.

Think cash flow

Cash flow describes the movement of money within a business. Energy flow means the same for a tree's business of survival. Think of the component parts of a tree and its processes as similar to the workings of your business. You and your people are the symplast. If you are the owner, then you are the cambial zone. Your office and other non-living parts make up the apoplast.

When a tree business is small and young, it is mostly "symplast." As your business grows and ages, you must take care to recognize "dead wood" among employees and non-living things. The faster you discard "dead wood," the healthier your business will be.

A common saying in the corporate world is that the amount of money you make is less important than how much you keep. Indeed, as your business grows, you might find yourself making less money. This is just one argument against uncontrolled growth. Growing bigger and faster, then, does not always make for a healthier company or a healthier tree. In business, constant and careful pruning will maximize profits from limited resources. The same may be said for trees.

Dr. Alex Shigo is a noted authority in the field of arboriculture. An author, lecturer and consultant, he is the owner of Shigo & Trees, Associates
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Deregulation

What it means to you and me

Deregulation (1965): The act or process of removing restrictions and regulations ... Somehow, Webster's definition just doesn’t seem to describe the term. However, the deregulation of America's electric utility industry is clearly affecting the lives of tree care industry employees and customers.

When the topic of deregulation comes up among people who work in, or for, the electric utility industry, you might hear some of these descriptive phrases: increased competition, downsizing, cost cutting, restructuring, strategic mergers. These words can strike fear in the heart of any person—or company—facing the prospect of losing a job or contract. However, as the saying goes, every crisis is also an opportunity.

"We all should understand that with deregulation, there will be turmoil and disruption," says Chris Asplundh, president of Asplundh Tree Experts, the world's largest utility-line clearance company. "We understand this and we must live through it. We must try to be the solution to the problem."

To succeed, those who serve the electric utility industry will have to demonstrate flexibility, innovation, a strong customer service orientation and a relentless drive to become more efficient, productive and cost-effective. The people or companies who adopt these characteristics will be better able to survive the increased competition that comes with deregulation.

A little history and lingo

As with the deregulation of the airline industry and the break up of AT&T, the electric utility industry is being deregulated because the consumers have called for more competition. A free market approach to electric power production and distribution will allow consumers to "shop around" from a variety of power suppliers in the marketplace.

Unfortunately, one result of deregulation of the airline industry has been the bankruptcy of several major carriers. And, in the long-distance telephone service industry, deregulation has generated unparalleled advertising and price wars that are mind-boggling and, frankly, annoying to many consumers. No one wants these things to happen to the utility industry.

For more than 70 years, the utility industry has been subject to state and federal regulations that restricted, as well as protected, its business operations. The move to deregulate the industry began in 1978 with the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act. This law stated that the excess electricity that could be generated by manufacturers who had built their own private power plants could be sold to utilities.
Low Impact Tree Climbing?

By Robert Phillips

As arborists, how we get into trees is of concern. The method one chooses to climb may cause injury to the tree and be physically exhausting. The equipment and techniques available today can lessen these effects.

The most obvious cause of injury is the use of climbing spurs. Spur use should be limited to just removals and emergency aerial rescue from trees. Not only is a gaff puncture harmful to the tree, it can also be serious when the gaff jabs the climber in the back of the leg. The climb line can also be inadvertently pierced by the spur. The angle at which the spur cuts the fibers of the rope can reduce the strength of the rope significantly.

Running the climb line through an unprotected tree crotch to body-thrust climb can cause tree bark injury. On some trees, running a rope over the bark can lead to major dieback or tree structural disorder. Trees with rough bark can cause an incalculable amount of lost rope life.

There are many combinations of climbing techniques and equipment to make the climb easier or less injurious. I continually try new ideas, but I also use a few favorites over and over. Here are a couple of techniques that I use when climbing big and tall trees:

I begin with a weighted canvas throw bag. This is tied to a 3mm Beale throw line about one hundred feet long. The line can be stored in a small canvas pouch and used in the tree. The climber aims for a strong, wide tree crotch. The climb line is then tied to the throw line.

When possible, I run my climb line through a pulley. I sometimes use a separate line to raise and anchor the pulley. One can also place a static, retrievable false crotch with a climbing line set in a pulley. This technique can save the climber a lot of energy when used with a setup that advances the climbing hitch without the use of hands. It makes sixty to eighty foot climbs much safer, easier and less injurious to the tree.

When I have set up as described, my ground person can assist me greatly. The fact that the hitch is tied eliminates potential failure when belayed from the ground.

Remember, to lessen the impact of a falling limb, always climb with a hard hat.
Even though demand and costs fluctuated, utilities were expected to contract to purchase this power. Some utilities have been hurt by these contracts.

Increased competition really came to the industry with the passing of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which allowed "exempt wholesale generators" to generate and sell power at wholesale prices. These new producers can apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for access to a utility’s transmission system. FERC, an independent regulatory agency within the Department of Energy, is responsible for setting the rates for transmission of service. The rate is supposed to cover all of the utility’s verifiable costs for transmitting the power, and all qualified power producers must be given open or equal access.

Soon after the Energy Policy Act, a number of independent power producers (IPPs) sprang up in the marketplace. IPPs are not subject to state or federal regulations, but are allowed access to the regulated utility industry’s transmission lines for an established fee. In response, some utilities are setting up subsidiaries to compete with IPPs.

So, competition in the electric utility industry is here and, depending on the rules set forth by each state’s public utilities commission, consumers are starting to purchase their electricity from any number of power producers. These are turbulent times, but one thing remains the same ... trees will continue to grow, despite a deregulated utility industry. The reliability of transmission and distribution systems, whether they are overhead or underground, will still be an important aspect of electrical service. Consumers, large and small, will probably not be willing to sacrifice their current level of reliability to price.

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If you try these loppers, we think you’ll agree that they’re perfect, or close to it. So we’re making you this money-back offer. Buy a pair. Prune with them for two weeks. Use 'em and abuse 'em. If you agree they’re the best, buy more. If you don’t, return them to us along with a note telling us what you think would make them better. We’ll refund your purchase price. Fair enough?

For further information, contact your Corona dealer or call us at 1-800-234-2547.
The Secrets of Power Negotiating

Learning to improve your negotiating skills is the highest and best use of your time. Consider this: If you make $50,000 a year, that’s about $25 per hour. When you are negotiating the purchase or sale of something, you’re not making $25 an hour—you’re making $25 a minute, maybe $25 a second. You can’t make money faster than you can when you’re negotiating!

Here are five negotiating gambits that can make thousands of dollars for you in just a few seconds.

Never Jump at the First Offer
Be careful you’re not saying yes too quickly, because this automatically triggers two thoughts in the other people’s minds:

• We could have done better (and next time we will).
• Something must be wrong here. If they are willing to go with a proposal that we didn’t think they’d accept, we better check them out further before we go ahead.

So always go through the process of negotiating, even if the first offer or counteroffer is perfectly acceptable, because you always want the other side to feel that they won in the negotiations. In fact, I’d almost give you that as a definition of a good negotiator. Two people might be negotiating a purchase with the same supplier. Both come away with the same dollar figure, but the Power Negotiator comes away with the supplier feeling they won, and the poor negotiator comes away with the supplier feeling they lost.

Nibbling
You can get things later in the negotiations that you can’t get earlier. Always go back at the end and make a second effort on something that you couldn’t get them to go along with earlier.

However, look out for people Nibbling on you, because there’s a point in the negotiations when you’re very vulnerable, and that point is when you think the negotiations are over. You may be selling a used car, and you’ve finally found the buyer. You’re feeling good that the negotiation went so well, and you got such a good price. The buyer is sitting there writing out the check, and at the last minute he looks up and says, “That does include a full tank of gas,
The Competition is

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doesn't it?"

You're at the most vulnerable point in the negotiation, for two reasons. First, you're feeling good because you just made a sale. When you feel good you tend to give things away that you otherwise wouldn't. Secondly, you're thinking, "Oh no, I thought we'd resolved everything. I don't want to have to go back to the start of this thing, renegotiate it, and stand a chance of having them back out. Maybe I'm better off just to give in on this point."

Flinching

It's critical that you learn to react visually, whenever the other side makes a proposal. Assume that they don't think you're going to agree to their proposal, and that they're only throwing it out on the negotiating table to see what your reaction will be.

When the salesman asks you to give him a deposit with the order, he may not think for a moment that you'll go along with that. It's just something he threw out on the negotiating table to see what your reaction would be. And if you don't appear too shocked or surprised, suddenly he's thinking, "Well, that didn't seem to shock them too much, maybe I will get them to give me a deposit. I'm going to hang in and be a tough negotiator."

So prepare to Flinch at the other side's proposal. Slap your cheek, gasp and say,
“You want us to do what?” And you don’t have to be negotiating in person to make this work. Phone Flinches can be very effective too!

Trading Off
Whenever the other side asks you for a small concession, get in the habit of asking for something in return. Let’s say that a customer has special-ordered some equipment, and you’ve just found out there is a delay at the factory. Just as you’re about to call the customer and give him the bad news, the phone rings. It’s the customer calling to see if you could delay the shipment. You have a tendency to say, “Sure, that would work out fine. No problem.”

Don’t do that! Always ask for something in return. Say, “Well, I don’t know. I’ll check with my people and see, but let me ask you this: If we can do that for you, what can you do for me?”

Three things might happen

1. You might just get something, such as them giving you an additional deposit.
2. You’ve now elevated the value of the concession. Why just give something away? You may need it for another Trade Off later. Later you can say, “You know how much trouble we had to go through over that delayed delivery? We did that for you, so don’t hassle me over the final payment check, fair enough?”
3. It stops the grinding away process. This is the most important reason and why you should always do this. If they know that every time they ask you for something, you’ll ask for something in return, it stops them constantly coming back for more.

Position for Easy Acceptance

If you’re dealing with someone who prides himself on his ability to negotiate, there’s a danger the negotiations will deadlock at the last moment. The problem is that the ego of the other person as a negotiator got in the way. You’re talking to a contractor about a change to your building plans and you’re $1,000 dollars apart on the price. You can’t believe that it’s all falling apart when you’re within $1,000. It doesn’t make sense. What’s gone wrong is that the ego of the other person, as a negotiator, is getting in the way. He’s not doing as well as he hoped he would, and he simply doesn’t want to feel that he lost to you as a negotiator.

So you have to make him feel good about giving in to you. Do it with a small concession made just at the last moment. The size of the concession doesn’t matter, because it can be ridiculously small and still be effective. It’s the timing that’s critical.

Learning to improve your negotiating skills is the highest and best use of your time. You can’t make money faster than you can when you’re negotiating to buy or sell something—or for an increase in pay. You could be making thousands of dollars per minute!

Excerpted in part from the new book Roger Dawson’s Secrets of Power Negotiating (Career Press, $21.99). Dawson is one of the country’s top negotiating experts and a leading sales and management speaker. Details: (800) YDAWSON.
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Technical Corrections to Guide

Two corrections in the 8th edition of the "Guide for Plant Appraisal" will appear in the next printing (the 3rd) of the "Guide." Corrections should be noted in the existing first two printings.

**Correction #1.** Refer to page 55, the "compounded cost of maintenance" example on the line which reads: "Years 3-9($20 each year) 8-2 = 222." This should read: "Years 3-9($20 each year) 8-2 = 188."

The "188" is obtained by multiplying "$20" by the figure in Table 8-1 for the interest rate (6%) and the number of years the cost is to be compounded for each of the seven years (8-2). Add these compounded costs to obtain $188.

It may be more clear if the compounded cost of annual maintenance had been shown:

1st year - \$50(1+0.06)10** = $50 x 1.79 = $90; 2nd year - \$30(1+0.06)9 = $30 x 1.69 = $51; 3rd year - \$20(1+0.06)8 = $20 x 1.59 = $32; 4th year - \$20(1+0.06)7 = $20 x 1.50 = $30; 5th year - \$20(1+0.06)6 = $20 x 1.42 = $28; 6th year - \$20(1+0.06)5 = $20 x 1.34 = $27; 7th year - \$20(1+0.06)4 = $20 x 1.26 = $25; 8th year - \$20(1+0.06)3 = $20 x 1.19 = $24; 9th year - \$20(1+0.06)2 = $20 x 1.12 = $22; 10th year - \$20(1+0.06)1 = $20 x 1.06 = $21. Total \$350

* The number of a printing of the "Guide" is often shown on the page indicating the copyright along with other publishing information. The "10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2" on the presently available "Guide" indicates the "Guide" is in its second printing. These numbers are not in the first printing.

** The raised number to the right of the () indicates how many times the number is to be multiplied by itself.

**Correction #2.** This correction should have been made in the 5th edition of the "Guide" published in 1979. It has persisted in each edition since. The last two sentences in the first paragraph on page 74 should read, "If the insurance company provides up to $500 for each plant lost and the property owner had a $100 deductible policy, subtract $100 from $900. Even though the difference is $800, without even considering the value of the lost tree, the property owner would collect only $500.

Richard W. Harris, Chairman
Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers

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After the Storm

“In fair weather, prepare for foul”
- Thomas Fuller

When Hurricane Opal made landfall on October 5, 1995, strong winds surged from the coast as far north as Atlanta, where tornado-like “micro-bursts” caused devastation to trees and properties.

Before the wind had calmed and the skies cleared, The Bartlett Tree Expert Company sprang into action. On two days’ notice, Bartlett, which maintains an office in Atlanta with six production personnel, mobilized 30 of its best climbers, grounds people and equipment to help the local office deal with the storm’s aftermath. Organizers anticipated that crews would remain in Atlanta for several days, but it would be a month before they finished.

About 25 percent of their work was in Callaway Gardens, a horticultural organization owned by the Callaway Foundation. Another 12 percent took place in a Civil War cemetery, and the remainder came from existing as well as new residential and commercial clients. According to Bartlett Safety Director Joe Bones, Callaway Gardens and the local office served as the “anchors” for the overall operation.

Despite the enormity of the job and the need for haste, safety was the company’s chief concerns. Bones and other managers shuttled between job sites to conduct daily safety meetings. One crew member was pulled out of production to serve as a roving safety advisor. Crediting the heightened awareness of safety, Bones reports that no incidents marred the operation in the month of cleanup.

While the massive undertaking proceeded smoothly from the standpoint of safety, Bartlett was forced to devise creative solutions to a variety of serious logistical problems.

How do you outfit 24 crew members who fly in with nothing but their climbing
Storm Work

Action Steps

• Maintain control of how and when you will be paid.

• Control work hours to control costs and prevent accidents.

• Concentrate on the work that requires your skills and expertise.

• Prioritize your work: Separate emergencies from urgent needs, and urgent needs from cleanup that can wait. Place existing clients first.

• Communication is key: Place knowledgeable people on the phone to gather reliable information.

• Make sure crews are adequately trained to deal with downed power lines and trees on structures.

• Know where you can find support. Commit to your contractors and vendors. Line up extra help, dump sites, parking, storage, supplies of gas, food, parts, etc.

• Know how you will communicate. Do your office phones work when the power is down?

• Know where and how fast you can obtain extra equipment. Seek pre-qualification to rent or lease.

• Be prepared to respond to the media.

• Warn customers, in writing, about trees likely to be hazardous in a storm. Tell them what your emergency response procedure is, and advise them of what they should do when a storm hits.

• Mitigate the storm’s effect before it occurs by advising clients on corrective pruning, cabling and bracing, and planting “storm-resistant” trees.

• Develop an action plan with municipal, commercial and major residential customers.
Bartlett's crews overcame, and they are
typical of the challenges encountered in
responding to the devastation left in the
wake of a major storm. In addition,
storms don’t always sleep when humans
do, and arborists should be prepared for
the occasional night job.

Steve Pregler, city forester in
Dubuque, Iowa, lists lights and signs as
night-work necessities. Pregler uses spot
or flood lights for work areas, lighted
toolbox, good flashlights, yellow
strobes on work vehicles (some are mag-
netic-mount, temporary lights) and
magnetic-mounted floodlights. In a
pinch, of course, vehicle headlights can
make removing a tree from atop a house
or car much faster and safer. He suggests
that signs should be light-reflective,
highly visible and oversized for night
work. In addition, crews should wear
reflective vests if their duties are likely
to bring them into the street.

Bones reports that his company
learned important lessons from the At-
lan
ta experience, which they
immediately applied to a major storm
cleanup operation in Greensboro, N.C.

“In Atlanta, we mobilized crews in
two days, only to find that we weren’t
fully prepared to deal with what we
found,” relates Bones. “In Greensboro,
we wisely chose to organize a couple
extra days before sending in crews, and
it is paying off. Ultimately, our clients
will end up getting their work done just
as quickly, just as professionally, be-
cause of better planning.”
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Allegiances with local companies are absolutely necessary for the success and profitability of any major operation. In Atlanta, much of the cleanup involved large, wind-thrown trees, and a crane was essential. Bones stresses that lining up the right equipment can be critical. “Commit to the crane well beforehand, for a specified amount of time,” he advises. Similarly, the tree company should hammer out firm commitments from other contractors and vendors such as arborist supply companies, truck dealers and financing companies.

Bartlett developed a protocol for dealing with commercial and residential client needs. Existing clients received first priority, but beyond that, jobs were handled in order of urgency. Projects were also charted by geographical location, so crews could be routed efficiently.

Bones offers some words of caution for managers who must decide whether to chip brush. “If the municipality has made provisions to haul away brush left at the curb, then chipping can be a waste of the crews’ time and talent. In Atlanta, for the most part, we found that our chippers sat idle, but circumstances could have just as easily been the opposite.”

Without a plan, a tree care company’s first responses may be slow and disorganized.

First, all life-threatening situations should be given priority. Supervisors should make on-site visits to determine the severity of the damage. Crews should remedy the situation to a point where it is no longer life threatening before proceeding to the next location. Final cleanup should wait until all life-threatening situations are resolved. Second, all major property damage instances should be remedied to a point where the crisis is abated. Again, final cleanup should wait until all life-threatening situations are resolved.

Third, existing clients should receive preferential treatment.

Financial issues

Prices and payment arrangements for storm-related work will vary from the norm.

Fees must reflect the additional costs associated with the work. Expenses such as food, lodging and overtime must be calculated along with the normal costs of operation. Bartlett’s crews were working 10 hours a day, sometimes seven days a week in Atlanta. They “consumed” 1,200 feet of three-quarter-inch, double-braid rope. Bones notes that Bartlett reps will often advise clients to “wait out the storm” for
non-critical work, so they can pay more reasonable rates.

In the confusion and urgency after a storm, tree crews often charge into action after a hastily consummated verbal agreement and a handshake. The potential for misunderstanding and misrepresentation always exists in hurried and stressful situations—an embarrassment that can hurt the client and the tree care company.

Bartlett reps had all their clients sign contracts, a precaution that produced very few disputed bills. In Calloway Gardens, at the insurance company's behest, crews took photos and kept records on every tree, which greatly facilitated payment.

Planning for the next storm

When a disaster strikes, it is almost too late to save valuable shade trees and too late to devise an action plan to maximize service to your customers. It would have been better to protect your client's trees beforehand, including a plan for treatment of damaged trees when a disaster does take place. In the aftermath of a major storm, tree care companies can capitalize on heightened public awareness to inform clients about important ancillary services. Don Blair, noted arborist, author and lecturer, recommends that arborists sell hazard-tree assessment, root-crown excavation and damage-prevention planning to mitigate damage as well as protect the client and the client's property.

The calm before ...

For the commercial arborist considering municipal contracts for post-disaster cleanup, it could be vital that the municipality has the ability to qualify for disaster-relief funding. Assistance is available for emergency work involving clearing trees. For a community to receive any funding for tree-care activities, it must demonstrate a commitment to this resource. One way to demonstrate this dedication is by having a tree ordinance, a community forest management plan or inventory, a staff forester or by having Tree City USA status. To obtain funding, it is important to be prepared.

In order for a community or group to obtain any type of disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, estimates of reimbursable tree damage and the amount of funding allowed will be calculated through a Disaster Survey Report (DSR). In considering the tree resource during a DSR assessment, it is vital that the funding agency recognize a community's commitment to tree management. If a community is not perceived as being committed to managing its tree as a resource, inspectors may not allow tree costs to be covered.

Evidence of such a commitment includes: designation as a Tree City USA community; the existence of a management or maintenance plan; a completed tree inventory; a community forester or arborist on staff; or documents showing previous tree replacement or maintenance after other natural disasters. Speak with municipal officials now so that when a storm strikes, your city or town is ready and qualified to secure disaster relief funding.
The complex insurance protection needs of the nation's 13,000 arborists and tree care specialists now can be met by an expanded insurance program offered through Hartford Specialty, an affiliate in the ITT Hartford Insurance Group.

The program, which is endorsed by the National Arborist Association (NAA), offers hard-to-find features, such as Workers' Compensation and Pesticide and Herbicide Application Coverage.

ITT Hartford's Arborist Program is available through any agent or broker. The program's basic liability package includes business Property, General Liability with limits up to $1 million per occurrence, and Commercial Automobile coverage, with limits up to $1 million per accident.

The form of the pollution coverage offered protects against claims of contamination resulting from the application of approved chemicals. The options include coverage for Property in Transit and Contractor Equipment at the work site. An umbrella of up to $10 million is also available.

Major benefits of the program include centralized underwriting by people knowledgeable about the tree care industry, the expertise of ITT Hartford's loss control experts to help identify and minimize potential problems, and a country-wide staff of claims professionals.

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- the longevity and loyalty of ITT Hartford
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The ITT Hartford benefits tree care companies in general because:
- their package offers all necessary coverages
- everything is with one carrier, giving the insured greater purchasing power as well as convenience
- the insurer is financially very strong, with comprehensive knowledge of the industry
- the program offers centralized policy issuance and service
- the insurer offers an on-line claims system and trend reporting capability
- the insured can obtain quarterly loss runs
- a personal claims representative contacts new insureds
- workers' compensation coverage is currently available in every state except Tennessee and Maine. The program is unavailable in Hawaii.

For more information about the "new" ITT Hartford property/casualty insurance program, contact Mike Rook or Lorna Verrastro at 203-547-4277.

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How Flat A Tax?
By Les Kozaczek

For a while, it seemed as though you couldn’t turn around without bumping into a Republican candidate for president itching to tell you about his flat tax proposal. For good or for bad, abolishing today’s convoluted and, some say, unfair and much-abused tax code and replacing it with a purportedly “simpler” flat tax has fired the public’s imagination.

A flat tax, as argued by the politicians, is a single tax rate that is collected on everybody’s personal adjusted gross income above a certain level. The finer points—whether unearned income, capital gains tax, or mortgage interest deductions should be allowed, for instance—depend upon the different forms the tax can take. The loss of mortgage interest deductions could spell disaster for small business owners who have used home equity loans to finance equipment and other capital purchases.

Not surprisingly, the politicians have followed the scent of public opinion. “One way to get people’s attention as you travel across the country is to talk about an entirely new tax system and getting rid of the IRS as we know it,” noted Presidential candidate Bob Dole, R-Kan., during a hectic primary season. Despite what sounds like fighting talk, Dole is lukewarm in his endorsement of a “flatter” tax. That made him the GOP’s odd man out: the other candidates argue not over if the country needs a flat tax, but, rather, what kind of flat tax would work best. In January, The National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform, chaired by former Housing Secretary Jack Kemp, recommended dumping the current tax code for a flat tax of less than 20 percent. The current rate ranges from 15-39.6 percent.

This report was good news to proponents, who say a flat tax would eliminate the “distorting” effect of current tax preferences and the multiple taxation of income from capital investment. Also, advocates say a flat tax would benefit lower income taxpayers who are less likely than those with higher income to take advantage of the current code. Finally, a flat tax as proposed by some would slash and burn the administrative and legal jungle into which even some IRS professionals fear to venture.

Other experts, however, were less than thrilled. “If a flat tax is enacted without a firm grasp of the goal, you’ll rapidly end up with a system that’s just as complicated as the one we have now,” says David Bradford, an economist at Princeton University. Bradford warns that a flat tax may have to be as high as 24 or 30 percent to accommodate popular deductions and to collect roughly as much as the current income tax system.

Judge for yourself. Here’s a small selection of flat tax proposals still on the table.

Kemp’s Commission: A single tax rate of less than 20 percent with a generous but unspecified personal exemption to reduce or eliminate taxes for low-income Americans; elimination of capital gains, dividends and estate taxes; continued tax deductibility of mortgage interest and charitable donations; the deductions for individuals of Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes.

Steve Forbes: A single rate of 17 percent and no deductions. First $36,000 exempted for a family of four.

Dick Armey, R-Texas: A 20 percent flat tax that would drop to 17 percent after two years. First $33,000 exempted for a family of four, with no deductions.

Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas: A flat rate of 16 percent and tax deductions for mortgage interest and charitable donations.
Eight Steps to Return to Work

By Stephen W. Campbell

A n effective return-to-work program can make dramatic strides in reducing workers' compensation costs. By restoring an injured worker more quickly to productive worker status, return-to-work programs have reduced indemnity costs by 20 to 40 percent, and reduced medical and rehabilitation costs even more.

Since the price of workers' compensation insurance is directly related to losses, a company that reduces the incidence of claims and the costs of settlement can reduce its insurance costs. Meanwhile, the company's workers benefit by having fewer accidents and are more quickly reintegrated into the workforce when they are injured.

That's what a return-to-work program is designed to do. The program breaks the standard employee disability cycle to rehabilitate and return the injured employee to productive work in the shortest possible time.

Cost containment is just one advantage. Companies using return-to-work programs have kept recovering workers productive, avoiding the "disability" mental attitude that often keeps workers from ever fully recovering from their injuries. The program's emphasis on communication helps the injured worker realize that it's important to be at work every day, even if only on light duty assignment. This, in turn, helps the worker more quickly reintegrate into full productive status.

Return-to-work is based on teamwork, but the actual membership of the team should reflect the size and structure of the company. The team could be as basic as a supervisor and a representative from management. In a larger firm, representatives from human resources, engineering, management, labor and other departments should work with medical providers, insurance carriers and the injured worker to review progress and plan a course of recovery.

A combination of loss prevention and loss minimization is the most effective risk-management strategy. This will protect workers from unnecessary harm and limit the occurrence of compensable injuries that cost a company money. It also increases the likelihood that the company will be in compliance with federal and state safety regulations.

Accidents happen

Despite the best accident-prevention methods, injuries do happen. Here are some steps employers can take in advance to prepare for injuries:

• **Enlist employee buy-in for the return-to-work program.** Inform employees of the company's workers' compensation benefits, explaining that you expect them to cooperate in their recovery and to get back to work as quickly as possible. Tell them that they have an obligation to keep you informed of medical restrictions resulting from injury, and you will provide modified duty work for as long as medically necessary. Stress that all injured employees will participate in
this program and will be treated in the same manner.

- Identify the best medical care providers in the area before a worker is injured. That way, he or she can receive appropriate help quickly. An employer, in concert with the insurance carrier, should establish a panel of medical providers able to provide prompt, high-quality, appropriate treatment. The list should include physicians, occupational therapists and vocational rehabilitation counselors willing to work with the company and insurer to determine treatment, length of disability and work readiness. All health care providers on your panel need to aim for fast and thorough patient rehabilitation. Employees should be informed of the selected medical providers. Some states give employers the legal right to specify the treating practitioner, while others allow an employee merely to suggest a provider. Your local workers' compensation claim office can advise you on this matter.

- Create an accurate job description. A thorough job description should identify all requirements of a position, including specific skills, education, experience and physical demands. The information can come from records, observation and interviews with supervisors, managers and the worker. The job description can determine if the injured worker is able to return to the same job and can guide placement in other positions, where necessary.

- Conduct a task assessment. This process evaluates all specific elements of a given job, including the working environment and job functions. Problem jobs are identified along with the opportunities for job redesign and alternate or modified work possibilities. The task assessment allows job requirements to be matched with physical capabilities. A written summary is useful to give to the treating physician to help in determining work-readiness or work restrictions.

The advent of video cameras also is being called into play here. Some companies now videotape each task and use tapes to modify work. Treating physicians also use these tapes to see the worker's actual movements. Physicians can use this information during follow-up visits to determine the worker's readiness to return to the job or to suggest changes to the way the worker performs.

Four action steps

When an injury occurs:

- Report accidents promptly to the insurance claim handler. ITT Hartford Insurance Group's research shows that the cost of medical care and lost wage payments averages one third less—$2,744—when an employer reports an employee injury within the first 10 days.

- Act fast to stop further injury. A rapid medical determination of the employee's capabilities and restrictions is essential to avoid additional damage to the injured worker. Employers also must reexamine the accident to determine if the job needs to be re-engineered in order to prevent repetition of the injury to others. This may appear obvious, but uncorrected problems are the known cause of many repeat injuries.

- Keep everyone informed. Health
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care practitioners are required to give employers and claim handlers a written post-injury response stating the employee's specific restrictions. Frequent communications with the care giver will keep everyone informed of the nature of the injury and progress of recovery. It also will keep the medical rehabilitative practitioner aware of regular work requirements and the availability of alternate assignments. In addition, this will underscore the employer's desire to work with the practitioner to return the employee to work. Communication with the health care practitioner, using the form sent with the employee or through some phone contact by your employee health center or the individual's supervisor. To minimize confusion, designate one person to maintain contact with the practitioner.

- Encourage the reintegration of the injured employee to the workplace. Stepping in to make it easier for the injured worker to return will encourage that employee's medical progress. It will also provide co-workers with a positive message about the value of the individual worker to the company.

Reintegration requires a communications strategy. When an employee is out of work, the supervisor or manager should contact the employee within 24 hours of the injury to check on his condition, the extent of the injury and when he can return. In ongoing cases, the administrator or manager can make weekly or biweekly calls. After five days of lost time, consider sending a get-well letter to the employee. Employees don't like to feel they are being monitored, so make your communication sincere. Above all, be sensitive to each employee's situation.

The claim handler also has an important role to play here and should be alerted to injuries that involve home or hospital confinement, referrals to specialists or other complications that require attention. The claim specialist or nurse case manager will stay in touch with the care giver to determine the earliest possible date the employee can return to alternate or modified productive work—and work with all parties to see that it happens.

In some cases, the injured employee may benefit from occupational rehabilitation to strengthen or retrain him for return to work. A manual laborer who injures his back, for example, may be able to return to the job if he learns new lifting and material-handling techniques. Practicing those techniques will ingrain them and also will build up strength.

Once back on the job, the injured employee and the supervisor need to work together to increase the worker's capabilities to pre-injury levels. Ongoing communications with the return-to-work team is essential until the worker reaches the best possible outcome for his case.

Implementing a return-to-work program involves many steps, but it's actually less cumbersome than it appears. Return-to-work can go a long way to reducing the costs of workers' compensation for everyone.

The author is assistant manager, technical loss control, with ITT Hartford Insurance Group. ITT Hartford provides all lines of insurance coverage through their NAA-endorsed program. For more information, call (203) 547-4277.

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URL: http://www.Report.com
National Gardening Association
E-mail: nga@together.org
or: 76711.417@compuserve.com
NGA manages the Garden Forum on
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IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THE IRS...

...avoid it.

Bentley College statistician Amir Aczel, author of "How to Beat the IRS at its Own Game" (Four Walls Eight Windows), claims he has discovered how IRS auditors pick tax returns for an audit. Aczel says tip-offs to the IRS that you should be audited include: silly mistakes on forms – particularly on Schedule C (self-employment), home office expenses and returns that show high ratios of expense to income.

For small businesses, the key number is 63 percent. That is, if your Schedule C expenses total more than 63 percent of gross income, Aczel guarantees the IRS computer will spit your return out for a closer look.

If picked for an audit, Aczel advises you bring only specifically requested documents, along with any current receipts you can find. Answer questions simply and briefly. If the auditor requests records for other years, say you'll get back to him, and then try to stall.

Legally, the IRS can only question you on returns for the last three years. Try to avoid signing form 872 or 872A, which allows the IRS to extend its investigations.

EMPLOYEE THEFT COSTS $$$

Employees who help themselves to or "borrow" company-owned property are costing American business about $120 billion every year, according to Jerald Greenberg, professor of business ethics at Ohio State University. Even conscientious employees can feel they have the "right" to use company-bought supplies, Greenberg says.

For instance, of employees at 1,083 restaurants and fast food services, 43% said they steal cash or merchandise, according to a survey by McGraw-Hill/London House and National Food Service Security Council. On average, restaurant employees admitted to stealing $113.46 a year.

Greenberg advises establishing newsletters, a hotline and team meetings to make employees feel more a part of the company, and less likely to steal from it.

STIFFER PUNISHMENT FOR HIRING OF ILLEGAL ALIENS

Moving to fulfill his promise to tighten enforcement of immigration laws, President Clinton has signed an executive order barring federal contractors who knowingly hire illegal aliens from obtaining additional government contracts for one year.

The order also prohibits employers from using the possibility of sanctions as a reason to discriminate on the basis of ethnic origin. Clinton instructed employers to confirm workers' eligibility by reviewing documents of all people when they are hired, not just those who were born in countries other than the United States.

The order applies to government vendors who now provide such services as landscaping on military bases, cleaning offices, and operating cafeterias in courthouses.

PRESIDENT'S UMBRELLA POLICY GOOD FOR ALL

People with assets to protect might want to take a leaf out of President Clinton's book and buy a personal umbrella liability policy, which will pay for an attorney and cover an adverse liability ruling in court. Just a few hundred dollars buys a $1 million policy.

The policy certainly proved a wise investment for the president. The insurers currently bankrolling his defense in a sexual-harassment case brought by Paula Jones have shelled out nearly $900,000 for attorney's fees thus far.
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Spoiled by Cheap Workers?

Recently, I read your article on how to optimize your Hispanic workforce. Although the article presented some informative facts that may be useful, I feel there seems to be a clear but unspoken question in many readers' minds: What are the industry's goals and objectives in attempts to utilize these employees?

I have had the experience and opportunity to work with large companies that employed a large number of Hispanic employees. Through my experience, I became increasingly troubled by the lack of standards that, I feel, were the product of hiring employees who spoke very little English. In the majority of cases, these employees arrived with very few arboricultural skills at all.

One negative example in particular comes to mind occurred in Greenwich, CT. The company was working at a client's home where extensive work was being done on some hemlocks in front of the house. The Hispanic crew was speaking Spanish when the home owner approached to ask a question. The client, somewhat confused, asked who the foreman was. The foreman was an Hispanic who not only knew very little about tree work but spoke very broken English. The home owner, frustrated, as can be expected, called the company and demanded the crew be pulled off the property.

This is only one instance of a home owner displeased with the company. Is there a danger in hiring employees who speak very little English? Lack of communication may appear harmless—until a worker's safety is compromised. There have been many times when a lack of communication produced dangerous situations. Am I suggesting that we need to reorganize our whole industry to reflect the needs of only English-speaking workers? No, of course not. I do, however, believe there is a fundamental problem with our hiring techniques.

And with this, some disturbing facts start to emerge like a bad stench. The cost of tree work increases every year, as does the cost of everything else in the economy. As the industry becomes more efficient and profits enlarge, the percentage of tree workers making over $8.00 an hour stays stationary. What is wrong with this picture?

When I first got out of college, I looked for a job in the vicinity of my school. My daughter, nine months old at the time, was my number one priority. So, I intently looked for the best offer. A local tree company interviewed me one afternoon. The interview began with a dissertation on my responsibilities as an employee, which turned out to be a four-page packet. After an hour of discussion and a review of safety procedures, I finally inquired about the hourly wage. At first, I thought he was joking when he told me that I would be paid $5.00 an hour. I was so shocked that I thanked him for his time and walked out past his $16,000 chipper and $13,000 truck. And on my way out of his driveway, I just managed to slip my car past his brand-new sprayer. Anyway, you can see my point.

It is my perception that employers are becoming spoiled by the abundance of cheap Hispanic workers. And, the
industry's constant complaints about taxes and the economy are empty as well, since profits increase yearly.

In conclusion, if we want quality workers who are detail-oriented and will reflect the objectives of the company, then maybe some changes are in order. Hispanic workers should be required to learn English before stepping foot on any property. They should be able to communicate with co-workers. They should not be paid wages less than those of other employees simply because the company feels it can take advantage of them. Wages, in all ways, should remain competitive with the cost of tree work, not with the industry's twisted perceptions of fairness. A plumber can walk into someone's house with a box of tools and make $30-50 an hour. A tree worker, on the other hand, hangs from a tree at 80 feet, runs a chain saw, works a chipper and has responsibilities three times that of a plumber, while making $8-11 an hour. Let's stop the madness!

David M. Neal
Neal Tree Service
Woodstock, Vermont

Industry Has Matured

Well, it's winter, the time of year that we prepare for, but which all arborists approach with apprehension. Anxiety is at its highest because of the challenges the season brings. On a positive note, it is time for our annual conferences to learn new ideas, network and keep up with a rapidly expanding industry. It is incredible how these conferences are wonderful examples of how our industry has evolved in a professional manner.

When I first broke into the industry 10 years ago, I was as green as they come. I knew absolutely nothing about arboriculture or landscaping. Fortunately, my boss at the time was, and still is, a man who believes in educating his staff. He took me to several conferences and meetings, exposing me to educational experiences.

While attending my first major conference, I received an indoctrination into my new line of work. Quite frankly, it was a unique experience. Many of the attendees looked as if they had worked in the morning and then came for the afternoon lecture. The displays were nicely set up, but it seemed as if everyone was selling the same things. There wasn't much selection in plants, tools or products. That night in the hotel lounge, a fight almost broke out because a company owner insulted a waitress. (Not exactly a corporate role model). These events were not particularly shocking to me at the time, but I wondered about the image my new profession was projecting.

Ten years later, I have climbed many trees, become a certified arborist, gone back to school and attended countless seminars. During this short period of time, I have seen the industry grow and evolve into a profession with a greater emphasis on education. The increasing concentration on selling knowledge as opposed to just a service is the present and future. Through these conferences and other events, we have improved our industry's image, which has in turn increased our markets.

We still draw our workforce from the same places, but through education we have increased our employees' confidence in dealing with an increasingly interested clientele. By learning to have respect for the services we provide, we
can develop seasonal jobs into rewarding careers. I feel that I have benefited greatly from opportunities provided by our industry’s associations.

Today when I go to our expositions, they seem a world away from the ones I attended years ago. There is a totally different feeling in the air. A professionalism abounds. The products and innovations are tenfold what they were. Of course, there are still a few people who wear their work clothes, but, for the most part, people have more respect for themselves. And I haven’t seen a potential fight since my first meeting. That’s not bad for an industry full of bravado.

These conventions are a testament to how far we have come, and they are a great sign of changing times. It is a tribute to our professional organizations such as the National Arborist Association that were leaders in this change.

David Anderson
Lowden Tree and Landscape
Lincoln, Massachusetts

Understand Tree Anatomy

I found the article “Formal trees” (C.O. Curry) in your September issue very interesting, even though its conclusions are totally mistaken. No tree’s silhouette imitates the shape of its leaf, except in a few anomalous cases that are mere coincidental resemblances.

A tree’s shape is determined by genetic instructions, strength of the wood, amount and angle of light and the push of the wind. (See my piece in the Journal of Arboriculture, September 1990).

Curry’s efforts, however, are to be commended as evincing curiosity and the initiative to advance a new hypothesis.

Most arborists are woefully deficient in their understanding of tree anatomy, structure and physiology. Why not run a series of articles in which the shape and structure of all parts of the tree (roots, trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, fruits and seeds) are clearly, simply and convincingly accounted for?

John M. Haller
John M. Haller Tree Service
Modesto, California

Stop Spiking

In response to your “From the Field” article in the January issue, I find it in bad taste to promote and even pay a hundred-dollar fee to someone who spikes trees. As professionals, we should all do whatever we can to discourage such practices as spiking or topping. Surely, many of you readers have been around long enough to have spiked trees, topped trees, and painted flush cuts. But, as the profession has evolved and these practices have become outdated, we hardly glorify the old practices or those who continue to perform them.

I don’t believe that subjecting a 60-foot pine tree to multiple spike wounds and opening up the tree’s defenses to insect and disease infestation is worth “Fifty Bucks.” The cat in all likelihood would have come down on its own after the rain, and if not, the tree could have been climbed properly in safe, dry conditions. Personally, I would rather have my principles than the “Fifty Bucks.” They’ll last longer.

In the future, I hope that we will not promote the use of spikes on live trees unless they are to be removed, or there is a real emergency concerning human life. It is also my hope that when such stories appear again, as I’m sure they eventually will, you reconsider printing them as submitted, so as not to contradict ourselves or lead newcomers to our profession astray.

I enjoy your “From the Field” features and the different perspectives they offer; however, when spiking of trees or 110-foot chestnuts appear (see September 1995), I think you need to ask a few more questions before going to print.
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The Climber’s Guide is available in English and Spanish. The decals are currently available in English only. The Guides are $2 each to NAA member firms, $3 to all others. The decals are $1 each to members, $1.50 to non-members. Please add $5.50 shipping and handling for orders in the U.S., $15 outside the U.S. Payment can be sent to the National Arborist Association, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094. VISA/Mastercard orders can be placed over the phone by calling 1-800-733-2622.
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WASHINGTON IN REVIEW
By Brian Barnard

OSHA Struggles
Budget squeeze shortens priority list

Prolonged political wrangling in Washington over unresolved budget issues has forced the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to rethink its plans for 1996. While Congress voted to keep the government running through mid-March, OSHA was slated for a 16 percent cut in federal funds.

This reduction for OSHA might appeal to some tree company owners, but repercussions created by Congress’ squeeze on OSHA’s traditional framework are sure to impact tree firms.

OSHA has had to reassess its priorities.” Dear’s field priorities include: common sense enforcement, including significant cases; nationalizing Maine-200 type programs; and continued partnership with programs such as the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).

Started in 1993, the Maine-200 program directed OSHA to focus its inspections on the 200 most hazardous work sites in the state of Maine as determined by workers’ compensation claims. These employers were required to address their workplace injuries and illnesses. Although the success of the focused-inspection initiative is difficult to measure, administrators believe this program illustrates how the agency can use its resources most effectively. Similar programs have been implemented in Wisconsin and New Hampshire.

The VPP program is OSHA’s way of recognizing and emphasizing aggressive, effective safety and health programs. For acceptance into VPP, a company must develop a safety program and apply to OSHA, which then sends a review team to evaluate the company’s potential as a VPP site. If accepted, the firm receives recognition from OSHA and direct benefits such as reduced workers’ compensation rates.

Dear’s memo also focused on national office priorities for 1996, including eliminating more than 1,000 pages from OSHA’s policy manual and issuing final rules on a handful of standards that are currently in the development process. Two items on Dear’s list that directly impact tree firms are abatement verification and respirator use. The National Arborist Association submitted comments to OSHA during the development process for the proposed revision of both of these items. Abatement verification requires employers to correct cited hazards. The proposed respirator revision updates the standard to encompass current technology.

Regarding Dear’s memo, OSHA spokeswoman Cheryl Byrne stated: “We can’t say what’s realistic, because we don’t have a budget.” She added, however, that “No specific reinvention project has been abandoned.”

OSHA Reform Legislation
Sponsored by Senate Labor Committee Chair Nancy Kassebaum, R-KS, OSHA reform legislation (S. 1423) remains under consideration in Congress (see TCI December 1995). Sen. Kassebaum has made it clear that getting S. 1423 out of committee this spring is a top priority. However, if this issue is not addressed by early summer, the presidential election is sure to eliminate the possibility that OSHA reform will pass this year.

Brian Barnard is government affairs specialist for National Arborist Association.
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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - MARCH 1996
In early June 1995, Randy Robinson and I were pruning a large white ash at Mount Vernon estate, the home of George Washington. While ascending this ash, I noticed a large hollow cavity about 40-45 feet up. I also noticed vertical separations between some of the main leads and the trunk—as if they were pulling away from the trunk of the tree. At the end of the day, I reported my observations to my boss, Stewart Bunn, of Guardian Tree Experts, Inc. I told him that I believed the tree was hazardous and should come down.

Herein lies our dilemma. To the untrained eye, the tree was a beautiful specimen. It stood over 120 feet tall and had a circumference of 17 feet. Planted by Washington himself, estimates placed its age at 210. The tree bordered a path along "Bowling Green," where one million visitors stroll each year. No one wanted to hear that a tree of this size, beauty and historical significance needed to come down. Please, don't shoot the messenger!

Stewart immediately called Dean Norton, the head horticulturist of Mount Vernon, to advise him of the situation. A meeting was scheduled for two weeks hence to decide if any measures could be taken to save this tree. Among those in attendance were Bunn, Norton, Jim Rees, executive director of Mount Vernon, and Dr. Jim Sherald, plant pathologist with the National Park Service.

We used our bucket truck so each individual could visually inspect the cavity. It was decided, with much trepidation, that the tree needed to be removed. When we arrived at Mount Vernon the following Monday, lo and behold, one of the large leads was lying in the Boxwood Garden. Fortunately for all concerned, the lead broke out in the middle of the night and not during the day when people would have been around. Needless to say, the ash was a very hazardous tree.

As field personnel, we play an integral part in developing a trusting relationship between our company and the clients we serve. We are the eyes in the tree that can detect possible problems, whether it is abnormal twig growth, cankers, insect infestation, structural defects or potentially dangerous situations. When we notice problems, it is our duty to report these observations to our superiors.

It was sad that George Washington's ash tree had to be removed, but gratifying that our recommendation, though unpopular, was the right decision. In spite of their loss, the staff at Mount Vernon were appreciative of Guardian's professionalism in handling this hazardous situation.

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