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The complaint is a frequent one in the tree care industry: “We have to do something about low ball competition. I simply can’t compete on price with these guys.”

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We face the exact same challenge here at Tree Care Industry Magazine. Why should a company advertise with us? There are at least four magazines that cover all or part of the industry, and numerous others – mostly with a landscape focus – that claim a portion of their audience is interested in tree care. We are the most expensive. Nevertheless, there are good reasons why advertisers choose to pay that premium.

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Our audience quality is higher. TCI Magazine targets decision makers in the industry as readers. A landscaper who does “a little tree work” has different buying habits than the owner of a commercial tree service. And the guy who drags brush has limited decision-making authority. TCI has a separate publication, called the TreeWorker, for field personnel. TCI Magazine is for owners, partners, vice presidents, general foreman and supervisors. According to our auditors, more than 17,000 of our readers hold those job titles at tree care companies.

Our circulation is verified. Advertisers know who reads TCI Magazine because it’s independently audited, which is a type of certification for publications. The two leading audit firms for print media are ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) and BPA Worldwide. Print media buyers who want to assure they are getting what they pay for request the latest audit report. Copies of U.S. Postal Service receipts or invoices from printers aren’t substitutes for independent audits. Sending magazines to the wrong audience or to people who don’t want them doesn’t result in sales for advertisers.

Every month I receive piles of magazines I didn’t ask for and don’t read. Some poor advertiser is paying for my copy, thinking I am a qualified reader. TCI Magazine is audited by BPA.

Our expertise is deeper. Our articles are written by professors, experts in the field, experienced (Continued on page 5)
practitioners and freelance journalists, some of whom have been writing for us for a decade or more. Before publication, they are subject to technical review by TCIA technical staff. That means the articles have credibility, and copies of the magazine are kept on office shelves and in personal libraries for years.

Our credibility is higher. In addition to paid ads, hidden (and not-so-hidden) advertorials have been steadily creeping into many trade publications. Some offer advertorials as a bonus for paid advertising. “Buy an ad and we’ll run an article about your product.” What are advertorials? Disguised as content, these hidden ads may be paid ads that are written by the advertiser and designed to look like the editorial pages of the magazine. An ethical publication will clearly label these pages as advertisements. Others won’t. Less clear and more deceptive for the reader are articles written by advertisers or their public relations firms that run without any transparent disclaimer. A discerning reader will notice that the article only mentions or shows pictures of one brand. (And sometimes those pictures are the same ones in the company’s paid ad on the same page!) The article might also run without a byline to disguise the writer’s origin, or may have a tagline at the end that lists the writer as working for a marketing firm that happens to be in the home town of the product profiled. Some readers are fooled, some of the time, but a steady diet of less-than-objective articles means that shoddy publications have little credibility with readers, which doesn’t help advertisers in the long run.

All companies and people will buy, and continue to buy, if they believe that value has been received. In addition to price, customers demand other benefits, both tangible and intangible, in order to believe they have received value.

Mark Garvin
Publisher
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By Rick Howland

By the July 4th weekend, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had confirmed more than 1,600 tornados in the U.S. That makes 2011 already the deadliest tornado year since 1936, even though at the time of the writing of this article we were just about half way through the twister season.

You’re likely familiar with the language of the forecasters: “large storm system… associated frontal boundary… super cells, heavy wind, torrential rain, hail, tornadoes” followed by “severe and widespread damage.”

To the tree care company entrepreneur these words spark thoughts of “business opportunity.” Take, for example, the image of Joplin, Missouri, where virtually every tree visible to the horizon in all directions was leveled or broken. It will be months before all that debris is processed.

But before you hitch up the chipper, jump in your bucket truck and head to the next storm ground zero, stop and think! The work is indeed there, but getting the job and getting paid for it can pose more of a challenge than you think or are prepared to handle.

There are three levels of storm clean-up work:

- the independent
- those pre-approved by insurance companies or via professional association, and
- what are called federally approved first responders

Nick’s Tree Service out of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, represents the experience of an independent tree care pro heading into a disaster area, specifically, the May 22 Joplin tornado.

“We are near Tulsa, about three hours from Joplin,” says Elliot Taylor, vice president of the TCIA-member company. “I heard how badly things were messed up, so I jumped in my truck and drove up. I was on site myself for a full day assessing the situation.”

Returning to company headquarters he mobilized his dad, Nick, for whom the company is named, his brothers and two crewmembers as well as himself. The team convoyed a 25-ton, 120-foot-reach telescoping truck crane, T320 Bobcat compact skid loader, Rayco RG90 self-propelled stump grinder, high-capacity Bandit 280HD heavy duty chipper and 62-foot aerial lift bucket truck with an 8-foot-tall, 17-foot-long dump bed.

“A typical Joplin, Missouri, street immediately after the tornado. Courtesy of Terry Tree Service.
was obviously all shook up,” says Taylor. “Here is what I ran into a lot: Most of the problems were trees on a house. I would explain that I have a crane and a truck and can get that tree off your house. In better neighborhoods, those comfortable with their finances could pay you and deal with the insurance companies. In other neighborhoods, people would say they had to wait on their insurance agent. Three weeks later, they were still waiting.”

“The upshot was that we got about four days of work and reached a lot of dead-ends. So we went home, but there was so much work we could have worked for three months steady,” he says.

“I noticed a lot of volunteers going into wealthy neighborhoods. But what puzzled me was the urging to volunteers to help their fellow citizens and to start by getting debris off homes and other structures. It’s like using volunteers to get a free workforce to get past claims. Then professional tree care companies have trouble doing service for a fair price. Volunteers provide a marginal service, sometimes doing more damage in the process. As I see it,” he says, “the insurance company now may not have to pay some claims and the homeowner is left with hacked up material in the yard that is no longer covered by the insurance policy. The consumer gets hurt with a crappy job and little insurance payout.”

All that being said, “Even those four days were good ones with a lot of very good contacts,” Taylor says. He’s more encouraged for the future. “We did the Fayetteville (2009 Arkansas) ice storm. We went there for a month and a half. Customers loved what we did and said whenever we got back there would be a batch for work for us. One guy we did an $8,500 job for, then subsequently did a job for a neighbor and then got a call back from the original customer. Another customer was a school teacher who knows a lot of people in Fayetteville, and it’s a close-knit community. One of our first jobs was for a yoga teacher who knows a lot of prominent wives. It’s referrals.”

Ray Gilliam, owner of TCIA-member Gilliam’s Tree Service Professionals in Kingsport, Tennessee, has been busy working to clean up after a smaller, yet rather messy tornado April 9, donating time and equipment and mobilizing the Navy Seabees to clean up tree debris on the grounds of a VA hospital in Johnson City. “The VA was a unique situation. When I called to see if they wanted help there were two related entities to deal with. One was the Mountain Home Cemetery, a national cemetery with separate budget. For that, you have to be on the Central Contractors Registry (a pre-approved contractor list, part of doing work for the federal govern-

Eager for Storm Work?
Experience Says Prepare In Advance!

Kevin Caldwell, president of Caldwell Tree Care, an accredited TCIA member company in Roswell, Georgia, is a TCIA board member and a veteran of nearly a dozen major storm responses, including this spring/summer’s outbreak, having called out five crews from his own company and others. His advice for those considering this type of work is to be prepared.

“What is the one thing you can do in advance?”

“Every circumstance is different, and we know that at any given time we can get a call,” says Caldwell, whose company is also an HMI member that responds on behalf of insurance companies. “So the biggest thing we do is diligent maintenance of equipment. And I know from experience that because my equipment is in great shape I was able to take advantage of this situation, he says of the recent storms.

“I always require vigorous maintenance. You can’t plan for a storm. At most you may have a day’s notice of bad weather. With tornados, you just never know,” he says.

Caldwell warns that there is a small window of opportunity when responding to a storm’s aftermath.

“You have to be there in the first 24 to 48 hours, and you have about a 10- to 14-day window to get the bulk of your work done,” he says, noting that the longest he and his crews were out of town on storm cleanup was 30 days; the shortest was seven.

He explains that there is an intense sales effort involved, largely due to the shifting psychological state of the client. “Initially, it is the devastation, then a certain negativity sets in as peo-
prepare in advance

(Continued from page 9)

people get angry and critical of the costs, imagining things like price gouging.”

Regarding the April 27 storm striking Tuscaloosa and Chattanooga, “I remember it well. It was my birthday, and we were at a meeting,” Caldwell recalls. “HMI called. We have worked with them for years, mostly individual jobs. They said they needed four to five crews in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the next morning and asked what we could do. I said I would make it happen.”

Caldwell says he called TCIA colleagues in North Carolina and Atlanta and put together what he called “four and a half to five crews, depending on configuration. Altogether, we had 21 people on the ground,” adding “We have a company culture here where people understand that if they want to make a larger check, we leave a skeleton crew in the office and travel.”

“We ended up sending three bucket trucks, two grapple trucks, a mini skid, three Bobcats, several chip trucks and lots of rigging devices. We find that in storms the availability of cranes is limited. We rigged all our trees from houses.”

“The BIG question in these large-scale storms always is – do you bring a chipper? Out of the 11 storms I have worked, we have used a chipper three times. We did not chip much in the beginning in Chattanooga, though we were required in one municipality to haul debris because of a local ordinance. Typically, what’s used are grapple loading trucks because in the normal course of storm work we get trees off homes and to the street for another contractor to come by for pickup.”

“Some situations you just cannot plan for. You almost have to plan for a backup. Let’s say you did not bring a chipper. Typical storm work is to get trees off the houses and stage debris to be hauled away, but you find there is no place to put debris. In some cases, removal is a requirement of the job. Or your equipment breaks. You always have to have someone and something on standby. That’s another reason maintenance is so important,” he concludes.
Gilliam says he was worked for that one insurance company for many years, and the two know and trust one another. “We work by the hour and charge time-and-half. We get to OT in about 2.5 days, and I have to be mindful of overworking my crew – someone can get hurt.”

“I usually bring in a Caterpillar track loader with a grapple or Bobcat A300 skid steer to lift logs out, and all kinds of climbing gear. Cranes are handy, but you may not be able to get them in where they’re needed,” Gilliam notes. “Also, this is a mountainous area, and cranes are not always viable.”

“In a storm situation, you need to be flexible and accommodate folks. The first week after the tornados, all we did was toss stuff off and tarp roofs. This is handy and economical for the insurance company and an extra service a tree care company can offer.”

HMI, a TCIA Associate Member company, provides a novel, streamlined service that matches tree care companies with insurance company-approved jobs. (These can be as simple as a single tree that has fallen on a residential or commercial customer’s home or facility, or as complex as managing an insurance carrier’s neighborhood-by-neighborhood exposure following a major storm event.) HMI claims to be the only company in the U.S. that specializes in providing the insurance industry with comprehensive claims support for tree damage and landscape losses.

The result is an organized response that benefits all involved.

According to Doug Cowles, president of HMI, “We have copyrighted our first responder program. Our insurance clients pay to register, as do tree care service companies. We run a highly structured, rigid protocol for assignments limiting who can call for deployment of tree care service and who can cancel them.” HMI can deploy approved tree care crews in advance of a major storm threat or immediately after.

“Our message to the insurance companies with respect to anything involving landscaping or tree care material is that our members can act as everything from consulting (including estimating) to emergency cleanup,” Cowles explains.

For authorized members (TCIA accredited and ISA certified), “We have the process in place to get them qualified jobs and get...
them paid quickly. We answer the questions of the (tree care) business owner when is he going about the effort to get guys out and potentially into harm’s way. For example, “How do I get work and get paid quickly and get home?” In the fog of a post-storm situation, Cowles says, there is often no methodology to get paid to fix a problem, such as getting tree off a house.”

Cowles says that unlike an independent company that has to work with a homeowner then perhaps wait for the homeowner to get paid from the insurance company before getting paid for the tree work, “We (HMI) get and qualify the leads, get the work approved with the insurance companies (often within hours of a written estimate), and the insurance companies pay the (member tree care company) directly. It’s a low-risk deployment,” Cowles adds. “If you get there and we cannot qualify enough work, we and the insurance carriers will ensure members’ costs are covered.”

He warns that there is also a downside. If a company is committed to working with HMI it may not be able to take a big job. “There are some tradeoffs.”

Right now, the HMI network has more than 50 members representing upward of 1,500 arborists and 2,500 crews, which makes it capable of covering about 75 percent of the U.S. population base, according to Cowles.

During the recent tornado outbreak, Cowles says, “We had, at any one time, 15 members working exclusively for us, mobilized into the affected area. Plus, we worked with members who were stationed in the local market.”

“Our authorized members do their own crew configurations with one estimator per two three-man crews. The important point to remember is that HMI is in the middle of all the administration issues and does not leave members dangling when it comes time for collection.”

“There is a small fee to join and a small percentage taken off the work. Our model is that if the members are successful, we are,” says Cowles, adding that the requirements to be an authorized HMI member were assembled in collaboration with TCIA. “Right now we are just rolling out to our authorized members an industry first, a warranty program so that members can offer a warranty to restore a site to its pre-storm condition,” Cowles says.

Jay Hager, branch manager for TCIA-member Arbor Masters, headquartered in Shawnee, Kansas, worked the recent Tuscaloosa and Birmingham tornado events, deployed by HMI.

“The fact that we are already vetted (equipment and qualifications are checked off) ahead of time cuts our costs,” Hager says, “and it makes the interface painless because someone else handles a lot of the back office needs.”

“Whether it is a single event or a large-
scale catastrophic event, we get a call from HMI and go out to look at the situation to see if, for example, a tree is on a house,” Hager says. “We write the estimate, take photos and get homeowners to sign off, letting them know or remind them that we are an approved contractor for their insurance company. We send the information to HMI, which uploads it to the insurance company database that manages claims. We get approval pretty quick. During the tornados, we would get approvals sometimes in an hour, but typically in three to four. After the job, we would bill and the insurance company would cut us a check within a week.”

Hager says Arbor Masters was running five crews totaling 15 tree care professionals. Equipment deployed included bucket trucks, skid steers, a few chippers (“We did not do much chipping,” says Hager), climbing equipment, log loaders and one crane at each location (Tuscaloosa and Birmingham). The work was largely described as getting trees off lines and structures and stacking material, large and small, for pickup by other vendors.

“We were out for 10 days,” Hager says, “working 10 to 12 hours a day.”

When it comes to storm cleanup, at the top of the food chain are major first-tier storm responder contractors who are essentially strategic partners with the federal government specializing in disaster recovery. Typically, they are charged with removing construction and tree debris. There are only a handful of companies doing this, and they will be running their own crews as well as previously approved sub-contractors, calling in several hundred affiliated companies to manage storm cleanup.

In the event of a major storm, companies rushing to get work with a bucket truck and chipper are likely to be turned away from major, secured areas unless they have been given prior approval by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel or other authorities.

TCIA-member Terry Tree Service, LLC, based in Rochester, New York, is one of those previously approved companies that has been committed to the assistance of disaster recovery since 1995. The company has put together an organization that, along with its subcontractors, has the capacity to mobilize within 48 hours more than 200 dump trucks and trailers, numerous skid steers, 75 self-loading grapple trucks and 25 front loaders, which might result in them having more than 100 crews and 400 workers in the field.

The company reports that as a first tier subcontractor during Hurricane Katrina removing debris under contract in New Orleans, the area of responsibility covered more than 8 square city miles that included more than 15,000 homes. Terry was tasked with debris removal tree work and house demolitions. In order to accomplish the task, Terry Tree Service managed more than 50 crews, consisting of 300-plus workers in the field, and utilized 100 dump trucks/trailers, 40 self-loading grapple trucks, 10 excavators, five front loaders, 25 Bobcats and 50 bucket trucks.
Timothy J. Pope, vice-president of Terry Tree Service, recently returned from the tornado areas and shared the strategic nature of how his company does business.

“When a local municipality is overwhelmed by an event, it goes to the next level for assistance, such as the county, state and federal levels. At the highest level, such as Hurricane Katrina or the tornados in Tuscaloosa or Joplin, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is tasked to handle cleanup. The Army Corps gets contracting under way,” Pope explains.

“Where we step in is with other contractors who are awarded what are known as pre-position contracts.” (These, he explains, are major, pre-approved federal contractors who have been pre-screened for such work to include equipment levels, equipment readiness, training, licensing and prior history.) We are subs to them. They task us to bring our management, equipment and experience and to get boots on the ground immediately. I have been doing this for 20 years,” Pope says.

“We know the program. We get the call, and off we go. Our learning curve was years ago,” he notes.

Typically, even before the cleanup contracts are in place, Terry gets the call. “Time is of the essence. I was in Tuscaloosa two days after the tornados occurred. The next morning I was off to Joplin to get there to do a resources assessment,” Pope says. “We will bring in our own resources plus other supplemental resource (Terry’s own pre-approved subs) and manage the task to ensure everyone follows rules and regulations.” (That includes review of qualification, safety procedures, up-to-date and proper insurance and the process to ensure everyone gets paid.)

Pope says, “We have several companies who have been working with us for years and years, and we do bring on new subs. We go through the vetting process in the off-season when we can bring everyone up to speed so that when an event occurs (such as the recent tornado outbreak) we are up to speed and can call on personnel and equipment.

“What we do is travel to conferences, including TCIA events, to meet with people,” he says, adding that potential subs can go to the Terry Tree Service website for a subcontractor log-in page. (visit www.terrytree.com)

To give you an example of how much and how fast Terry can mobilize, Pope says that “Within 24 hours we had, in Tuscaloosa, 70 knuckleboom loaders on site, and even before the contracts are actually approved, we’re going through the process when equipment shows up of checking for safety, drivers’ licenses, registrations, lights, alarms and other safety equipment to ensure that we have good equipment.” Pope explains that the contract approval process takes about a week to 10 days. “In the meantime, we anticipate the need and get our resources moving in that direction.”

When asked if there was one thing he wanted to stress, Pope says, “The most dangerous things I see are crews working around wires either in the air or on the ground, including underground transformers. Working around utilities is handled very differently (from regular tree care); every wire has to be treated as if it is energized. We watch very closely,” he says.

The bottom line seems to be that the time to prepare your company and crews to cope with and profit from any kind of disaster is well before it strikes. Get to know your major local insurance carriers and get pre-approved vendor status. Get to know the majors in terms of tree damage remediation and first tier disaster responders. Work to get sub contractor status from them, which could be in any market, and use your list of affiliations, certifications, training and equipment in your marketing materials.

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LebanonTurf names marketing director

LebanonTurf, a 16-year TCIA member company (formerly as Plant Health Care, Inc.), in June named Dave Dell director of marketing. LebanonTurf serves the landscape and golf markets with microbiological components and advanced controlled-release fertilizers.

Dell is responsible for strategic marketing planning and implementation, product strategy and development and distribution channel management. He leads the marketing function for the fertilizer, seed and biological product portfolios that make up the professional division of the Lebanon Seaboard Corp. of companies.

“As we continue to differentiate and add value to the LebanonTurf portfolio of products and services with end-users and distributors, Dave’s career experience is an ideal match for our current needs and the challenges of today’s market,” said Dave Heegard, general manager of LebanonTurf.

Dell earned a bachelor’s of science degree in Agricultural Systems from Penn State University. He serves on the Board of the Penn State Alumni Association and on the Board of the College of Agriculture Alumni Society.

Morbark hires new tree care products manager

Morbark has hired Casey Gross as sales manager for its Tree Care Products business unit. Gross comes to Morbark with 28 years of tree care equipment industry experience, including 20 years in sales and management roles. Gross will be responsible for sales team leadership, as well as general management responsibilities in the Tree Care Products business unit.

Jim Shoemaker Jr., vice president of operations and leader of the Tree Care Products team, stated, “We are very excited to welcome Casey to our team at Morbark, as he brings considerable experience, talent and energy to our team. His industry experience will help sustain and build upon the sharp growth Morbark has seen in tree care products in recent years.”

Terex appoints new VP of sales in central region

Terex Aerial Work Platforms has appointed Paul Waller vice president of sales for the central region. In this role, Waller will lead the central region sales team in supporting customers of Genie and Terex products while achieving company objectives within the territory spanning from Winnipeg, Canada to Austin, Texas.

“With his leadership and the strength of the central region sales team, Terex AWP is prepared to supply all customers with the equipment and support they need,” said Tom Saxelby, vice president North American Sales, Terex AWP.

Serving as a key member of the sales team, Waller has been with Terex AWP for three years. He holds a bachelor’s degree in communications from William Paterson University of New Jersey.
By John Iurka

Having spent the last few years traveling the country performing site visits for TCIA’s Accreditation program, I have seen that many companies have very organized sales and accounting procedures dealing with daily income from tree care/plant health care/landscaping crews. On the other hand, I have visited many companies that do not have a clear picture of how they are pricing their work.

Many times work is priced because of gut feelings, how profits have been in the past, competitors’ pricing, etc. Companies need to develop methodology to accurately determine what their cost of doing business is, what the company’s breakeven point is, what profits are expected, and how to track income and profits.

At a “Job Estimators’ Workshop” held by TCIA several years ago, individual bids on a sample tree care job varied from $375 to $4,000, although many of the bids were in a general range.

There are many very complex models used in business for tracking these things, but it does not have to be rocket science.

The first step is to develop a profit and loss statement with four basic parts:

- income (sales)
- fixed expenses
- variable expenses, and
- gross profit

Tracking income is easy; tracking costs can be more difficult. But with today’s computer hardware and software, it is increasingly easier. Gross profit is the difference between income and costs.

Tracking of expenses means determining what your fixed and variable costs are. Fixed costs are those costs that remain essentially the same, such as rent, payroll, insurance, vehicle costs, etc. Variable costs are those costs that can fluctuate, such as materials, fuel, etc.

The more you break down the tracking of expenses the better you will be able to draw comparisons from one year to the next. For example, if you merely have an expense column that is for office supplies, then you only can track general expenses. But if you provide more detail, i.e. paper goods, toners, letterhead, postage, etc. in separate columns, then you get a much better cost analysis.

Once you have determined what your expenses (fixed + variable) are, you have a number that will be your break-even point, or the amount of income needed to pay all expenses. Profit would then be that percentage wanted above the break-even point. For instance if expenses were $375,000, your break-even point would be $375,000. If you wanted to have a margin of 10 percent profit, then the total sales would be $375,000 + $37,500 for a total expected sales of $412,500. (These figures are for a fiscal year).

Now how do we use these figures to determine what to charge for each man hour worked?

We have determined that we need to have total sales of $412,500 for a year. We know that if an employee works 40 hours per week, for 52 weeks, he or she works a total of 2,080 hours a year.

Knowing the total gross needed for expenses and profit, and the number of hours an employee will work in a year (approximate), you can easily determine the number of employees needed to accomplish the projected work load, and you know what you need to charge for each hour an employee works.

Employee hours (2,080) x Rate Per Man Hour ($85) = $176,000 generated dollars for one employee, for one calendar year.

So $412,500 divided by $176,000 = 2.34, which is the number of employees you need to accomplish your yearly breakeven point plus your targeted profit.

Now you can also take your total projected gross revenue and divide that by the projected number of man hours: $412,500/(2.34 x 2080) 4,867.2 = 84.75 dollars per man hour. So you can work the equation both ways.

Now how can you increase your profit?

With the above figures you are hoping for a 10 percent profit margin. If you diversify the work your company does to include services other than general tree care (removals, pruning, cabling, etc.), you can increase your profit margins, because other services such as fertilization, plant health care and air excavation, are less labor intensive, and thus generally provide a higher dollar rate per man hour worked. Generally industry averages for plant health care range from $125 to $200 per man hour, fertilization in the same range, and air excavation work from $100 to $150 per man hour.

Even if you do not wish to add other services, you can increase daily profit by estimating “value added services” for each sold job. These would include cabling and bracing, soil corrections, granular fertilization and other generally higher priced services.

It is very important to set up a system for projecting manpower and income ratios on an annual basis, so that you can track progress, based on dollars per man-hour, on a weekly and monthly basis. That way you can adjust production abilities of crews, sales rates of sales personnel, efficiencies of operation, etc.

John L. Iurka, CTSP, is an arborist, owner of Green Industry Consulting in Sound Beach, New York, and a TCIA Accreditation auditor. This article is a preview of his talk on the same subject that he will present this November at TCI EXPO in Hartford, Connecticut. For more information about TCI EXPO or to register, visit http://expo.tcia.org/.
Stihl FS Brushcutters

Powered by a low-emission engine, the new STIHL FS 360 C-E and the FS 460 C-EM brushcutters are approximately 20 percent more fuel efficient than previous models. The FS 460 C-EM is the first Stihl brushcutter available in the U.S. featuring the Stihl M-Tronic system that is designed to intelligently manage the engine to deliver optimum power at all times. The M-Tronic engine automatically adjusts to changes in elevation, temperature and air filter cleanliness, eliminating the need for manual carburetor adjustments. It also compensates for fuel quality and varying octane levels, and its memory function automatically restores previous settings when subsequent conditions have not changed.

Both the STIHL FS 360 C-E and the FS 460 C-EM feature a large, 25.4 oz. translucent fuel tank, and the Easy2Start system makes starting fast and easy. The four-point anti-vibration system helps reduce user fatigue. The rugged professional design and four-point anti-vibration system allow for optimal control and help reduce user fatigue. A new lightweight universal harness comes standard.

Leonardi M1 Blueshark

The M1 Blueshark, Leonardi Manufacturing’s new M1 Cutting System for small to medium size grinders, has simplified tooth ordering and maintenance – only one tooth is needed; no more rights, lefts, straights or pockets. Teeth are three-position, indexable and only one tool is required for changing and indexing, saving you time and money. M1 Blueshark’s reduced wheel weight allows for easier maneuverability, decreased operator effort, better balance and less clutch and belt wear. It has improved cutting in both directions and also allows for plunging.

VizCon traffic cones

VizCon Quick Deploy Spring Cones, available from Forestry Suppliers Inc., are half the weight of conventional traffic cones, deploy automatically and collapse for easy storage. The rubber/polyurethane base grips the roadway for stability. The included wire/mesh tote allows for convenient storage of the set of four cones. The cones are MUTDC compliant (day and night).

Flynn Tree Scabbard

The new Flynn Tree Scabbard is designed to carry a chain saw safely at the arborist’s side, allowing a climber safe and easy access to the saw. No more saws dangling from a rope, hitting against the tree and getting stuck in crotches. Made of high quality leather and aluminum in the USA, the scabbard is well balanced and field tested. The scabbard is 32 inches long, 10½ inches wide and weighs 8 pounds. The opening at the bottom of the scabbard accommodates larger saws when chunking down big wood.

Arborjet ACE-jet insecticide

Arborjet’s ACE-jet micro-injectable, broad spectrum “fast acting” insecticide is now available in 32 states. In June it was approved for use in California. ACE-jet targets leaf-chewing insects including caterpillars, winter moth, gypsy moth and webworm; piercing-sucking insects including whiteflies, adelgids, aphids, spider mites, scale, thrips and mealybugs; and min-
Events & Seminars

August 9, 2011
Hazard Tree Workshop
Duluth, MN
Contact: www.safetrees.com/workshop-2011.html

August 10-12, 2011
L1 Tree Climbing Methods & Work Positioning
Attleboro, MA
www.arbormaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

August 12, 2011
SHADE: Southwest Horticulture Annual Day of Education
Renaissance Glendale, Glendale, AZ
Contact: Arizona Nursery Association www.azna.org

August 16, 2011
Tree Risk Mgt, Hazard Tree ID & Storm Dmg Restoration
Farmington Hills, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

August 17-18, 2011
Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) Workshop
Target Specialty Products, San Jose, CA
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

August 23, 2011
Shoots and Roots! A Diagnostic Walkabout
Green Oak Twp., MI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

August 25, 2011
Diagnosing Turf & Tree Problems in Urban Landscapes
Rochester, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

August 25, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Round Rock, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

August 30, 2011
“Real World” Plant Health Clinic
Pontiac, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

August 31, 2011
ArborMaster TreeScape Symposium
Southfield, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

September 15, 2011
Conifers: The Good, the Bad and the Not so Bad!
Blissfield Hills, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

September 20-21, 2011
L1 Precision Felling & Chainsaw Handling
Longmont, Colorado
www.arbormaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 22-24, 2011
L1 Tree Climbing Methods & Work Positioning
Longmont, Colorado
www.arbormaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 23, 2011
Arizona Community Tree Council 2011 Annual Conf.
Sept. 24 - AUTC Plant Problem Diagnosis Workshop
Prescott Resort and Conference Center, Prescott, AZ
Contact: (602) 354-3023; www.aztrees.org

September 24-25, 2011
3rd Annual Women’s Tree Climbing Workshop
Mary B. Wakefield Estate, Milton, MA
Contact: NE Chapter ISA, heather@newenglandisa.org

September 26-27, 2011
L1 Arborist Rigging Applications
Longmont, Colorado
www.arbormaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 29-30, 2011
ISA-Rocky Mountain Chapter 2011 Annual Conference
Marriott Denver South/Park Meadows, Littleton, CO
Contact: (303) 756-1815; www.isarmc.org

October 1, 2011
2011 ISA-RMC Tree Climbing Championship
Denver, CO
Contact: (303) 756-1815; www.isarmc.org

October 4, 2011
Diagnosing Urban Tree Decline: A Diagnostic Walkabout
Rochester Hills, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 5-7, 2011
2011 Texas Tree Conference & Trade Show
Waco Convention Center, Waco, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

October 7, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Waco, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

October 10, 2011
Outdoor Power Equipment Safety, Application & 
Green Technology, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 21-22, 2011
NJ Shade Tree Federation 86th Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ
Contact: Donna Massa (732) 246-3210; njshadetreefederation@att.net; www.njstf.org

October 22-25, 2011
New England Chapter ISA - Annual Conference
Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, ME
Contact: Heather Leff,

October 25-26, 2011*
Illinois Arborist Assoc. Annual Conference & Trade Show
Holiday Inn Select, Tinley Park, IL
Contact: www.illinoisarborist.org

November 1-2, 2011*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) Workshop
In conjunction with TCI EXPO, Hartford, CT
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

November 3-5, 2011*
TCI EXPO 2011
Preconference workshops Nov. 1-2
Hartford, CT
Contact: cyr@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

December 5-6, 2011
Certified Arborist Seminars and Exam
Fort Harrison NR Education Center, Indianapolis, IN
Contact: Lindsey Purcell www.indiana-arborist.org

January 24-25, 2012
2nd Annual NJ Plants Trade Show & Conference
New Jersey Convention Center, Edison, NJ
Contact: NJPLA, Kevin 1-800-332-3976;
Kevin@macevents.com; www.njplantshow.com

January 24-26, 2012
2012 Annual Indiana Arborist Association Conf.
Marriott Inn, Indianapolis, IN
Contact: Lindsey Purcell www.indiana-arborist.org

January 30 - February 2, 2012
Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
Marriott at City Center, Newport News, VA
Contact: www.mahsc.org; (757) 523-4734

February 12-16, 2012*
Winter Management Conference 2012
Curacao
Contact: cyr@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

March 6-7, 2012
Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) Workshop
Gwinnet Tech, Lawrenceville, GA
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

March 6-7, 2012
MGIA 25th Annual Trade Show & Convention
Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance
How do you know when your safety program is working? When an OSHA safety inspector tells you “you made my day.”

Those were the words used to describe the experience of an OSHA inspector who unexpectedly did a site visit on one of our job sites. It was April 7 around 8:30 a.m., a normal, typical day, and our crew members had no idea that they were being watched.

The inspector pulled up across the street in an unmarked SUV. He had his clipboard with citations ready. It was quite a day, he said, because he had just finished another site visit where he handed out citations left and right. It was early and he was just getting started. When he saw our crew’s truck parked on a residential street in Washington, D.C., he thought “this should be an easy one.” Tree companies are one of the targets that OSHA looks for, he related, and there is never a shortage of citations or safety issues that can be found.

He watched our crew for 45 minutes from his truck. Our crew leader thought it was just someone watching, maybe a neighbor or some passerby checking out how pruning is done. He had taken numerous photos of the chain saw operation, waiting for someone to drop-start or one-hand it, or to start cutting without chaps. He took photos of the cones and the site set-up. He watched the chipper operator and the communication between crew members.

After 45 minutes and without any safety violations witnessed, he approached the crew. He asked the climber in the bucket truck if he was tied in, and the climber showed him that he was. He handed the crew leader a business card with his name and introduced himself as an OSHA safety inspector. Our crew leader asked him to hold on a second while he removed his ear protection. He was impressed, but the inspection wasn’t over.

It wasn’t just taking the photographs or just looking for the obvious safety violations – he interviewed our crew leader. He asked him if we had a written safety program, if we provided safety bonuses and how we manage safety incidents.

The answers he received from the crew leader were what impressed him, he said. Our crew leader told him, yes, we have a written safety program, we do a weekly tailgate meeting, and, no, we don’t offer bonuses just for safety – because it is expected – and that we have a safety incident system where all employees can submit a safety concern anonymously.

The crew leader told the inspector that our company encourages everyone to discuss a safety issue topic, whether it relates to the company or to them, or something they read about. The program promotes involvement – it’s not about just showing up.

When I contacted the OSHA inspector to get his feedback, he was surprised. Normally people don’t ask them about what they think. He said that good companies with good safety programs still get citations, because at the end of the day it is up to each and every crew and staff member to ensure his or her own safety and the safety of others. This is cultural; it is more common to find unsafe practices than it is to find implementation of safety practices, the inspector related. He said watching our crew for 45 minutes was like “watching a good show,” and that it “made his day.”

When asked what the most common citations are, his response was:

► Improper PPE, worn out PPE and just plain no PPE – this is the easiest citation for an OSHA inspector
► Bucket truck operation, not being tied in
► Chain saw usage without chaps
► Improper chipper use, “like sticking your feet in the chipper.” Haven’t we all learned?

When asked if we could do anything differently or better, he replied, “Keep up the good work.”

So, when you think you’re not being watched, and maybe it’s not a big deal – IT IS. The inspector said he writes thousands of dollars of citations daily. An OSHA inspector can shut down your job site.

We are proud of our company and our team members and we wanted to share this positive feedback. Everyone knows that you always hear about the “bad stuff,” but you rarely hear about the “good stuff.” We also want to thank TCIA for CTSP and all the programs that have helped us get OSHA approved.

Vat Ross is personnel manager and a safety committee member at RTEC Treecare, a TCIA-accredited, 24-year TCIA member company with two CTSPs on staff, located in Falls Church, Virginia.
A love of tree-climbing, engineering and artistic expression led Bill de Vos to a lifelong passion for trees and tree preservation.

An ISA Certified Arborist, registered consulting arborist and NJ Certified Tree Expert, de Vos, started his first tree care business, Ramapo Valley Tree Surgeons, in New Jersey in 1974. The same year, he joined the National Arborist Association, which later became TCIA.

“My first meeting was when Dr. Alex Shigo rolled out his ‘Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees’ theory,” de Vos says. “I was fascinated as well as hooked forever.”

de Vos sold the company when he moved to Vermont in 1978 to attend the University of Vermont, but stayed in tree care. He registered his second business, TreeWorks Ltd., Historic & Notable Tree Preservation, in 1984 and now has one office in Montpelier and a second workshop in Charlotte, Vt. Between eight and 12 employees work in the field, depending on the season. Three work in the office, two full time and one part time.

He won 11 NAA/TCIA “Excellence in Arboriculture Awards” before the program was disbanded a few years ago. Many of De Vos’s clients have been with him for more than 30 years. Seventy percent of all his clients are residential, with the remainder being commercial and institutional, including some universities. He advertises in the yellow pages and sends out flyers and emails, but most of his new clients are referrals.

“I’m proud of our reputation,” he says. “I’ve always said, if you concentrate foremost on building a reputation, you’ll always have work and meaningful success.”

The majority of the company’s work is pruning and tree fertilization. They also do “arbor engineering” and tree transplanting. A growing portion of de Vos’s work is consulting in these areas. He recently received a “patent pending” for a system to manage tree health that he designed for property managers, from estates to universities.

TreeWorks can’t use traditional cabling and bracing on many of the trees they work on because of the limited scope it provides, de Vos says. Instead, he uses the mechanical and engineering skills he’s refined over the years to custom build support systems for individual trees.

“Most of our arbor engineering work is for other tree care companies around the country that have clients with notable trees that have needs beyond traditional cabling and bracing parameters,” de Vos says.

He designed a cantilever system to support a historic black oak in California so it would withstand 95-mph winds. He collaborated on a system at Paul Newman’s Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Connecticut so a wheelchair-accessible tree house and the tree itself would withstand 115-mph winds.

At Harvard University, he designed a steel tower and cable support system for the Artemus Ward Sycamore, which was planted after the Revolutionary War and was slated to come down. The project won the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association’s 2010 Industry Award – “Exceeds Excellence Award.”

“The tree was in perfect physiological health and dominates the sky, but there were safety concerns,” de Vos says. “We looked at all the issues one by one and developed a comprehensive plan to mitigate the stress.”

He traveled to the Sanctuary Forest in Northern California to help save Luna, the redwood tree that Julia Butterfly Hill had
lived in for two years to prevent a logging company from cutting it down. The company eventually gave her the tree and land to go with it, but a year later, someone cut half-way around the tree. de Vos, along with arborists Dennis Yniguez and John Phillips, canopy biologist Steve Sillett and a local engineer, designed a cabling system to hold it up.

“According to reports I’ve received, Luna really hasn’t missed a beat since then,” he says.

In 2010, TreeWorks traveled to Georgia to design and construct a support system for an 80-foot tall, 6-foot diameter southern magnolia. “It was severely decayed and other tree care firms wanted to remove it,” de Vos says. “It had significant historic value related to the Civil War and I just couldn’t remove it, so we created a support system that will keep the tree standing for years to come.”

For moving and transplanting trees, the company has a 90-inch tree spade, and a track-mounted spade for smaller (to 5-inch dbh) trees. They also hand-dig larger trees in inaccessible places.

de Vos wrote the protocols for a project to transplant more than 1,600 mature live oaks for The Cloister at Sea Island, Georgia, and supervised the move. More than 640 were between 38 and 70 inches in diameter.

“The only trees that were lost were the ones that were transplanted with a tree spade, because the stock in the forest was too large,” he says. “We went to hand-dig-

(Continued on page 26)
I wanted to write up this interesting tree case that I was recently involved in for several reasons. One, consulting arborists are usually called in on situations where expertise in arboriculture or horticulture is needed, and in this case, one did not need to know the xylem from the phloem, or even anything about tree biology, physiology or anatomy. Secondly, this case, as many of my situations, called for the consultant to do some serious forensic snooping work (or CSI type stuff) and arrive at some conclusions and opinions to determine causation in this accident. A lot of our work involves the question as to whether there was or was not negligence.

A pause here to point out that consulting arborists who act as expert witnesses or expert consultants (we sometimes do both) need to pursue the assignment as if we were not working for either side. Our opinions are as advocates for the situation – not the client; and the client, whether a party to the action or the attorney, needs to know the truth. If your opinions do not help them and write a report because it was my opinion that this tree was an accident waiting to happen and the drive-by inspections should have seen this problem. The attorney told me to write my report as to my opinions so that they could take it their people and get the matter settled.

Another very important factor in presenting a case is the nature of the written report. In this type of work, we need to be good at communications; oral and written. This skill can make or break cases. Oral communications is important in depositions and trial testimonies, and written communication skills are important to “tell a story” and possibly help in settling a case for the client from a seat of strength. There are great sites and publications about report writing, but in my opinion, many reports that I see are far too long, too detailed with data that may or may not be needed, and too technical. It seems as if they are written to impress an opposing expert rather than for the client or a trier of fact (judge or jury). We need to be accurate and use the proper terminology, but we also need to make sure we are understood by the audience. If they do not understand what you are saying, the report is worthless.

My “typical” report usually starts with my conclusions. I then have a section on the background of the case depicting what I reviewed, what I did and did not do, and a brief summation of what happened in the case. Then I go into a discussion of the case, which is the meat and potatoes part. Rather than...
making this portion sound like a lab report or scientific discussion, it is actually telling a story from start to finish, chronologically, with details that are understandable and citations that are back-up to my opinions. This is followed by a brief summary of the case and then a certification. Of course photos, and/or charts, are extremely important IF they demonstrate what your story is telling.

Enough rambling, let’s discuss this case. A young couple, both recent grads from medical school, was in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, attending a wedding of their friends. They were motorizing down a small, unfamiliar side street on a Vespa motor bike and entered an intersection of a major street at the bottom of a hill. They were smashed by an oncoming vehicle and the male was killed and the female severely injured. The reason this accident occurred was because the stop sign for this side street was hidden by foliage and not visible until almost at the intersection, 24 feet to be exact.

An interesting side-bar to this case is that a police cruiser was parked on the main street about three blocks away with the camera in the front windshield in operation. The actual collision was caught on tape, but because of the distance, the details were not there. There was no mistake, though, the Vespa and the two riders were thrown high into the air.

Without getting into a lot of the details, I visited the site as a plaintiff’s expert about nine months after the incident and was able to review some police photos taken at the scene as well as some photos after the foliage was cut following the accident. There were two lawyers from separate law firms working as a team for the plaintiffs and an accident reconstruction expert at this inspection. (Incidentally, the reconstruction expert made a special effort to call me after receiving a copy of my report to tell me how much he appreciated my efforts and what a wonderful report I had prepared.) I was also provided with the township’s documents regarding safety for their streets. Actually, the township had a shade tree commissioner and full time arborist on staff. I was asked to prepare a report regarding my opinions as to the township’s responsibilities in this incident.

Figure 1, taken at the accident scene by the police, shows that the stop sign is being hidden by foliage, and figure 2, also taken by the police, shows the stop sign coming into view at approximately 24-feet from the intersection. It has become obvious that the offending plant is a rose of Sharon bush. Figures 3 and 4 were taken by me on my inspection and show an existing 10-foot-tall rose of Sharon bush. Figures 5 was taken by me on my inspection and show an existing 10-foot-tall rose of Sharon bush. Figures 3 and 4 were taken by me on my inspection and show an existing 10-foot-tall rose of Sharon bush. Figures 5 was taken by me on my inspection and show an existing 10-foot-tall rose of Sharon bush.

My report also provided published citations as to roadways and/or intersections being “top priorities for inspection,” and that traffic signs being blocked are a “very high hazard.” I also referred to recognized drive-by/windshield inspections utilized by municipalities.

My opinions in my report indicated that the township should have been having regular inspections as normal operating procedures to prevent these problems and keep their roadways safe. They did not follow their own printed guidelines.

I was later asked to write a supplemental
report involving the property owner adjacent to that intersection because a survey indicated that the rose of Sharon bushes were actually on this private property, not on the township’s property. Furthermore, this private property was subdivided several years prior to the accident and part of the documentation that I was provided required that all plants in the right of way be trimmed.

I don’t recall, nor do I actually know, how long it took the parties to settle this matter, but I do know it was really, really quick. I assume the settlement was large enough for the plaintiffs to be satisfied. The major law firm was a large national one that is well known.

Being a “forensic arborist” (if there is such a thing) is really interesting and I find the challenges to be, well, challenging. I have had so many unusual circumstances over the years and every year there are more and more mind boggling situations. I have been involved in more than 65 cases in the past 22 years involving fatalities and severe personal injuries, and some involved children – really sad.

There was one case where a party sued the contractors, et al, because they killed her 48-inch-diameter white oak when they built her new house. In going over numerous documents, including a lot of photos that the plaintiff supplied (I was working for one of the defendants), I discovered a photo that they took the very day excavation was first started and this tree, half dead at that time, was in the background. My client refused to pay anything in a settlement.

There was another case involving a large ash tree that failed causing a very severe personal injury and there was a large vertical open decaying crack in the lower tree trunk. When I visited the site, again a defendant expert, I discovered a freshly cut dogwood stump right at that portion of the tree. I found photos where the dogwood was still present and it did hide the decaying crack.

As I stated at the beginning of this discussion, this type of endeavor really involves much more that knowing arboriculture, tree failure, tree appraisals, anatomy, physiology, etc., etc. It is about being thorough, being completely honest, understanding the assignment and communicating well in regard to that assignment. Write a thorough report, but do not drag it on and on and on with minutiae. In an expert witness seminar many years ago, I was told that the three most important steps of being a good expert witness are PREPARE, PREPARE and PREPARE.

Lew Bloch is an ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist based in Potomac, Maryland, and author of Tree Law Cases in the USA.

### TreeWorks (Continued from page 23)

... ging. It cost 10 times as much but we didn’t lose any trees.”

The project lasted five years. de Vos still maintains the trees and manages the irrigation through weekly moisture readings. “Our trucks are shipped down on tractor trailers and the crews fly down one or two times a year for maintenance work,” he says.

He’s begun to experiment with a method of transplanting trees bare-root, which he learned in a class at Cornell University. Recently he successfully moved a 13-inch beech tree using this method.

When you use a balled-and-burlapped system, you can get only about 5 percent of the feeder root system, he says. “If the tree is bare root, you can get perhaps 20 percent or more of the feeder roots and the tree weighs a fraction as much.”

### Accreditation

The company was accredited in December 2008, the second to achieve that designation in Vermont.

“I thought it would make us a better company and would force us to do things we wanted to do and should do but often put off during busy times,” de Vos says. “It most certainly did.”

It took only a couple of months to prepare for Accreditation. The employees in the office did the paperwork, and 27-year veteran Jay Haggett, the foreman, and de Vos did the rest. The documentation was by far the most difficult part, he says, because the employees had to gather all the information and get it up to date while they kept up with all the office and field work.

Although the company didn’t have any problems before they became accredited, Accreditation made them aware of challenges they hadn’t noticed, he says.

“It made us more organized, more aware of the importance of having focused business, marketing and safety plans. We revisit these plans on a regular basis now, and we’re secure in the fact that we have appropriate plans in place for both field personnel and office staff.”

They also made some changes in their safety culture. He has a greater understanding of the continued need for training, no matter how good the crews are, he says.

As for the future, “I’ve purchased a sonic tomography unit (for assessing the mechanical strength of the wood within a tree), and I see us moving more into specialized consulting. Being accredited is a big plus.”

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**TreeWorks**

**Newly Expanded second edition of Tree Law Cases in the USA by Lew Bloch**

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Over the years, this author has written about equipment for snow contractors numerous times. Mostly, the focus is on what is the most productive equipment available. In the mid 1800s some engineer wrote “all the advances that can be made to make life easier have been accomplished – nothing more can be done.” Sounds like an ignorant statement if ever there was one. A couple of years ago, I wondered if we could see very much more improvement in the equipment offerings related to snow and ice management. As I look back, I tend to wonder if I could have been steering too close to that mid 1800s mindset.

Over the past two years, snowplows have come some distance with regard to improvements. In Italy, street plows no longer are attached to the truck frames via steel. Yes – the steel superstructure is there, but the plows actually are suspended by thick rubber extensions. These muffle the vibration from the plow’s cutting edge and isolate stress from the moldboard to the plow frame. The life of the plow’s mounting frame is extended significantly, and stress is dissipated better and not transferred to the truck frame.

While this particular innovation has yet to reach the United States, a derivative of this has begun to appear in snow pusher equipment. Arctic Snow Plows use this rubber isolation to keep their moldboards separated from the steel support structure that attaches to the loaders. Additionally, the sectional nature of this pusher’s design allows “sections” of the moldboard to independently “rise up” over obstructions (tire bumpers, manhole covers, imperfections in the pavement, and the like). One potential drawback is from loader operators with a penchant for stacking up the snow with the pusher. The rubber brackets tend to crack and fail with the inherent stress associated with using the equipment in a manner for which it is not designed. If they were for stacking snow, they would be called “snow stackers” instead of “snow pushers.” Stacking should be done with loaders with buckets, not with snow pushers and plows.

Some snow pushers have side plates that swing up to 180 degrees. This reminds snowplow operators of the old “snow wing” attachments to snow plows, except these are controlled from the cab of the loader. Now, a 12-foot pusher can have “wings” that move and effectively extend the 12 footer to 14- or 16-feet wide. One company in Canada...
(Horst) has a pusher that angles from side to side like a snowplow, with sides like a pusher that can be positioned 180 degrees from standard. This unit is built like a tank – with the weight of a tank, too, and a price tag to match. However, the maneuverability of this unit adds a degree of productivity that is far superior to the standard (immoveable) pusher.

The various snow plow manufacturers are developing their own “pushers” to augment their product offering. Additionally, no longer do we need to use rocker switches or push-pull levers to operate our plows. Handheld joy sticks and wireless controllers allow for an easier time of manipulating the plow’s position and direction.

The major plow manufactures now offer “wide-out” snowplows. These expandable plows increase efficiency over the old straight plows considerably. These units have hydraulically expandable wings that automatically tilt forward allowing for unique versatility over the straight blade. They are now manufactured so when you angle the blade from one side to the other, the wings automatically extend and/or retract to increase ease of use by the operator. Blizzard pioneered this advancement in equipment technology – and the “blizzard plow” was well known for enhancing productivity amongst snow contractors. When Blizzard was acquired by Douglas Dynamics, the technology then became available to Western and Fisher. This “wide-out” technology has made as big an impact on the snow industry as the “V” blade did in the late 1990s.

Contractors who service commercial and retail facilities dread having to address sidewalk snow clearing. Until recently, sidewalks could be cleared one of two ways: by hand (stick plows, shovels, snow blowers, walk-behind brooms, etc.) or mechanically with expensive equipment. The mechanical options were limited to skid steers (inefficient), ATV’s (inherently dangerous) or very expensive articulating units ($150,000-plus) used mostly by airports or municipalities. However, contractors now have a more affordable option that is efficient and operator friendly. Ventrac Equipment has come out with an articulating tractor with heated cab and attachments that actually work. This equipment (under $45,000 including attachments) has made a tremendous impact on the contractor sidewalk operations. It replaces up to 10 laborers, never complains or gets tired, and costs one-third what previous articulating units costs.

Laborers are still needed even with the new technology, however there are some new developments here, too, to make it easier on the backs of laborers. Power walk-behind brooms speed up production in lighter snows. Recent developments for hand pushers have made life easier for laborers, too. Hand pushers made of plastic, curved to allow for ease of moving snow, along with walk-behind implements make for less fatigue for the laborer. There are now two-wheeled plastic pushers so laborers can just walk behind, pushing these units and essentially “plowing” snow to the side, which means far less bending over and straining back muscles.

Technology has crept into the snowplow operator’s truck cab, too. Now, we can track field operations from the office through GPS/cell phone technology upgrades. These units can now interface with various accounting software packages so the time from “service” to “invoice” can be tallied in “hours” instead of days or weeks. This benefits cash flows and allows for more working capital as winter events unfold.

What will the future bring? I can dream, but wonder if I can dream big enough. If one can step back and actually remember how it was 10 years ago, it would seem as if we were in the Stone Age compared to where the industry is now.

John Allin, a snow industry consultant, is founder of the Snow & Ice Management Association (SIMA). The 2nd Edition of his book, Managing Snow and Ice – long considered the bible for snow contractors looking to become more productive and profitable – was released in June 2011.
This article will explain the municipal bid process. The title can be interpreted in two ways: A qualified contractor gets selected to perform the contract over other proposals, or the agency puts out an excellent package for bid and a great contractor does quality work at a competitive price.

Municipal bidding rules generally require that projects receive multiple bids. The evaluation process is supposed to award the project to the lowest responsible bidder. The evaluation process may not be solely based on price. Some materials or products may be sole-sourced when it can be shown that only one product is in the City’s best interest to use. In sole-source circumstances, staff generally will need to show the cost-benefit analysis or sound reasoning for a sole-source decision. For every contract award, staff will need to show the reasons for the contractor selection, and their belief the selected contractor can perform the work to the bid specifications.

So, how do we work within these process parameters with the goal to get the necessary work performed to a high quality by qualified contractors, where the contractors make a profit and the agency pays a reasonable amount? I consider this result a win-win. The alternatives can be: the work doesn’t get performed well – the agency loses; the bid price is excessive – the contractor may win; change orders skew the actual low bid award amount and the final cost is greater than other bids received – the contractor may win; or the contractor performs all the work to specifications and loses money – the contractor loses.

Putting a good contractor out of business is not in the agency’s or public’s best interest. Putting a poor contractor out of business may be in the public’s best interest. Unfinished necessary work is not in the agency’s or public’s best interest. Putting a poor contractor out of business doesn’t get performed well – the agency loses. Making poor decisions for the project to the lowest responsible bidder is not in the agency’s or public’s best interest.

I have experience bidding on projects for tree maintenance, management plans, inventories, risk assessments and plant health care services. I also have experience writing grant requests, which are similar to project bids – designed to qualify and meet a goal of the grant opportunity, and be selected over other competing proposals.

The first step in the process is for the agency to identify the necessary work and write quality specifications to complete the work. The specifications should include three important things:

- A timeline for bidding and completion that is adequate for the intended work
- Clear bid items that are measurable and payable work tasks
- Clear parameters for performing the intended work

Sometimes a change in the work specifications may help both parties. For example, performing work during off hours may reduce work stoppages for traffic, allowing the crew to finish the job sooner. Here a Mayer Tree Service crew works at the public library in Andover, Massachusetts.

Common pitfalls I have observed include:

- specifications in which the work product or process had too much ambiguity – leaving it to chance as to whether the agency could either have the work completed as intended;
- written specifications requiring work to be performed within such rigid constraints that the contractors could not save the agency costs by using an alternative or modified, successful methods; and
- written specs requiring extra steps that were unnecessary, costly and increased the contract cost with no benefit to the agency.

From the agency perspective let’s look at what I have seen as shortcomings and the effect on the project. Unclear or ambiguous specifications require the quality contractors to add contingency costs to make sure they do not lose money while completing the intended work in the intended manner. A crafty contractor is looking to find the least work that can be completed to meet the specs at the lowest costs to submit the winning bid. Crafty contractors are less concerned with completing the intended work as in passing the work as completed to specs and getting paid. A crafty contractor will usually complete extra work through a change order and receive additional money.

Specifications should be productive and beneficial to the project goals. For example, requiring excessive tree protection during public sidewalk repair work, such as fencing around the repair area that will only have to be moved to perform the work, will cost the agency money in the bid and won’t provide real protection to the trees, because the majority of work will be taking place within the area that will be fenced. Better specifications require avoiding specific damage, set minimum parameters for protecting the trees, and allow the contractors to provide a tree protection plan that must be approved by the agency and meets the requirements. This allows the quality contractors to include all the work in their proposal and may differ-

By Gordon Mann
entiate them from other contractors.

Specifications that direct every step of the project and micromanage every step of the process may not allow the contractor creativity and innovation that could save the agency costs. Additionally, if the agency tells the contractor everything to do, in every step, and something goes wrong with the work, the agency is responsible, as the contractor was doing what they were directed. If the agency allows the contractor to make some choices to meet a minimum parameter the contractor is responsible for their work.

An example is root pruning. If I told the contractor where to cut the roots, a certain distance from the trunk, and how deep to cut, if the tree failed my agency was responsible for the stability of the tree. I told the contractor where and directed them to cut the roots. How the contractor performed the cutting had to meet minimum parameters, using their choice of methods. However, if the contractor did not cut where they were told – cut closer to the tree or deeper – the contractor was responsible for the stability of the tree. If they used a method that did not meet minimum parameters such as, leave a clean cut edge or they damaged or tore roots toward the tree side of the cut during the root pruning or excavation process, the contractor was responsible for the stability of the tree. The expectations and any mitigation penalties should be clearly defined in the specifications. Unfortunately, we usually don’t learn about the unacceptable root pruning work until a storm occurs well after the project was completed.

From the contractor perspective, the agency has developed specifications and we bid on those specifications to perform the work for a certain price. Once I have been awarded the contract, I should not be arguing with the agency about having to follow the specifications, or avoiding the completion of the agreed upon work. If I have methods that accomplish the desired work practice in a different manner than listed in the specifications, the proper procedure is to meet and propose the change. If the change does not cost the agency any additional money, and if the agency sees the benefits, they may agree to the change. If the proposal reduces the use of materials, or reduces the excavation depths or other parameters that the agency interprets as a cost savings change to the specifications, they may only approve the change with a credit back.

An example I was involved in was the reconstruction of five blocks of our downtown streetscape. The contractor fought with the pedestrian traffic and inconvenience to the businesses while working during the contract specification hours of 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the first week. They proposed working at night from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., when the streets were clear, the public was away and they could accomplish a greater work output. The only increased agency cost was the inspector’s shift differential and the contractor agreed to pay that amount. The work was completed three weeks early to full specifications with fewer public disruptions. The contractor stated he earned at least as much profit as his initial bid proposal targeted. By finishing early, he could perform other work with the same crew. The public appreciated the project completion ahead of schedule. I considered the project a win-win.

The first step is to write clear, effective specifications. Once high quality specifications are complete, the project is offered to bidders. A proactive step to assist bidders is a pre-bid conference. The pre-bid conference is an opportunity for prospective bidders to learn more about the project. Bidders can also see which other bidders are interested. The pre-bid conference may be mandatory or optional depending on agency procedures and the importance of information.

At the pre-bid conference, the agency has the opportunity to clarify parts of the specifications, and respond to questions that may result in addendums that become part of the bid documents and must be submitted with proposals. The agency can use this forum to sell the benefits of performing work for the agency – prompt payment, the inspection process, testing procedures, and any procedure the agency has to support the work process and shorten the time from work completion to payment. Any information that eliminates contingency additions to the bid should be presented at this time. The contractors can ask about any ambiguities in the specifications, the inspection process, timing of payments, timelines and weather conflicts, and clarity on products, materials or procedures listed in the specifications. Contractors have the opportunity to gain clarity on the outcomes and importance of the different parts of the project that may affect how they prepare their bids.

The contractor prepares their bids based on the understanding of what the agency wants, what the specifications and work process call for, and how much it costs to perform those tasks. Quality contractors endeavor to do the work properly and completely the first time, avoiding punch lists or re-do’s. Crafty contractors submit their...
bids to achieve the bare minimum specification compliance at the lowest price. Any punch lists or re-do’s cost them money and reduce profit by the costs of repeating work. My goal and preference is to bid on projects with high quality specifications. With clear specifications, I can propose to perform the work the agency desires at a price where I can be competitive and still make a profit.

The bid evaluation process allows the agency staff to review the proposals for balance, sensibility, reasonableness, expertise, and logistics. I had a sidewalk lowest-bid contractor submit one bid item for $1 when the going costs were $6, and another bid item for $25 higher than the going cost of $8. He predicted the agency would reduce quantities of the $1 dollar bid item, and increase the quantities of the $25+ bid item, intending to make a profit off of the quantity changes. Because the one item could not be completed for the price submitted and the imbalance in the bid proposal, our agency was able to reject the bid. I suppose what we could have done was award the bid, then reduce the $25 item to the minimum allowable quantities and increase the $1 item to the maximum allowable quantities.

I had a low bid asphalt supplier that was 45 miles away from the city. The cost of pick up exceeded any savings in the per-ton rate of the material. The bid evaluation included mileage and pick-up time in the formula, computed by pricing out the pick-up time based on Google maps mileage at the city’s operating costs. The evaluation process saved us from awarding only on price, which would have cost the city more.

Some bid processes require an interview with the contractor before awarding the bid. This type of process considers price, but also considers the contractors ability to perform the work, exudes the confidence from the agency that the proposal will be completed as submitted, and allows the agency to follow up on any questions they have from their proposal review. I have been in contract bids where I was the lowest price, but our company was not selected after the interview process. In one case, we were not clear on the most important need of the agency. Although we interviewed well, we didn’t bring our foreman and couldn’t provide the personal assurance about the crew leader the agency was looking for.

Once the work begins, quality inspection is necessary to assure the work is actually being performed to the specifications. A pre-construction meeting is a tool agencies can use to review the proposed work, and reinforce which parts of the specifications are critical to the success of the project. I have lost bids to crafty contractors who didn’t install the listed number of wire cables; didn’t prune the trees to meet the specifications; and didn’t perform the construction work to the written specifications and standards. The frustrating thing is that if those are the specifications the agency wanted, I could have usually bid that level of work for less than the crafty contractor.

The only way to keep the crafty contractors in line is to have clearly measurable specifications, perform disciplined inspections, and be prompt with punch lists and follow-up. I practice more intense inspection in the early parts of the project when the contractor needs to learn how the city follows the specifications. I allow the contractor every opportunity to perform the work as specified before beginning the process to cancel the agreement.

The bid process may be complicated. In the current tight economy, companies are looking for work to keep their crews employed. Profits seem less important than putting the crews to work. Some projects do offer the opportunity to make a profit and perform a valuable service to an agency.

As an agency, I want to have quality contractors working for me to complete the work to specifications. As a contractor, I want to work for quality agencies that provide excellent bid documents and have a high level of inspection, assuring the work is completed to specifications.

These approaches support an equitable bid process. They provide the agency with assurances they are receiving services aligned with the specifications. They provide the contractor with clear work parameters that they can effectively bid on.

Gordon Mann is a consulting arborist and urban forester, and general manager with Mann Made Resources, Consulting Arborists in Auburn, California. He served 30 years in municipal positions in three municipalities – Brookfield, Illinois, and San Mateo and Redwood City, Calif. – and administered contracts and inspected work in all three. He developed and oversaw a tree preservation and sidewalk repair program with a contract budget of $350,000 to $850,000 over 22 years. He’s served as director of urban forest services with the Sacramento Tree Foundation, and municipal manager and general manager at Fallen Leaf Tree Service, where he developed specifications and submitted grant and bid proposals. He represents the Society of Municipal Arborists on the ANSI A300 Committee. This article is a preview of the talk he will give on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford this November. For more information or to register for TCI EXPO, visit http://expo.tcia.org/.
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* New membership rate of $150 is available to first-time, new members only. Please respond by September 15, 2011 or call Brenda or David for details.
THINKING ABOUT SELLING YOUR SMALL SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS?

By Ed Shebert, CPA

Many of you have provided the inspiration for this article. I get many questions from those of you who are in the early stages of contemplating the eventual sale of your tree care company. Being organized is the best approach, and simplifies the progression. The following recommendations will prepare you for this mission, and help you to realize your goals.

Preparation is the key. Buyers are a finicky lot. Most will get a sense of the value of your operation before you can even open your mouth. You want the potential buyer to form a positive image about your business. This happens in many ways.

Let’s start with housekeeping. Your yard should be absolutely neat and clean. Stow away or screen unsightly equipment and waste. Clean up trash, overflowing receptacles, and get rid of junk that you have not used in years. Your parking area should be orderly. Trucks and equipment should be spiffed up and in good working condition.

Next is your facility, namely your offices, crew area and garage. Floors, desks, tables and work areas should be clutter free. Good organization is absolutely essential not only to encourage a professional working environment, but to positively impact visitors. Jobsites should be set up safely and efficiently prior to execution and production employees should be wearing crisp, clean work attire.

Now comes the fun part. Expect and have answers ready for all the obvious questions! What are the motivating reasons you would want to sell a successful business? What do you want to do? Can your management team carry on without you? Identify your key people? What do they do? What are their tenures?

And, lest I forget, do you have covenants in place? At this juncture, have an executive summary, which is simply the history of the company along with a strategic plan that identifies new opportunities.

What separates you from your competition and what is your reputation in the marketplace?

Have a confidentiality agreement executed. You will be asked for client/sales information, service area and service lines. You will be conveying your selling and marketing processes, production process, back office functions and how they impact client satisfaction. Know your closing, referral, repeat and renewable ratios?

Do have any and all relevant client experiences available, i.e. surveys, Angie’s List reviews, and reputable publications recommending your business. Any business can say that they are the best, but this helps you to measure up to your claim.

Time for the stats – yes, you will have to reveal your numbers. Talk with your banker and accountant on the best way to scrub the information on your financial statements to show them in the best light. These must be honest, detailed and accurate. Have available other metrics that reveal novel and fresh ideas that you have created. Have supplement historical reports with future expectations, anything to show that you are in growth mode.

Knowledge is power. I strongly recommend that you get an opinion on what your business is worth. Ask your accountant or any other trusted resource. The asking price must be realistic and make sense to you, and even more so, be sensible to the buyer.

Now it is time to ask yourself a question: What and when should I tell my employees? This is not an easy answer. Speak too early, and you may risk losing someone. Don’t speak at all and you may be criticized for not being upfront. Also, a misplaced paper, someone overhearing a phone call, or noticed performance of any of the above suggestions can be used to connect the dots. Additionally, you may have to bring in a key person to help you. My recommendation – be honest!

At this point you are seeking various ways to finance, expand and maintain the course and growth of your business over the long haul. One of the many alternatives under this scenario is selling, but unquestionably you are looking at any and all viable options.

Some of these options are: selling to key employees; selling to all employees (known as an ESOP-Employee Stock Option Plan); partnering with another; selling to an entity outside the industry; and, finally, selling to an entity within the industry (a competitor). Keep an open mind, as any of these may work. However, each one presents its own advantages and disadvantages.

There are many ways to market your business. Help is available from a number of sources; namely consultants, brokers, and acquaintances that have been through the process. Good luck!

Ed Shebert performs all merger and acquisition functions for SavATree, a 25-year TCIA member company headquartered in Bedford Hills, New York. For further information, you may contact Ed through TCI Magazine at editor@tcia.org.
Please don’t tell me that when things start to get tight, i.e., sales are falling, that you go and slash your marketing budget. Do you immediately cut your spending on your promotion? Marketing is an investment, not an expense.

So, what happens when you slash those marketing investments? Things almost always get worse. Sales plummet. Profits disappear. And so the next move is to slash and burn: cut overhead. Panic! Fire some people. Shrink the business. Now there’s a self-fulfilling prophecy if I’ve ever heard one.

There are many ways for you to continue to do the promotional investments you need to make to sustain your business, and possibly even grow, at the expense of your competitors. This marketplace is not even a zero sum game – it’s shrinking. But by executing a well-designed marketing plan you can be very successful.

A lot of things that used to work don’t work anymore. Yellow pages, for one, may be a bygone marketing device, especially since there are so many different ones in every town now.

If you know how to market your company’s offerings, you can increase your sales and your profits at the expense of your competitors. Let them panic, cut their marketing expenditures, slash their payrolls, fire their key people and close their facilities.

Advertising is extremely expensive, and even large national companies are seeing a diminishing return for their dollars spent on advertising in the traditional way. And besides, it’s oh so hard to attract attention of your consumers because of all the “clutter” in the marketplace. Consumers are being bombarded with advertising messages hundreds of times every day. How will yours really stand out? And will it get them to actually buy anything from you?

If you think you can’t do anything about this economy, you’re right. If you really think you can still grow your business and your profitability – even in this economy, you’re right. If you can’t teach old dog new tricks? You can.

The most powerful device you can create is a strong brand identity. That’s the best way to keep growing and being more profitable year after year.

Frequent buyer programs can be very powerful tool for building loyal customers. And loyal customers are your most profitable customers (you don’t have to spend a fortune on advertising to get them to buy from you.) Customer relationship management (CRM) has long been known as the biggest factor in the sustainability of a business. CRM is a strategy for managing your interactions with your customers and prospects. The goals are to find, attract and win new clients, nurture and retain those you already have, bring former clients back into the fold, and reduce the cost of marketing and client service.

What about contests? People love contests. Just witness the success of game shows on television for decades. And look at what’s happening in the mobile gaming apps industry – an explosion of new games!

The only thing people love more than games are gifts. Everyone loves to get something for “free.” Of course, you’re going to design the freebie so that in the long run you are making more money.

It’s the 21st century. The Internet is the biggest change in the world of marketing in many decades. You need to understand and learn to use search engine optimization, e-mail marketing campaigns and many ways to increase your Web presence. The Internet can help you capture and keep customers. There are many ways to get a bigger share of those customer’s pocketbooks.

The most powerful device you can create is a strong brand identity. That’s the best way to keep growing and being more profitable year after year.

If you think you can’t do anything about this economy, you’re right. If you really think you can still grow your business and your profitability – even in this economy, you’re also right! You can. Who said you can’t teach old dog new tricks? You can.

Cliff Robbins is the senior management consultant at the University of Massachusetts Small Business Development Center. He has counseled more than 2,000 entrepreneurs. This article is a preview of his presentation on the same subject this November at TCI EXPO in Hartford, Connecticut. For more information about TCI EXPO or to register, visit http://expo.tcia.org/
TCIA Associate Member Profile is a new feature focusing each month on one of the many companies that support TCIA and its member tree care companies through membership in the association as well as through the goods and services they provide.

Associate Member interview:
Tony Gann, vice president

What is your newest product for tree care?
As we’ve grown as a supplier to the tree care industry, the biggest thing we’ve continued to work on is expanding our product line to be a complete supplier. In the last year we have introduced new boom truck cranes, new chipper models, and a redesigned chip dump body. We also recently introduced a 6-inch chipper primarily aimed at the rental market. We’ve introduced these new models while being focused on continually improving our existing products.

What image does your company look to portray?
Our aim is to manufacture equipment that is safer and smarter. That is a simple approach but fundamental to everything we do. We’re committed to having the safest equipment available and refuse to compromise in this area. Smarter means having the right features so that operators can be more efficient using our equipment. It also means providing a complete portfolio of services including rental and financing options to help fleet owners better manage their equipment from acquisition, through operation and then disposal. We constantly challenge ourselves in all aspects of our business by asking, “is it safer and smarter?” We certainly hope our image reflects this commitment.

What is the greatest challenge your business is currently facing?
Sometimes your greatest strength can also be one of your biggest challenges. That is the case for us. We have a direct channel of distribution allowing us the advantage of dealing directly with end users. Our history tells us this approach provides a number of advantages. The challenge is ensuring we get our message out to all customers so they clearly understand their choices. Our business model is different and it is sometimes tough to break through the traditional third party distribution model. We continue to work hard through our direct sales force, advertising strategy, and online approach to get our message in front of equipment purchasers.

What would you say most defines your corporate culture?
“Customer first” most accurately defines our culture. That is what we’re all about.

Does your company use social media for marketing?
We are currently evaluating that, but we’ve not been an early adopter. It’s certainly something we continue to monitor.

If we interviewed some of your customers what would they say about you?
I hope they would say they have confidence in a safe, quality product they can use day in and day out. In addition, I would hope they would indicate that Altec consis-
tently demonstrates a deep commitment to the tree care industry and to the relationships and level of trust we establish with our customers. They know when they have issues we have the resources, the aptitude and the commitment to fix their problem. That commitment is reflected in the investment we make in a comprehensive, nationwide service infrastructure that gives our customers confidence that their service needs are just a phone call away.

**Does your company do anything in particular to promote social and environmental responsibility?**

Absolutely. For one, we’re committed through our manufacturing operations to be environmentally responsible. As an example, we use powder coat vs. wet paint on our equipment, with a huge investment required. Our customers continue to look for eco-friendly solutions. We’ve developed systems so the equipment can operate off an electric pump powered by a battery bank, eliminating the need for the chassis to be running. We have also played an important role in developing the technology necessary for our equipment to work in conjunction with hybrid vehicles. Altec was recently recognized by the Business Roundtable for our commitment to social, economic and environmental stewardship. The examples are endless, but we clearly understand giving our customers “green” options is imperative.

**What TCIA programs is your company involved with?**

I served two terms as the associate member director on the TCIA Board. We’re also a TCI EXPO exhibitor, a Crown level PACT (Partners Advancing Commercial Treecare) partner, involved in the Winter Management Conference and active and involved in many other ways.

**Why does your company support TCIA as the industry’s trade association?**

TCIA is completely committed to its members and the industry, from a safety standpoint and helping companies get better at what they do through Accreditation. We understand that by helping businesses run more safely and more profitably, the industry gets stronger as a whole. A more professional, stronger industry means more demand for our products and services.

**Final comment**

Altec is a customer focused company selling directly to our customers without going through third party distribution. We’re all about continuing to offer a complete product line, so we can be a one-stop shop for all tree care companies.
“The market isn’t stupid. If you are willing to under price your bids, the market will give you lots of work.”

This is one of the “Main Points” that James R. Huston concludes with after a short chapter explaining cost estimating in his book, A Critical Analysis of the MORS Estimating System. If you or your company are finding it hard to get work in this competitive market, then this book is for you.

Huston applies a scientific mathematical approach to basic estimating principles that reflect the actual costs of work more accurately than using percentages or “guess-timating.” This can, obviously, help a tree care company operate more profitably.

Multiple Overhead Recovery System – or MORS – is a job-cost estimating system that is currently enslaving many tree care operators to a life of haphazard bid underestimation. Huston goes to great – but simple – length debunking the myths and mysteries.

As someone who is not a “numbers” person, I winced when I was handed this book for review. But shortly after I started fanning through the pages in search of simple drawings or large easy-to-read print, the value of Huston’s book was becoming very clear. Once you get over the initial discouragement from the apparent complexity of the book, you soon realize that this book could be a very valuable tool to your financial statement bottom line. I spent a little time with it before the information on the pages started to make perfect sense to me.

The book walks you through exercises that compare different estimating types, and gives you the whole point of the exercise in a single statement. You could basically skim the book for the “Main Point” statements then read more information about just those estimating procedures of interest, and gain plenty of insight about your company’s bottom line.
“A mistake made a billion times does not correct the mistake” or “We’ve always estimated this way” is the easy way out for bidding work. This isn’t your daddy’s tree/lawn care business anymore. I know that is a terribly over-used expression, but anyone who is clinging to yesterday’s ways of making money is likely to find themselves left far, far behind in business.

This book is not for the faint of heart. Some people get queasy at the sight of blood, others get queasy at the sight of detailed accounting analytics. This book is along the lines of the latter, but if you are serious about your business you will benefit by using this book to help you attain your business goals.

But don’t just hand this off to your office administrator, unless they, too, are crazy about making money. If you presently use the MORS system or some other system – or no system at all – to make your cost estimates, this book will greatly assist you with your accounting decisions.

The accompanying CD is a helpful tool intended to continue the MORS teachings while on the go or instead of reading the book. I found it useful to combine both the audio portion and reading the book simultaneously, as listening to only the CD did not assist my learning style.

Huston summarizes two methods of operating a tree company: You can either do tree work and get by, or you can run a profitable tree care company destined to thrive in the long run. Too many people get into tree work for the “tree work” part, not for the “how to be profitable” part. But if you are investing your time, money and experience into a tree company, then estimating without losing your shirt is a big factor in business.

Huston’s work takes the work out of your work. OK, maybe not quite, but it does help put profit back into your work, and that is even better.

Tchukki Andersen, BCMA, is staff arborist for the Tree Care Industry Association.

This is the first, and intended final, revision draft of Part 7, which applies to the creation and implementation of integrated vegetation management plans.

Part 7 IVM addresses:
- IVM applications
- Chemical control applications
- Elective & non-selective management
- Wire zone – border zone concept

The Tree Care Industry Association is a member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and an ANSI-accredited standards developer. TCIA also serves as the secretariat for the ANSI A300 series of Standards for Tree Care Management Operations (ANSI A300 Parts 1 through 9). A300 standards are developed by the ANSI-ASC A300.

Following is an excerpt from the proposed revision to the part 7 standard.


The biggest change in this revision of the standard is that it can now be used for IVM in any utility rights of way, not just electric utility rights of way. There were only a few minor adjustment needed to accommodate this. Most of the revision changes were to the information in the annex regarding the wire zone – border zone concept. No changes were made to the overall concept, just clarification of the information. Since the annex is not technically part of the standard, the wire zone – border zone concept is just provided for information only, however, since most of the changes occurred in the

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**Current ANSI A300 standards for tree care**

TCIA is the secretariat for the ANSI A300 tree care management standards, which are divided into the following parts based on tree care practices:

- ANSI A300 (Part 1) - 2008 Pruning
- ANSI A300 (Part 2) - 2011 Soil Management (includes Fertilization)
- ANSI A300 (Part 3) - 2006 Supplemental Support Systems (includes Cabling, Bracing, Guying and Propping)
- ANSI A300 (Part 4) - 2008 Lightning Protection Systems
- ANSI A300 (Part 5) - 2005 Management of Trees and Shrubs During Site Planning, Site Development, and Construction
- ANSI A300 (Part 6) - 2005 Transplanting (includes Planting)
- ANSI A300 (Part 7) - 2006 Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)
- ANSI A300 (Part 9) - 2011 Tree Risk Assessment

See the A300 website for more info: www.tcia.org/standards/a300.htm.
Annex, we have decided to provide that as this excerpt in TCI Magazine.

Annex A: Wire Zone – Border Zone Concept (This annex is not part of the ANSI A300 Part 7 IVM standard)

The wire zone – border zone concept is a proven IVM method that ensures the reliability of electric supply lines while promoting stable, compatible plant communities and improved wildlife habitat on suitable electric utility rights of way. This method delineates the portion of the right of way beneath the conductors (wire zone) from the portion on either side (border zone), and prescribes different management strategies for each area. Annex A provides supplemental information about this method.

A-1 Annex A Glossary

A-1.1 Border zone: Portion of electric utility right of way on either side of the wire zone and extending to the outer edge of the established right of way, selectively managed to include a mix of compatible herbaceous and low-growing woody vegetation below a specified height.

A-1.2 Wire zone: Portion of electric utility right of way directly beneath electric supply lines and extending outward to a utility-specified distance, managed to promote only low-growing, primarily herbaceous vegetation.

A-2 The wire zone – border zone method requires the use of separate management strategies for the wire zone and border zone on the same right of way, which may not be optimum for all sites. The method is especially useful in areas where ecological concerns, such as visual impact and wildlife diversity, are a consideration. When properly implemented, use of the wire zone – border zone method will not affect the reliability of utility facilities. The vegetation manager must determine the suitability of a particular site or right of way for management using the wire zone – border zone method.

A-3 During initial establishment, especially on rights of way that have not been regularly maintained, or contain minimal or no compatible vegetation, non-selective methods may be used; however, the effect of these methods on surrounding land owners and other stakeholders must be carefully considered prior to implementation.

A-4 In the border zone, incompatible vegetation is selectively controlled, and compatible vegetation that will not grow above a specified height is conserved. By retaining a greater variety of vegetation types, wildlife habitat is improved, and the visual impact of the right of way is softened.

A-5 In the wire zone, woody stems, climbing vines or other vegetation that could impair access or harbor young trees may be controlled using selective or non-selective methods. Maintaining low-growing, primarily herbaceous cover in this area allows access to utility infrastructure for inspection, repair and maintenance, and to inspect vegetation on and off the right of way. In addition, the wire zone is often ideal for wildlife species that prefer a meadow-like habitat.

A-6 Over the long term, the wire zone – border zone method increasingly makes use of cultural and biological controls to develop stable plant communities in each zone, thus minimizing the need for other IVM control methods. These plant communities attract and aid in the establishment of stable wildlife populations, which in turn may further enhance biological controls. The wire zone – border zone method can be implemented in most areas; however, the need for additional control methods, as well as the species of flora and fauna present, will vary depending on local climate and site conditions.
I n this economy, how are some companies thriving while others are limping along? How are some sales people thriving while others are struggling? It’s simple. Those who are thriving are doing something different than the ones who are struggling, which is what this article is about.

Let’s look at the 12 Keys to Success in Selling

**Commit to excellence.** Make a commitment to be the best. The best in your field, the best in your office and the best in your region. Don’t tell anyone, just do it. When you get to be the best don’t brag, just stay focused.

**Have written long & short term goals.** Back every goal with desire. (It’s the fuel for success!) Here’s the question: Do you have long-term and short-term personal and professional goals written down somewhere so that you can refer to them at any moment, or are they in your head? A goal that is not written down is not a goal. It’s a wish, it’s a dream. Write down your 10-year, five-year, two-year, one-year and six-month goals on a sheet of paper or in a computer. Do it now – today.

**Affirm your day everyday!** Tell yourself you can and will succeed. Plant positive seeds and cultivate. This means look in the mirror and tell yourself you are going to have a great day and that you are successful and that you always know what to say and do. Alright, maybe you don’t have to look in the mirror, but write it out and say it out loud. Make this something you do every day so it becomes a habit. This is the most powerful technique I’ve run into in 30 years.

**Sharpen your blade regularly.** Attend seminars, read books by successful salespeople such as Brian Tracy, listen to CDs and tapes. Find your favorite and have that person inspire you.

**Incorporate a daily time-management system.** Become a time-management expert. Treat time like water in the desert.

The more focused you are, the more you will accomplish.

**Be disciplined – become balanced, stay balanced.** Being balanced is a personal thing and is based upon someone’s lifestyle. Everyone knows when they are working too hard. When you know you are headed toward burnout, ease up and take a break. Don’t let a heart attack or a stroke wake you up. This all reflects a disciplined lifestyle.

**Be honest – have integrity-follow your word.** It’s simple; don’t over commit and under deliver or your customers won’t come back. They might just tell all their friends on Facebook and all of their associates on LinkedIn what a rat you are.

**Treat every customer as if they are the only customer you are going to help today.** When customers feel like you really care about them they’ll tell others and when that happens you will work less and make more $$$.

**Don’t underestimate the power of a good nights sleep.** If you need eight, get eight. If you need seven, get seven. Why? Because when you need eight and you get five one night and four the next, you turn into a grouch, you’re impatient, you’ll make mistakes and you might even yell at someone. Take care of your body. You demand a lot from your body so take good care of it so that when you’re 70, 80 or even 90 it will still work well!

**Be organized.** (Being unfocused is a thief of time). Keep a daily/weekly things-to-do list. During every weekend, stop for ½ hour to an hour and prepare a weekly list for the upcoming week of what you will do and deals you will close. Write down how much money you will make, write down who you will contact and what outcome there will be. This is called creating your success instead of hoping it will all work out.

**Be kind to yourself.** If you have had a bad week, month or quarter, pick yourself up and get after it again. Everyone has a bad week, month or quarter. When it comes to an end, vow to yourself to have a much better week, month and/or quarter and create a game plan of what you will do to have the upcoming week, month and/or quarter be the much better than the previous one.

**Visualize your ideal situation daily, as if it were already completed.** This is easy but people just don’t seem to find the time to do it. Here’s how it is done. Sit in a place where you will not be disturbed and imagine that your customer is saying yes to you and signing the contract. Then imagine the same customer being so thrilled with the quality of work and service that you have provided that he/she is telling all of his or her friends and associates to hire you!

This should get you started.

**Steve Beck** is an author, keynote speaker, facilitator and coach with more than 20 years experience as a corporate executive, and author of “How to Have a Great Day Everyday!”. The content of this article will be part of his presentation of the same name, “How to Increase Sales & Decrease Stress,” at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford, Connecticut, this November. For more information or to register for TCI EXPO, visit http://expo.tcia.org/.

By Steve Beck
The missing moon trees

“Fifteen years after NASA astronomer David Williams started searching for them, hundreds of trees grown from space-faring seeds are still missing,” writes Lisa Grossman in her Wired Science column (www.wired.com/wiredscience/2011/02/moon-trees/).

The “moon trees” are from seeds that circled the moon 34 times in Apollo 14 astronaut Stuart Roosa’s pocket. One was planted in Washington Square in Philadelphia as part of the 1975 bicentennial celebrations. Another was at the White House. Several found homes at state capitals and space-related sites around the country.

And then everyone seemed to forget about them, says Grossman. Apparently, no good records were kept regarding what happened to them. But Williams has made it his mission to find them, and for the past 15 years, he has kept a record of every known tree’s location. When he started in 1996, he only knew where 22 trees were. Now, that number has climbed to 80.

Although most of the trees are long-lived species expected to last centuries, some have started to die off. According to Williams’ most recent tree count, 21 of the 80 known trees are dead, including the Loblolly pine outside the White House, five sycamores and two pines outside the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and one New Orleans pine that was damaged in Hurricane Katrina.

The trees’ poor health has nothing to do with their journey to space, Williams told Grossman.

“No one knew for sure whether being exposed to weightlessness or radiation would do something to the seeds,” he said. “They grew control trees right next to each other to see if they grew differently. But they didn’t find anything.”

The healthy trees have given rise to a crop of half-moon trees, trees grown from the seeds of a moon tree.

“There’s a lot of second generation moon trees being planted now,” Williams said. “That’s getting to the point where I can’t keep up with it.”

If you know of a Moon Tree, please send a message to dave.williams@nasa.gov.

2011 National Register of Big Trees released online

Every year, skilled hunters head into the woods, but they aren’t tracking deer. They’re stalking really big trees. The nation’s Big Tree Hunters – whose ranks include retired teachers and insurance agents – monitor and measure in hopes of finding new national champions in the highly competitive world of big tree hunting.

They measure trees’ height, circumference and average crown spread, and points are awarded for these dimensions, a system that determines which trees retain their top spots and which are dethroned. Winning champion trees are compiled annually in the National Register of Big Trees, organized by American Forests and sponsored by The Davey Tree Expert Company for 22 years.

How big are these monster trees? General Sherman, a giant sequoia in California and a champ since 1940, is a whopping 274.9 feet tall and its trunk weighs nearly 1,400 tons, roughly equivalent to 15 adult blue whales.

On July 1, American Forests launched the online 2011 National Register of Big Trees. More than 660 species are represented, 30 more than last year, with trees in 46 states, including Alaska and the District of Columbia. Other 2011 highlights include:

- The 2011 National Register contains a total of 751 grand champion trees, including 18 new ones. Newcomers include the co-champion Osage-orange trees in Virginia and Delaware, the Rocky Mountain Douglas fir in Texas, the Virginia pine in West Virginia, and the eastern white oak in Indiana.
- Florida has the most champions, 106 to be exact, and is the only state with more than 100 national champions. Other states have: Arizona (87), Texas (86), Virginia (76) and California (72).
- 108 previous champs have been dethroned in the 2011 Register.
- Five states have no national champion trees: Hawaii, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Wyoming and North Dakota.
- Texas and Virginia have the most new champion trees, with more than 20 each.
- Indiana has eight new champion trees, dethroning some previously popular champions such as the eastern white oak in Virginia and the swamp chestnut oak in Maryland.
- The Lost Monarch in the Grove of Titans at Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park in Northern California has a total of 1,290 total points and a volume of 42,500 cubic feet, ranking as the second biggest tree on the National Register.

For more, visit www.americanforests.org/resources/bigtrees.

Send Tree News to editor@tcia.org.
Man inured cutting tree

A Colbert County, Alabama, man was injured June 1, 2011, while trying to cut a tree in Tuscumbia. Rodney Glenn Flack, 42, of Tuscumbia, was flown to Huntsville Hospital by Air Evac after a tree hit him in the head and knocked him to the street.

Flack was working with his brother cutting a large limb when a section of the tree, 25-30 feet long and 4-5 feet around, snapped. When the limb started falling, Flack apparently tried to run out of the way but was hit before he could get clear. The limb fell across some utility lines, but knocked him to the ground pinning him for a few seconds before the lines pulled the tree back off him. Flack was conscious and talking immediately after the accident, and was listed in fair condition, according to The Times Daily.

Man killed in a tree cutting accident

A 48-year-old Alabama man died one day after being injured while cutting a storm-damaged tree in Ligon Springs, Alabama, June 1, 2011. Stanley Jones of Russellville was attempting to cut a tree at the residence in Ligon Springs and it fell across his chest, pinning him to the ground. Firefighters had to remove the tree and begin medical treatment prior to his being flown to Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital in Florence, apparently in critical condition.

It appeared Jones was at the residence to cut down a tree damaged in the recent storms, according to The Times Daily. Jones and his family used to live at the residence where the accident occurred and were trying to get it ready to sell, according to an NBC Channel 13 report.

Tree trimmer electrocuted

A Daytona Beach, Florida, man working with his family’s tree-trimming crew was electrocuted June 2, 2011, as he tried to free a stray palm frond stuck in a power line in Ormond Beach.

Damian R. Mays, 36, had worked at one of two family-run tree trimming companies for the past five years. He was part of a crew from the two companies trimming palms at a home when the accident occurred. No one actually saw the electrocution, but co-workers heard Mays yell and the chain saw that Mays was using fell to the ground. The men ran to the tree, where one said he could hear a loud electric current. Mays was limp, hanging from the tree in his harness. The crew couldn’t reach Mays at first, but they quickly fetched a ladder, freed him from the harness and carried him to the ground.

When police arrived, Mays’ fellow crewmembers had already managed to get him down from a 12- to 15-foot-tall tree. The crew said he wasn’t responsive any time after the electrical shock. He was pronounced dead about an hour later at Florida Hospital Memorial Medical Center.

Co-workers weren’t even sure why Mays was in the tree, which had already been trimmed. On Mays’ feet were metal climbing spikes, according to The Daytona Beach News-Journal.

Tree truck crash kills one

A fiery accident involving a tree service truck in Bastrop County, Texas, June 2, 2011, left one man dead and sent two others to the hospital. Three men in a tree trimming truck were traveling eastbound on Highway 290 near McDade, south of Elgin, when the driver lost control of the truck, overcorrected and slammed the truck into a ditch. The truck then caught on fire.

The driver died on scene and the passenger seated in the middle was taken to University Medical Center Brackenridge burns to 80 percent of his body. The other passenger was able to get out of the vehicle with only minor injuries, according to a KXAN Austin News report.

Contributed by Miles J. Lefler, owner of Sunrise Tree Services in Austin, Texas.

84-year-old killed by cut tree

An 84-year-old Chautauqua County, New York, man died after a tree he was cutting fell on top of him June 2, 2011.

Frederick Hannum of Mayville was trying to cut up a tree that had been uprooted on his property in the woods near his home. When he walked behind the stump/root portion of the tree, it fell down on top of him. Crews arrived at the scene to rescue him, but say he was deceased, according to the WIVB/WNLO-TV report. The Town of Chautauqua Highway Department helped in the recovery of Hannum’s body by bringing in heavy equipment.
Climber dies after fall from tree
Robert Jasmin, 45, of Amenia, New York, died June 6, 2011, after falling 40 feet from a tree he was cutting. Jasmin, who was working for a local tree service company, climbed the tree using ropes at the Pine Plains property. He was cutting a limb when it fell toward him, causing him to move out of the way. His rope knot slipped as a result, according to a sheriff’s report, and he fell about 40 feet to the ground.

Jasmin went into cardiac arrest en route to Saint Francis Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead a short time later, according to the Poughkeepsie Journal.


Man killed by rolling tree
A Madison County, Missouri, man died in Dorsey, Illinois, while taking down a tree June 12, 2011. Tom Dean, 67, and a friend were cutting a tree down on Dean’s property. They had dug around the tree when the tree fell on a utility vehicle. Dean was attempting to remove the tree from the vehicle and slipped. The tree rolled over on Dean causing his death, according to a KMOV-TV report.

Trimmer cut by chain saw dies
A 50-year-old tree trimmer died June 14, 2011, in Stockton, California, after he was severely cut under his armpit with his own chain saw. Stockton fire crews took the injured tree trimmer to a hospital where he died from his wounds, according to a KCRA Channel 3 report.

Climber knocked out, rescued at 80 feet
A climber was knocked out at 80 feet June 14, 2011, in North Whitehall Township, Pennsylvania, when he was hit by a big branch. A four-man crew was cutting large trees at the property. Using ropes, the workers were lowering the cut branches. The wind caught one and blew it into the climber, who was tied in, knocking him unconscious. Firefighters came to the rescue with an aerial truck and basket, according to The Morning Call.

Logger dies in struck-by
A logger died June 15, 2011, in Nelson, New York, apparently when a branch fell on him. Brett K. Armstrong, 36, of Nelson, was logging with permission across the street from his own property. The accident was discovered by the owner of the property, who had gone to check on Armstrong because it was getting late. Armstrong was declared dead at the scene.

Investigators believe Armstrong was downing a tree and that one of its branches got caught in another tree. A 15-inch-diameter branch from the second tree fell as a result and appeared to have hit Armstrong.

Armstrong was a professional logger and was wearing safety gear, according to The Post-Standard report.

Man killed by cut tree
A Torrington, Connecticut, man who worked for Litchfield’s public works department and was just about to retire was killed June 16, 2011, in a tree-cutting accident.
A German organization has designated November 12, 2011, as Save the Chestnut Day in that country. People nationwide are urged to collect the fallen leaves of their local horse chestnut trees and see that they are burned or otherwise properly disposed of. The aim is to control the horse chestnut leaf miner (Cameraria ohridella), a moth that has invaded Europe in recent years and damages the chestnut tree.

The insect almost exclusively attacks the common horse chestnut tree (Aesculus hippocastanum). The Protective Association German Forest (SDW) reports that the female moth lays eggs on the upper side of the leaves, and the tiny caterpillars bore, or “mine,” a tunnel into the leaf. They pupate there and emerge as adult moths. Because of the tunneling the leaves turn brown and, in severe cases, fall prematurely in late summer, depriving the tree of needed photosynthesis. The brown spots are much easier to spot than the insect itself – it measures only about 5 millimeters (0.2 of an inch).

The moth was originally thought to have been of Asian origin, but recent studies at herbariums have shown that it was present in remote parts of Greece as long ago as 1879. Modern road building probably accounts for its emergence from the remote areas.

It was first identified in Macedonia in northern Greece in 1983, and since then has spread westward to Italy, as far north as Sweden and as far east as Poland. The spread is partly because of adult flight, assisted by the wind. But a far more important reason probably is the transport of adults or infested leaves in cars and other vehicles, which can account for the moth’s sudden appearance at some location a long way from a known infestation.

The spread of the moth in Europe has been particularly swift because it produces a huge number of offspring and has hardly any natural enemies there. It can have as many as six generations a season in warmer climates, and three or four even in northern Europe. One female can lay as many as 2.5 million descendants in a season.

One female can lay as many as 40 eggs on the leaves, which means that, with four generations, a single female can have as many as 2.5 million descendants in a season.
many of 40 eggs on the leaves, which means that, with four generations, a single female can have as many as 2.5 million descendants in a season. In warmer climates the moth is naturally controlled by parasitic wasps, but there are few of these of the right species in Europe.

Means of controlling the insect are being sought, but there are many problems. No procedure is allowed to pose a threat to human health or the environment. And many of the possible procedures may be prohibitively expensive. The most effective feasible means of control at present is gathering the fallen leaves in autumn, hence the SDW’s Save the Chestnut Day.

The leaves of an infested tree will contain pupae that are remarkably cold resistant. They can survive temperatures as low as -23 C (-9 F) and start another generation in the spring. The gathering should be done soon after the leaves fall, because the pupae may burrow into the soil if they are left there long enough. The gathered leaves should be burned or professionally composted. Garden composting is less effective because small leaf quantities don’t get hot enough to kill the pupae.

Gathering the leaves, however, isn’t always practical if they land in gardens or...
in areas of shrubbery. There are also drawbacks to other control methods. The use of parasitoid species, such as certain wasps, is said to be impractical for financial reasons. Chemical means can be expensive, too, as well as difficult and illegal.

For instance, it is hard to effectively spray large trees. Since the eggs are laid on the upper sides of the leaves the spraying must be from above, which requires an elevated platform. The main emphasis is in the development of other means of applying chemicals. Glue boards with female pheromones will trap large numbers of males and interfere with the reproduction cycle. The trees can also be injected with Imidacloprid or other agents, which circulate to the leaves and protect them from the larva. This method, however, is presently not approved in Germany.

Experts agree that the moth poses no danger to the tree’s survival. But it nevertheless presents a serious threat. Chestnut trees play an important role in European cities, where they line the avenues, add to the beauty of parks, blossom beautifully in the spring and provide lots of shade, for example in beer gardens. Dr. Barbara Jäckel of Berlin’s Plant Protection Office points out that, “deciduous trees have a favorable influence on the microclimate, the shadiness and the humidity on hot days.” Sometimes because of the moth, she adds, “chestnut trees can’t perform these functions in high summer and early autumn.” The tree also may not blossom as well in the spring, and the nuts, which children love as playthings, may be smaller.
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By Ed & Amanda Carpenter

Simply put, Ergonomics is “the study of work,” but more importantly it is the study of how people interact with the tools they use every day for work. Ergonomics is becoming increasingly more common due to the amount of money spent on musculoskeletal disorders in today’s health care market. Ergonomic equipment is becoming more readily available with technological advances in product development. There now exist many ergonomically advanced tools and techniques in the tree care industry to decrease the stresses leading to musculoskeletal disorders. In this article, you will learn some basic techniques to decrease your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has identified risk factors associated with developing musculoskeletal disorders. These risk factors include awkward postures, repetitive movements, forceful exertion, contact stress of the body against an object, vibration and extreme temperatures. Production tree work exposes the worker to each of these risk factors.

Tree work is without a doubt one of the most physically and mentally demanding occupations the body can endure. A production arborist is truly an industrial athlete.

Ergonomics is the applied science of designing and arranging things that people use so people and things interact most efficiently and safely. The ergonomist’s job is to fit the tool or task to the person as opposed to making the person fit the tool or task.

In the tree care industry we have to adapt to the situation in order to maintain safety. When we are up in the tree getting ready to make a pruning or a removal cut, we have to adapt to where that branch is and to where we can safely tie in and position ourselves in our harness – we are adapting constantly. However, the whole idea of ergonomics is to have things adapt to us.

The ergonomist’s job is to fit the tool or task to the person as opposed to making the person fit the tool or task.

example pulling on the rope, using a handsaw and foot locking are examples of repetition performed by arborists. Do you foot lock with the same lead leg all of the time? Can you switch it up and foot lock with the other leg? Being able to use right and left is important because dominance and habits lead to repetition. For example, do you prefer to sleep in one position? Try changing sides of the bed with your spouse; this will alter your repetitive sleeping habits, which is better for your body.

For the most part nobody thinks about a...
musculoskeletal disorder as being disabling, however, carpal tunnel and elbow injuries in this industry are rampant. If you cannot grip a rope then you are not safe to climb. Could you imagine becoming disabled right now in your career? There are little things you can do now to prevent those injuries and be more in tune with your body. When you are in a tree you can never sacrifice safety for proper posture and body mechanics, but you can reposition yourself to make the cut without straining your back.

You have likely heard the term “cycles to failure.” If you cycle something enough times, especially in a negative way, eventually it will fail (see Photo 1). We constantly replace our ropes and maintain our aerial lifts. These are mechanical devices and if they cycle enough times they are going to fail. We can think about our bodies the same way. If you consistently place your shoulders or back in a bad position over a long enough time, eventually they will fail and you will sustain an injury.

Production arborists are industrial athletes who also tend to play hard. The more physically active you are the more susceptible you are to injury. If you are working five or six days a week repetitively stressing your body, you need a day of rest for your tissues to have time to heal and rebuild. Give yourself at least one day of rest involving only light activity and no climbing (including rocks) and make sure you hydrate and eat well.

Below is a list of symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders.
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Swelling
- Loss of motion
- Stiffness
- Weakness
- Decreased grip
- Painful grip
- Pain

If you have any of these symptoms lasting longer than three days you should seek medical attention. If they fluctuate, but last longer than seven to 10 days then you need to see a doctor. If your chipper is leaking oil and then it stops, do you just fire it up and keep chipping? If you have aches and pains lasting longer than seven to 10 days and they disappear, there is likely a biomechanical imbalance and it will likely rear its ugly head again only to be worse or even disabling. An evaluation by a physical therapist can identify your personal biomechanical imbalances and address them with a personalized program.

If you sustain a musculoskeletal disorder inform your supervisor and seek medical attention. Avoid work-related duties and other activities that aggravate the symptoms. If you have been climbing all of the time, mix it up and do a little bit of ground work. If you are loading wood into the back of the truck, rotate that task to somebody else. If you are doing a task for longer than 45 minutes, you are predisposing yourself to a musculoskeletal disorder.

Prevention
Most of the musculoskeletal disorders that we are talking about can be prevented...
through proper posture and body mechanics. A great way to prevent a musculoskeletal disorder is to practice good posture. This will decrease your risk of a shoulder, neck or back injury. You can work on your posture when you are driving to the job, between jobs and home at night.

Using your abdominal muscles is an important part of practicing good body mechanics. Your reaction to being punched in the stomach is to tighten the stomach muscles. Your abdominal muscles are tightening as they try to protect your vital organs; at the same time they are stabilizing your low back. When you go to lift that piece of wood, imagine getting punched.

If we imagine getting punched, we stabilize the core and we can’t twist our low back. The only thing that you have to remember about body mechanics is to engage those abdominal muscles. Just imagine getting punched.

If you are standing and your back is sore, engage your abdominal muscles because it puts the stress on your muscles and takes it off of the structures in the low back. This is an application to use throughout your day. Just by engaging your core muscles you will also notice improved balance when limb walking and, as you improve your core strength, ascent will also be easier.

The other key components to proper posture are the muscles between your shoulder blades. When you squeeze your shoulder blades together, you contract these muscles, but be cautious not to scrunch your shoulders up to your ears when you squeeze; keep your shoulders back and down.

Try this exercise: Slouch in your chair and then reach up. Do you feel pain, pressure or a pinch in the top of your shoulder? You are pinching the soft tissues in your shoulder, which can lead to a rotator cuff tear.

Now sit up nice and tall and position your shoulders back and down and raise your hands again. The pinch should be gone or less. When you are reaching way out for that limb and you feel that pinch in the shoulder, think cycles to failure – you can get away with doing that several times, but eventually the rotator cuff is going to develop a micro tear. It is important to reposition your shoulders back and down.
and reposition your body to make a better cut. When you are sitting in the truck at the end of the work day exhausted, the tendency will be to slouch, rounding out your low back and rolling your shoulders forward. Add trying to get caught up with sales calls and multi-tasking and you leave yourself very vulnerable to terrible posture and cycles to failure (see Photos 2 and 2A). Not only are you putting stress on your low back and neck, but also you are straining your shoulder complex and pinching your carpal tunnel.

Walking across the job site or carrying brush is also an important time to address your posture (see Photo 3). Your vehicle’s rearview mirror can be helpful to assist in the maintenance of good posture (see Photos 4 and 5).

To decrease your risk of a musculoskeletal disorder, plan your tasks, avoid repetitive movements and practice good posture and body mechanics. Remember the most valuable piece of equipment you use everyday is your body – take care of it.

Ed and Amanda Carpenter operate COR Ergonomic Solutions, LLC in Douglas, Massachusetts. Ed Carpenter has been a production arborist for 14 years. Amanda Carpenter, DPT, is a doctor of physical therapy. Both Ed and Amanda are Ergonomic Assessment Specialists. This article is based on their presentation on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2010 in Pittsburgh.
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www.lebanonturf.com
A leader in research and commercial development of products using beneficial mycorrhizal fungi and rhizosphere bacteria and has developed over 30 proprietary products for improving plant, soil and water quality.

Leonardi Manufacturing
www.leonarditreecare.com
The cutting edge for stump grinder and chipper needs, including the revolutionary M1 Cutting Systems; change all teeth in just moments, faster cutting, quicker clean up. From economical 1/2-inch teeth, Levco and Tuff Teeth, to the time saving Tomahawk.

Liberty Financial Group, Inc.
www.libertyfg.com
Providing commercial financing alternatives to the tree care industry who are purchasing new and/or used business equipment, offering a variety of programs and services.

Loftness/US Attachments
www.loftness.com
Provides a full line of tractor 3-point mounted or skid-steer mounted tree and brush shredders, orchard and vineyard shredders, flare mowers, rock pickers, sod roll-laying and snow blowers, featuring state of the art design, durability and workmanship.

Mauget Company
www.mauget.com
Protecting & treating trees for 50 years. The fully closed Gen II delivery system and the fully closed Gen III delivery system provide no drift and low risk to applicator/environment. Insecticides, fungicides, fertilizers, micro nutrients, combo products and an antibiotic.

Minnesota Wanner Company
www.mwanner.com
Manufacturer/distributor for IPM/plant health care sprayers, pumps and accessories.

Mobile Oil Pitstop
www.oilpitstop.com
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Morbark, Inc.
www.morbark.com
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www.neropes.com
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New River Equipment
www.newriverequipment.com
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NiftyLift, Inc.
www.niftylift.com
Manufacturer of a complete line of trailer mounted aerial lifts. Range is from 24-foot platform height to 63-foot platform height.

Norco-Dynamic Chippers/Grinders
www.norcoequipment.com
Building on Dynamic’s Cone Drum technology, delivering superior value measured in performance, reliability and uptime. Products include Dynamic handfed chippers, forestry chippers and grinders, and PUMA log forwarders and harvesters.

Northern Arborist Supply
www.northeasternarborist.com
A complete line of professional tree and turf equipment such as climbing gear, saws, ropes, safety supplies and brush chipper. Includes the latest rigging supports and lowering devices. Manufactures custom and standard tree and turf sprayers.

Northern Atlantic Financial, LLC
www.northernatlanticfinancial.com
Specializes in financing new and used equipment for the arborist industry, with affordable financing options.

Oregon Cutting Systems, Inc.
www.oregonchain.com
A leading manufacturer of cutting chain, guide bars, drive sprocket systems and accessories for chain saws.

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device/system; throw, retrieve, isolate targets. New knotless connections. Optimal geometrics for flight and transitioning from throw lines up to 7/8-inch rope.

Rose & Kiernan, Inc. www.rkinsurance.com Insurance program for arborists and landscapers including liability, property, equipment, auto, umbrella and workers’ compensation.

Rotochopper, Inc. www.rotochopper.com International manufacturer of wood waste grinders, mobile bagging systems and wood chip processor/colorizers. The only U.S. company that markets a mobile bagging system and the only wood waste grinder that can grind and color mulch in one pass.

Royal Truck & Equipment, Inc. www.royaltruckequip.com The industry’s toughest custom forestry and landscape trucks; designed to your specs with cranes, grapples, hook lifts and more.


Salsco, Inc. www.salsco.com Manufacturer of 3-inch to 18-inch capacity wood/brush chippers, 8 to 200 hp, gas, diesel, electric and PTO. Chipper/Shredder/Vacuum — 25 hp gas.

Samson www.samosrone.com By applying the latest fiber technology to the design and manufacturing process, producing ropes that increase safety and enhance productivity for the professional arborist.

Sandvik www.smc.sandvik.com Offers products for the stump grinding industry. The patented DURA Disk Cutting System is now available for a variety of stump grinder machines for the efficient and economical removal of stumps.

SavATree www.savatree.com An industry leader in environmentally sensitive PHC; general tree care and turf management for residential, commercial and historic properties. Healthy, aggressively growing and providing premier arboricultural services from Massachusetts to Virginia.


Shelter Tree, Inc./Tree Care Products www.sheltertree.com Established in 1994 with the sole purpose of providing high quality tree care supplies at competitive prices. Offering pruning tools and climbing gear toippers and stumpers and wood processing equipment.

SherriLLTree www.sherrelltree.com Tree gear. Tree people. Offering quality innovative tools for the tree care industry, featuring a new, full line of Silky saw products as well as the climbing and rigging gear and spliced goods, and a full-sized spray rig.

Signature Systems, LLC www.signaturefencing.com DuraDeck traction/access mats protect turf/landscaping from equipment/vehicle damage; and are used as traction/roadway mats over soft or unstable soil. Superior to plywood, they won’t absorb water/chemicals, hold up to 80 tons, won’t splinter, and are durable.

Skako Lift, Inc. www.skakoliftusa.com Offering the world’s most advanced, compact and efficient series of indoor and outdoor atrium lifts ranging in working heights from 46 to 138 feet.

Smith Truck Cranes www.smithtruckcranes.com Truck cranes.

Southco Industries, Inc. www.southcoindustries.com The industry’s leading forestry truck body manufacturer; specializing in complete chassis, cab and body packages. Knuckle boom cranes, lift gates, corner mount cranes, platform, service and landscape bodies.


Stein USA LLC www.stein-usa.com Range of lowering devices and safety products.


Stihl Inc. www.stihlus.com Stihl is the number one selling brand of handheld outdoor power equipment in America. A full range of Stihl chain saws, outdoor power equipment and hand tools.

Supersonic Air Knife www.diarborist.com Ergonomically designed tools that use air to dig holes and trenches with no damage to roots, wires, pipelines, fiber optics or the operator, i.e. for root collar excavations, vertical mulching, radial trenching, soil decompaction and transplanting quickly and safely.


Switch-N-Go www.switchnogo.com The Switch-N-Go Detachable Truck Body System makes interchanging truck bodies simple and easy in a matter of minutes. This system is a great way to maximize the versatility and utilization of medium duty (11,000-26,000 GVW) work trucks.

T. H. Glennon Co., Inc. www.mulchcolorjet.com Manufacturer of colorfast colorants for landscape mulch and producer of the mulch color jet equipment used to inject colorants directly into any grinder, including horizontals and tubs as well as trommel screens.

Teletrac, Inc. www.teletrac.net Manage mobile resources and drivers to maximize productivity, control costs and enhance service. Fleet Director GPS-based fleet management solution allows crew on-site verification, custom productivity reports, fuel consumption data, location and more.

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Timberland Truck & Equipment LLC www.timberlandtrucks.com Custom new and used forestry and log loading knuckle boom trucks. A COPMA knuckle boom crane dealer with the capability to supply a wide range of hydraulic cranes. Also carries an extensive line of ICM grapples and related crane accessories.

Timberwolf Manufacturing Corporation www.timberwolfcorp.com Professional firewood processing equipment; splitters, conveyors and processors.

Top Saw Tool LLC www.buytopsaw.com Top Saw Pocket Tool, a 10-in-1 multi-tool for chain saws, cut off saw, trimmers and blowers.

The Toro Company www.toro.com Innovative compact utility equipment to save time and money for the tree care professional. Products include: stump grinders, chippers, log splitters and mini-tracked loaders.

Townsend Corporation www.townsendtree.com Vegetation management, line clearance and herbicide application services for electric utilities and pipeline companies; power line and substation construction for the energy industry, herbicide wholesale supply and emergency storm restoration services.


Tree & Landscape Equipment Trader www.treeandlawn.com Offers new and used equipment from manufacturers, dealers and private sellers, Arborist supplies, parts suppliers, financial services, upcoming auctions, and insurance. Website is quick and easy to use and offers a wide variety of categories.

Tree Care Industry Association www.tcia.org Since 1938 the Tree Care Industry Association has been providing high quality to member companies: increasing safety with the Certified Treeare Safety Professional (CTSP) program, increasing your profits and helping your company implement sound business practices with TCIA Accreditation, fighting for your interests on legislative and regulatory issues through the Voice for Trees Political Action Committee, and raising the industry’s profile and professional image with consumers through www.treecaretips.org; Producers of TCIA EXPO and Winter Management Conference. Publisher of TCIA Magazine!

TREE Fund Tree Research/Educational Endowment Fund www.treefund.org Mission is to identify and fund projects that advance knowledge in the field of arboriculture and urban forestry to benefit people, trees and the environment.

Treenum Supply www.greenteeth.com
Accident Briefs

(Continued from page 44)

dent at a Litchfield residence. Peter Beyer, 54, was pronounced dead at the scene after being pinned beneath a large-diameter tree that fell while he was cutting it.

Beyer had completed his work for the town the previous week and was using vacation time leading up to his retirement date the following week, according to the Republican-American.

Trimmer rescued from broken bucket

A tree service owner was stuck 55 feet off the ground June 16, 2011, in Coshocton, Ohio, after the hydraulic system used to lift his boom bucket failed.

Joe Ames was trimming a 60-foot tall maple in a backyard when something caused the hydraulics on the lift to malfunction. Ames patiently waited to be retrieved from his bucket by firefighters. A firefighter rode the department’s bucket up alongside Ames, then helped him out of the boom bucket, according to the Coshocton Tribune.

Tree falls on man pulling it down with ATV

A 62-year-old man was injured when a tree he was attempting to pull down with an ATV fell on him June 18, 2011, in Holland Township, New Jersey.

The man was attempting to take down a tree at his residence when it fell quicker than he expected and struck him. The man, who was not identified, sustained injuries to his left arm and left leg and was flown to St. Lukes Hospital in Bethlehem, Pa.

Police could not confirm the severity of his injuries, but the man was conscious the entire time emergency officials were at the scene, according to The Star-Ledger.

Man killed by felled tree

A Richmond, New Hampshire, man died June 19, 2011, when a tree he was cutting at his home struck him. Aram Gurian, 28, was pronounced dead at the scene. The tree was a large hemlock, about 2 feet in diameter, according to The Keene Sentinel.

Gurian had experience cutting down trees and had planned how he would remove this one, a neighbor told WMUR TV, adding that Gurian apparently didn’t anticipate how quickly this tree would come down, and it caught him in the upper branches. The trunk then came down on top of him. The trunk that pinned him lengthwise was so big that all his friends could do was call for help and wait.

Man killed using excavator to fell tree

A Lacona, New York, man was killed in Sackets Harbor June 20, 2011, when he was pinned in an excavator by an uprooted tree. Kenneth Bush, 47, was using an excavator to cut and pull trees at the eastern end of Madison Barracks, a former military facility and now a residential community. A 40-foot-tall tree followed the arm of the excavator and slid down onto the cab. Bush was pinned inside the cab for seven to 10 minutes before emergency responders cut off the roof with a hydraulic tool.

He was unconscious and unresponsive when rescuers reached him, according to the Watertown Daily Times. He was pronounced dead at Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown.

Contributed by Brian Skinner, senior arborist, National Grid-Central Division, Syracuse, N.Y.
Trimmer injured by 13,000 volts

A tree trimmer was hit with 13,000 volts of electricity when a branch fell across electric utility feeder line June 21, 2011, in Vineland, New Jersey.

The private contractor was cutting down a tree in the front yard of a home when a severed tree limb struck the line. The branch carried the electricity back to the contractor who was standing atop an aluminum ladder.

The injured worker was taken to the South Jersey Healthcare Regional Medical Center. His name and condition were not immediately available.

The incident knocked out power to about 1,500 customers. Another crew from the company cut back the tree to ensure the safety of the situation, according to The Daily Journal.

Two injured when bucket truck tips

A man using a bucket truck to remove a tree in South Bend Indiana June 23, 2011, and his nephew were injured when the truck tipped over.

Rick Franklin, who works with a local tree service, was removing tree limbs at a home when the truck tipped over. Franklin and Nate Maxson, his 8-year-old nephew who was also in the bucket at the time, were both injured.

Maxson was treated and released from the hospital. Franklin, the truck operator, was in fair condition.

The company apparently was not licensed to work in South Bend, or had its license revoked, and had previously been investigated by city officials, according to the WSBT-TV report.

Electrocution claims trimmer

A Monte Vista, Colorado-area man died June 27, 2011, while trimming trees in Saguache, Colo., when the arm of his tree-trimming device came into contact with an electrical line.

Jerod Chisholm, 25, was found unconscious in the bucket. Chisholm’s partner Francisco Delgado, 64, of Del Norte was alert, but also appeared to have been electrocuted.

It appeared that the line slid underneath the bucket and then came into the contact with the arm. Responders told Delgado to stay still inside the bucket until the electric company responded to cut power, as the arm still was only about an inch from the line.

Once power was off, the bucket was lowered. Paramedics took both men to the football field at Mountain Valley School where they performed CPR on Chisholm. The responding Air Life physician pronounced Chisholm dead at the scene.

Delgado, who apparently did not appear to be seriously injured, was transported to Memorial Hospital for observation, according to the Valley Courier.
I’ve been climbing trees for most of my adult life and have come face to face with all sorts of critters that call trees home. Usually they are not happy to see me and we both scramble to get out of each other’s way (although bees tend to be ill-tempered and enjoy the chase).

Early one morning I started climbing a Douglas fir in someone’s backyard, one of hundreds I’ve climbed over the years working in the Pacific Northwest. Halfway up, I had the feeling I was being watched.

I looked a couple of branches up and saw a furry, masked face looking down on me. This raccoon seemed content to sit and watch me work, but the moment I advanced up the tree, he would move the same distance up. Thinking back to a similar situation with another climber, I remember watching in disbelief from my position in a nearby tree as the raccoon peed on his.

Wanting to avoid any raccoon pee, I kept an eye on him as I slowly worked my way up the tree. As we approached the top, he did something I’ll never forget.

From a height that would have been suicidal for you or me, he ambled out to the end of a branch and jumped.

As he passed me on the way down, he spread his paws out like a skydiver assuming the “stable position.” He landed on the roof of a metal shed, went through it and ran out the door without so much as a limp.

I’ll never know if he planned that, slipped and fell or just got lucky. But after seeing an animal the size of a small dog leap from a high branch with such reckless abandon, I’ve come to realize that raccoons really are the scrappy little hell-raisers of the animal kingdom.

Howard Rasmussen lives in Estacada, Oregon, and is currently employed as a deputized arborist of Metro Regional Parks in Portland, Oregon.
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