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The divided 112th Congress was sworn in on January 5, 2011, with much fanfare but diminished expectations. There will be headlines generated over the next two years, but finding common ground on divisive legislation won’t be easy. Immigration reform, one of the most polarizing issues facing the nation, is unlikely to see a resolution.

What does that mean for the owners of commercial tree care firms? Get your paperwork in order because the Department of Homeland Security’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is on the prowl. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, the agency has moved forward in the past year looking at workforce paperwork compliance, specifically on I-9 forms. And fines are on its mind.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act, signed by Ronald Reagan in 1986, granted amnesty to millions of illegal workers. It also made it illegal for employers to knowingly hire unauthorized workers. As an employer, you must verify that employees are eligible to work in the United States and you are required to complete Form I-9 for each new employee. The employee must produce documents showing identity and work authorization. Until recently, the government didn’t pay all that much attention to the paperwork.

That all changed on April 30, 2009, when Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced the agency would focus on criminal prosecution of employers that knowingly hire illegal workers. ICE began implementing its new strategy that summer, targeting employers for I-9 audits. ICE agents conducted sweeps of hundreds of companies at a time, ordering employers to turn over their I-9 forms for inspection.

The Obama administration’s new focus on I-9 audits has resulted in record penalties and prosecutions against employers. According to ICE, in fiscal year 2010 the agency recovered record penalties of $6.9 million, more than 10 times the 2008 total, and charged 187 owners or managers with criminal immigration violations.

Few would argue that employers who knowingly and routinely break the law should face the consequences. Don’t cheer too loudly, however, because if your paperwork isn’t in order you, too, could face penalties – even if all of your employees are legal. In September, ICE wacked trendy retailer Abercrombie & Fitch with a fine of $1.04 million for I-9 paperwork violations. No illegal workers were found.

Under current law, employers that fail to complete the I-9 form for each new hire (or fill it out improperly) can be subject to civil fines of up to $1,100 for each violation. How many employees do you have … and is all the paperwork filled out properly?

Scrutiny has also increased for those companies that hold federal contracts. ICE debarred 97 businesses last year for violations, compared with 30 the previous year.

As the owner you probably delegate I-9 paperwork to someone else in the office. Now might be a good time to check up on compliance.
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You’d think that the larger the tree care mission (for example right-of-way maintenance versus a tree take-down) the more difficult it would be to “go green.” And then you’d naturally wonder, if you actually DO go green, how much this would challenge the profitability of your business.

To disagree with Kermit, the great green Muppet philosopher, in the ROW business it IS, in fact, easy being green – all the way to the macro tree care level. And going green can actually be as profitable as it is environmentally responsible. That’s the bottom line, figuratively and literally, based on the experience of one of the nation’s oldest and largest tree care and vegetation management companies, The Townsend Corporation, a longtime TCIA member.

Townsend is an integrated group of companies that serve more than 60 percent of the nation and provide everything from vegetation management, power-line clearance, herbicide packaging and application, electric utility line construction and storm-damage relief to the manufacture, installation and maintenance of custom electrical control panels. The company serves both national and international markets.

Not only does Townsend have a tree care legacy reaching back to 1945, according to Phil Chambers, president and chief operating officer of the Townsend Corporation, but it also has been a staunch supporter of TCIA and its predecessor for more than 33 years.

Chambers, a former investment banker, joined the company as its president and COO three-and-a-half years ago and is part owner of this privately held firm. (He has also been elected a TCIA Board member and will be sworn in at the Annual Meeting during Winter Management Conference in February.)

Townsend has a broad enough business platform and sufficient experience across the tree care business to be able to address green initiatives and illustrate green successes from both a strategic and tactical level. For a company such as Townsend, green has to work day in and day out for the company and its partners.

“Our company is involved in the electrical construction side, and so far in 14 wind farms across the U.S., from Oregon to...
Kansas,” says Chambers. “That industry depends on tax credits. We also are involved in construction of solar (energy installations), to a lesser degree, but it’s becoming a fairly large push coast-to-coast with regard to alternative energy sources that are friendly to the environment.”

What is unspoken here is that the application of right of way is evolving, just as energy and utility businesses themselves are evolving, from the traditional utilities and transportation corridors. Both wind farms and solar fields represent new markets for the tree care business because they will be requiring vegetation maintenance, equipment and knowledge/training appropriate to the application and the geography. For example, once constructed, tree service may not be needed for a solar farm, but vegetation management will be.

According to Chambers, “In an integrated vegetation management environment, there are a couple of levels of consideration in and around green. One is the use of mechanical equipment in what utilities call ROW, or right-of-way, management. Businesses like ours with large equipment fleets, tend to leave a large carbon footprint.” (He is referring to the use of fuels and the carbon-based exhaust given off by general transportation to and from the site and also, more specifically, while running on the job.)

“At Townsend, we have our own efforts under way, aside from what is mandated by the federal government, to reduce our carbon footprint. We do this, for example, by keeping trucks from sitting and just idling all day. Same goes for our chippers. We turn them on and off, depending on their use. In the past, we might keep our trucks running all day regardless of whether or nor our booms were in the air.”

That’s a simple beginning that anyone can adopt for no cost, but there are other ways the company lessens its carbon footprint, too.

“With right-of-way maintenance, if we look at managing growth control along with cutting, which is a major focus for electrical utilities and government agencies, we can, by applying herbicides and/or growth inhibitors, achieve two things at the same time. We can lengthen the trim cycle and thereby reduce the carbon footprint. This results in multiple savings for the customer and for us.”

Another environmentally friendly initiative offered by Townsend is its specialty blending business, which can blend and package herbicide or vegetation control compounds to meet the specific needs of a customer. Clients include state and local governments as well as utilities.

What’s noteworthy about this is that a custom blended vegetation management product can be more effective in a program that targets vegetation as to whether it needs to be eradicated or its growth slowed. Plus, materials can be blended to
target native or invasive species more effectively. It’s a bit like farming. In the old days, a farmer would spread fertilizer and crop and pest control agents broadly and universally over his field. Today he will use materials with highly specific performance characteristics. After having assessed his land’s needs, he can pinpoint the location and amount of application needed. The environmental impact is obvious.

In addition to blending (for their own use or for resale to other users), Townsend also practices a closed/returnable system. As the name implies, it is the exact opposite of the non-returnable container. Chambers says this closed/returnable system has numerous green and safety advantages. Because the vegetation material is custom-blended, there is no mixing in the field. This reduces and virtually eliminates spills, which can affect the environment and also pose a threat to workers who now do not have to handle chemicals directly.

“Second, the process is environmentally friendly because the used containers (and related pumping gear) are unhooked and sent back to the plant for cleaning, refilling and repair as needed, over and over, and do not wind up in landfills,” he stresses. “This is a service getting a lot of attention from utilities and applicators all over the country.”

There is also a security benefit. “For a host of reasons starting with environmental impact and the safety of workers, containers no longer can walk off the job site. Each container is marked and tracked so...
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we and our customers know what was shipped and where it was shipped. Utilities can also take advantage of this as a trackable security measure.”

“One other technique that has come into vogue in the past five to 10 years is the use of mowers and specialty equipment in right-of-way maintenance,” Chambers observes. “There are things we can do (in ROW) which cannot be done in electrical distribution (community) settings because of urban, neighborhood settings, but as we move more into the country and have less construction and traffic, we can use more specialty equipment like the Sky Trim all-terrain mechanical trimmer and specialty mower heads that can go through thick brush and mow down vegetation to the ground quickly.”

“This kind of specialty equipment takes fewer man hours and thus becomes more productive in the right-of-way application. Plus, they generally and more quickly can cover more and more rugged ground because they are built for the purpose. Unlike a bucket truck and chipper, for example, you have only one machine running at a time,” he says, referencing the reduced footprint mission. “Then, we follow behind with herbicides and vegetation growth inhibitors.”

Another technique Chambers referenced is the growing use of helicopters for trimming and spraying. “These are especially effective in rough terrain. We contract with specialty providers to trim using helicopters with specialty equipment that hangs from the aircraft for trimming. The same type of helicopter can be fitted to apply vegetation-killing or growth-inhibiting agents along the right-of-way tree line to keep vegetation from moving back in after the cut.”

Other pieces of specialty equipment used by Townsend in ROW work are units such as the Jarraff all-terrain, boom-mounted circular saw trimmer. Made for ROW work, these units are available with various tire options to not only overcome terrain challenges, but also to minimize environmental impact, he notes. “These long arms (booms) and blades can quickly achieve a vertical reach of 50 feet or more. They can move faster over rough terrain (than multi-purpose equipment) and are more efficient in cutting. Furthermore,
there is less danger to operators largely because the job does not require as many crew members.

“Specialty pieces like the Geo-Boy (Jarraff’s brush cutter tractor) with Fecon mowing heads, for example, and other mowers adapted for skid steers and other tool carriers allow us to mow quickly regardless of whether the tree is a couple of inches thick or full-grown,” says Chambers.

“Specialty equipment like these can be profitable. First, you get to charge appropriately for specialty work whether you use the clearing equipment or apply herbicides or growth inhibitors. Regardless of the type of services of services we offer, both are fare more efficient for us and for the customer.” (In an integrated vegetation management program you’d be doing the cutting and a follow-up application.)

“From a return on investment perspective, we see a far better return on our investment, including specialty equipment, even with green equipment because each piece is in high demand and is in-use a high degree of time. This equipment doesn’t sit, and there is far more production and efficiency than with two men and a bucket truck.”

We asked the obvious question about how much of the business is being driven by demand for green or environmentally responsible equipment and services. His response was compelling and truly captured the essence of this issue.

“Certainly, a large and growing part of the Townsend business is driven by the green initiative. But this demand is not a specific result,” explains Chambers. “The type of business result (profitability) you get out of these services and this equipment ends up being a green one. They are green because they are more efficient.”

What he is saying is that, these days, the efficiency of new equipment and application practices gives them “greenness,” if you will, that makes them both attractive and profitable.

Chambers concludes: “I would tell you that the environmental green movement is growing in the utility business and is going to get bigger as we go forward with different types of equipment; applications and trimming techniques in combination with each other, and the use of specialty equipment in reducing the overall carbon footprint, will become more in vogue as we move forward.”
“You want fries with that?”
Canola oil – Reaching into the past for a greener future

By Mark Przekurat

As we look forward by trying to be “Greener” – recycling, hybrid cars, Energy star appliances – let’s not forget to look to the past to learn new/old ways of being planet and emission friendly.

Today’s canola oil was developed from rapeseed oil (Brassica napus) through conventional plant breeding. For hundreds of years, Asians and Europeans used rapeseed in oil lamps. Machinists, during the steam-powered era, found that rapeseed oil clung to water- or steam-washed surfaces better than other lubricants of the time. During World War II, rapeseed oil was in high demand for naval and merchant shipping. Rapeseed oil is also used in the manufacture of biodiesel. After WWII, demand declined and growers tried to market rapeseed oil for human consumption and, after breeding out the undesirable qualities, canola oil was born.

The name Canola comes from CANadian Oil, Low Acid, denoting that it had been modified to reduce the erucic acid content that caused it to be unsuitable for human and animal consumption. Canola oil is processed by crushing the rapeseeds, which are approximately 42 percent oil. The remaining 48 percent is called rapeseed meal, a high quality animal feed. Fifty pounds of rapeseeds make about 2.6 gallons of canola oil. World production is growing rapidly, with Canada and the United States producing between 7 and 10 million tons of canola seed per year. A renewable resource to be sure!

After centuries of use as a lubricant for heavy machinery, canola had been forgotten as a lubricant as the age of petroleum and synthetic chemicals was born. But the time is right to rediscover this important, renewable and eco-friendly lubricant!

Fast forward to five years ago (summer 2005). I was pruning a sugar maple (Acer saccharum) along one of the small lakes that abound in New Hampshire. From my 50-foot perch, I had a beautiful view of the lake, the small camps and surrounding hillsides. Loons were frolicking in the small cove nearby. I felt at ease with nature as I enjoyed the sunshine and blue skies of that day. As I swung back to work, rigging a medium sized branch through the canopy, I first spied the oil slick that my trusty climbing saw had just spewn across the top of that otherwise pristine lake. I was horrified at the size of the oil slick! And it kept growing and growing as I watched in amazement!

I had never once thought about what was happening to the oil that flung out onto my chain, other than to notice when it wasn’t flowing... I had never considered what happened to it after I was done using it as a lubricant and coolant to extend the life of my bar and chain. I abruptly realized how short sighted I was as I continued to watch the rainbow oil slick expand on that hot summer day. I finished the rest of the day’s work with my handsaw.

When I returned home that evening, I began to research alternatives to standard bar and chain oil, and did a rough calculation that we use about 55 gallons of bar and chain oil each year. I tried to imagine myself dumping a 55 gallon drum of oil onto the ground. I could not. I was repulsed by how insensitive I had been acting, by not noticing this sooner...

After several hours of Web searches and reading cautionary technical bulletins regarding tackifiers and additives to manufacturers’ products, I came to the conclusion that I would switch to canola oil, as one person in the Midwest reported positive results. The very next day I cleaned my saws of bar and chain oil, donated my remaining bar oil stock to a

Wesson canola oil with the saws at a Women’s Chain Saw Safety training class the author held last summer.

One of the pristine New Hampshire lakes the author has worked on.
local firewood processor, and went to the big box store to purchase canola oil. I have never looked back nor regretted my decision.

Prior to running canola oil, I’d replaced a handful of chain saw oil pumps on various saws. I’d learned the basics and finer points of saw chain filing, inspection and maintenance. And I’d cleaned, filed, flipped and trued bars. I’d learned how to inspect and replace drive sprockets, check for tight rivets in chain and replace tip sprockets as well. So, while I may not be able to present proven scientific results regarding my experience with canola oil, I do feel that my familiarity, understanding and sensitivity to metallurgy and fatigue qualify my opinion regarding the results of replacing petroleum-based bar and chain oil with canola oil.

In the five years that we have exclusively used canola oil in our saws, we have not experienced one friction or heat related failure of a bar, chain, sprocket or oil pump. Here’s the variety of saws we’ve used canola in: Stihl 039, 084; Husqvarna 338xpt, 346xp, 390; Dolmar 5100s, 7900; and Jonsered CS 2135T.

As you can see, a cross section of brands, sizes and uses, from climbing, to firewood to bucking big wood. What’s gone is the sticky stringy smelly mess of petroleum oil, replaced by the fragrant smell of french fries when a little canola oil burns off a hot muffler. My mind rests a lot easier when I see the natural oil slick I create on a pristine lake these days. I know that the vegetable based oil slick will soon biodegrade into a natural fertilizer and won’t hurt the loons or spoil thousands of gallons of drinking water. Did you know that one gallon of petroleum oil can contaminate 1 million gallons of fresh water (according to the EPA)?

If we are collectively dumping that much oil into the environment, what about the respiration risk that chain saw operators are exposed to? I’ve heard that researchers are beginning to ask this question, but I was unable to find any published information. The MSDSs (Material Safety Data Sheets) for petroleum-based lubricant state: “No known significant effects or critical hazards.”

The conclusion of the MSDSs contains the standard disclaimer that states: “Final determination of suitability of any material is the sole responsibility of the user.”

I must admit that I’ve never taken the time to decipher this section of the MSDS sheets that describe the way we use bar oil: “Under conditions which may generate mists, the following exposure limits are recommended: ACGIH TLV TWA: 5 mg/m³; STEL: 10 mg/m³.” Have you?

Is canola oil superior to petroleum? Is it scientifically proven? Are there people who swear by petroleum? Does the financial impact for manufacturers play a role? Will I have to tighten my chain more often? Will I have to warm up my saw in cold weather? These questions and hundreds of others may prevent some folks from making the change. But after doing the math, I ask myself, does the (unproven) risk of premature bar and chain wear outweigh the calculated and tangible benefit of cleaner air and water?

My customers love the fact that we think about and care for the environment enough to research this topic and promote it to them. It’s one more way we can differenti-
SavATree merges with Autumn Tree Care

SavATree in December announced a merger with Autumn Tree Care Experts. SavATree, an accredited TCIA-member company, has been serving the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions for more than 25 years. This partnership expands SavATree’s presence into the Illinois market. Both firms are TCIA member companies.

“What attracted me to SavATree was their excellent reputation,” says Matthew Dziedzic, co-founder of Autumn Tree Care Experts.

Dan Klindera, president of Autumn, adds, “We share many similarities in culture, in particular our dedication to providing exceptional customer service and expertise. It’s a natural fit.”

Founded by Matthew and Veronica Dziedzic in 1979, Autumn Tree Care Experts is a full-service arboricultural firm dedicated to tree preservation. Services include tree pruning and fertilization, disease diagnosis and treatment, pest management, cabling/bracing, and pre/post construction consultations.

“We are thrilled to partner with a company who, like us, strives to sustain the environment. Both organizations have been at the forefront of environmental awareness for over two decades. Further, both organizations have adopted FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) standards,” says Daniel van Starrenburg, president of SavATree.

“Our reputation and track record make SavATree an ideal company for others looking to join forces. We have successfully integrated a number of businesses and are always taking care to understand what made these companies successful and then leverage those capabilities to make us both better,” says van Starrenburg.

ASCA installs 2011 Board

The American Society of Consulting Arborists recently installed its new Board of Directors for 2011. The Board’s term will run through December 2011.

Officers are Alan H. Jones, Charlottesville, VA, president (TCIA member with Bartlett Tree Experts); James R. Clark, Ph.D., Pleasanton, CA, president-elect; James P. Allen, Santa Cruz, CA, immediate past president. Directors include Brian K. Gilles, Kirkland, WA; Donald R. Goulding, Pompano Beach, FL; J. David Hucker, Berwyn, PA ((TCIA member with David Hucker Consulting); Gordon Mann, Redwood City, CA; Dennis Panu, Thompson, CT; and, Molly E. Sinnott, Carson City, NV.

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Bandit 490XP chipper uses gas or PTO

Bandit Industries new Model 490XP chipper uses gas or PTO power, and a drop-style infeed to deliver efficient, affordable chipping. The 490XP is a lightweight, inexpensive hand-fed chipper with PTO capability that’s ideally suited for tree farms, orchards and any property where regular tree maintenance is required. The 490XP’s low cost and ease-of-use make it an ideal choice for smaller tree trimming projects. It features a large 7.5-inch x 15.5-inch opening, allowing it to receive and process materials up to four inches in diameter. It’s equipped with a swivel discharge spout and a chip deflector, enabling material to be forcibly discharged in any direction. The standard 490XP is a manual push unit with an 18-hp Briggs and Stratton engine for power; PTO models easily mount to tractors and should utilize at least 18-shaft horsepower to achieve maximum effectiveness.

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Recycled Billboard Tarps

Recycled advertising billboard vinyls are being repurposed as tarp material by a company called, of course, Recycled Billboard Tarps. These tarps can be used to protect equipment, cover materials on site, cover roofs/structures from debris, ease cleanups, etc. In addition to being a “green” alternative, since they are recycling billboard advertising, they are also cheap and effective. These vinyls are super heavy duty (20 mils thick and 13 ounces per yard), heavier than most material you’d buy new for the same uses (the blue tarps at Home Depot are just 5 mils thick). And, they are about 75 percent less expensive than store bought tarps of similar quality! In fact, about one third of the users so far are people who have used billboard tarps previously, and want more because of how well they liked them. Common sizes are 14 feet x 48 feet, 12 feet x 42 feet and 10 feet x 30 feet.

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Morbark Beever M18RX Brush Chipper

Morbark, Inc.’s new Beever M18RX is a new, lightweight option package for the Beever M18R Brush Chipper. Less than 10,000 pounds fully charged with fluids, spare tire and a rugged winch, this rigid and efficient machine can be towed without a CDL. Other key modifications include the single feed-wheel yoke pivot assembly with TorqMax drive, which minimizes dead space between the feed wheel and chipper drum, and increases down pressure efficiency. It has all the features of the standard M18R in a lighter package, yet it’s still a heavy-duty, reliable piece of machinery. The Beever M18RX is available in horsepower ranging from 140-170 with Cummins, John Deere or Caterpillar power options.

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SnowEx wirelessly controlled spreaders

SnowEx’s new SR-110 and SR-210 utility spreaders are compact units equipped with wireless controls, which eliminate the need to route an electrical harness to the cab and allow simple plug-and-play operation. Both models attach to a variety of vehicles, including pickups, SUVs, cars, utility vehicles and ATVs. Both feature a 3-cubic-foot hopper. The remote controls the rate of the two-speed spinner and toggles the electric motor on and off. The SR-210 spreads up to a 25-foot range with a vertical high-flow auger and a spinner that allow the unit to spread bulk materials, such as bagged rock salt or calcium flakes, whereas the SR-110 spreads material up to a 20-foot range with a gate feed system, allowing it to handle small calcium chloride pellets or bagged ice melters. The SR-110 includes a cable to open and close the gate from the cab. An electric motor drives the spreaders – meaning no engines to fuel and no pulleys, sprockets, belts or chains to maintain. Both models feature a modular, powder-coated steel frame with a high-density, UV-protected poly hopper. SnowEx is a product division of TrynEx International.

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**Colorbiotics reformulated colorants**

Colorbiotics has reformulated their red and black mulch colorant selections, resulting in a deeper black and a redder red, an enhancement that makes these two popular colorants an even more attractive option. The enhanced red and black colorants are available through the Mulch Magic and Starburst colorant lines and are available immediately. Both selections can be ordered in either tote or drum packaging options. Like all Colorbiotics product offerings, the improvements have been produced under strict International ISO 9001 guidelines to ensure consistency and quality. Prior to introduction, the enhanced red and black colorant offerings underwent rigorous indoor and outdoor testing to ensure they met the levels of durability and longevity required by Colorbiotics.

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**Vermeer whole-tree chipper**

Vermeer Corporation’s new WC2300 whole-tree chipper is designed specifically to produce chips for the growing biomass industry. The unit is powered by a 440-hp (328.1 kW) C-13 CAT diesel engine that allows for maximum output while consuming less fuel than higher-powered machines. A 6-degree slope of the infeed table lowers the “break-over” point where long material first contacts the machine, reducing the likelihood of limbs or tree canopy from snagging on the end of the machine. Two drum knife options are available – double-edged or babbitted single-edge cutter knives – allowing the operator to select the type of knife that best suits their operation, jobsite or customer requirements. A compact design allows for more maneuverability and easier repositioning of the machine on the jobsite, especially with the grapple grip collar area on the WC2300 tongue. Machine functions can be controlled remotely using a handheld remote control that also provides real-time machine performance data to aid the operator in maximizing productivity by monitoring and adjusting settings.

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Contact: Deb Cyr cyr@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

February 9, 2011
Develop Your Strategic Plan for 2011 and Beyond!
Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

February 10, 2011
Plant Disease Wilts: Origins and Remediation
Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

February 12, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Humble, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

February 13-15, 2011
Ohio Tree Care Conference & Trade Show
Hyatt Regency Columbus, Columbus, OH
Contact: (614) 771-7494; info@ohiochapterisa.org; www.ohiochapterisa.org

February 19-20, 2011
North American Tree Climbing Championship
Savannah, GA (in conjunction w/ No. Amer. Tree Conf.)
Contact: www.northamericantcc.com

Feb. 19-22, 2011
North American Tree Conference
Savannah, GA
Contact: www.isasouthern.org

February 22, 2011
Mystery Beneath ... Getting to the “Root” of the Problem
Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

February 28-March 1, 2011
Great Plains Tree Conference
Embassy Suites, Lincoln, NE
Contact: (402) 476-3865; www.NEArborists.org

March 10, 2011
3rd Annual Sustainable Urban Landscape Conf.
Cuyamaca College,
El Cajon, CA
Contact: www.cuyamaca.edu/OHweb; (619) 660-4023

March 17, 2011
NJAIS Garden State Tree Conference
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.NJArboristsISA.com

April 21, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Round Rock, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

May 11-13, 2011
Western Chapter ISA 77th Annual Conference
La Jolla, CA
Contact: www.wcisa.net

May 19-21, 2011
2011 Texas Tree Climbing Championship & Workshop
Trinity Park, Fort Worth, TX
Contact: www.isatexas.com

July 21, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Round Rock, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

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

October 5-7, 2011
2011 Texas Tree Conference & Trade Show
Waco Convention Center, Waco, TX
Contact: www.isatexas.com

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

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

Upcoming TCIA webinars

Feb. 17
Wally Hauck, Ph.D., CSP,
Why the Typical Performance
Appraisal Fails and What To Do To
improve Performance

Feb. 22
Tom Dunlap, CTSP
SRT: Half the Rope, Twice as Easy

Feb. 25
Bob Rouse & Randy McDonald, CTSP
Business Boot Camp Series: Sales and Marketing

Mar. 10
Brian Kraft, & Griffin Davis, Market
Hardware
Social Networks & the New Face of
Online Marketing

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More almanac online! For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.tcia.org
Hi! I’m from the federal government and I’m here to help you!”

To a small business owner in the U.S., that might sound like the punch line to a bad joke. But the reality is that federal government agencies can be a boon to small business, and a prime example of that is the Small Business Administration, or SBA.

For those who may need convincing, the SBA’s Office of Advocacy is an independent voice for small business within the federal government and is the watchdog for the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA).

Recently, as part of SBA’s mission to ensure that small business owners and entrepreneurs have access to accurate, timely and helpful information, SBA unveiled a newly re-designed SBA website. The new site features the launch of SBA Direct, a dynamic new Web tool with a variety of personalization features that will help small businesses start-up, succeed and grow.

“With the launch of the new SBA.gov, we have reached a significant milestone in how the agency has evolved in using interactive Web tools, social media and blogs to engage with, and better meet the needs of, small business owners,” said SBA Administrator, Karen Mills. “While the SBA website has traditionally been an information-rich site, we wanted to make it easier for small business owners to navigate. With the new improved SBA.gov, business owners can access the answers they need, specific to their business profile, in an instant – it truly presents the face of the future of SBA.”

While the site features a variety of enhancements, including a full re-design, new content and improved navigation, the centerpiece is a dynamic new Web tool called SBA Direct.

SBA Direct allows visitors to personalize their browsing experience according to their business type, geography and needs. SBA Direct then delivers relevant and targeted information on all aspects of running a business such as the steps involved in getting started, business growth strategies, and how to stay compliant with current laws and regulations. SBA Direct provides information on the available SBA programs that can help businesses, such as financial assistance, exporting and government contracting opportunities, counseling and training.

Other new features to the website include:
- SBA’s small business search that improves the accuracy and relevancy of search results – saving time and frustration.
- Improved navigation that gives users one-click access to the information they need. Combined with the personalization features of SBA Direct, users no longer have to mine through pages of information to find answers.
- Integration of Business.gov content including a variety of guides and tools that collate information from across government agencies to help business owners comply with laws and regulations, and take advantage of government programs.
- Interactive location-based maps that allow users to quickly find small business resources in their area, including local SBA offices, and other sources of training and support.
- User-rated content gives visitors to the site direct control in determining the most useful and relevant information to feature by small business topic.

SBA’s commitment to using Web services to provide small businesses with greater access to the pool of government resources available began in 2006 with the launch of the award-winning Business.gov website, and later with the Business.gov Community initiative in 2009 (the first government-sponsored online community built specifically for small businesses), and more recently with SBA’s own social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

The new SBA.gov built on these achievements and best practices as a driver for its transformation. The project is also a flagship for the agency’s Open Government Plan, with the goal of building an online presence for SBA that they tout as being transparent, participatory and collaborative.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for TCIA.
In Midwestern landscapes and nurseries, leaf tatters of oaks and common hackberry have been reported since the early 1980s. Vegetation surrounding the injured oaks and hackberry remain unaffected. Amongst the oaks, white and bur oaks are the species most affected by leaf tatters in the landscape.

Symptoms of tatters begin with browning (necrosis) of the interveinal tissues of young unfolding leaves (Photo 1). The necrotic area later drops off as the leaves continue to expand, leaving behind mostly the veins in fully expanded leaves (Photo 2).

A tree with leaf tatters in one year may not be affected the next year. Leaf tatters may affect part or the entire tree canopy. Later in the growing season, the trees will produce new flush(es) of normal leaves but the older leaves with tatters may remain. Trees with severe leaf tatters may become stressed, making them susceptible to other nutrient, weather or site pressures. A major concern for nurserymen, arborists, park managers and homeowners is the reduced aesthetic value of trees with leaf tatters.

In the past, insect feeding, frost injury, leaf diseases or herbicide drift were thought to cause leaf tatters. Hints to a possible cause of leaf tatters were observations that oak and hackberry trees near agricultural fields were most affected. Our research study with white oak and northern red oak found a group of herbicides (chloroacetanilides) including acetochlor, dimethenamid and s-metolachlor (active ingredients in Harness®, Outlook®, and Dual Magnum®, respectively) caused leaf tatter-like symptoms when seedlings in their leaf unfolding growth stage were exposed to these herbicides at rates simulating drift (Photo 3).

Chloroacetanilide herbicides are commonly applied pre-emergence to corn, soybeans, sorghum and rice. Five to six days after exposure to chloroacetanilide herbicides, the unfolding leaf tissue started to turn brown (Photo 4), resulting in tattered, fully expanded leaves. In both the white oak and northern red oak species, the seedlings with leaf tatters later produced a new flush of normal leaves, similar to in landscape settings.

In our previous study, white oak seedlings exposed to chloroacetanilide herbicides, the unfolding leaf tissue started to turn brown (Photo 4), resulting in tattered, fully expanded leaves. In both the white oak and northern red oak species, the seedlings with leaf tatters later produced a new flush of normal leaves, similar to in landscape settings.

In our previous study, white oak seedlings exposed to chloroacetanilide herbicides, the unfolding leaf tissue started to turn brown (Photo 4), resulting in tattered, fully expanded leaves. In both the white oak and northern red oak species, the seedlings with leaf tatters later produced a new flush of normal leaves, similar to in landscape settings.
Bicides at the swollen bud, unfolding leaf or expanded leaf stage only developed leaf tatters at the unfolding leaf stage. White oak seedlings treated with herbicides from other herbicide groups also did not develop leaf tatters symptoms, although other symptoms of injury were observed. Herbicide rates used in this study also simulated drift conditions.

Symptoms of leaf tatters can be confused with damage caused by frost injury, anthracnose, wind damage or feeding of oak sawflies and Asiatic oak weevil. Frost injury to newly emerged oak leaves causes rapid death and the leaves turn brown and drop-off the trees (Photo 5).

Anthracnose is a fungal disease usually killing portions of oak leaves (Photo 6). The dead tissues eventually fall off leaving ragged leaf margins, whereas leaf edges of tatter leaves are smooth. Damage by strong winds causes oak leaves to be shredded, with ragged leaf edges (Photo 7).

Oak sawfly damage in late spring on an individual oak leaf does appear similar to leaf tatters (Photo 8), but will affect individual leaves, unlike leaf tatters. The Asiatic oak weevil is a ¼-inch-long greenish gray beetle that feeds in midsummer on interveinal tissues of oak leaves (Photo 9), producing different timing and injury symptoms than leaf tatters.

Herbicide drift can be a problem in the Midwest, where topography is relatively flat and residential zones are often intermingled with agricultural farms. Further research is needed on the impact of leaf tatters on tree health.

Watering and fertilizing trees can minimize tree stress. Talk with nearby farmers so they can avoid applying chloroacetanilide herbicides when oak and hackberry leaves are unfolding. Always prevent herbicide drift by spraying in the absence of cross winds, when wind speeds are less than 10 mph, and by choosing spray nozzles producing large sized droplets.

Jayesh B. Samtani, Ph.D., is a post-doctoral scholar in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of California, Davis. James E. Appleby, Ph.D., is an entomologist in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. John B. Masiunas, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The research studies on leaf tatters were funded by USDA Forest Service Evaluation Monitoring Program and were conducted at University of Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences.
Utility pole falls, killing tree worker

A tree trimmer died while working in a right of way in Chicago, December 3, 2010, after a telephone pole fell on him. Marvin Yoder was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital, after a telephone pole fell on him. Marvin was working for a tree care company that had a contract to notch and drop old utility poles along a commuter rail corridor.

Man killed by felled tree

A man died in New Castle County, Maryland, December 17, 2010, after a tree he was cutting behind his home fell on him. Galaen Shoun, 60, was pronounced dead a short time later at Christiana Hospital.

Police say Shoun was cutting the tree to get firewood when it fell on him and pinned him. The man’s wife called out for him and when she got no response, went into the yard and found him. She called 911.

Rescue workers lifted the tree of the victim and began CPR before taking him to the hospital, according to a report on www.delmarvanow.com.

Worker suffers burns in workshop fire

An employee was injured December 18, 2010, while attempting to put out a fire at a landscaping and tree service company in Peoria, Illinois.

Hassen O. Drissi, 71, was working when a machine shed used as a workshop at the business caught fire and he attempted to put it out. He suffered severe burns and was transported to OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. His condition was unavailable shortly afterward, according to The Journal Star. Insulation in the wall of the structure started on fire from sparks generated by tools.

Trimmer struck, killed on train trestle

A tree trimmer was struck and killed by a train while walking to his job site December 20, 2010, in Trenton, Ohio.

William E. Kingrey, 44, of Camden, Ohio, who worked for a tree care company contracted to work in the area, was struck while he was walking across a trestle. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Kingrey was part of a crew trimming trees on Duke Energy property, with their vehicles parked on the south side of Elk Creek.

At the time of the accident, Kingrey was crossing the trestle with his equipment to go to the other side to their work area. He apparently was caught on the trestle and couldn’t get off in time.

He had worked as a tree trimmer for 26 years, according to the Hamilton Journal News.

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**TREE CARE ACCIDENT SURVEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My company is a Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes ❑ No ❑ I don’t know</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. My company is accredited by Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA).</td>
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<td>Yes ❑ No ❑</td>
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<td>3. My company has at least one Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) on staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes ❑ No ❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Full-time or part-time? Please check one:</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Our TREE CARE business in calendar year(s) 2009 and/or 2010 was part-time, employing less than one person full-time or creating less than 1,000 hours of employment in a year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Our TREE CARE business in 2009-10 was full-time, employing one or more person(s) full-time or creating 1,000 or more hours of employment in a year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If you checked “part-time” you are done with the survey, thanks!</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Our TREE CARE business in 2009-10 was full-time, employing one or more person(s) full-time or creating 1,000 or more hours of employment in a year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How much tree work did you do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>You may provide either your company’s total TREE CARE hours worked by all production personnel for the calendar year, including overtime; or you can provide the number of full-time tree care production personnel you employed for the calendar year and we will estimate the hours you worked; or you may provide both (a&amp;b). Please provide a numeric, whole number response (i.e., “6,000”, not “six-thousand”; or “3”, not “three” or “2.75”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Total TREE CARE Hours Worked: ___2009 ___2010</td>
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<td>AND/OR</td>
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<td>b. Number of FULL-TIME TREE CARE EMPLOYEES: ___2009 ___2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Please provide the number of REPORTABLE INJURIES your company experienced doing TREE WORK: ___2009 ___2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Companies with more than 10 employees: This may be determined from your OSHA 300A Summary from the appropriate year by adding items G through J. Companies with 10 or fewer employees: Provide the total number of injuries in the calendar year that required medical attention beyond first aid in the field. You should provide a numeric, whole number response (i.e., report “3”, not “three” or “2.75”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Please provide the total number of INJURIES your company experienced doing TREE WORK that resulted in days away from work, job transfer, or work restrictions: ___2009 ___2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Companies with more than 10 employees: This may be obtained by adding the totals of columns H and I from your OSHA 300A Summary from the appropriate year. Companies with 10 or fewer employees: Provide the total number of injuries that caused the injured employee to miss work beyond the initial date of the injury, to be transferred to other duties temporarily, or to have restrictions placed on work activities. Please note: You cannot have more lost-time injuries than reportable injuries. You should provide a numeric, whole number response (i.e., report “3”, not “three” or “2.75”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Please check off which of the following your company uses in its safety efforts:</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Yes ❑ No Written Safety Policy &amp; Procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Yes ❑ No ANSI Z133.1-2006 – Safety Standard</td>
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<td>❑ Yes ❑ No Documented training (with written records)</td>
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<tr>
<td>❑ Yes ❑ No Documented crew inspections (hazard inspections)</td>
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Please complete online at www.tcia.org or fax completed form to (603) 314-5386 by March 15, 2011. Thanks!
Man killed when tree rolls

A man died at a rural Scotts Valley, California, home December 28, 2010, when a tree he was using a chain saw to cut into pieces rolled over him.

A caller reported hearing a neighbor yelling for help, and responding emergency personnel found that the tree had already been on the ground, and the man was attempting to cut it when it rolled over him, according to the Santa Cruz Sentinel and San Jose Mercury News.

Climber killed after cutting safety line

An Allentown, Pennsylvania, man who accidently cut a safety line as he trimmed a tree December 29, 2010, in Whitehall Township fell 30 feet to the ground and died six hours later. Edward Goworowski, 48, was trimming the tree when he cut through the line and dropped from the tree, according to The Morning Call.

Send your local accident reports to editor@tcia.org.

Accidents in the tree care industry that occurred during the month of December 2010. Graphic compiled from reports gathered by, or submitted to, TCIA staff.

The results are in.

TCIA Member companies with employees enrolled in the Certified Treecare Safety Professional program are 10 times less likely to experience a lost workday incident compared with non-CTSP companies.

The numbers don’t lie...*

safety-conscious tree care companies that get involved with the CTSP program experience fewer accidents, fewer injuries, and less lost time — PERIOD.

*for the full survey results, click on the CTSP tab at www.tcia.org.
Whether the urban forest is sustainable depends on the definition of sustainability used and how the work is accomplished.

Sustainability is often defined as: “The ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Starting with this definition, a simplified approach to the urban forest can be viewed as an equilateral triangle with the sides being planning, planting and pruning. This approach includes aspects of both urban forestry and arboriculture.

For this discussion, the urban forest means only trees managed, planted and maintained as part of the constructed landscape.

Planning includes an analysis of the needs and functions the urban forest is to achieve. The analysis includes short and long-term goals and restraints coupled with available resources. The intention is to have an urban forest that will achieve and maintain ecological diversity and produc-
tivity over time at the lowest cost – in dollars and to the environment.

Planning includes a management plan, which considers the service life of different species in relation to the existing tree population, their maintenance requirements and ultimate use. Prime considerations are species diversity and age diversity. The species diversity component specifies that any one species should not exceed more than 10 percent of the total tree population.

Species known to be invasive are not considered acceptable. Trees known to have uncontrollable disease or pest problems that might prevent them from achieving their service life functions and benefits are avoided.

To accomplish age diversity, a management plan specifies a percentage of trees to be removed and replaced each year, for example over-mature or declining trees. This ensures there will always be some mature trees and a larger percentage of mid-age and young trees. A removal and replacement plan ensures that each succeeding generation of people will be able to experience and enjoy some large, old, mature heritage trees and also mid-age and young trees.

If tree removals are not performed as part of a scheduled program, a climax situation can result where many old trees in a population start to decline at about the same time, as they approach the end of their service lives. This can stress resources, including funding, to the point where the program starts to fail.

A planned removal strategy also helps contain maintenance costs as large, old trees cost more to maintain and remove. Planning for the removals in advance also allows for the budgeting of adequate funding. A continuing funding source is critical to provide for a sustainable urban forest.

Improperly grown container plants can develop root system problems including kinked or “J” roots in liners. Circling or girdling roots or root-bound conditions occur in larger size containers, if shifting is not properly performed and accomplished in a timely manner. This can lead to poor growth and failure to provide service life benefits.

No matter what production methods are used, poor nursery growing practices can result in poorly structured branches, canopies and root systems that are difficult to correct. The corrective pruning may further damage the tree and delay its establishment and intended contributions in the landscape.

In California, the state agency CAL FIRE, in conjunction with industry professionals, has developed a series of publications. This work was initiated by Brian Kemph of the Urban Tree Foundation and Dr. Edward F. Gilman of the University of Florida. The publications include: “Guideline Specifications for Nursery Tree Quality”, “Strategies for Growing a High-Quality Root System, Trunk, and Crown in a Container Nursery” and “Tree Standards and Specifications.” These publications can be accessed at the following website: www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource
A properly grown, sited and planted tree can be established without the need for the numerous products claiming to be “beneficial.” These products have an environmental cost in their manufacturing, marketing and transportation. They also add to the time and cost required to plant a tree. The use and effectiveness of any product should be carefully considered. Since roots soon grow past the edges of the excavation dug to plant the tree, the materials placed in the backfill are of short-term value, if of any value at all. Organic material mixed in the backfill can quickly decompose or hold excessive moisture.

Greater long-term benefits are gained from excavating a wider planting site, by proper mulching and by adding additional mulch as it breaks down and is incorporated into the soil by earthworms and other soil organisms. An increased environmental and fiscal impact is realized if the mulch is from wood chips generated by nearby tree pruning operations, eliminating transportation and disposal in a landfill.

Pruning can be either a benefit to trees or damaging to both trees and the environment when improperly performed. Regularly scheduled inspections and evaluations determine what maintenance work is required. A diagnostic methodology is used to specify only work necessary for the trees that need it. Some valid reasons for pruning trees include cleaning to remove dead wood, clearance pruning, structural pruning (especially of young trees) and the correction of hazardous conditions.

One frequently cited benefit of the urban forest is its ability to sequester carbon by removing CO₂ from the atmosphere. As a part of the carbon cycle, trees in a natural forest are carbon neutral. They take in and store carbon as they grow, and then release the carbon back to the atmosphere by respiration and decay or if they are burned in a wildfire.

Because of the fossil fuels (which are sequestered carbon mainly from dead trees and plants) and other resources that go into producing, planting and maintaining urban trees, it appears to me there is a net gain of atmospheric CO₂. Activities associated with pruning operations result in the release of CO₂, from truck exhausts, chippers and chain saws.

Oak grove of coast live oaks (Quercus agrifolia) and Engelmann oaks (Quercus engelmannii) planted in 1995 by community volunteers from seedlings grown from locally collected acorns. No soil amendments were used. No irrigation system installed. Winter planted with water catchment basins and well mulched. Initial watering by buckets from water trucked to site. Supplemental water was later provided infrequently through first two growing seasons by hoses after water was piped to the site.

Evergreen ash (Fraxinus uhdei) mutilated by severe crown reduction pruning. Very few leaves remain on tree.

Circle 19 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org
Over-pruning, over-thinning, lion’s tailing and topping release even more carbon through removing the carbon that has been sequestered in the trees.

In my community, a recently approved contract for the pruning of the city’s trees required the pruning of all trees and “Tree foliage shall be reduced by at least 15 percent, but not more than 30 percent.” This is not based on a diagnosis for individual trees and exceeds the maximum of 25 percent foliage removal stipulated in the ANSI A300 pruning standards and “Best Management Practices” cited in the contract.

The use of urban wood in construction, furniture manufacturing and other products sequesters carbon, but may not overcome the expenditure of the fossil fuels used in the production and use of the urban woods.

The urban forest needs to be managed and maintained for the health of the trees and the health and safety of the community. To be considered sustainable and “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” the resources invested and the by-products produced by the urban forest need to be carefully considered and managed.

Mark Wisniewski is a landscape architect and consulting arborist, an ASLA member, and the principal with Wisniewski & Associates in Encinitas, California. He will be speaking on this same subject at the third annual Sustainable Urban Landscape Conference at Cuyamaca College in El Cajon, Calif., March 10, 2011. Sponsored by the Cuyamaca College Ornamental Horticulture Department, the conference will feature a number of distinguished industry professionals, speaking on a variety of topics that will engage and inform anyone interested in current trends and the future direction of sustainable landscapes. More information regarding the agenda, registration, and sponsorship opportunities is available at www.cuyamaca.edu/OHweb, or by calling (619) 660-4023.

Topped eucalyptus trees have no remaining leaves.
In the previous two articles of this series on top performers (TCI, November and December 2010) we looked at identifying and discovering just what top performers do and how to replicate it. We then explored providing feedback, both positive and negative, encouraging growth and helping develop top performers to their full potential. In this final article, we will put it all together with succession planning.

Succession planning, for our purposes, will have two components: Leadership development and developing repeatable processes. Top performers, as we have described them, by their nature and abilities need to move up in your organization. To develop a first-class crew leader is also to be grooming a future production manager and so on. To expect a top performer to stagnate at one position for an extended period is not realistic, nor will it result in the best value for the team member or company. Your best people simply have to continue to improve, learn and develop or, by definition, they are no longer top performers.

Reality also chimes in when dealing with team members. People join your organization and they leave it. Even your best, most loyal team members are subject to the whims of life and circumstance. Savvy business owners know this and plan on it. Look at your work force as it stands now and tell yourself that in less than a year all these people will have to be replaced. Hopefully, replacement will be necessary because of advancement and growth. Unfortunately, some will be due to attrition. Either way, succession planning is vital.

Leadership

So much is packed into one little word. Volumes have been written and many more will come. For our purposes, we will discuss only one critical part of leadership – communication of vision (COV). Leaders in your organization, yourself included, must have a clear, obtainable vision and communicate it constantly. Your communication must not only be verbal, but shown through action, attitude and commitment. Consistent COV guides the people in your organization in the direction laid out for success. This direction allows team members to make sound decisions even when nobody else is around to guide them.

For example, let’s say, “Safety is paramount” is a part of your vision and all team members know it through robust communication. Given the choice, every team member, from the newest hire to the oldest salt, knows to choose “Safety.” In situations where a choice must be made, safety will have an established precedence over time, job or cost run-over and other concerns that come up through the course of a work day. Pre-establish a hierarchy of priorities through COV and team members have a guide in decision making.

Granted this is overly simplistic, but you get the idea. COV is also important because it is one big step in succession planning and training. Future leaders need to know the vision and communicate it clearly. Developing a new top performer to fill the place of a former starts with COV. If your top performer cannot or does not buy into COV, he or she must learn that particular leadership skill or stagnate.

The 4 M’s

Developing new top performers can be boiled down to a four step process: Model, Mentor, Monitor and Multiply. The handy “4M” format is something I adapted from John Maxwell’s excellent book, Developing The Leaders Around You.

The first “M,” Model, we touched on when speaking of COV. In short, lead by example. You must be the type of leader you want. This trickles down to the top performers under you and in turn falls to the
people under them. Every behavior you require of a top performer must be modeled consistently and accurately. We all know the trap of “Do as I say, not as I do!”

The second “M” is Mentor. Mentoring is a proven way to develop leaders. To be an effective mentor, remember yet another mnemonic device: B.E.S.T., again adapted from John Maxwell:

“B” is for Believe. To be willing to guide or teach someone else, you must believe they are capable of the task you wish them to do.

“E” is for Equip. You must give those you teach the tools and authority to perform the tasks you desire. A leader who has to go ask permission for every task or necessary tool – physical or otherwise – is no leader at all.

“S” stands for share. Be honest and direct with those you mentor. Tell the truth and expect the truth in return. Be robust in your communication. Give the why’s and what-for’s of all decisions made. Knowing the intricacies behind a decision can make all the difference to acceptance, especially if the decision is unpopular.

The “T” is for trust. Without trust you are wasting your time. None of the other points can be implemented without the trust of those you mentor. If you do not trust a team member’s driving skills, you should not give a leadership role and COV certainly would not let them take $90,000.

The next “M” on our list (remember, we were talking about 4 M’s) is Monitor. Once future top performers are mentored and equipped to lead, they must be left to the task. However, this does not mean your job is over. Monitoring consists of evaluating performance, providing feedback and advising. A set format for rewarding actions and decisions that are desired is a great help here. Conversely, a fair, understandable system should be in place to deal with mistakes and shortfalls. These will happen. Expect them and deal with them in such a way that all can learn from the mistakes.

Who better to train the next set of top performers than the last? However, there are several things to consider before we send our top performers out to train the next generation.

First, we must realize that not all top performers have the ability and/or desire to teach. Find your leaders’ strengths and encourage them. Let the strengths of your top performers guide them in your organization. If you find that none of your top people can or will train others to fill their footsteps, you may need to examine your top performer criteria and tweak it to fit the needs of succession planning.

Also, by definition, your top performers are already adept at the production skills needed in your company. Invest not in enhancing those skills, but in the skills of teaching them to other adults. A chain saw safety course for a top performer may be useful for the individual. A course on how to teach chain saw safety is valuable to the whole company.

Remember how we used observation in the first article to decipher what makes a top performer a top performer? The insights gleaned from those first steps will again be necessary to guide your mentors on the skills and competencies they should be passing on to others. For example, you have one crew leader who consistently outperforms all the other crews when it comes to safety. Her crew has no time loss injuries, very low property or equipment damage incidents and morale is high. Through observation, you noticed that this crew leader held multiple job briefings throughout the day. As the job changed and work load was redistributed, she constantly gathered the crew to inform them of the changes and get their input.

Here is an excellent, tangible training point that can be conveyed to other crews and instituted as a company policy. Using observations and interviews with your top performers and consolidating these will, in effect, give you the basis of a training manual. Use the good practices that your people may be unconsciously using, coupled with sound safety practices, while learning from your mistakes and celebrating all successes. These will be your guide, manual and epilog all rolled into one.

Conclusion

We have briefly touched on many large topics here in this final article on top performers. Succession planning, leadership, mentoring and process development are huge topics that require your thought, planning and execution. It was our purpose not to cover and instruct you thoroughly in these topics, but to give a taste of each to show how these tools can be applied.

Look to successful companies in and out of the green industry, read articles and books, research and plan to replace the leaders around you as they move through the ranks of your company and our industry. Neil deGrasse Tyson, scientist and teacher said, “One of the most powerful things you can do in this world is to launch another learner into it.” Identify your top performers; develop and encourage them; teach them how to teach and let them multiply – and launch new learners into the tree care world.

Tony Tresselt, CTSP, is director of safety and training for Arborist Enterprises, Inc. in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
By David Lusk

“Training to deal with trees has far exceeded education about trees. Training is wonderful. However, training without educating leads to robots. At the same time, education alone leads to waste. Training and educating are twins; both are needed. Now!”

– Dr. Alex Shigo

Trees are highly adapted to planet earth. At the core of their existence are the biological and genetic capacities to become the world’s largest, longest living organisms. The importance of trees to the web of life cannot be overstated. The field of arboriculture provides a superb venue for the understanding of how trees grow, stand, fall apart and ultimately – die. No one before has made such an impact on our understanding of trees via the field of arboriculture than the late Dr. Alex Shigo. His model, CODIT (Compartmentalization Of Decay In Trees), offers us a universal, three dimensional view inside the tree; enabling us to grasp, clearly and concisely, how trees are built and how they break down.

I have never known a better educator and communicator than Dr. Shigo. A revered researcher and scientist, he became increasingly philosophical in his communications about trees and their higher order connection to the web of life. His ability to “connect” people to trees, particularly arborists, all around the world, was phenomenal. Much of this discussion will focus on the themes of human connectedness with trees and, just as relevant to the discussion, the human disconnect from trees. The impingements on trees and The New Tree Biology,1 since its introduction in the 1980s, have been and remain formidable. (see Diagram A).

In this essay, I will try to demonstrate, through a connection of ideas and the use of diagrams, that biology is only a part of the saga of the rise and fall of trees. I intend to explore not only how trees are built and how they fail, but also why so many trees are failing.

Given that trees are the biologically and genetically superior inhabitants of planet earth begs the questions: “Why then are so
many trees failing?” Why are our communities populated with so many unhealthy, weak trees? Why are there so many requests for the removal of non-problematic trees and for the dwarfishing of tree canopies by tree topping. For that matter, why are so many tree service companies willing to oblige? Why is there so much clear cutting for new home developments that are often, ironically, named after the trees? Why are trees such a low order item in municipal budgets?

More than 30 years ago, I attended a tree biology workshop at the University of New Hampshire. The instructor, Dr. Shigo, looked across the room at the class of attentive, wide-eyed arborists from around the country as he quoted a familiar maxim from the old comic strip Pogo: “We have met the enemy and he is us.” He handed out a typed manuscript in a binder with simplistic, hand-drawn illustrations. This was a draft of what eventually would become a cutting edge text of new knowledge titled, Modern Arboriculture: A Systems Approach to the Care of Trees and Their Associates. He taught us early on about PPD, or people pressure disease. In the following condensed statement, he prophetically outlined the primary cause of most all tree failures as well as a challenge for us who work in the field of arboriculture.

“PPD … are those diseases of trees caused by people and their activities. Trees cannot move away from people. People are crowding the trees … Over 90 percent of the time the cause of the tree problem will be the people and their activities … The best solution comes through awareness programs … It is the responsibility of the professional tree person to make people aware of potential problems and make certain they do not repeat.”

On education and training he wrote: “Training to deal with trees has far exceeded education about trees. Training is wonderful. However, training without educating leads to robots. At the same time, education alone leads to waste. Training and educating are twins; both are needed. Now!”

In my opinion, too much of tree work done today is, to use Shigo’s word, “robotic.”

The tree survival matrix

“Thinking,” Shigo wrote, “... is a mental process where experiences, old thoughts, and ideas, facts and other stored information are connected in ways that result in some new thought or idea.” As a thinking apparatus for trees, The Tree Survival Matrix Diagram (Diagram B) works like a prism of sorts to separate tree survival factors into four primary variables: economics (E), history (H), psychology (P) and culture (C). The purpose is to graphically illustrate, using a Venn diagram of overlapping variables, some of the major factors that affect our perceptions of trees and how we subsequently deal with trees. Tree survival is as directly linked to these factors as they are to biological factors. The roots of tree survival are deeply embedded in the influences of how we have treated trees in the past, in economic concerns, in cultural biases and in our uniquely individual perceptions of trees. At any given moment in time or space, one or more factors in the Tree Survival Matrix are, more or less, impacting tree survivability. Tree survival is most assured when all factors within the core of the matrix (HPEC) are in harmony.

For example, a community debate over the adoption of a tree protection ordinance may be more highly charged with economic and cultural factors; all the while, subtle undertones of historical import and personal preferences linger in the minds of the individual participants. In my hometown, an emotional firestorm erupted recently as the various entities debated the pros and cons of trees, tree protection ordinances and more governmental regulation.

By contrast, the decision to spend 5,000 euros ($75,000) to save the famous Ann Frank tree in Amsterdam indicates that historical and cultural factors superseded the economic factors surrounding the issue. From a psychological perspective, Ann Frank’s diary reveals a meaningful attachment to the tree; providing her some degree of hope and sense of freedom as she gazed out her attic window. Her psychological attachment to the tree served to firmly embed this tree in world history. A few years ago the care of the tree was handed over to some highly skilled arborists in an attempt to prolong the tree’s life and keep the old, decayed tree standing. The valiant
and costly effort to save the tree was no match for the forces of nature as the old, decayed tree was blown over in August 2010. Still, this has not stopped the economic and cultural factors that remain in play to keep alive the tree’s historical significance. Interestingly, parts of the tree were auctioned on a Dutch website. Reuter’s news service reports that the highest offer was 10 million euros ($12.72 million). All of this based on the pure, psychological reflections of a young girl’s love for a single chestnut tree during a time of unfathomable horror.

**The freakonomics of trees**

In today’s world, the success or failure of trees is inevitably rooted in the day-to-day realities of economics. There is a fascinating book recently published titled: *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything.* Using vast amounts of data, Harvard professor of economics Steven Levitt and writer Stephen Dubner conclude that there are several fundamental ideas unique to our modern world, all of which, I find, can be applied to trees and arboriculture. The following four fundamental ideas run like a thread throughout the course of this essay:

1. **“Incentives are the cornerstones of modern life.”**

   Arboriculture, like any profession is money driven. Economics is one of the more crucial components of the Tree Survival Matrix.

2. **“Conventional wisdom is often wrong.”**

   Shigo’s research served to shed light on many outdated tree practices and revealed them as simply wrong and bad for the trees.

3. **“Dramatic effects often have distant, even subtle, causes.”**

   Shigo’s tree wound dressing research was the catalyst for the development of The New Tree Biology.

4. **“Experts … use their informational advantage to serve their own agenda.”**

   Many tree practices proven to be damaging are still perpetuated by so called “tree experts” who use fear tactics to sell tree removal and tree topping services.

**The Tree Perception Continuum**

If there is one thing I have learned over the years from talking to thousands upon thousands of people about their trees is that each and every one of us can be biased on our individualized perceptions of trees and placed somewhere along a continuum of these individualized perceptions. The Tree Perception Continuum (Diagram C) depicts a range of appreciation and rejection, as well as the middle ground of neutrality/uncertainty. The unbounded nature of a continuum implies no restrictions for change, thereby providing the arborist, whose mission is tree preservation, the opportunity to effect change in the minds of his or her client. This is where and how trees are most likely to be saved from client requests that a tree(s) needs to be either topped or removed when there are likely (with the exception of hazard trees) better options.

I have seen many remarkable trees lost and/or mutilated for the most minor of infractions – a crack in a sidewalk, shade on a patch of grass, bird droppings on a driveway, leaves in a gutter, etc. The faulty perceptions of a grounds committee chairperson of a homeowner association or of a church or those of a commercial property manager can adversely impact many valuable trees. I have saved far more trees by changing people’s perceptions of trees than I have by combating attacks by insects or disease. Saving trees often means simply (or not so simply) changing perceptions of trees.

To illustrate the Tree Perception Continuum as it relates to tree acceptance/neutrality/rejection, I have inserted along the continuum quotes and examples from the famous and infamous. Julia Butterfly Hill, for example, spent more than two years camped out in the top of a redwood tree she name Luna, in an effort to save the tree from being cut down. She, obviously, has a high degree of attachment. Where would you place yourself? Where would you place your clients?

My suggestion is that the Tree Perception Continuum be considered a beginning point for dealing with tree survival issues. Although a mostly intuitive exercise, positioning others along the continuum forces us to, at least momentarily, step away from our own biases in order to form a reasonable evaluation of other people’s, groups’ or cultures’ perceptions of trees. Rather than quickly and judgmentally scoff and walk away from the request to cut down or cut the tops from perfectly good trees, take a moment to assess the
client’s position along the continuum. They may have an irrational fear of trees, thereby a low tree tolerance but, just perhaps, not so much as to forego suggestions for better tree care options that are often far less expensive – proper pruning, support cables, lightning protection, or sometimes simply leaving the tree alone.

Conversely, what about the client who has an extremely hazardous red oak, for example, leaning over his or her house with vertical trunk cracking and decaying roots; yet, distraught over cutting down such a large and once magnificent tree. Their degree of tree attachment is high. Providing a careful risk assessment utilizing the New Tree Biology concepts, along with an explanation of the danger and consequences of keeping the tree, are in keeping with good tree perception strategy.

In my experience, the number of people who are neutral and/or uncertain about trees is shockingly high. This group to me is the most baffling, but then again, they provide for an opportunity to effect good tree management strategies. More important is the awareness that the Tree Perception Continuum is not static and that change in the perceptual field of trees is feasible and worthwhile. Shigo was right; however, it is not always easy.

**Conclusion and review**

In conclusion, there are rewards working with trees. Admittedly, the tree disconnect that I witness almost daily as an arborist fuels a sense of burnout and cynicism that, on a more positive note, lends a certain passion and purpose for a worthwhile cause. Shigo early on recognized the disconnect and created what we now know as Modern Arboriculture. Through his efforts we more clearly see how trees, with our help, can and will survive in our towns and cities. Connecting the less tolerant mind set with trees is a difficult task but I know that it is possible. The Tree Perception Continuum suggests that human relationships with trees are dynamic and flexible.

Hopefully, future societal shifts will be increasingly more toward the positive end of the tree perception spectrum; provided education is adequately teamed with training.

One final note, consider the idea that at its core, the Tree Survival Matrix also represents an intermingling of both opposites and attractions whereby history, the economy, psychology and cultures come together in ways that have the potential to attract qualities of sustainability. Meanwhile, surely as time passes and memories fade, trees will quietly rise and resolutely fall, rise and fall, rise and fall...

The writer wishes to thank Judy Shigo Smith for her helpful review of this essay.

David Lusk is a consulting arborist, licensed psychologist and owner of Lusk Tree Care, Inc. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

1. A New Tree Biology: Facts, Photos, and Philosophies on Trees and Their Problems and Proper Care, by Alex L. Shigo.
Thanks for accident briefs

Ever since our magazine started publishing the incident reports (“Accident Briefs,” TCI monthly feature) this section has been my first interest every month. I am appalled at what is happening in our industry. The increase in incidents does not scare me from going up in the bucket, for I was taught to respect height, not to fear it. The stories in this section have caused me to check, check and double check every element of my equipment and surroundings before starting every work session. Words cannot express my degree of concern for safety of all, and appreciation for this information.

Last week I was at Wal-Mart in Batesville, Arkansas, at the tire shop section. When I came out I heard a small engine running on a steep hillside adjoining the parking area. One young man had perched himself up the hill among grapevines and stood on slippery leaves. Wearing no PPE and using a Stihl HS 75 or 80 double blade hedge trimmer, he would cut and climb along the hillside while another young man stood below catching and piling the waste. I intervened by introducing myself including my tree service, my membership in TCIA, and then excused myself for butting in on their work. I explained that he was at high risk for a severe head injury and/or injury to his body with the trimmer because of how he had perched on the hill with no support beneath him. He was appreciative about my intrusion, but I don’t know if he changed things. I did not have time to stay and watch what they would do.

Sherman Anderson
Owner, Best Tree Service, TCIA member
Mountain View, Arkansas

Bad pruning, bad pricing?

Regarding the article by David Schwartz in the December 2010 (issue of Tree Care Industry Magazine, “Bad Pruning Is An Expensive Way To Save Money.”) This is basically a good article, however I have to disagree with him on the “appraisal exercise,” where he valued a 12-inch Gleditsia at $7,100?

Maybe we are in different environments, but I have been appraising trees for just the past 12 years and can only value a Gleditsia with 80 percent condition, 75 percent species rating and 75 percent location at a total value of $2,200; even at 100 percent ratings (which is impossible!), it would come to $4,000.

H.D. “Dutch” Afman, consulting arboriculturist
Afman Consulting
Grand Junction, Colorado

Hearing protection excuses fall on deaf ears

I want to compliment you on “The Daily Grind Leads to Hearing Loss (TCI, October 2010). As with many of us, I started wearing hearing protection too late, for the usual reasons:

a) always pulling out
b) the string gets caught in branches
c) incredibly hot and uncomfortable when using the gun-range type.

Your article, with its details on decibels and exposure time, is the best I’ve seen.

As a footnote, I find a cheap pair of drug-store magnifying eyeglasses enable me to sharpen chains much more effectively.

John Rochester
Coral Springs Tree Co.
Margate, Florida

Another angle on mini lifts

Thank you for providing such an informative and helpful publication. The tree care profession benefits greatly from your efforts.

I would like to respond to the article “Refining and Re-defining the Mini Aerial Lift” in the November 2010 TCI Magazine, as an operator of a mini lift featured in the article, a certified arborist, a certified tree care safety professional and, at the age of 37, someone who has worked and studied in the field of arboriculture for more than 50 percent of my life.

I have experienced, first hand, the advantages of the technology available in a “mini-lift.” As a CTSP, the improved safety during removals of dead and structurally compromised trees or the pruning of extended limbs that can multiply hazard variables is wonderful. Accessibility to backyards and areas that reduce time on a rope while increasing productivity greatly pleases me as an operations manager as

(Continued on page 42)
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It wasn’t easy convincing Steven Mays, Sr., president of Carroll Tree Service, Inc. in Owings Mills, Maryland, to sign up for Accreditation. He’d started cutting firewood and selling it to neighbors when he was 15 years old, bought a pickup at 16 and begun cutting down trees, then bought climbing hooks and started climbing. He started his own company when he was 19. Twenty-four years ago, he merged his company with Rob Nelson’s Carroll Tree Service, and together they built it into a powerhouse that now has 35 staff in the field.

“I felt like I’d had a tree business for a long time. I didn’t like the idea of having someone to tell me how to run my company, but it’s been an enormous help. I’m extremely happy with it,” Mays now says of Accreditation.

His employees include eight of his nine children, six of whom work there full-time – Steve Jr., Luke, Emily, Hank, Gus and Sam – and Jake and Eli part-time. “They all came willingly,” he says. “A couple went in different directions and came back.”

Roughly 40 percent of their work is residential and the rest commercial, municipal and state projects. Their services range from pruning, cabling, root collar excavation and lightning protection to clearing, excavating and road-widening. They recently bought a small land-clearing company.

“We’re also getting fairly heavily into tree preservation on construction sites for government agencies and private developers,” Mays says. “It’s good to be able to do both. Hopefully we can continue with them as a customer.”

They’re currently working with a construction company to preserve the elms along the reflecting pond in front of the Lincoln Memorial. They also preserve trees at universities, including Johns Hopkins, during building projects. The work includes putting fencing up as well as aerating roots to expose them for root pruning to cut them clean so they aren’t torn by bulldozers.

They have a “multitude of equipment,” he says, including a portable mini lift that can get through a 40-inch gate and has a 75-foot reach, cranes, bucket trucks, an excavator, a front-end loader, dump trucks, log loaders, chippers and stump grinders. They have spray rigs for fertilization, IPM and disease control in the spring, and Bobcats and pickups with plows, and salt spreaders for snow.

Carroll Tree also has very good people working for them, Mays says. One employee has been with the company for more than 40 years, and most for 10 to 15 years. Eight are ISA-certified, nine are Maryland Licensed Tree Experts. Two are full-time mechanics – which allows them to repair equipment for other tree care companies and landscapers, as well as their own.

Tree care seems to be a Mays family trait. “My wife home schools,” says Steven Sr. “The children who got their work done could help out.”

He and his three older sons, who are certified arborists, are in the process of buying out the other two partners, whom he hopes will stay on. A daughter runs the spray department and two sons are working foremen. His 15-year old is a budding mechanic and works in the shop. Even his 12-year old daughter helped out with the filing last summer.

“I assume that as time goes on, more of the children will want to become owners, too. Their last name isn’t the only criteria, though – they also have to put in the effort and enthusiasm they need to as the owner of a company.”

The company has a small ad in the yellow pages, but most of their new clients find them through word of mouth, which Steven
Sr. attributes to their customer service.

“We’ve had very few problems with clients,” Mays says. “We leave the property cleaner than it is when we arrive. Ninety-nine point nine percent of the time the customer’s right, even if it means doing what we don’t really have to, to make them happy.”

The company became accredited in 2009, largely because they knew that in the future some contracts would require accredited companies to do the work. The process took four or five months. The hardest part was organizing the paperwork, he says. The safety director, Steve Sprague, spent several months writing manuals and policies and procedures. They had some help from Bob Mead of Mead Tree and Turf Care in Maryland, which was already accredited, and since then they’ve helped other companies as well.

The company changed very little because of Accreditation, he says. “We had a fairly well-run and well-managed company, but we’re always looking for ways to improve.”

The biggest changes they made were in safety and documentation. Their safety program includes weekly meetings, and they hold aerial rescue days, CPR and line-clearance training. New employees go through a two-day orientation with Sprague.

The documentation was difficult, but now that everything is in place, Accreditation is already paying off, says Steve Mays Jr., Mays’ eldest son. “We’ve had a few jobs that required copies of our entire safety program. Before we were accredited, we never would have been able to provide that, but all we had to do was print it out and send it over. They were very impressed.”

As for the future, there are a lot of directions the company can go, Mays Sr. says. “I think we could expand. We’ve grown 30 percent in the last 10 years. I think we could grow another 15 to 20 percent.”

Accreditation definitely will help, Mays Jr. says. There’s good PR attached to it, and some of the bigger jobs they’ve gotten had more stringent requirements, which Accreditation helped them satisfy.

In the end, though, says Mays Sr., “It’s the right thing to do.”

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**Company History**

Henry J. Carroll founded Carroll Tree Service in 1950; he passed away in 1987. The company is now managed by three partners, all of whom are Maryland licensed tree experts: Steve Mays, Sr., whose company, Mays Tree Experts, merged with Carroll in 1988, has been president of Carroll Tree Service since 2005. Robert L. Nelson, Jr. and Frank E. Dudek are also Maryland licensed pesticide applicators. Nelson has been a partner in the company since 1972 and is CFO, and Dudek, vice-president, became the third partner in 2000, and is also a consulting arborist.
Seven Ways to Improve your Web Presence

By Griffin Davis

Image is everything on the Web. Big companies can look small and small companies big. What follows are my seven tips and heads-ups for 2011 to help you build and maintain a successful lead-generating “Web presence.”

Shorten your home page content – Website visitors are overwhelmed with long paragraphs of essay-style text on home pages and service description pages. If overloaded, your visitors will either leave or won’t get a strong impression about why they should call you. Write with concise clarity and describe your services in short sentences, or with bullet points. Look at your home page. In a 15-second scan, does it clearly say who you are, what makes you different, and what geographic areas you serve?

Add video and more photos – Photos of you at work, of your completed jobs, or staff pictures all help personalize your Web presence, distinguishing it from others. Video of you or customers talking about your quality work is an excellent way to engage with potential customers and keep their attention long enough for your message to get through. With video, just use any digital video camera, talk into the camera for 30 seconds to a minute, upload to youtube.com and link to it from your site.

“Convert, don’t divert” – Focus your brain on converting site visitors into leads. Many business owners focus too much attention on design details instead of the basic task of generating business. Look at your home page. Do you see your phone number and service area at first glance? If not, you are missing the most critical website element when it comes to converting leads. If you need the phone to ring, an easy-to-spot phone number is your Web page’s best salesperson.

Google Maps – Go to Google Maps, find, claim and then fully complete your profile listing. These profile listings are free and a key to getting noticed when people search for local businesses like yours. These profile pages, when complete, will give you an edge when it comes to getting in front of more people. The way these profiles are organized and displayed makes it really easy for searchers to hop from one to another. Make your business look better than your competitors’ by having a full profile that lists all the neighborhoods or towns you serve, descriptions of services that match those on your website, and pictures of you or your staff. There are services that will do this work for you at a nominal fee, around $250.

Mobile Internet – Do yourself a big favor right now. Using a Web-enabled mobile phone, pull up your own site. Is it painfully slow to load? Is everything tiny? Tiny text, tiny photos and, worst of all, tiny phone number? Maybe it’s just plain broken? The fix is easy – get a mobile website. They are inexpensive (usually under $300) and fix all the previously mentioned problems. You need to pay attention to the “mobile revolution” because 45 million people use smartphones today. Blackberry, iPhone, Android, whatever – everybody’s got one or is getting one. Don’t get left behind with a website that doesn’t work on smartphones.

Online reviews – Leading search engine and local directory sites have areas for customers to rank your business from 1 to 5 stars and include comments on their experience with you. When I get asked about “Social Media” for small businesses, my top recommendation is to focus on getting your best customers to post reviews on one of the top sites (Google, CitySearch, Yelp are the top three I would pick). In 2011, your Web marketing strategy must at the very least include an understanding of online ratings sites.

Bold design change – Change is good. If you are building or overhauling your website in 2011, consider using a bold element that appears on your home page. Maybe a textured background or consistent “wow factor” photo that appears on every page. What you are getting here is my sole opinion, backed by a gut feeling, not a Harvard study.

And the smart choice when it came to Web design for newbies was to be conservative. But if your business has evolved or grown, and your image has become more distinct, it’s time to consider a design element that really pops off the page. Here are a few quick ideas: a large scale stunning photo of a landscaper’s best work, a single bold color that ties into a remodeler’s logo, a landing page with simply a company name and elegant tagline and phone number. Or, keep the “wow” more simple by adding a Web video to your homepage. These are just a few ideas that can help attract the attention of a potential new client.

I urge you to be bold, but also careful. If you are a high-end provider or the leader in your market, work with your Web designer to make one bold Web design move. Customer’s eyes will appreciate a single bold element, but be distracted if you go overboard.

Griffin Davis is VP of marketing for Market Hardware, Inc., a TCIA Associate Member company and TCIA Affinity partner, helping tree care experts compete on the Web with special discounts for TCIA members.
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well. However, (and we all knew it was coming) the talk of “hardening” the equipment after it has been out for several years sticks in my craw.

As a customer from “early” in the U.S. history of availability of this type of “mini-lifts,” we have received NO notifications of “upgrades” or “hardening” options to add to our, what now seems fragile, lift. We were told that our machine had been tested for years in Europe and could easily survive the rigors of tree care while needing minimum servicing other than the motor. Sounds like it came “hardened,” or so we thought!

The (author’s) sentence, “The machines’ extant capabilities are so robust that, even without ‘new and improved’ features and benefits, the mini-lift presents itself as a step in a new direction for a lot of users,” seems a bit deceiving. To say something is “so robust” yet only “presents itself as a STEP in a new direction” might lead a reader to believe that these machines can withstand the abuse they will receive in arboriculture. As Mr. Hrycak both infers, and clearly states later in the article, electronics over hydraulics “are more expensive to purchase and maintain and require a more broad support network.” We have had issues with our lift involving the electronics over hydraulics that our distributor (who was our only “support network”) told us were due to “sawdust accumulation” on a wiring harness, resulting in weeks of down time in after only 2½ years of use. It was our opinion, but apparently not the opinion of our supplier, that sawdust in our industry is something that should be counted on rather than surprised by. Almost $15,000 later we had our lift back ($4,500 was shipping to the dealer because there were no local service shops closer to St. Louis).

As a note, one of the deciding factors in purchasing our mini-lift was that we were told a local supplier of rental lifts would be able to service or repair this machine whenever it was needed. When we contact-ed this company while looking for local repairs, they had never heard of our lift or were they aware of any intercompany agreement to service it, but would “take a look at it” for a fee.

Overall this technology is good for arboriculture. Are these “mini-lifts” advantageous to our world – ABSOLUTELY, when working properly! Do they improve safety – IMMEASUR-ABLY, when working properly! As of this moment though, it is my opinion that, since we work in a world where there are few things that are 100 percent dependable, we rely heavily on the ones that we feel are, or are at least close to it. One of these is the women and men who show up alongside of us every morning; we literally trust them with our lives (my wife knows that the families of my co-workers can expect the same level of commitment from me that she does of them), and second is the equipment, that when maintained according to “manufacturers’ specifications, will fulfill its claims and perform as expected or be supported immediately and without question when the sales staff say it will. Unfortunately we are not at that level yet. These lifts have great benefits, but DO NOT leave the shop without knowing how to lower one manually and without your rope and saddle.

Michael Sestric, CTSP, safety manager
Trees, Forests & Landscapes, Inc.
Kirkwood, Missouri, 20-year TCIA member company

Mark Garvin’s editorial tone

Throughout the past year I’ve read a lot of comments from Mark Garvin (Tree Care Industry Association president and TCI Magazine publisher) about OSHA. Our industry NEEDS respect and cooperation from OSHA. Mr. Garvin’s tone in some of his attacks on “the administration” and OSHA don’t impress me as conducive to achieving this. They often sound, to me, to be politically motivated and abrasive. If the attitude Mr. Garvin conveys to TCIA members is an indication of the face TCIA officially presents to OSHA, I wonder if responsibility for the rift lies solely with OSHA. We most certainly need to defend our interests. But is a rigid and confrontational position the best way to achieve our goals? (I don’t know.)

Warren A. Jacobs
Jacobs Tree Surgery Inc.
Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania, TCIA member since 1997

Mark Garvin responds: Mr. Jacobs, I appreciate your sensibility as well as your perceptiveness concerning our association’s current view of federal OSHA. TCIA has worked directly with federal OSHA through five consecutive presidential administrations to help them create effective and responsible guidance for our industry. At times we have had to be quite confrontational and at other times we have been able to be much more conciliatory, but we have never wavered on our principles or on what we want for this industry.

It is the collective opinion of our leadership that federal OSHA is currently not fulfilling its mission and acting responsibly toward an industry that is statistically one of the most hazardous in the U.S. You are correct that our comments are politically motivated. We are being very clear with the regulatory agency, as well as with the over-

(Continued on page 53)
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For a limited time only we are offering new members 50% off of our first-year dues.*

* New membership rate of $150 is available to first-time, new members only. Please respond by March 15, 2011 or call Brenda or David for details.
**CTSP Celebrates 5 Years**

Since its inception five years ago, TCIA has successfully established more than 600 CTSPs – and that number is growing. But the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program does more than just establish a company safety trainer. As the only safety credentialing program in the industry, CTSP can create a safer environment that increases profitability through lower insurance premiums, reduced lost time due to accidents and injuries, and increased business by marketing a commitment to safety.

CTSP is a strong career path for key employees, which increases job satisfaction and company loyalty. And, the CTSP community is a dynamic asset for professional development.

“A critical component of safety improvement, as with any other form of professional development, is networking,” explains Peter Gerstenberger, CTSP program administrator for TCIA.

TCIA is thrilled with the progress we have made collectively with the growing number of CTSPs to spread a culture of safety in the industry. There is strong evidence suggesting that a culture of safety makes a huge difference. According to a 2006-2007 Tree Care Industry Accident Survey, employers who were the first to embrace the CTSP program were 10 times less likely to experience a lost workday incident compared with companies that did not have a CTSP on staff.

In an industry eager to improve its safety record, a few current CTSPs have also found that the program has helped their job performance and their careers. Tim Walsh, safety compliance and training manager for the Asplundh Tree Expert Co., says his CTSP credential has benefited him in two primary ways.

“First, I increased my knowledge base and skill set during the process of earning my CTSP,” says Walsh. “Second, and probably the greater of the two, since earning my CTSP I have improved my abilities as a safety professional, both by maintaining my CTSP (earning CEUs) and in the process of presenting at CTSP workshops. The more I teach and train, the more I learn.”

Jim Courville currently works for Mayer Tree Service and is involved with safety committees, tailgate safety meetings, teaching EHAP, aerial rescue and teaching a certified arborist study group, among other tasks. Courville says that the CTSP program has helped him in all of these roles.

“The CTSP program opened my eyes to a different world of teaching guys, and how much it means to have a culture of safety. I firmly believe that without this certification a lot of doors and opportunities would not have been presented to me.”

John Ball, industry researcher and educator with South Dakota State University, notes that his perspective is different from most of the CTSPs who are employed by companies. “The value that I see to CTSP is its single focus on one of the most critical aspects of tree work – safety. Safety is not a component of this certification, it is the certification.”

He continues, “I also see one benefit of CTSP is that you have a “brotherhood (or sisterhood, since CTSP is gender neutral!) of like-minded individuals to share training ideas and strategies.”

Chris Girard is owner and operator of Girard Tree Service, a small family run business in New Hampshire. Since his responsibility is to ensure the safety of those who work for him, CTSP has been an important tool, he says. “An unanticipated benefit that I now have that I didn’t consider before is a newfound awareness as to the responsibilities that go with being a CTSP. It’s not just a title, but an attitude that I now take with me to the job sites, always aware that we constantly have to be on our toes and think about the safety for those around us, as well as for ourselves.”

Jim Craner, who currently works with Asplundh Tree Expert Company doing field observations, assisting in safety committees, incident investigations, field training and compliance tracking, says, “Being a CTSP provides a level of credibility and a unique network to rely on.”

Dave McQuaid, crew foreman for Nelson Tree and head instructor for the IBEW Local 1919 line clearance tree apprentice school, first heard about CTSP about a year ago and now proudly wears his CTSP stickers on his hard hat. “At the CTSP classes and TCI EXPO, I met a lot of people, some students and some instructors,” says McQuaid. “I was impressed with the level of information shared as well as the willingness to share it with others. I learned a lot. The instructors not only shared great info, but they did so in a way that was easily understandable... not an easy task.”

To become a CTSP, you must meet the prerequisites in the application process, successfully complete a series of Critical Thinking Exercises, attend a CTSP workshop and pass the Certification Exam. TCIA has made it even easier for arborists to develop their safety expertise by running CTSP workshops around the country. Learn more about the program, and view upcoming workshops, at www.tcia.org.
T CIA knows that arborists like to talk trees. And consumers have a lot of questions about trees.

So we’ve joined with a few like-minded tree organizations to orchestrate a #treechat on Twitter. This weekly #treechat allows twittering tree care companies and interested consumers to take part in a scheduled conversation about trees via Twitter.

We’ve discussed everything from Christmas trees to how/why to hire an arborist. Most weeks feature a dynamic group of professionals, curious consumers, great giveaways, and more. On December 15, TCIA hosted the #treechat that focused on the how-to’s of hiring an arborist. We explained Accreditation, shared tips on places to find reliable companies (such as TCIA’s zip code search), and provided lots of resource and information links.

Interested in taking part in #treechat? Log into Twitter on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. EST and enter the hashtag #treechat in the search box located on the home page of your account. You’ll immediately see a full list of what the tree world on twitter is currently talking about. Join the conversation, ask or answer questions and get involved in the world of trees ... in 140 characters or less!

Not familiar with Twitter? Never heard of a hashtag? Contact Amy Tetreault, TCIA’s marketing and PR coordinator, at tetreault@tcia.org or (603) 314-5380 for details.

Don’t forget: You can also connect with TCIA on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube or Flickr.

One-day “Business Boot Camp” March 3 – half price for New Hampshire attendees!

TCIA will host a one-day “Business Boot Camp” workshop March 3, 2011, at its Londonderry, N.H., headquarters. TCIA’s “Business Boot Camp” covers business basics for tree care company owners and managers who are serious about improving their business profitability. This one-day workshop will highlight managing human resources for small businesses, writing and implementing company policies (including a safety program), labor pricing, cash flow and monthly budgeting, service proposals and specification writing.

TCIA understands that these are not one-size-fits-all solutions. There will be ample time to discuss how to customize and implement best business practices for your company. This workshop is beginner-level and open to all tree care companies.

The cost is $150 for TCIA members and $175 for non-members. In addition, TCIA has secured a job training grant from the state of New Hampshire. To be eligible for reimbursement from the NH Job Training Grant a company needs to have paid unemployment taxes to the state of NH and any attendee must also be a resident of NH, or the company must be located in NH or intending to locate to NH. Eligible TCIA members will only pay $75 (regularly $150), while eligible non-members will pay just $87.50 (regularly $175). This workshop is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and lunch is included. Register online at www.tcia.org. If you have questions, please contact Bob Rouse at 1-800-733-2622 or rouse@tcia.org.

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Contact Deborah Johnson, Director of Development at johnson@tcia.org or call 1.800.733.2622
USFS quantifies financial and environmental value of urban trees

New research from the U.S. Forest Service demonstrates that among their many benefits, trees increase home prices, improve air quality, reduce household energy use and the effects of climate change. While this may not be “news” to many, the USFS has some new data to back up these claims.

“Trees in urban areas beautify neighborhoods and provide great economic benefits,” said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “Aside from enhancing neighborhood aesthetics they filter the air, reduce storm runoff and absorb carbon dioxide.”

Reports issued by the Forest Service Northern and Pacific Northwest Research Stations focused on specific cities – Chicago, Portland and Sacramento. The studies detailed the following findings:

- Chicago’s 3.6 million trees annually reduce air pollution by about 890 tons, a $6.4 million benefit per year.
- In Sacramento, trees planted on the south and west sides of houses reduced summertime electricity bills by an average of $25.16.
- In Portland the study found that street trees growing in front of or near a house added an average $8,870 to its sale price and reduced time on the market by nearly two days.

These economic benefits spilled over to neighboring properties as well. For instance, a neighborhood tree growing along the public right of way added an average of $12,828 to the combined value of all houses within 100 feet.

Nationally, benefits from the estimated 3.8 billion urban trees are significant. These trees are estimated to have a structural value of over $2 trillion, and store carbon valued at over $14 billion. Urban trees also annually remove air pollution valued at $4 billion and remove carbon dioxide, a dominant greenhouse gas, valued at around $460 million per year.

For more information go to Urban Forest Data website: www.nrs.fs.fed.us/data/urban/.

The Forest Service developed software tool, called i-Tree (www.itreetools.org ), that produced the Chicago results is applicable to any community’s trees. To date, more than 6,000 copies of this software have been distributed in more than 80 countries.
At the same time we are being deeply critical of federal OSHA’s lack of responsiveness to our industry; we have productive and amicable relationships with the State Plan OSHAs in California, Maryland, Michigan and Virginia. We have worked directly with standards writers in California, Maryland and Virginia to write or revise standards affecting arborists. We are part of a green industry alliance with Michigan OSHA to help the arborist industry there. In 2008, we presented TCIA’s Advancing Arboriculture award to a Virginia OSHA regulator and in 2009 it went to several members of the staff in Michigan OSHA’s compliance assistance program.

On the other hand, in a 1999 Stakeholder’s meeting with lead regulators from federal OSHA, we told them their standards were woefully ineffective. In the next few years we had a series of (respectful) meetings with ever-changing, politically appointed heads of OSHA to express our concerns. In 2006, we formally petitioned OSHA to write new standards for us. Those who prefer confrontation over cooperation were shocked that an industry would actually ask to be regulated. It was our view then and it is our view now that current regulations are outdated and inadequate to protect tree workers. Shortly after our petition was filed, writing an arborist standard made it onto fed OSHA’s regulatory agenda. Just recently, however, it was removed because OSHA now has “other priorities.”

This fall, TCIA helped defend a Pennsylvania member against an OSHA citation after he used a crane to hoist him into a declining and hazardous oak tree. In the interest of enforcing its woefully outdated standards, federal OSHA would have dictated that this arborist park a bucket truck (that he didn’t have) directly under this brittle and disintegrating tree, or worse yet, climb it. That, in a nutshell, is why we are expressing both impatience and intolerance with federal OSHA’s current position. As OSHA reacts to headlines, arborists continue to die. Someone needs to hold them accountable.

Letters & E-mails

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sight committees of Congress, that we will not compromise the safety of tree workers because of shifting political interests. We expressed our concern this way in a recent letter to Congress. Regulatory agencies tend to respond to headlines and public criticism, such as the West Branch Mine disaster and the Deepwater Horizons oil drilling rig fire. Yet during two months in the summer, our industry quietly equaled the human tragedy of those two incidents combined.

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AERIAL RESCUE – All in a Days Work

By Darren Garlough

It was a beautiful fall October afternoon. My small crew, made up of my dad, uncle and my son, Isaac, and I, had just put in a long morning of pruning pin oaks. Deciding to call it a day, I went home figuring on spending the rest of the day working there on some overdue work. I was enjoying a nice afternoon digging potatoes from my garden when my cell phone began to ring. Now, 90 percent of the time I usually let it go to voicemail, but for some reason I decided to answer the call. It was my cousin, Scott, who is a paramedic for the Leetonia, Ohio, fire department.

“Darren, just how fast can you make it to the bike trail?” he asked, “We have a person stuck in a tree.”

Well, I didn’t ask questions, I just said, “I’ll be right there.”

Hanging up, I yelled for my son, Isaac, to help throw in my climbing gear and a couple of saws. With my pick-up truck we made the 15 minute trip in 8 minutes. I drove down the bike trail, following all the flashing lights from all the rescue trucks and personnel. Right away I was directed to the location of the victim, which was about 100 yards off the bike trail.

As my son and I made our way through the woods with our equipment, I was imagining maybe a young man putting up a tree stand for deer hunting or something and who was then not able to get down. But I found it to be an older gentleman perched up in a large cherry tree with his leg pinned in the crotch of the tree.

As I was in a rush to put on my climbing gear I began to size up the situation. It appeared as though the man was alone in his own woods cutting firewood when he came upon a large uprooted cherry tree, which had fallen into the crotch of another large cherry tree. He decided to shimmy his way up to the holding crotch. Using a 20-inch Husky, he decided to stand down in the crotch, so as to feel safe, and began to try to cut the one large tree free from the other. Unfortunately he was unable to determine the outcome.

He began his cut from the top side, which after only being half way through the log, the weight hanging out past the crotch caused the tree to split upwards and put the chain saw in a bind and, worse yet, shifted the whole tree sideways just enough to pinch the man’s lower leg very tightly in the crotch of the tree. There he was, both saw and leg bound tightly in the middle of nowhere, and in a great deal of pain.

Being somewhat close to the bike trail the man was able to occasionally see riders going by. He would yell for help several times for over an hour before two girls passing by heard his cry. Making their way to the scene they called 911. The Leetonia fire department and local sherriff department arrived quickly. The firemen erected ladders and my cousin, Scott, immediately started an IV and administered medication for the pain. With several attempts to free the man using air bags and other extracting equipment, my cousin who occasionally helps me on tree jobs, decided I may be of some help, so he called me.

I first climbed well above the victim to get tied in and descended down to the situation. We all decided it was best to first cut away as much as we could to expose the situation a little better. As I cut away limbs and logs, the firemen and Scott kept the man calm and protected. Time was beginning to be an issue, for the circulation to the victim’s leg has been cut off for almost two hours now, and nothing was giving. Being very careful not to cut anything to make matters worse, I decided to bore the bar of my MS200 Stihl as close to the victim’s foot and leg as I could without knicking him. He did a terrific job of holding still.

After several bore cuts I was able to make enough room in the crotch of the tree to slip his leg free. The firemen put the man in a body harness and, using a figure eight, they attached him to my safety line. After a two-hour-or-better stay in the tree, he was lowered to the ground and carried to the ambulance.

It was all quite the experience for all of us. I was surprised to see it made the front page of two major newspapers. Other than a few cats, I never was given the opportunity to help rescue someone from a tree before. I must say I enjoyed the opportunity to put my everyday working skills of 27 years toward helping save somebody.

Darren Garlough operates Garlough Tree Service in Salem, Ohio.
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