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You’re Going to Get a Kick Out of This…

Those of you who have been following the TCIA Reporter newsletter articles as members each month have been reading about my trips to visit TCIA members this spring. One of the greatest benefits of spending time with the industry on “its own turf” is getting a chance to see the wide variety of tree care businesses. While you have a core passion at the heart of what you do, how you go about running your operations is very different.

There are many, many of you who have found your sweet spot – the size of company that exactly suits the number of customers, the level of complexity, the capitalization of equipment, and the number of personnel for whom you wish to be responsible. You have an accompanying lifestyle that fits your exact dream and, oftentimes, a family dynamic that parallels and supports this choice. You are one happy group of business owners.

There are others of you who are in pursuit of aggressive growth – either buying more equipment and putting on more crews or setting up additional branch offices to serve a wider constituency or buying up companies whose owners are looking to sell as their answer to succession. Your desire is to take your passion to as many customers as you can, to have a larger company, to challenge yourself and your management team to develop into a more corporate culture, and to maximize profitability on a large scale.

There are a few of you who have taken this to the next level, creating very large complex organizations that are serving a significant portion of the nation and some international clientele. Operations in these categories often have a wide variety of offerings – everything from irrigation to landscaping to lawn care to snow plowing to Christmas lights to PHC to tree pruning, etc., etc.

And then there is “the other guy” – the ones that you’re not so thrilled to have running around your community. Generally, there is no identifier on the truck, no mention of TCIA membership, no certifications, no accreditation and not a lot to recommend from an arboriculture or business standpoint. I was touring the Virginia area recently and included a stop at my parents’ home along the way. After about five hours of driving around the state one day to visit active and associate members, I returned home to a big grin on my parents’ faces – and they weren’t just glad to see me safely home.

Not long after I had pulled out of the driveway early that morning, my Dad answered the doorbell. Standing on their porch was a man with no uniform, no logo on the truck parked on the street, and no TCIA membership. “On days like this, I come around and talk to people about getting their tree work done,” he says, as he hands my dad his card. First of all, some of you know that my dad used to be a climber for one of our members in his days straight off the farm. Secondly, my parents have read every word that TCIA has published in the last nine years and know the difference between a quality tree care company and one that fits the latter category I just described. My dad happens to have a pretty great sense of humor, and he replied to this guy, “My daughter is the president of the Tree Care Industry Association, and she just left to go visit some members.” Let’s just say that the guy left my parents’ porch rather quickly. My parents were laughing hysterically that he didn’t want to have anything to do with me, so he knew enough to know who TCIA was and that his style of doing business didn’t fit our professional standards.

Of all the houses in the entire neighborhood that he couldn’t have knocked on, he chose my parents’ on a day that I was actually around – but he didn’t stop at the other four houses that he had to pass on the way out after he talked to my dad!

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MAY

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In the urban environment, trees are often grown in close proximity to concrete. This can limit the tree’s growth potential and it can set the concrete up for failure in the future as the tree grows. At the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, we have been studying methods of improving tree root growth under concrete and ways to avoid damage to sidewalks for more than a dozen years. What we have found can be applied in nearly every city to promote tree growth and reduce infrastructure damage. This information can also be used by commercial arborists to expand their menu of services.

Reducing sidewalk damage

One of the areas that trees cause the greatest damage in the city is to concrete or asphalt sidewalks, driveways and other pavement. A recent study that looked at tree related concerns of city residents in Ohio found that the greatest concern of citizens was the damage done to sidewalks by tree roots. Other studies have shown that the cost of repairing sidewalks and settling lawsuits related to “trip and fall” injuries associated with sidewalk lifting are in the hundreds of millions of dollars every year. It is thought that in some areas as many as one in four large trees is associated with sidewalk damage.

With these great costs and amounts of damage done by tree roots, it is not surprising that many cities now require installation of a means of sidewalk protection whenever a new tree is planted. Whether or not this is required, it can be a great opportunity for commercial arborists to extend their expertise and provide an additional service whenever they are involved in planting trees near pavement.

The first question to answer is how can we protect sidewalks from tree roots? Keep in mind that not every crack that appears in concrete is caused by a root. Most concrete cracks are due to the expansion and contraction of the concrete, caused by temperature changes. Once cracks do occur, they allow water to penetrate beneath the concrete, and that water in turn is used by roots from nearby trees.

Most concrete cracks are due to the expansion and contraction of the concrete, caused by temperature changes. Once cracks do occur, they allow water to penetrate beneath the concrete, and that water in turn is used by roots from nearby trees.
of the pavement. Given space, moisture and oxygen, roots will take advantage of even the low level of nutrients that are present in subsoil to grow under the pavement.

When the first fine roots are successful, they will enlarge and continue to grow across the pavement, often to the lawn on the other side. Once the roots enter the soil under a well watered and fertilized lawn, they will prosper and increase in diameter. Given time, the roots will expand to the point where something must give. In that case, one of three things will happen. The roots will be restricted from growing any more, the root will compact the soil to allow expansion, or the pavement will be moved upward. As we all too often see, the result is likely to be the sidewalk lifting upward to allow for the continued increase in root diameter.

This explanation of how and why roots lift pavement may start you thinking of ways to counter their impact. Possibilities include:

1) restricting oxygen below the pavement;
2) reducing the condensation layer or moving it deeper in the soil;
3) redirecting root growth more deeply into the soil;
4) allowing roots to expand while not lifting the pavement, or in other ways; and
5) making the growing environment beneath the pavement less hospitable.

Many of these techniques have been tried, with the possible exception of reducing the oxygen level beneath the pavement.

**Under pavement treatments**

How can the condensation layer be moved deeper? There are several methods of doing this. One that has been used successfully in Europe and parts of the United States is installing a layer of coarse gravel beneath the pavement. We tried this in our experiment and it worked very well. The likely reason it works so well is that the gravel does not retain water well, so if roots do grow into it and a dry period is experienced, the roots dry out and die. Gravel also does not hold the nutrients required for tree growth. The obvious place where this treatment will not work is in poorly drained soil. If the gravel can’t dry, roots will grow there.

A second method we tried to move the condensation layer deeper into the soil was the installation of a layer of an expanded foam board (Foamular, Styrofoam). This treatment had the added potential benefit of allowing root expansion without pavement lifting. In our research, the foam board was very successful at keeping roots away from the concrete. Roots did grow directly beneath it, but they tended to be smaller and deeper than the control (in back).
beneath it, and as the roots expanded in size, they did crush the foam without lifting the pavement. This was a very successful treatment that, unlike gravel, is just as likely to work in poorly drained soils as it is in well drained soils. However, like the gravel layer, foam needs to be installed at the time the concrete is poured.

Root barriers

This brings us to root barriers. Root barriers are products that are installed vertically near pavement that are used to keep roots from growing directly underneath the pavement. They are intended to both slow root growth down and divert roots to deeper layers in the soil. Roots do eventually grow under barriers and the pavement next to them; however, in most cases they are smaller in diameter and therefore less damaging.

We have looked at the four basic types of barriers: soft or hard, chemically treated or plain: The hard plastic barrier was provided by DeepRoot Partners. We used the 18-inch barrier; other researchers have used the 12-inch-deep version.

Soft barriers were either 6 mil black poly sheeting that can be purchased at any hardware store, or a non-woven geotextile from Reemay Corporation.

Chemically treated barriers were Biobarrier from Reemay, the non-woven fabric geotextile treated with the herbicide trifluralin and TexR, a copper hydroxide treated geotextile from Texel Inc. DeepRoot also experimentally treated their hard barriers with copper hydroxide for one of our trials.

Over the course of 10 years and three experiments at the Bartlett Lab and eight years and two experiments by Dr. Ed Gilman in Florida, we have seen how root barriers affect tree root growth. Here are the conclusions we made that can assist you when selecting a product to use:

1) all root barriers will alter tree root growth patterns,
2) deeper barriers work better than shallow barriers,
3) roots can grow through or over some barriers,
4) chemically treated barriers slow root growth more than non-treated barriers,
5) ridges molded into barriers will divert root growth.

Let’s look at these conclusions in more detail. First, all root barriers will have an affect on tree root growth. Roots did grow underneath all root barriers tested, but when they came up on the other side of the barrier, they tended to be smaller in diameter, at least near the barrier.
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underneath all root barriers tested, but when they came up on the other side of the barrier, they tended to be smaller in diameter, at least near the barrier. So in the area where sidewalk lifting is most likely to start, root growth will be less.

Second, barriers work better the deeper they are installed. Comparing the data from 12-inch-deep and 18-inch-deep barriers, the 18-inch barriers do a substantially better job. Barriers installed deeper than 18 inches are available and may perform even better, but there are no published results on any of these products. It is often recommended that when trying to contain bamboo, a deeper barrier should be used.

Third, roots can grow through or over some barriers. We found that often when the top of the barrier was bridged with mulch or soil, roots would take advantage of the situation and grow over the top. Once roots were over the top, there were quite capable of damaging the pavement. Generally, the softer the barrier, the more likely it is to fall over and allow bridging. The 6 mil poly sheet had the worst overgrowth problems of any product we tested. In only one of our treatments, roots did penetrate the joints of the hard plastic barrier. At the time of excavation, they were not of a sufficient size to damage pavement. No roots penetrated any other intact barrier.

Fourth, chemically treated barriers slow root growth beneath barriers more than non-treated barriers. We saw this with both the trifluralin treated Biobarrier and the copper treated barriers. Both the trifluralin and copper are used to stop root-tip growth and neither product should move into the tree. There is some indication that the copper treatment encouraged root growth parallel to the barriers while slowing growth under the barriers. Persistence of both of these treatments on the barrier material is very long, measured in decades.

Fifth, ridges molded into barriers will divert root growth. The vertical ridges change the direction of roots that are growing along the barrier. On non-treated geotextile, roots that encounter the barrier will end up growing in all directions. When ridges are present, as on the DeepRoot barriers, and root tips encounter them, the roots dramatically change direction and grow downward. The double ridge at the top of the DeepRoot helps to reduce overgrowth even when mulch or soil is against the barrier.

While gravel or foam must be installed prior to the pavement being installed, root barriers can be installed at any time. Typically they are installed when a new tree is planted or shortly after planting. This is a great opportunity for an arborist to expand the scope of their planting services or even come in after a landscaper and offer a service that will extend the life of the adjacent pavement.

The tools required for this service are few. Installation only requires a trenching machine or root cutter and shovels for back filling. As with any service that requires digging, it is essential that the area where the barrier is to be installed be searched by the local utility locator service prior to digging.

The minimum length of barrier required for a single tree is typically 12 to 20 feet, centered on the tree. For trees with aggres-
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sively growing roots and a large size at maturity, wider barrier should be used. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on any installation. The top of the barrier must be kept free of soil and mulch to ensure efficacy of the treatment.

In summary, tree root damage to sidewalks and other pavement is a serious problem in the urban environment. Arborists can reduce this damage by installing treatments underneath or along side the pavement at the time of paving or tree at the time of tree installation. For arborists who plant trees near existing pavement, the installation of root barriers can be a good service that is added onto the tree planting.

E. Thomas Smiley, Ph.D., is an arboricultural researcher at Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories in Charlotte, North Carolina, and an adjunct professor at Clemson University. This article was adapted from his presentation on the subject at TCI EXPO 2007 in Hartford.

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Wolf Tree Joins The Davey Tree Expert Company

The Davey Tree Expert Company has acquired Wolf Tree Experts, Inc., a tree service company based in Knoxville, Tennessee, with 700 employees and a service area covering 13 states. Expected annualized revenues are in excess of $40 million. Their customers include rural electric co-ops, municipalities and investor-owned utilities. They will operate as a wholly-owned Davey subsidiary. This acquisition is Davey’s twelfth within the past two years and largest to date.

Wolf Tree was established in 1926 by Jacob L. Wolf, a man dedicated to providing safe and efficient tree trimming services. A former Davey employee, Wolf attended the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences in the early 1920s and was the youngest foreman in Davey’s history during his tenure with the company.

“While the Wolf Tree name is not changing, it is an exciting time as we begin to work together,” said Karl J. Warnke, Davey president and CEO.

Wolf Tree and Davey Tree combined have nearly 200 years of experience providing customers with stable, cost-effective service. We will continue to focus on service integrity as we build on the best qualities of both companies,” said Karl J. Warnke, Davey president and CEO.

Jacob Wolf’s grandson and current Wolf Tree president, Tom Wolf, said, “Our companies have parallel histories. Our office has a photo hanging on the wall from the 1920s featuring Davey foremen; it is a constant reminder of Davey’s heritage and history and the connection of our companies.”

“While the Wolf Tree name is not changing, it is an exciting time as we begin to work together,” said Wolf.

Davey also recently made acquisitions in Albany, New York; Orillia, Ontario, Canada; and Portland, Maine, and expand its residential/commercial services operations with new office locations in Chicago, Illinois, and Vancouver, British Columbia. The recent acquisitions included:

- All Seasons Tree Service, Albany, N.Y. All Seasons founder, Richard Johnson, and five employees join Davey’s existing Albany office. The acquisition reunites Johnson with Davey, a 1967 recipient of the Golden Oak award for highest achievement in the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences.
- The Treeman, Ontario, Canada. The Treeman founder, Mark Powell, and 10 employees join Davey. Powell is a 2008 graduate of the Davey Institute.
- ArborCare Tree and Landscape Company, Portland, Maine. ArborCare founder, Kevin Bosworth, and eight full-time employees joined Davey.

Husqvarna acquisition nets access to McCulloch name

Husqvarna has signed an agreement with Jenn Feng Co., Ltd. for acquisition of the company’s outdoor products operation.

Jenn Feng, a Taiwanese company, is a producer of chain saws and trimmers for the consumer market. The product offering also comprises lawn mowers, high-pressure washers and generators.

The acquisition gives the Husqvarna Group a greater presence as well as a wider manufacturing base in Asia. It also gives Husqvarna access to the McCulloch brand in the North American market. Husqvarna already owns the rights to the McCulloch brand in the rest of the world.

In 2007 the operation to be acquired reported sales of approximately $120 million, of which more than half referred to Europe. Chain saws accounted for 50 percent of sales. The company has about 1,250 employees, and production is mainly based in China. The acquisition is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2008.

ArborMAX expands coverage area and coverages

ArborMAX, a provider of arborist insurance, is expanding into additional states and coverage offerings. ArborMAX has expanded their territory to include 31 states and their commercial coverage to include Property and Inland Marine (equipment).

They have also improved the Professional Services endorsement that includes a broader scope of coverage.

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Berkshire Products’ Improved Drivers

The drivers for Berkshire Earthwings tree anchors have been redesigned to be stronger to better resist bending. The new drivers are made out of carbon steel that has been hardened to increase strength and durability, making them ideal for hard or rocky soil. The Earthwings tree staking system is available in four sizes: 2C for trees up to 2-inch caliper, 3C for up to 3-inch caliper, 5C for up to 5-inch and 10C for up to 10-inch caliper. They are particularly useful for trees planted in windy locations. Drivers are used to drive Earthwings underground. Berkshire also makes Earthwing Rootball Anchors, a completely underground staking system ideal where aesthetics and safety are most important. Contact Berkshire Products at (413) 229-7919 or via www.BerkshireEarthwings.com.

Barko 2008 ML Loaders

Barko Hydraulics, LLC’s three new models in their ML loader line, the 2008 295ML Magnum, 495ML Magnum and 595ML Magnum, come outfitted in Barko’s vibrant new product colors and equipped with features to enhance operator usability. The 2008 models feature a new Murphy Power View display with an engine tachometer that will allow operators to set an appropriate throttle setting to run at optimum rpms, which will maximize torque output and minimize fuel consumption. An enhanced electronic engine horsepower control, more precise than load-sensing hydraulic technology, works to improve fuel economy by 5 to 10 percent. Finally, an upgraded CB radio features added functionality and an extended range, so operators can communicate more clearly in forest environments. Contact Barko via www.barko.com.
Events & Seminars

May 1-5, 2008
Western Chapter ISA Annual Conf. & Trade Show*
Fairmont Hotel, San Jose, CA
Contact: (866) 785-8960; www.wcisa.net

May 6, 2008
Landscape Inspectors Assoc. of Fla. Industry Seminar
Volunteer Park, Plantation, FL
Contact: www.landscapinspectors.org

May 6, 2008
Chain Saw Safety Course
Forest Resource Education Center
Jackson, NJ
Contact: John Perry (732) 833-0500

May 13, 2008
First Aid/CPR & CPR Recertification
Monmouth County Agricultural Building
Freehold, NJ
Contact: John Perry (732) 833-0500

May 13, 2008
Urban Tree Risk Assessment workshop
UTenn, TN State Ext., TN Tech., Tree Solutions, Hallers Lnd
Contact: (615) 963-5616; jidassi@tnstate.edu; Karla Kean, (931) 648-5725; kkean@utk.edu

May 15, 2008
Certified Tree Expert Prep Course II
Monmouth County Parks, Middletown, NJ
Contact: NJ Soc. of Cert. Tree Experts 1-888-873-3034

May 20, 2008
ISACertified Tree Worker Exam
NJ Forestry Research and Education Ctr, Jackson, NJ
Contact: Matt (609) 625-6021; www.isa-arbor.com

May 20, 2008
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop*
Mount Laurel, NJ
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

June 7, 2008
New England Tree Climbing Championship
Fort Williams, Cape Elizabeth, Maine.
Contact: (802) 282-2299; lorax93@yahoo.com

June 12, 2008
Invasive Plants Symposium
Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens, Stamford, CT
Contact: (203) 322-6971; www.bartlettarboretum.org

July 16, 2008
Fertilizer School
Northeast Shade Tree, Portsmouth, NH
Contact: (603) 436-4804

July 18, 2008
2008 Woody Plant Conference
Swarthmore, PA
Contact: (610) 388-1000 x507; www.woodyplantconference.org

July 24-25, 2008
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop*
St. Louis, MO
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

July 26-30, 2008*
ISA Annual Conference*
St. Louis, MO
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com

For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.treecareindustry.org ⇒ news ⇒ industry calendar

Upcoming 2008 Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP) low-cost* workshops

May 12
Knoxville, TN
New Harvest Park
May 12
Milpitas, CA
Milpitas Community Center Auditorium
May 19
Tucson, AZ
Tucson Electric Power
June 17
New Brunswick, NJ
Rutgers University
June 26
Columbus, OH
Kottman Hall, Ohio State University
July 25
St. Louis, MO
In conjunction with ISA Annual Conference

Spanish Language Workshops

May 14
Milpitas, CA
Milpitas Community Center Auditorium
May 19
Knoxville, TN
New Harvest Park
May 19
Tucson, AZ
Tucson Electric Power

* Sponsored in part by an OSHA grant

Please note that workshop dates and locations are current as of press time. Check the TCIA Web site (www.tcia.org) for the most current information.

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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|       | August 20-21, 2008* | Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop  
San Jose, CA  
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org |
|       | September 11, 2008 | Urban Tree Risk Assessment workshop  
UTenn, TN State Ext., TN Tech., Tree Solutions, Hallers Lnd  
Knoxville, TN  
Contact: Joshua Idassi (615) 963-5616; jidassi@tnstate.edu; Karla Keen, (931) 648-5725; kkean@utk.edu |
|       | September 13, 2008 | 10th Annual Tennessee Tree Climbing Championship  
Lake Shore Park,  
Knoxville, TN  
TN Urban Forestry Cncl/TN Dept. of Ag, Div. of Forestry  
Contact: www.tufc.com; (615) 352-8985 |
|       | September 17, 2008 | ISA Cert. Arborist, Utility & Municipal Spec. Exams  
Atlantic City Electric Regional office, Mays Landing, Atlantic City, NJ  
Contact: Matt (609) 625-6021; www.isa-arbor.com |
|       | September 20-24, 2008* | Pacific Northwest Annual Training Conference  
Boise, ID  
Contact: Boise Urban Forestry (208) 384-4083; www.pnwisa.org |
|       | September 24-26, 2008 | 29th Annual Texas Tree Conference  
Hilton Hotel & Conference Center, College Station, TX  
Contact: ISA Texas/Texas Forest Svc; www.isatexas.com |
|       | September 29-October 1, 2008 | Mid-Atlantic Chapter ISA Annual Meeting  
Blackburg, VA  
Contact: www.mac-isa.org |
|       | October, 2008 | Certified Landscape Technician (CLT) Exam  
NJ Landscape Contr. Assoc. & PLANET  
Bergen Community College, Paramus, NJ  
Contact: www.njica.org; (201) 703-3600 |
|       | October 24-26, 2008* | NJ Shade Tree Federation 83rd Annual Meeting  
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ  
Contact: Donna Massa (732) 246-3210; njshade-treefederation@worldnet.att.net; www.njstf.org |
|       | October 25, 2008 | Protecting & Supporting Veteran Trees Workshop  
Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, GA  
Contact: www.GeorgiaArborist.org |
|       | November 11-12, 2008* | Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop  
In conjunction with TCI EXPO 2008  
Milwaukee, WI  
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org |
|       | November 13-15, 2008* | TCI EXPO 2008*  
Milwaukee, WI  
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org |
Cora Hartshorn Arboretum, Millburn, NJ  
Contact: Matt (609) 625-6021; www.isa-arbor.com |
|       | January 7-9, 2009 | Empire State Green Industry Show  
Rochester, NY  
Contact: NYSSTA (518) 783-1322; www.nysta.org |
|       | February 8-12, 2009* | Winter Management Conference 2009*  
Westin Grand Bahama Island Our Lucaya Resort & Sheraton Grand Bahama Island Our Lucaya Resort Bahamas  
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org |

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance
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GSA GS-30F-00195

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With a December 26, 2007 Federal Register notice, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration proposed to revise standards for mandatory training requirements for entry-level commercial driver's license-holders. The Tree Care Industry Association objected stridently. We found that the FMCSA was proposing to place an exorbitantly expensive program on the backs of employers with no demonstrable benefit to driver safety whatsoever. The proposed rule would not kick in until three years after promulgation. Following that date, persons applying for new or upgraded CDLs would be required to complete classroom and behind-the-wheel training from an accredited institution.

Interested parties can read public comments to this proposal by going to regulations.gov and searching for the docket item FMCSA-2007-27748.

As service-providing companies, the driving that tree care companies do is incidental to what they are paid for and comprises a very small part of their overall day. In TCIA’s opinion, this proposed regulation would have been crippling. Our members’ drivers are on the road for one and one-half hours per day on average; and that driving is done in 10 to 20-minute increments. Our average member company operates five CDL vehicles within a 30-mile radius of its office or base of operations. Eighty-six percent of these vehicles seldom or never cross state lines. Less than 0.07 percent of these CDL vehicles were involved in accidents of any kind in 2007. The average company currently has about $176 in out-of-pocket expenses to help one of its employees obtain his or her CDL. Over 80 percent provide on-the-job driver training and testing to their newly hired or newly authorized CMV drivers.

Our industry experiences an estimated 0.049 fatal vehicular accidents per 100 million miles driven, inclusive of both CDL and non-CDL vehicles. According to the FMCSA’s 2006 Large Truck Crash Causation Study (LTCCS), the comparable statistic for all large trucks was above 2.1 in each of the last three years of the study.

In the FR notice, the FMCSA states: “Currently, there are no data available to permit comparison of CMV driver training to the subsequent safety performance of the driver. In particular, no accessible records of training exist . . . this proposed rule would provide the baseline data needed to begin to study the effectiveness of the training when compared to the actual crash experience of the drivers.” Also in the FR notice is this statement: “The FMCSA believes that the mandatory training proposed in this NPRM need not be delayed until further research is conducted, standards developed, etc.”

It appears that FMCSA assumes that private sector employers have remained unaffected by our economy and have the wherewithal to bankroll their research.

Furthermore, the Agency seems to be ignoring what data it does have. In September 2006, FMCSA conducted further analysis on the recently released LTCCS for data regarding the training and experience of commercial drivers involved in crashes. The study provided information on nearly one thousand selected truck crashes from around the country, which is quite a bit of data in our estimation! These data specify many characteristics of each crash, including the training of the drivers involved and whether or not the driver was at fault.

One would think that such a large study would yield data that would inform this proposed rule-making. However, the FMCSA concluded that, “... analysis using the LTCCS was inconclusive and did not identify any statistically significant difference between trained and untrained drivers with regard to crash frequency. Analysts reported that the relatively small sample size and difficulty in differentiating the effects of training, experience, and age precluded useful conclusions.”

FMCSA’s perspective is by its own admission biased. In 2006, FMCSA personnel visited various driver training facilities to gain the benefit of their expertise. Not surprisingly, all of these training entities agreed that current knowledge and skills testing for the CDL does not negate the need for training, and that training should be a prerequisite for the CDL. FMCSA believes these training facilities have a vested interest in increasing training requirements, yet steadfastly believes that entry-level driver training should be a prerequisite for the CDL.

Finally, FMCSA’s cost analysis was flawed because it either underestimated or completely overlooked some significant
costs.

The cost of providing training consists of the costs of hiring an instructor, producing training materials, equipment used for instruction, fuel, wear and tear on vehicles, etc. FMCSA indicated in the FR notice that it had interviewed training schools and associations regarding the costs of training, and respondents indicated that a cost of $4,000 for a 4-week course was typical. This estimate equates to $25 per hour. We accept that.

The concept of opportunity cost is apparently much less familiar to FMCSA. The FR notice provides an encyclopedic definition of this term with which we agree: the value of the best alternative that must be foregone when an action is taken. We also agreed with FMCSA that in this case, the opportunity cost of training is the foregone value of the work that the driver would otherwise be performing.

But our agreement ends when it comes to how opportunity cost should be estimated. FMCSA states that the standard value of an opportunity cost to be the driver’s wage plus “fringe benefits”. It is much more. The components of opportunity cost that are easiest to quantify and universal to all drivers in private industry are wage/labor burden and lost revenue.

The wage/labor burden discussion is too complicated to go into here. Suffice to say that FMCSA estimated it at about $14 per hour and we say it is closer to $26 per hour.

Lost revenue is by far the biggest component of opportunity cost, and yet FMCSA completely overlooks it. We polled our members and came up with a range of between $74/hr. and $110/hr.

The bottom line is this: FMCSA estimates the total cost of sending one entry-level truck driver through the requisite 120 hours of training for his/her Class A CDL to be: $42/hr. X 120 hrs. = $5,040.

Depending on the area of the country, the local market and the service being provided, we estimate that obtaining the same CDL-A will cost from $12,000 to $16,320, not including tuition for the training program itself! Our estimate of the true per-person cost of this program when tuition is factored in is three to four times greater than FMCSA’s!

There are hidden costs that are harder to quantify but significant. The loss of one key crew member may force the remainder of the crew to rearrange or cancel work. Additionally the high employee turnover rate that seems inherent to our profession translates to higher ongoing costs to the employer to maintain the requisite number of CDL drivers.

We certainly are not opposed to driver training. TCIA promotes in-house and third party driver training programs to its members. The fact that over 80 percent of our members currently provide in-house driver training and testing is testament to their belief in the value of training as well.

However, we believe that the extent of training and the associated expense in FMCSA’s proposal is completely unwarranted.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.

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The achievements of two tree care companies, one big and one small and both heavily into utility line-clearance work, are truly impressive - and a good example for others.

One company is national, the other is family run. But what both have in common is a long winning streak. Both are celebrating an important feat - long stretches with no losses.

Kappen Tree Service, LLC, a 112-person company in Cass City, Michigan, trumpeted going through its first 16 years without a single lost-time accident. That's an impressive achievement, as was one trumpeted by a larger company, Trees Inc. of Houston, Texas.

Trees Inc., which has 1,600 employees doing utility line clearance, went through a full year without a lost-time accident. Both are enviable milestones with real benefits for tree care companies, and somewhat equitable given the proportionate sizes of the companies. Both share something else in common. The achievement is the end result of the creation of an on-the-ground “safety culture” that other companies would be wise to emulate.

“We're very blessed,” says Crystal Kappen, co-owner and de-facto safety officer of Kappen, acknowledging that the achievement is the result of a company-wide effort. “All of the employees buy into it. We have respect for each other, and it really helps out. When we hold safety meetings to try and educate them, they really take an interest in it.”

Last year, Kappen invited Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) to conduct a complete evaluation of its company – including crews, paperwork, records, etc. - and the result was that in December 2007 the company received the MIOSHA Consultation Education and Training’s (CET) Gold Award, recognizing its impressive record.

“We are honored to present the CET Gold Award to Kappen Tree Service and to recognize your exemplary achievement of reaching 16 years without a lost time accident,” said Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Director Keith W. Cooley in a prepared statement. “Your outstanding safety and health record is a testament that protecting your workers is a core company value.”

Trees, Inc., meanwhile finished 2007 with no lost employee time due to accidents. “We have implemented several new training programs, policies, procedures, new types of equipment and work methods that either make us safer or more productive, and in many cases, both,” says David Fleischner, Trees Inc. president.

From a tree care perspective, creating a better safety culture makes sense for a number of reasons, beyond the very obvious and very human reason that no employer ever wants a fatality on his/her watch, and tree care can be a dangerous profession.

A company with a gleaming safety record can reap the benefits, however, including realizing greater favoritism with would-be clients by virtue of that record. It is likely no accident that two companies such with a strong focus on safety both specialize in clearing utility lines. Nor is it unusual that they would trumpet their respective achievements.

“Safety is really the first and largest issue in the industry,” stresses Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry.
The tree care industry is among the most dangerous professions in the United States. The research that we’ve been able to tap from some independent sources indicates that tree care may be, depending on the year, the fourth or fifth most dangerous industry there is, in terms of fatal occupational accidents. So many things hinge on safety or the lack thereof. In a smaller company, the loss surrounding an accident goes much deeper than just the loss of the employee for a period of time. Lower employee morale, resulting in higher turnover, is certainly a very significant factor.

Another benefit favoring a company with a safety record that good is that it can buck the industry-wide trend of paying huge insurance costs overall, specifically for workers’ compensation.

“In a marketplace where some companies can’t even get comp insurance, when a company, because of its safety record, can pay 61 cents on the dollar compared to its competitors, that’s a huge competitive advantage,” Gerstenberger says. “Especially when considering that, after payroll, insurance is probably the biggest cost in the company.”

Gerstenberger notes that utilities are particularly sensitive to safety both because of the obvious dangers and shared liability risks, and also because of concern relating to outages, and potentially large federal fines.

“If a company doing line clearance is less than safe in what it does,” he says, “it may result in outages, which is a major customer inconvenience and sometimes even a critical issue. Utilities can’t afford that sort of thing.”

He also added that employee turnover is generally high for utility line-clearance companies, and a company that can tout a stellar safety record can both retain its own employees but also use it as a recruiting tool.

“If you can promote that, and point to valid reasons why you have a safe environment, that becomes a huge recruiting and retention tool,” Gerstenberger says.

All of those have been beneficial for Kappen, which has enjoyed great growth—particularly over the past three years. The recent notoriety has brought greater respect in their community, as well. Kappen notes, but the important part of the bottom line is the respect for employees and their safety.

“As my husband, Warren, has indicated, they’re more than a number out there,” she says. “We truly care and want them to go back to their families at night. We realize it’s a dangerous occupation. Anything can happen on any given day. We don’t want it to, but the bottom line is that we need to follow through and maintain this safety culture that we do have, and respect each other.”

So, how does a company create a culture of safety in the field? Not surprisingly, it starts with training and is reinforced through company actions on a day-to-day basis. As Gerstenberger says of Kappen and Trees, Inc., “Their efforts in the safety area are pretty generous. They have robust overall safety programs.”

Both companies have reached what Gerstenberger calls “the pinnacle” of TCIA’s safety training, in that both have certified tree care safety professionals, or CTSPs, on staff. In the case of Kappen, both Crystal and her brother-in-law, Jason Kappen, have achieved the CTSP designation. Trees, Inc. has several employees currently in the CTSP program, and one credentialed CTSP, Wallace Carranza.

Fleischner lists some of the changes that the company made in 2007 that helped lead to the improved safety record, including implementing “a new and improved defensive driver training program,” and adding “some of the newest innovations in equipment to our fleet that help get the job done quicker and safer.”

The company “initiated a new truck and fully equipped mobile training facility, along with certified instructors, to help take training to our employees,” Fleischner says. “We implemented new job site set up procedures (in 2007), along with a better way to communicate our job briefings. The Job Behavior Observation (JBO) process was revised and improved (in 2007), and we went through the implementation and first evaluation of our own Safety Management Process (SMP). We are currently in the middle of a new tree felling program as well.”

Programs and education are important components of Kappen’s long string of success as well. Crystal Kappen says the key to that success has been the company’s team approach.

She and Jason have sat with other tree care executives at conferences and compared stories and methods from the field. While they have had some accidents, they
have dodged those that have caused major damage.

“It made us sit back and think, too, ‘we hope it never happens,’” she says. “You do all you can to prevent it and to teach what you want, but things can happen. We’ve been very fortunate to this point.”

In addition to her, Kappen has a safety manager who goes out into the field and inspects crews and does tailgate training, presenting workers with safety scenarios and asking how they would deal with different situations.

“It gets them more involved, rather than having them sitting there reading the ‘Tailgate Safety’ lessons day after day,” Crystal Kappen says. “It gets them to think a little more, rather than just rolling their eyes saying, ‘Yeah, yeah, we’ve heard this before.’”

Different people have different learning styles, she notes, and it’s important to deliver that message in a way that employees can learn best.

The short tailgate trainings are held once a week, and the safety manager goes out to sites also at least once a week. In addition, the company holds longer training sessions once a month to reinforce the needs and the fundamentals of tree care – wearing protective gear, feeding the chipper from the
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"It can get costly," she acknowledges. "We have 100 employees, and we give them half the day off (for training) and obviously pay them. It does add up to quite a lot, but we look at the overall picture and say, "What we spend here, if it can save one, even a minor injury, it’s going to help our company and maybe even save a life in the end."

Four years ago, Kappen says, the company employed about 45-50 workers. With that number now more than doubled, she says it’s actually become easier to deliver the safety trainings. Whereas the safety trainings used to involve all of the workers in the field, the lessons are now split up. General foremen conduct some of the training. For other lessons, the company safety director meets with groups as small as two or three.

"I think the guys are more eager to talk about their close calls in a smaller group, as opposed to a group of 40 or 50," she says. "When he goes out on a smaller scale, it seems he gets more feedback. The general foremen do the tailgate safeties with about 20 guys, (a group that) is somewhat large, but at least we know they’re getting more attention than with the whole group of 100."

Kappen’s top-to-bottom commitment is consistent with other strong safety cultures, says Gerstenberger.

"The term I’ve heard people use is ‘active caring,’” Gerstenberger says. “Every employee in the business has to take upon himself or herself the personal responsibility of their own safety and the safety of those around them, and to demonstrate active caring – going above and beyond just noting that some condition or some action might be unsafe, and actually acting to intervene to prevent somebody from being injured by that unsafe condition or action.

"In order for that to exist, there has to be an environment within a business that is permissive of that," he adds. "That it won’t be construed that this employee stepped out of line, or went above rank, or ‘who’s this new employee to tell this older employee what to do; why isn’t he working?’ All of those attitudes certainly challenge the idea of instilling a culture of safety. Where it starts is management’s leadership in creating an atmosphere that permits that culture of safety to start to flourish.

"When I think of safety, the word holistic always comes to mind. Safety is more than just using the right equipment, it’s more than hiring experienced personnel, and it’s more than the safety programs you might purchase or put in place. It’s more than the policies you have on a piece of paper. It’s a combination of all of those things working synergistically to create this environment.

"At the end of the day, it comes down to people’s attitude," Gerstenberger says. "The employees ultimately are the ones with the real power when it comes to creating a safe work environment, because 90 percent or more of all accidents can be attributed to at-risk behavior."

Companies trying to find ways to discourage at-risk behavior would be well off following the fine, and even award-worthy, examples set by Trees, Inc. and Kappen Tree Service.
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Earning a good living by making mulch and other products from wood is a positive way to start the spring business season. There’s a lot more to it, however, than just chipping and grinding stuff up and trying to sell it.

Jeff Hansen is founder and owner of Hansen’s Tree, Lawn and Landscaping Inc. in O’Fallon, Missouri (not far from St. Louis), a full-service tree care company accredited by the TCIA. (Hansen’s, a TCIA member since 1995, was the first company in Missouri to earn TCIA Accreditation, earning it in June 2005.) From the full name of his business alone, you know Hansen knows the power and profit inherent in diversification.

The irony that he started out in the refuse trade with BFI (Browning Ferris Industries) and now is in the business of making a valuable product, mulch, out of refuse should not be overlooked. With mulch, what once was trash is now treasure. If that doesn’t get your attention, perhaps this will.

Tree care companies used to be in the service business, that is, selling labor for tree care services - cutting, pruning, hauling away, etc. Smart and successful owners such as Hansen recognize that profit also lies in the “goods” side of the marketplace; that is supplying products people can use as well as the services.

Look around; you spend money on products or services, or both, every day. So, why not double your business potential (or at least bump it up a little) by considering how you can make something to sell as well as selling your labor? And why not make something of value from the refuse you generate in the service side of the business? After all, it’s at least free to you as a raw material, and often you are paid for removal and disposal. Maybe you’re already selling firewood? Think about it. That’s a product if nothing more than a simple byproduct of your pruning and removal services.

Hansen began his own weekend tree cutting business in 1985, largely to ensure that his wife could remain a full-time mother and not have to split her time between motherhood and an outside job. By ’89, Hansen had his own full-time tree care business, and he hasn’t looked back. In fact, economy in and economy out, “I’ve never had a bad year,” he says, “we’ve grown every year.”

Hansen got into the material-reduction business perhaps out of self-defense.

“Around 1999, I hired a guy with a
grinder to work with me to get rid of my tree debris. I promised to stay out of his world if he treated me right. He stiffed me twice, so I bought my first grinder in 2000.”

Again, he never looked back, continually growing larger in his business and in the size of equipment he purchased. Today, he has three tub grinders and two horizontal grinders. A new one arrived in early April. That should tell you there is money in those chips you’ve been discarding.

Between the tree work and the grinding,

“There’s a big difference in the organic, composted mulch we make and typical sawmill mulch.”

Jeff Hansen

Hansen is running sites that include Springfield and Branson, Missouri, managing 100 employees most of the year.

“I got into the mulch business as I began to see the door close on landfills,” he says. “I bought a machine first to take care of my own wood waste, later helping colleagues in the excavating and grading businesses to get rid of their product from land clearing.

Then I realized I would have to get rid of this product, too!”

So, if you were in his place, what would you do now that the service end of the business is creating a pile of resource with potential to make money?

“I did a lot of research and ran across John and Tim Martin at Martin Mulch in Pennsylvania, one of the largest mulch producers in the U.S., who started coaching me,” explains Hansen.

The first, and most important, thing Hansen learned was the huge difference in mulches, he says. “There’s a big difference in the organic, composted mulch we make and typical sawmill mulch.”

The difference, he explains, lies in materials such as the bark, which is stripped off at the sawmill so clean logs can be milled into lumber. Unfortunately, that process very effectively strips out nitrogen (and other nutrients) that make for healthy mulch.

As Hansen explains, “Wood itself is a
very hard, heavily carbon material. It takes nitrogen to break down that carbon. So, when you put pure sawmill shavings and sawdust around trees and plants, it does not readily benefit them. Actually, it can be a detriment, as the sawmill material has to take nitrogen from the ground and plant to break down the wood material.” That’s a key point to remember if you plan to expand your business into the product side.

Hansen said he also drew heavily from the results of Ohio and Penn State studies on the subject. “Now, when we put in grass and leaves from material run through our chippers, we get all the nitrogen, which breaks down a multitude of mixed woods before we start grinding the composted material a second time into a finished product.”

In Hansen’s market, this is a defining factor, since in Missouri the main wood is a tough oak, still used in regional products such as barrel staves. That leaves a lot of sawmill material for mulching. “It’s hard to break that down unless you have other components. Microbial action is better because of the leaves and grasses in our materials we get off our chipper trucks.”

To make sure his product is the best it can be, “We have it tested regularly,” he says, and “our carbon-to-nitrogen is far less than sawmill material.” Because
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Hansen spends so much time having the carbon-to-nitrogen ratios tested, his product has been awarded the Seal of Testing Assurance by the U.S. Composting Council. “We send material on a scheduled basis to ensure we are maintaining that certification.”

And speaking of “green,” in this age of environmental awareness and trends toward green, yes, Hansen’s material is organic. Everything Hansen’s takes in as green waste (leaves to stump) is converted to compost, 100 percent natural mulch (if you want color, it’s even naturally colored) or firewood.

The market in the Missouri area is such that Hansen’s mulch business is looking attractive to privately owned hardware store businesses, some 60 of which are lining up wanting to carry his product in 2009.

Additionally, his processed product is being pursued “heavily,” in his words, by companies in the wood-waste-to-biofuel business, and Hansen scheduled processing green waste for that application last month. As a matter of fact, a large plant in the St. Louis area, the name of which Hansen was not at liberty to divulge, was testing with wood chips as a way to fire its boiler and simultaneously improve emissions.

And if that isn’t enough, Hansen is looking into ways of converting the substances in wood chips into bio oils for burning and lubrication. So, in less than a decade, that chipper or grinder that did a fine job reducing green waste from tree work into a compact landfill pile has become the leading edge in converting that same waste into valuable, highly profitable products such as mulch, biomass fuels and oils that...
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can run generators for power and, possibly, to transportation fuel, such as bio diesel.

“It’s incredible to see how the market is developing,” Hansen says. “It costs a lot for equipment. I have some $3 million alone just in wood processing and related equipment – chippers, grinders, excavators, conveyors, trucks and colorizers,” he says, “but that means an additional 20 to 30 percent net income for our business from environmental wood products.”

Obviously, to keep up with demand, Hansen has to look for multiple sources for his raw materials, including the City of O’Fallon, St. Louis and Springfield, taking in green waste to make compost, and in St. Louis county functioning as the management company for the green waste landfill operations – the only operating landfill left in St. Louis – and waste haulers. Not only do these kinds of setups provide a constant stream of raw material for his natural wood products, each can also be an additional revenue stream in cases where Hansen is paid to take in the materials.

“This (green waste) is a valuable natural resource, and we have a lot of different ways to process, reuse and recycle it. Creativity goes a long way in some specialty markets,” Hansen says. “We have developed specialties by way of our own experience, for example, with the trash business and being able to process palettes, spools for cable TV and phone wire and using a metal separator to reclaim the valuable wood. Hansen now has a unit on order, an air-lift separator, that will take trash out of a pile and leave clean wood behind for processing.

He’s even ground up several entire houses, removing the plumbing and roofing, and saving as much as possible of the valuable dry wood, which is ideal for bio mass fuel since there is so little moisture in it.

Hansen warns that operations such as his represent a huge capital investment and present the ongoing challenge of ensuring there is enough material coming in to keep the equipment and his crews operating economically.

The larger point to make, though, is that regardless of scale, the material running through the chipper is more than something one needs to reduce in volume for the dump. Those days are over. Time to give up that thought. Green waste is an increasingly valuable raw material from which one can make countless products in this new green age and perhaps launch another profit stream for the tree care business.

Jeff Hansen
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As fast as there is a story to print, there are new developments in the war on the emerald ash borer. And although no one has any expectation that this insect can be eliminated from North America, there are new promises for control available with the potential to slow the spread of EAB, at least in select trees.

The latest tool involves emamectin benzoate, a product used successfully in Canada in preventing sea lice in farm raised salmon. In the U.S., the same chemical is used in insecticide sprays for agricultural products. In both cases, the end product is fit for human consumption. Emamectin benzoate has broad spectrum control for both native and exotic pests.

Arborjet, Inc., working with Syngenta, a Swiss agrochemical company, used a 4 percent solution of this well known chemical (emamectin benzoate is already used in Syngenta’s Proclaim insecticide, and a similar product, avermectin, is used in its Avid insecticide) and reformulated it to be used with their tree injection systems. Called TREE-age, this new product already has emergency licensing in Michigan, Indiana, West Virginia and Ohio and it is pending in other EAB-infested states. It is in EPA queue for full federal registration. It will be available for purchase in registered states in mid-April.

“In preliminary studies conducted by Michigan State University, the pesticide killed more than 99 percent of the ash borer larvae in treated trees and 100 percent of the adult beetles that nibbled on their leaves,” according to an April press release from Arborjet.

This statement refers to the research of Michigan State University’s Dr. Deborah McCullough and her colleagues at the university, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the USDA Forestry Service. They are conducting ongoing experiments with TREE-age and other products licensed for use against EAB.

Groups of ash trees from different sites were treated in 2007 with TREE-age and other chemical formulations. Some trees were left untreated as controls. In the fall of 2007, some of each group were cut down, debarked and the EAB larvae counted. Right now, it appears TREE-age did well the first year.

In 2008, some of each group will receive a second treatment. In the autumn, more trees will be cut and the larvae counted. That data will tell if there is residual effectiveness the second year after one treatment compared to two treatments. But answers won’t come until 2009. Because of studies on other insects, Arborjet believes a residual effective period will be shown in the second year.

Dr. Cliff Sadof, entomologist from Purdue University, is conducting a separate study. With colleagues, he first did a review of Michigan State’s literature on past efforts in the battle against EAB. His comparison study involves half a dozen products claiming success with EAB. He is measuring the results of each product with defoliation levels. They are studying 300 ash trees in an EAB infested campground. The new applications of each of the six products were applied in June 2007, but indicators were insufficient to produce results last year. He expects to see differences this season as the study continues and infestation progresses.

A after reviewing the literature, Sadof says he believes TREE-age runs through the tree slower than other products and that its toxicity lasts longer in the adults. If this proves true in field trials, TREE-age could slow the spread of the beetle.

Sadof raises some interesting questions to ask home owners. Is it better to allow a tree to be killed by EAB or to wound it with an injection system? How much do people pay for lawn care? If a tree provides 50 percent of the shade to a home, is it worth $200 a year to maintain that cooling?

Toxicity
Random observers in Ohio and Canada have reported woodpeckers feeding in EAB infested areas during and after various EAB treatments. No one noted which of the treatments were used on the trees the
Firewood – the Unwitting Emerald Ash Borer Vector

By Nicholas Polanin

It has become painfully obvious to many of our communities over the last several decades of the need to change our behavior – professionally and as consumers – in the production, distribution and movement of firewood. This is again being brought to our attention in the wake of the emerald ash borer and other invasive infestations.

How often have we seen piles of “free” firewood left curbside for the taking, with no thought of the potential spread of diseases, borers – adult, pupae or egg masses – or other invasives by neighborhood “bargain hunters” as they pull up alongside with their pickups or trailers?

How do we define “firewood” other than the standard measure of cord volume? What incentives are needed for campgrounds and other firewood “destinations” to supply sufficient “certified, pest free” firewood for their users? How can regulations, education, outreach and value-added economic programs band together to minimize the threat of vector movement through firewood distribution?

These and many other questions were discussed at the Eastern Firewood Forum, held recently at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Whippany (Morris County), N.J. Sponsored by the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area, in cooperation with The Nature

A Japanese study (2003) found very low concentrations (in the order of parts/billion) of the emamectin benzoate in the treated trees.

Grosman has been testing emamectin benzoate on beetles that kill trees across North America. In initial tests, they treated 6- to 8-inch (dbh) trees with different concentrations of emamectin benzoate and cut them down at intervals of one, three and five months. Each series of logs was exposed to Ips engraver beetles for three weeks. Later the bark was removed and the...
logs examined for insect activity. In another test they studied emamectin benzoate activity against *Dendroctonus* species (bark beetles).

They learned that temperature affects the rate of chemical movement in the trees. At colder temperatures or high elevations, extra time is needed for the chemical to be circulated throughout the tree. The tree must fully circulate the formulation in order for the treatment to be completely effective.

"We suspect the chemical is stored in the wood tissue of the tree, but we don't know exactly how, when or where."

A request was made by Syngenta Crop Protection to EPA in January 2008 for a full section-three registration of emamectin benzoate across the U.S. The company believes the product is effective against bark beetles, woodborers and moth defoliators.

Several years ago, an early formula of emamectin benzoate showed phytotoxicity problems. Michigan State’s McCullough says, "These problems have apparently been resolved. There is no evidence at this time of any harm to the tree in 2007" using Arborjet’s TREE-age.

Even at this early stage of research, McCullough says she believes there are indicators to support the residual effectiveness of emamectin benzoate in the TREE-age formula. She believes it may be possible to get full coverage with a biannual treatment, with a homeowner applied soil drench on the alternate years. APHIS has already done leaf collections from the trees in Michigan and McCullough had received the raw data in early April, but needed time to compile it and provide the residual analysis.

The amount, if any, of residual emamectin benzoate levels in the leaves when they fall in the autumn is not known, but the potential is lower than with either soil drenching or spraying, according to Peter Wild, president and CEO of Arborjet. McCullough says she believes there is little risk that TREE-age will affect bees and other pollinators because ash is wind pollinated and bees don’t feed on leaves.

"TREE-age," McCullough says, "is another option to save valuable landscape trees."

**Canadian option**

In March 2008, emergency licensing was received in Ontario for injection of TreeAzin, a new product using azadirachtin from the oil of Neem seeds, for use against EAB.

Research has shown that, at very low doses, TreeAzin inhibits emerald ash borer larval development, prevents adult emergence, and provides prophylactic and remedial treatments. Taylor Scarr of Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources says, TreeAzin “is environmentally safe.”

TreeAzin was developed by the Canadian Forest Service in collaboration with BioForest Technologies Inc. and is owned by the Canadian Forest Service. Field trials of tree injections to fight emerald ash borer in ash trees are ongoing in Canada. Early results of the Neem experiments on emerald ash borer are expected in the fall of 2008.

**Parasitoid release**

In early April, Dr. Leah Bauer of USDA forest service was about to start tree cutting to determine if the 2007 release of the EAB parasitoids *Tetrastichus planipennisi* (Tetra) and *Oobius agrili* (Oobi) was successful.

Tetra lays its eggs in EAB larvae. Oobi lays its egg in an EAB egg. Dr. Julie Gould of USDA plant health is involved with the...
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Firewood as a vector
(Continued from page 43)

Conservancy, the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters and Tree Care Industry magazine, this full day forum was designed to build upon the successes of the first Firewood Forum held at the Morton Arboretum in Illinois in 2006.

Meeting organizers provided ample opportunities throughout the day to develop consistent messages and policies in changing public behavior in transporting firewood over long distances or across state lines, and for colleagues and decision-makers from several states to network and share the day-to-day dealings with this issue.

For us in the tree care industry, we can be an integral part of the first line of defense, if we choose to be.

If we are educated and knowledgeable enough to accurately diagnose what ails or kills a tree we need to prune or remove, we must then educate the property owner as to the threat leaving this wood can pose to the remaining trees in and around their property. We seem to do this by second nature when it comes to controlling the spread of diseases – removing infested branches and all fallen debris to reduce the source of any new infestation. Why should it be so different or difficult with wood?

A major concern repeated several times during this forum was the movement of firewood from homes and other properties to private campgrounds and our national parks and forests. Campgrounds are “picked clean” of fallen debris suitable for firewood by winter or early season campers, so many have taken to practicing “b.y.o.f.” – and thereby threatening the health of the very woods they are so fond of camping in.

Results of a recent urban forestry survey revealed that 96 percent of respondents agreed that trees are integral part of the first line of defense, if we choose to be.

percent felt strongly that trees give a sense or feeling of tranquility to residents, visitors and campers alike. Outreach, economic and regulatory efforts must build on these positive affirmations if they are to successfully change behavior in the movement of firewood.

Several states, including Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois that are currently dealing with emerald ash borer quarantines, along with New York and New Jersey with Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) quarantines, shared their regulatory efforts regarding “imported” firewood. One issue raised was the actual definition of firewood. In the legal and regulatory world, if one is to set standards and limits, one needs a legally defensible definition of the regulated product or service. So, here’s a question for you – how is “firewood” defined in your neck of the woods?

One presenter shared the frustration of a camping enthusiast who had his firewood confiscated since it met the current definition of “4 feet in length,” only to learn later that if he had brought in wood in 5-foot lengths, he could have kept it.

Regulations must be suited not only to the specific product, but should also insure the intent or spirit of the need for regulation – will shorter or longer lengths of firewood in any way lessen the chance of introducing invasive or destructive pests into a campground, park or forest? Do we have to wait for another outbreak and resulting quarantine of emerald ash borer or Asian longhorned beetle? We seemingly forgot the lessons of the past, when gypsy moth egg masses were identified as “hitchhikers” on trailers and campers leaving infested campgrounds. The issues regarding the movement of firewood is even more severe, as our global economy has introduced several forest pests of great concern.

Several presenters touched on the issue of “treated scrap lumber” or “kiln-dried” firewood. As the discussion evolved with audience participation, it became clear that certain words can elicit unwanted responses or perceptions: “treated” could be interpreted as similar to “pressure treated lumber,” and kiln-dried could mean almost anything without standards of dry time and temperature to insure pest-free firewood. And at what cost to the producer, distributor and consumer?

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NY DEC) stated that they were following the 71/75 rule for “certified firewood” – that is, 71 degrees Celsius (or 161 F) for 75 minutes of drying time. New York is also looking toward a possible state label for firewood, similar to the successful “Jersey Fresh” marketing program for New Jersey’s agricultural products. Another option presented would be a certification program for firewood producers and distributors. Many of these are in the early stages of discussion, with many challenges yet to be met. USFS representatives stated their concerns regarding the current use or “adaptation” of their shield logo on some firewood packaging.

release of the third parasitoid, Spathius agili (Spath). These different insects live by consuming EAB at different stages in the EAB’s life cycle.

“We recovered 87 gregarious ectoparasitoids (collections of wasp larvae) from one tree at the release site,” says Gould. “Confirmation whether or not these are Spath will be received in a few weeks.”

Construction and hiring to expand the release program in the fall of 2008 is starting.
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It is spring. The bugs, buds and leaves are out or coming out. We are encouraging growth for whatever plants, shrubs or trees aren’t growing enough, and trying to keep the insects from eating the rest. Bring on the sprayers.

But first, are you being as environmentally “green” as you can be when spraying? We are getting increased pressure to go green or be green in just about every aspect of business - and life, for that matter - so how does that apply here, to tree care and, specifically, to spraying of pesticides and other controls?

To look at one perspective on the issue, we asked spray equipment manufacturers what they are doing to foster a greener - and safer - environment for, well, the environment, but also for tree care companies, spray technicians and their clients. Following here are the questions we asked and some of their responses.

How are your vehicles or spray equipment set up to handle biorational pesticides?

“That depends on your definition of biorational pesticides, and from my understanding there are many,” says Richard J. Cordero, director of sales at Durand Wayland/John Bean Sprayers. “Our interpretation of biorational pesticides are that they are classified in one of four categories: botanicals, microbial, minerals and synthetics. We can spray all categories. For the upcoming spray season, we are focusing on pump and agitation technology to efficiently and gently agitate and deliver microbial and botanical pesticides.”

“We install aeration in the application tank to keep the compost tea spores alive for overnight storage,” says Tom Duffy, SherrillTree’s spray equipment sales manager. “We use specially controlled jet agitation to protect the compost tea spores from breaking down. SherrillTree has also used insulated spray tanks to better control the temperature of the water when using compost tea.”

“Our company manufactures its own major components in house,” says Tom Wanner, vice president at Minnesota Wanner Company. “So we are very adept at adapting to new trends in spray materials and application techniques. Many of our units offer the applicator the ability to custom mix small batches as needed, via a dedicated fresh water system, in conjunction with smaller applicator tanks.”

Green Pro Solutions spray equipment is also designed to handle biorational products, according to Gary Maurer, director of marketing for Green Pro. “As a leader in compost tea application equipment, we can also handle biological applications.”

What innovations have you made or are you planning to make to reduce waste of sprays/pesticides?

“SherrillTree installs stainless steel injector bowls so that all material being installed into the spray tanks can be added “from the ground” and pumped into the system to reduce exposure to the applicator.”

“SherrillTree has introduced a specially designed injection system to take concentrated material and inject this directly into the water stream at the spray application gun,” says Duffy. In every type of spray equipment we install a fully adjustable pressure relief valve to better control pressure for multiple types of application.”

“New, more powerful 12-volt pumping systems have been developed in the last few years,” according to Tom Wanner. “We can now offer 15- to 30-gallon mini systems that can be added to larger equipment that can really be efficient for low quantity sprays, which helps cut down pesticide use and cost.”

Durand Wayland has integrated technologies from its agricultural spraying products that focus on row crops and permanent crops, such as vines, tree fruit and nuts, says Cordero. These include direct injection of liquid pesticides, and spray gun nozzle technology such as integration of air induction nozzles. They are also evaluating the efficacy of electrostatic spraying related to tall tree spraying, along with integration of our SmartSpray technology,” says Cordero.

The gist of Durand Wayland’s...
SmartSpray system is that it uses waterproof ultrasonic sensors linked to an on-board computer and cab-mounted controller to seek and target trees that need spraying. It is all automatic, and intended to reduce chemical waste. SmartSpray reads tree shape and size and activates only the nozzles needed for any given tree.

Green Pro is in its third decade of building spray systems that mix all products, and particularly small batches of products, on an as-needed basis. “Companies report savings from wasted materials as high as 20 percent. That is REAL money!” says Maurer

What innovations have you made or are you planning to make to reduce exposure of application technicians to spray product?

“We build a multi-layered safety system into our larger truck units that protect every aspect of the spray system from operator error and equipment failure,” says Green Pro’s Maurer. “Elimination of split or blown-off hoses can significantly reduce operator chemical exposure. When these safety systems are coupled with our SpillProof spill retention system, both the technician and the environment are protected.”

“In addition,” says Maurer, “our Titan series of spray equipment is fully enclosed. All operations, including adding chemicals to the tanks, are handled from the ground. The potential for slips, falls and spilled chemicals is totally eliminated. It is much safer for both the technician and the company.”

“SherrillTree installs stainless steel injector bowls so that all material being installed into the spray tanks can be added ‘from the ground’ and pumped into the system to reduce exposure to the applicator. They also supply “lightweight soil injection equipment with a simple squeeze valve for better control of application material,” says Duffy.

“Obviously, the greatest reduction in pesticide use comes when a company shifts to IPM practices and stops doing ‘preventive’ applications.”

Gary Maurer

What innovations have you made or are you planning to make to increase targeted use of sprayed pesticides.

“SherrillTree provides better control of pressure at the gun, plus making the spray gun tips interchangeable for controlled application use,” says Duffy.

Durand Wayland is researching the “integration of our Smart Spray Technology used in our permanent crops market with our sprayers and bucket trucks, where we could automatically spray just the canopy of trees,” says Cordero, “moving the spray gun with the bucket across only the canopy surface of the tree at tree height.”

An obstacle to that is that the only sur-
face of tree that could be sprayed is where a bucket truck can move the bucket and can access, he adds.

“Obviously, the greatest reduction in pesticide use comes when a company shifts to IPM practices and stops doing ‘preventive’ applications,” says Maurer. “From an equipment standpoint, Green Pro produces a special line of application tools that limit waste and increase application efficiency.”

What else is new, or is coming down the line, regarding equipment for the spray market? Will we see anything drastically new or different in the next few years?

We’ll see “stiffer EPA and other governmental regulations related to lawn and tree spraying applications, from both the equipment and applicators side,” predicts Durand Wayland’s Cordero.

“We’re always researching ways to improve our spray systems, whether from a safety, efficiency, flexibility or any other conceivable advantage, including profitability,” says Green Pro’s Maurer. “The wide variety of benefits associated with compost tea holds a great deal of promise in its ultimate potential to reduce pesticide and other chemical use. Healthier plants are more capable of protecting themselves from health threats.”

“SherrillTree is building all-aluminum, fully enclosed spray trucks with stainless steel manifolds, fully adjustable high-pressure agitation, water fill from the ground, stainless steel injector bowls and high quality roll-up doors,” says Duffy. Also, skid-style spray rigs with a side wall for company advertising - made from aluminum and custom painted in custom company colors, custom trucks to carry spreaders, and trucks for a roll-off body.

Where do you see areas of potential growth in the year (or two) ahead?

“We’ll be seeing “technology integration from outside industries that focus on drift reduction, increased spray deposition and reduced worker exposure,” adds Cordero.

“We see continued development in the fully enclosed spray trucks market to be used for all types of applications,” says Duffy. “Also, development in the smaller skid-spray market for use in IPM spray applications, and a future in soil injections, both with all organic materials and insect controls.”

“We’re building spray trucks with safety in mind, says Duffy. “We feel the operator should never have to climb up on the truck for mixing materials or adding of water.

“We have also added remote control of the PTO-operated pumps so the operator never has to go back to the cab of the truck to increase the speed or start the pump,” Duffy adds. “All operation of the truck is from the passenger side, keeping the operator out of the road and on coming traffic.”

“The greater growth potential is in the area of compost tea and other microbial applications,” reiterates Maurer.

Tom Wanner says new areas of interest “include GPS mapping and larger flex-fuel work vehicles.”

Wherever the future takes spray application practices, it seems a sure bet that the manufacturers are looking to stay one step ahead in terms of efficiency and compliance as well as safety. As for this year’s bugs, buds and leaves, gentlemen (and ladies) – start your sprayers!

---

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One-handed chain saw use is for the lazy or unskilled

I was trained to always use two hands to operate a chain saw. Every safety manual I have read from chain saw manufacturers, primarily Stihl and Husqvarna, say to use two hands. OSHA says we must abide by safety procedures set forth in these manuals.

One-handed chain saw use was considered a lazy method, or done due to lack of skill. A good climber should always be able to position himself or herself to make the cut with two hands. Since making the commitment to always use two hands with the chain saw, I have never had a situation where one hand would be better, unless I was being lazy!

If it is a matter of production, bid your jobs higher or cut back on catering expenses for management meetings or whatever. Safety must come first. I have never moved too slow on a job because I use two hands on my chain saw – that theory is ridiculous. If safety is becoming too expensive, you’re doing something else wrong.

What I have witnessed is meeting several men through the years missing fingers, toes, ears, disfigured faces, big nasty scars, etc. from either one-handed chain saw use or other forms of recklessness. I know two guys, both of them work in my area, who have cut fingers off their left hands. They did it the only way possible, one-handed chain saw use!

I questioned hard hats for a while, too. I figured most tree climbers like me were so hard-headed, why did we need them? I decided years ago, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Push safety, and production will follow.

Scott Bowers
Born To Climb Tree Service,
Sterling, Virginia

Why are feet in chippers?

Thank you for the chipper safety article in the March (2008, TCI) issue. I was struck by the chipper safety photo showing a line on the chipper deck where the feet should not pass. It is bad enough that hands need to be used near the feed entry; isn’t it time we put our foot down as an industry, and say that feet should never be used to feed anything into the chipper?

Nathaniel Sperry
Sperry Tree Care Co., Eugene, Oregon

Peter Gerstenberger, TICA’s senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards, responds: I think we already put our foot down eight years ago:

ANSI Z133.1-2006, 8.6.11: Hands or other parts of the body shall not be placed into the infeed hopper. Leaning into or pushing material into infeed hoppers with feet is prohibited. ANSI Z133.1-2000, 9.6.8: Hands or other parts of the body shall not be placed into the infeed hopper. Leaning into or pushing material into infeed hoppers with feet is prohibited.

The 1994 revision of the standard did not address feet in the infeed chute.

Use caution with how you use an ascending device

I would like to comment on a photo in the April 2008 edition of your magazine. The article “A Blueprint for Eliminating Ergonomic Injuries” shows, on page 27, a black and white picture of a climber using a Petzl Pantin (ascending) device to enter a tree using a single rope technique.

While the Pantin has proven to be an excellent tool, I couldn’t stress enough the risk of injury if it is used repetitively with only one leg. One of our climbing arborists hurt himself two years ago after discovering the Pantin and loving it so much – he was out of commission for three weeks! His injury was located primarily in the left hip, from using the device on the right leg.

After recovering from the injury, he started to use two Pantins simultaneously on a double rope and climbed like one would climb a ladder. He also simply switched legs regularly using the single rope technique with one Pantin.

Thanks for the great article!

Alby Thoumin
Sperry Tree Care, Eugene, Oregon

Call back...

In the April issue of TCI, on page 64, we mistakenly ran an image depicting an aerial lift operator using a climbing harness as fall protection in the bucket. We asked Jim Pennefeather, vice president of Sales and Marketing for Buckingham Manufacturing Co. Inc., to explain why this is considered an unsafe practice.

The recommended practice is the use of a full-body harness with a shock-absorbing lanyard, or an aerial belt with a 2-foot lanyard. The reasoning is based on studies as to what could happen should someone be subjected to a fall from an elevated position.

If a 300-pound person was subjected to a 6-foot fall onto an aerial belt without a shock absorber, the arresting force could be 2,765 pounds of force to the abdomen. Should the user be rendered unconscious and suspended in a waist belt, they would hang in the “U” position, causing all the blood to rush to the head. Studies indicate there would be physical deterioration to the user in less than two minutes.

But if the same 300-pound person had a full-body harness and used a shock-absorbing lanyard, the arresting force would not exceed 900 pounds of force to the buttocks and leg muscles. Or, if catapulted head first, the force would be applied to the shoulders. The other benefit of the harness over the aerial belt is that the user is now suspended vertically.

There is always the potential for suspension trauma. There are products available that allow the user to build a suspension step to stand in to relieve pressure in the groin area. If the user is conscious and hanging in his or her harness, they should continually move their legs, relieving pressure and allowing blood to flow to the heart and distributing oxygen-filled blood throughout the body.

If the harness is not acceptable to the employer, an alternative is the use of an aerial belt with a 2-foot lanyard. This would be considered a fall restraint system, limiting the ability of the user to fall from the basket. Many people consider the 2-foot lanyard too restricting.

The idea is to find whatever works best for your application and mandate the use of the system. Unfortunately, there are falls from bucket trucks, but when the designated products are used, people have walked away to talk about it.

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The Changing Face of Health Insurance Benefits

By Mary McVicker

Health insurance benefits have been problematic for small business employers and employees for years. There were few options; benefits were either cost prohibitive or not available.

Policies that were promoted as being for small business tended to define small business in unrealistic terms for many businesses, small obviously being relative. There’s no question that the inability to offer health benefits put businesses at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining good employees. To some extent, that’s still the case.

But that’s been changing over the past few years, and owners who decided that offering health insurance benefits was out of the question probably should take another look.

Increasingly insurers, both the major ones and the smaller companies, are offering options for small businesses - real small businesses - making the minimum number of employees more realistic, opening up the option of health insurance benefits to many more businesses. However, this isn’t a matter of calling up the agent and just signing up.

Today’s shopping for health benefits resembles other consumer experiences: too many confusing choices. But there’s an advantage to the increasing number of options.

The process of sorting out and making some decisions about health insurance benefits for your employees shouldn’t be a solitary effort. This is a situation where it makes sense - and is good strategy - to involve employees in the decision making. They have a stake in the decision and should be invested in it. Whatever the health insurance decision, it’s not going to be ideal for everyone. By the same token, however, it should work at some level for everyone - or almost everyone. And several brains sorting out the conundrum of choice is better than one brain grappling with it. Form a committee to sift through the choices, look at costs, and make recommendations.

Sorting out – general

Group health insurance plans are either indemnity plans or managed care plans. The differences generally involve flexibility in choice of providers, out-of-pocket costs for covered services, and how bills are paid. Indemnity plans, the more traditional form of health insurance, used to dominate the health insurance market. These plans are also known as “fee-for-service” (FFS) plans. In general, indemnity plans give you a broader choice of doctors, hospitals and health care providers; you also have more out-of-pocket costs and paperwork.

Managed Care plans come in three basic types: PPO, HMO and POS plans.

HMO

In an HMO, or Health Maintenance Organization, a person’s choices of providers, hospitals, clinics, physicians, etc. are limited to those that are in the HMO. In a large metropolitan area, there may be many health providers available through the HMO; in some areas, the choices may seem very restrictive.

A person is required to select a primary care physician in the HMO. Referrals for care outside the system may or may not be covered; until recently this was very limited but that appears to be changing.

Advantages: HMOs have somewhat lower premiums than other forms of health insurance. There is less paperwork as well. Out-of-pocket costs are lower.

Disadvantages: For some people having fewer choices for medical care is a strong disadvantage. The requirement of selecting a primary care physician in the HMO can be viewed as a disadvantage as well. Convenience may be a factor; most people prefer to have their routine health care located near home or work. The limitations of the HMO may make health care seem much less convenient and available.

PPO

A PPO, or Preferred Provider Organization, is a group system of health care. The group is organized by an insurance company; health care providers, hospitals, clinics, etc. sign contracts with the PPO system agreeing to provide care to the insured members, and also agree to the PPO fee schedule and guidelines. These health care providers are “in the network.” Insured members may seek care outside the system without seeking permission of the insurance organization, but the PPO pays a smaller percentage of the costs, and the deductible may be higher.

Insured members pay a co-payment for medical service from providers within the system, payable at the time they receive the medical care. Typically the insurance pays a percentage of the medical fees charged by the PPO, usually 80 percent, and the remainder is the responsibility of the patient. There is also a yearly deductible before the insurance company will start paying the medical costs.

Advantages: A member of a PPO may seek care with a health provider who is out-
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of-network, though by doing so they incur more out-of-pocket expense. PPO networks also have prescription services that provide prescription drugs at reduced cost. Typically, there is a large network of providers to choose from. A PPO costs less than individual health care and will usually cover more medical services. However, a PPO costs more than an HMO.

POS
A POS, or Point of Service, is also a managed care group health insurance. It has characteristics of both an HMO and a PPO, with more flexibility than an HMO and less than a PPO.

As with an HMO, you select a primary care physician from a list of participating providers. This physician is your “point of service” as all your medical care is directed by that physician. Typically, he or she will refer you to an in-network physician if you need a specialist. Networks usually have a broad base of providers and cover a wide geographic area.

When you need a specialist you can see a provider who is out-of-network, as you can with a PPO plan. But, you will have to do the paperwork and submit claims to the insurance for reimbursement rather than having that done for you.

Advantages and disadvantages: Since you can choose to see an out-of-network provider, a POS gives you more flexibility than an HMO. That decision does cost extra, however; it’s a tradeoff between flexibility and cost.

Health Savings Account (HSA)
A Health Savings Account is an account that’s solely for health expenses; it’s used with an insurance policy that has a high deductible. Because high deductible policies cost less, in theory the money saved by getting such a policy is saved in the HSA, and those funds are used to cover medical fees until the deductible is met. Unused amounts remain in the account and earn tax-free interest. The insurance is used to cover medical costs that exceed the deductible.

Advantages: An HSA has some tax advantages. Up to a point, money that’s deposited into your HSA account is exempt from income tax, and, in some states, exempt from state tax also. Money withdrawn to pay medical expenses is tax free. An HSA is not tied to a specific job, and can be moved if you change jobs. After the age of 65 you can withdraw your money for any reason.

For some people who are blocked from health insurance because of the high premiums, the HSA may offer an alternative. Disadvantages: Until you are 65, any money that isn’t spent on medical needs is added to your gross income for tax purposes and will affect your tax. Also, you are tied to having a high deductible health insurance policy, with a deductible of at least $1,000 for single coverage and $2,000 for family. You are limited in the amount of out-of-pocket expenses as well.

For some people, the newness of the plan and its greater complications are a drawback.

Doing the Research
Increasingly, the major insurance companies are defining small business more realistically and offering plans for those businesses. At least one major company defines small business as two to 50 employees. That said, however, the “overview” of the plan on the Web site runs for pages. Plans may vary by state.

A helpful insurance agent is essential: someone who will patiently explain the options, help eliminate those that don’t or won’t work for your business, and lead you through the remaining considerations. This can be an agent from a major company or an independent agent. You want someone who not only will help you and your committee, but who will help your employees understand the health insurance they’re considering or purchasing. Many insurance companies help with the education process, often making presentations at businesses.

While you don’t want to make a second career of researching and learning about health insurance benefits, at the same time, don’t be hurried into making a decision. Take your time. And it’s worth repeating – involve your employees heavily in the research and recommendation process. Make them part of the decision. Just be certain you end up with health insurance that isn’t just tailored to the needs of your current workforce, or of a few people. Your policy must work for the majority of employees currently employed and those you’re likely to hire in the future.

Health insurance benefits for your business?
Unavailable? Impossible?
Look again. There’s no question that health insurance has expanded and gotten more complicated with its expansion of options and plans. But it’s that very expansion that has opened up the possibilities of health insurance benefits for small businesses – like yours. Look again.

Mary McVicker is a freelance writer living in Oak Park, Illinois.
## Vermeer

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<td>BC1000</td>
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## Asplundh

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TCI Reader Alert

TCI magazine ran a classified ad in the March issue (page 80, Products & Services) with the title “Tired of debt? Tired of bills? Need cash fast?” Two readers have reported being asked to send money in advance for a loan. TCI has been unable to contact the original advertiser and has been alerted to possible credit card fraud with respect to this advertiser. If you have any questions, please contact TCI magazine at 1-800-733-2622.

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City worker dies in chipper accident

An Inglewood, California, city employee who was part of a tree-trimming crew was killed after being pulled into a wood chipper April 9, 2008. The 46-year-old man was part of a tree-trimming crew and somehow got caught while feeding it branches and was dragged into the machine, according to an article in the Los Angeles Times.

One worker was in the tree trimming and the victim was on the ground feeding the branches into the chipper, according to Cal/OSHA, which is investigating the incident. The co-worker apparently did not see the accident but a resident may have.

Inglewood police determined it was an industrial accident and that no crime was involved. The victim, an employee with the city’s Park, Recreation and Community Services Department, had worked for the city for eight years.

Climber hurt by falling limb

A climber was severely injured while removing a tree April 21, 2008 in Atlanta, Georgia, after he was struck by a limb he had just cut. Witnesses said the man was tied into the tree as he cut off a large limb. The limb fell back in his direction and hit him, according to a news item on WSBTV.com.

Responding firefighters were able to lower the man to the ground safely and he was rushed to the hospital. He was expected to survive.

Worker killed handling ropes for take-down

A tree care company worker died April 12, 2008, from injuries sustained while handling ropes during a tree removal earlier in the day at a residence in Yorktown, New York. Manuel J. Villeda, 35, of Mount Kisco, got his hand caught in a rope that was tied to a falling tree. As the tree fell, the rope pulled Villeda headfirst into a nearby standing tree, according to an item on www.LoHud.com.

Villeda was unconscious and bleeding immediately following the accident. He was taken to the Hudson Valley Hospital Center in Cortlandt, where he later died, according to the report.

An OSHA spokesperson said they had not been immediately able to identify the name of the company Villeda had been working for. Villeda was wearing any type of protective headgear, according to police quoted in the article.

Man killed while cutting tree

The body of 70-year-old man was found April 1, 2008, in Prospect, Ohio, pinned under a limb he had apparently been cutting two or three days earlier. Harold “Richard” Gix was found Tuesday, April 1, shortly after his brother reported him missing to the Marion County Sheriff’s Office. Gix was last seen by his live-in girlfriend around 8:30 a.m. the previous Friday, but was not reported missing until approximately Tuesday, according to a report from the Marion Star published on www.CentralOhio.com.

After a short search, police located Gix on his property in a tree line with a large tree limb on top of him and a chain saw next to him. Gix was apparently cutting one part of the tree, which had recently fallen or been blown down, into pieces when it shifted causing the branch to fall on top of him. He had been dead at least a couple of days, according to the report.

It was unclear why Gix’s absence had not been reported sooner.

Landscape worker injured trimming tree

A landscape worker was injured March 25, 2008, in Anderson, South Carolina, when a tree fell on him, according to a WSPA Channel 7 News report. The man became pinned underneath a tree that he was cutting at a manufacturing facility. He was flown to Greenville Memorial Hospital where he was diagnosed with a concussion and luckily, no broken bones.

Utility worker dies felling tree

A public utility worker died March 26, 2008, after an accident while removing trees in Republic, Washington. William “Billy” Knutz, 37, of Malo, Washington, was part of a Ferry County Public Utility District work crew taking down a tree when things went wrong, according to a report in The Chronicle of Omak, Washington.

Knutz was hurt and later died at Ferry County Memorial Hospital.

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Customize your Fleet Vehicles to Maximize Profit

By Don Dale

If you have a particular tree care philosophy, you better have vehicles to match it. That’s Randy Finch’s theory anyway, and this means buying or building customized trucks. And who can argue with him? The idea has worked very nicely for him.

You see, Finch, owner of Finch Tree Surgery in San Gabriel, California, doesn’t like pruning with a bucket truck. He says he can’t get all the way up into those small branches at the top of the big trees he encounters here in Southern California with a bucket. He prefers ladders and climbers who can work a tree throughout its canopy.

“The buckets don’t reach how high I prune,” says Finch, who in 1981 took over the business his father started in the Pasadena area in 1946. “We’re a company that climbs. We’re a rope and saddle company.”

But that poses some problems. First, he has to carry lots of ladders, which are a nuisance. Second, he prunes the whole tree and tries to do several jobs to minimize trips to the disposal site. That means he needs more chip capacity in his trucks. The first factor means that he has to find innovative places to put those ladders, and the second means that he can’t clutter his chipper truck boxes with a lot of tool boxes or racks.

As a matter of fact, almost every vehicle Finch Tree Surgery owns has some kind of modification that makes its use more efficient and safe. That includes chippers, which double as ladder carriers. But the vehicle that is most central to his operations is the chip truck, and he puts a lot of thought into it. In fact, he has gone to an Altec truck box on an International chassis, because the Altec facility in Pomona is close enough for consultation with the manufacturer as well as for prompt delivery.

The first thing he looks at is the basic truck. He wants a chip truck that is large enough to accommodate a few days’ work for a pruning crew, which for him means a 14-foot box six feet high. His father, Fred, started out building the company’s first truck boxes, and so it seemed only natural for the son to have strong ideas for design. He wants the box to run the length of the bed and be uncluttered, so he doesn’t put any tool boxes behind the cab or inside the van. He does add a couple of boxes under the frame in front of the rear wheels to accommodate climbing gear and chain saws, but his crews don’t travel far from home base and so don’t need a lot of storage space.

Finch could buy larger trucks, but he’s also motivated by another factor. Any truck over 26,000 GVW must have a driver with a Class 2 commercial driver’s license in California, so he always buys trucks under that weight rating. It keeps his costs and
paperwork down. He prefers to buy new trucks and keeps them forever (he just got rid of a truck last year that was bought in 1964), so any modifications he makes that cost extra will be expensed for at least 15 to 20 years. And lastly, he orders all of his new trucks with dump beds. Whether a chip hauler or a one-ton flatbed used for larger wood, that truck should be able to dump its load and enable the crew to quickly move on to the next job. That not only speeds up work, it also takes a lot of the potential for back strain and danger out of the day’s work.

Rick Thomsen says Finch is a very smart truck buyer. Thomsen is the manager of Altec Service Group for Southern California in Pomona. He says he could make more money off Finch Tree Surgery if the company purchased new, large trucks every few years and always added a lot of extras, but he’s also happy to provide exactly what each client wants. Altec will make a truck up to 22 feet long and weighing some 33,000 pounds.

“There are a lot of options for in-the-box tool boxes and so on,” Thomsen says, but it’s less expensive to have a clean box and more sensible if you need all that cargo capacity. He says that Randy Finch is very organized, not only in knowing how much each truck will be hauling, but also in ordering a truck body. He points out that a good, efficient truck means a steady revenue stream for a company, and Finch clearly communicates what he needs in order to achieve that end.

Thomsen has a wide range of tree care customers, and probably the most demanding are municipalities, he says. He cites the city of Norwalk, California’s Pedro Herrera as an example of a supervisor who has different aims than Finch, and orders accordingly.

Herrera, maintenance supervisor for greenscapes and trees for Norwalk, has two chipper trucks, and each is very different because it serves a different purpose. One accompanies the city’s lift truck and has an uncluttered box with only a couple of tool boxes mounted below the frame. It hauls a lot of chips. But the other chip truck is a stand-alone unit that has to carry many different kinds of equipment, so it has boxes behind the cab and inside the box for tools such as chain saws and a hydraulic pole saw.

“I had (Altec) design a basket and put it under the wheel well,” Herrera says. That basket holds long tools such as 10-foot pole pruners, which he doesn’t like cluttering up the bed of the truck. The basket makes tools easily accessible while still allowing city trucks to be aesthetically pleasing. Some modifications such as bubble lights and cone racks are necessary for highway work, but Herrera says that for tree-related accessories he takes feedback from his field crews and uses that information to guide his truck designs. It’s very important to listen to the people using the tools and the trucks.

Herrera says he also puts a lot of time and effort into designing other landscape service vehicles. Customizing lowboys, service pickups and even dump trucks – and making everything lockable – gives city crews the ability to maximize efficiency and save time going from one job to another. By carrying many tools, his crews don’t have to return to the shop before they can respond to emergency situations.

“We keep our trucks long enough so we get our value,” Herrera says, aiming for 15 years of usage.

Finch, a former U.S. Naval Academy graduate and submariner with engineering experience, has gone so far on some vehicle designs as to use an AutoCAD LT (computer assisted design software by Autodesk, Inc. “LT” is a scaled down version.) drafting program to come up with precise drawings that express his ideas exactly for body builders. Don’t forget, Finch has modified most of his vehicles in one way or another.

Using his one-ton stake bed truck as an example, Finch points out the kinds of details that make his 30-employee company more efficient. The truck has a buffer rack behind the cab both to protect the rear.
In customizing vehicles, Finch aims to maximize efficiency as well as safety. By mounting a small crane at the end of his one-ton stake bed truck, he does both. The larger image shows an extension of the bed of the truck, and the inset shows the steel plate removed and a vertical part of a small crane at the right-hand side, with the horizontal part of the crane tucked in. That steel crane post folds down and is hidden in the bed extension when not needed.

windshield and to serve as a ladder rack. He had small openings left on both sides of the rack so that ropes could be easily inserted and used to tie down ladders. Taking a cue from a competitor’s truck, he had a small one-ton collapsible Western Mule crane mounted on the back – not inside the bed where it would take up room, but as an extension to the end of the bed with a skid plate covering it.

"It folds away and doesn’t hinder the other uses of the truck," Finch says of the small electric crane, which is used to lift large pieces of tree trunks or other heavy objects. Thus, the truck becomes very versatile, while at the same time reducing the risk of injury to his crews.

His other one-ton has been converted to a dump body, used primarily to carry tree trimmings from small jobs. "I don’t buy anything without a dump," he says, and he uses a local shop to install dumps on older vehicles if necessary. This truck also has bed racks for carrying ladders. Both one-ton trucks also have under-body boxes for tools. He also has a couple of ¾-ton pick-ups with service bodies that are used to carry soil or other bulky job debris, and of course, they are both fitted to carry ladders and will dump.

Finch points out that he also has a "miniature" chip truck, a one-ton used for tight chip jobs. It is configured just like a regular chip truck, but is small enough to navigate the circuitous driveways of the San Gabriel Mountain foothills where
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many of his clients live. He originally designed it with a removable top so that it could get under low overhangs and serve to haul firewood, but now that it is dedicated to chip removal the top stays on.

To go back and address one of Finch's basic problems – ladder conveyance – one only has to look around the company's yard. He uses a number of means of hauling ladders, sometimes 30-foot extension ladders. They go on racks above beds on small trucks, they go on behind-cab racks on one-tons. But an unusual solution to the problem for years has been to modify wood chippers to carry ladders.

"I never liked the look of chip bodies bristling with external attachment points. So we defaulted to the chipper to carry the ladder, sometimes with custom racks, if we were not sending a pickup body to the job."

Using the existing front wheel-jack mount on a Vermeer chipper, for example, Finch creates a front brace. He then mounts a rear brace, and voila, he has supports for a long ladder. He has also carried ladders on the chipper's discharge neck but is moving away from that where possible. Chippers also serve to carry long-handled tools after being fitted with a section of six-inch PVC pipe.

As for chipper trucks, Finch has broken his rule for carrying ladders inside them. But he's doing it in a way that will not decrease capacity. He and his son, Michael, a consultant for the company, designed a means of suspending a ladder from the ceiling of the box. It will consist of two racks, front and back. The ladder will slide into the front rack and then be clamped firmly up by an arm on the rear bracket, which will hold it in place and keep it above the load of chips. If it works on one truck, he will mount ceiling brackets in his other chip trucks as well.

Because much of his vehicle design is undertaken to offset high costs in an era when prices for workers' compensation insurance and diesel fuel decrease his profitability, Finch also pays a lot of attention to truck performance. His next chip truck purchase will probably be a crew cab, because it is cheaper to send one truck to do a big job and carry more than the typical three-man crew. It will also probably be an International truck, because he likes the gearing, power and dependability of his last one.

Finch will modify anything in the company to provide more efficiency. Years ago he bought a small six horsepower Power Wagon cart that he uses for jobs where there is limited vehicle access, and he built a dump cradle for it to improve effectiveness. To show the lengths he will go to produce effective equipment, he used AutoCAD to design a special computer desk to fit into his office and took woodworking training so he could build it himself.

Whether hiring somebody else to make vehicle modifications or doing them himself – he maintains a mechanic and a shop with basic tools such as a MIG (metal inert gas) welder and cutting torch – Finch believes strongly in designing and building vehicles that make tree work more efficient and safe. Then he cares for those vehicles and keeps them for a long time. And it all originated from his core philosophy of caring for trees in the best way possible.
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The results are in and the data couldn’t be clearer. For workers, commercial tree care firms are safer than landscape companies that do tree work and safer than municipal tree crews. Among commercial tree care firms, it is safer to work for a TCIA member than a non-member. Among TCIA members, the safest companies in the entire industry were accredited and/or enrolled in the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program.

With more than 15 million hours of data to work from, the results are unmistakable: TCIA member companies involved in the association’s credentialing and certification programs have lower rates of recordable accidents and a lower number of lost workday accidents.

And the differences are staggering: Accredited companies and accredited companies involved with the CTSP program are more than 10 times less likely to experience a lost workday incident than their non-accredited counterparts. Safety is an investment that pays off – for the employee and the company!

**Summary**

Analysis of the data from TCIA’s Accident Survey for 2006 and 2007 shows strong correlations between companies that are safer and those that enjoy TCIA membership and participate in Accreditation and CTSP. And the number of incidents dropped between 2006 and 2007.

**Our Methodology**

The data was compiled from three survey sources: a “cover-wrap” survey with TCI magazine, with completed surveys either mailed or faxed back; a fax-in survey from TCIA members; and a “Zoomerang” electronic survey, also to members.

TCIA’s accident survey focused on tree care operations among TCI magazine readers and TCIA members. More than 15.5 million hours worked reported by over 1,000 organizations were analyzed in the most recent year of this survey. Two widely used “lagging indicator” accident statistics were measured:

1. **Incident Rate (IR, or Recordable Case Rate)** is the number of recordable accidents per 100 workers in a year. A recordable accident is defined as one that requires medical attention beyond treatment in the field.

2. **Lost Workday Illness & Injury Rate (LWDII)** is the number of lost workday accidents per 100 workers in a year. A lost-time accident is defined as one that causes the injured worker to miss time from his/her ordinary duties beyond the initial date of injury.

**Risk comparison: Tree care companies vs. others**

Tree care firms experience fewer recordable accidents than landscape firms or municipal crews engaged in tree care. Furthermore, tree companies appear to have made the greatest gains in worker safety as evidenced by 2007
lost workday illness/injury rates. It appears that there is a relationship between being a TCIA member and being safer. TCIA members achieved the greatest reduction in recordable and lost-time accidents of any group measured.

Comparison of Accredited and CTSP Companies

Among TCIA members reporting, significant differences were found between those companies that were accredited (on or before June 1, 2007 for reporting purposes), those that had employees enrolled in the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program and those that were not involved in either program.

Here are some comparisons:

- Member companies tend to be much larger and work their crews more than non-members. Implementing safety measures and assuring safe behaviors on the job is much more challenging in a larger organization, and conventional wisdom is that increased hours lead to accidents. Nevertheless, members experienced a 28 percent reduction in recordable accidents from 2006 to 2007, whereas non-members saw an increase in accident frequency of almost 11 percent. Lost workday illness and injury rates for the two groups were comparable.

- Accredited companies as well as accredited companies involved with CTSP are over 10 times less likely to experience a lost workday incident than their non-accredited counterparts (Table 3). Companies involved in both Accreditation and CTSP have the lowest lost workday incidence rate of all, suggesting that they have greater proficiency not only in preventing the severest of accidents, but also in managing accident cases after the fact.

Conclusion

The data is clear: becoming accredited and involving employees in the CTSP program pays off in fewer accidents, injuries and lost work days.

### Table 3: Lost Workday Illness & Injury Rates in Member Companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Companies</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
<th>CTSP Member</th>
<th>Accredited CTSP</th>
<th>Non-Accredited</th>
<th>Non-Accredited CTSP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Example: If you buy $2,000 in products from Midwest’s Web site, your company will receive a credit from Midwest Arborist Supplies that will reduce your next year’s membership dues by $50. Your credits will accumulate throughout the 12 months of membership and when you receive your dues invoice at the end of this period, you can subtract the credits from your dues. This excellent members-only program helps reduce your company’s dues and helps offset some of the costs involved with keeping this industry safe.

Requirements: You must be a confirmed TCIA member, and you must order supplies online at www.treecaresupplies.com/tcia_discounts.shtml. To begin taking advantage of this member benefit, visit Midwest Arborist Supplies today.

To learn more about how your company can benefit from these and other TCIA affinity programs, please call 1-800-733-2622.
Announcing the answer to your aerial rescue training challenges

At last, an aerial rescue training program that goes beyond electrical hazards!

Finally, an aerial rescue training program that includes what the industry has learned during the past 20 years!

TCIA's newest training product for aerial rescue protects your employees while also meeting the aerial rescue training requirement created by OSHA. An aerial emergency could develop any time one of your crews is aloft. Co-workers on the ground need training to decide if performing an aerial rescue is possible. The most common reason for double fatalities in our industry is failed rescue attempts.

TCIA's new DVD and workbook training program – in combination with on-the-job training and practice – is designed to give crews the knowledge to evaluate an emergency situation and possible rescue an injured tree worker.

The manual covers an introduction to the industry and aerial rescue concepts, followed by:
- sequences of events that may lead to an aerial emergency
- regulatory requirements and safety standards
- tree care industry aerial rescue precautions
- aerial rescue emergency preparedness
- calling 911 and related issues
- techniques for aerial rescue preparedness in tree care
- tree care industry aerial rescue techniques
- practicing aerial rescues
- the industry's aerial rescue protocol
- implementing the protocol in various emergency scenarios
- working with EMS in real world situations
- introduction to EMS concepts and constraints
- communicating with your local EMS before critical events occur
- working with local EMS in emergency situations
- aerial rescue flowchart
- recommended first aid kit contents

The DVD covers most of the items in the workbook, plus case studies and aerial rescue scenarios. The DVD also demonstrates how to apply the ANSI Z133.1 Aerial Rescue protocol when practicing an aerial rescue.

This new program is part of the Advanced Series of TCIA's Tree Care Academy. Open to all employees, it is recommended that enrollees already hold a Ground Operations, Tree Climber and/or Aerial Lift Specialist certificate.

Keep your workers motivated, trained – and safe – by giving them an industry credential to strive for. Help employees feel they are part of a progressive company in an important industry with a career path. This program will also help you, the employer, verify that you have given safety training according to OSHA standards.

Don't wait to add this level of protection to your company. To order, call 1-800-733-2622, or go online at tcia.org.

New ANSI standard for lightning protection available

The new ANSI standard A 300 Part 4 - lightning protection is now available, and TCIA is offering one free copy to TCIA members as the member giveaway of the month for May.

Newly revised and approved, ANSI A 300 standards present performance standards for the care and maintenance of trees, shrubs, and other woody plants. They are intended as guides for federal, state, municipal and private authorities including property owners, property managers, and utilities in the drafting of their maintenance specifications.

These standards apply to any person or entity engaged in the business, trade, or performance of repairing, maintaining, or preserving trees, shrubs, or other woody plants.

Part 4 provides standards for developing specifications for tree lightning protection system installation. Lightning protection systems for trees shall be implemented by an arborist familiar with the practices and hazards of lightning protection systems for trees and the equipment used in such operations.

To obtain your free copy (members only), or for ordering additional copies, call 1-800-733-2622 or visit www.tcia.org.
The Tree Care Industry Association recognizes our 2008 Partners Advancing Commercial Tree Care. Their strategic partnership with TCIA supports our journey to Transform the Industry.

Helping to build a stronger marketplace can have significant benefits for your company. To learn about the many branding and marketing opportunities available, contact Deborah Johnson, Director of Development; johnson@tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622.
“Stihl” no moss growing on this Rolling Stone

Master gardener P. Allen Smith and Chuck Leavell, conservationist and keyboardist for such legendary bands as the Allman Brothers and the Rolling Stones, recently gave schoolchildren a few lessons in conservation and stewardship at an event organized by Stihl Inc. for the filming of a television series at Smith’s Garden Home Retreat near Little Rock, Ark.

In addition to keyboarding, Leavell is a noted conservationist and runs a Georgia tree farm.

More than 70 local schoolchildren spent the day gardening with Smith and were treated to an outdoor piano concert by Leavell, as well as a reading of his award-winning children’s book, The Tree Farmer, in which a grandfather teaches his grandson how to responsibly care for the land.

“There’s no better way for children to learn about the earth than to be outside, working with it,” said Leavell. “We hopefully gave them a sense of what they can personally do to make it a better place.”

Stihl, a sponsor of Smith’s endeavors and the official handheld outdoor power equipment for both his television shows, has worked with Leavell on conservation issues for more than 10 years and was instrumental in bringing the two men together.

“Allen and Chuck both believe strongly in educating children on how to care for the earth responsibly,” said Ken Waldron, national marketing manager for Stihl Inc.

Stihl has a history of working with groups such as the National Future Farmers of America, the American Tree Farm System, the Tree Research and Education Endowment (TREE Fund) and others to educate and promote socially responsible environmental stewardship.


Leavell has written two other books, Forever Green: The History and Hope of the American Forest, and Between Rock and a Home Place. He currently serves on the board of the American Forest Foundation, the National Arbor Day Foundation, and the Georgia Conservancy and many other conservation organizations have recognized him for his work.

Rare American chestnut discovered in Ohio marsh

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources revealed in March that a full-size American chestnut tree still stands in a marsh near Lake Erie, but state officials won’t give its exact location. State officials have apparently known about the existence of the tree for seven years, but kept that information a secret until now.

American chestnuts that grew up to 120 feet tall once accounted for about 25 percent of the forests in the eastern half of North America, until a fungus wiped out all but a few. “They are often referred to as the redwood of the East because of their tremendous size,” said Gary Obermiller, a regional manager for the Ohio’s Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, in an Akron Beacon Journal article on Ohio.com.

The fungus was first detected in 1904 in trees in New York City, and by 1950 some 3.5 billion trees - about 90 percent of the species – were dead, according to the report. This tree, Ohio’s largest existing remaining chestnut tree, is in Sheldon Marsh, a state nature preserve between Toledo and Cleveland. The tree stands 89 feet tall and has a 5-foot circumference. The American Chestnut Foundation has been offered samples of the tree to see if it is resistant to the chestnut blight.

Pest alert: Sirex woodwasps found in Michigan

In February, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of two female sirex woodwasps in Sanilac County, Michigan.

During the 2007 survey season, the U.S. Forest Service cooperated with Michigan Technological University (MTU) to establish sirex trap tree sites in 42 counties (81 total sites) in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and three counties (six sites) in Upper Michigan. The USFS and MTU also cooperated to deploy baited Lindgren traps at 24 sites in the remaining counties of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Collections from the traps were sent to Michigan State University for preliminary identification. These two positive traps were a part of that survey effort.

The sirex survey area in Michigan is part of a multi-state detection and delimiting survey that has been ongoing for several years in high-risk areas throughout the United States. To date, cooperative state and federal survey efforts have detected the insect in six Pennsylvania counties, two Michigan counties, 29 New York counties, and one Vermont county.

Sirex is an exotic species of wood-boring wasp capable of causing significant mortality in healthy species of pine trees. In other countries affected by sirex woodwasp, biological and cultural control programs have been developed to mitigate the impact of this forest pest. The USDA’s Plant Protection and Quarantine’s Center for Plant Health, Science, and Technology is presently assessing the feasibility of implementing a biological control program in the United States. APHIS is currently considering its regulatory options.

Swedish spruce may be world’s oldest living tree

Scientists have found a cluster of spruces in the mountains in western Sweden that, at 8,000 years old, may be the world’s oldest
loosestrife infestation

Beetles help reduce purple according to the report.

spruces had survived by pushing out another-
become at most about 600 years old, the
years old. Although a single tree trunk can

welsh basin bristlecone pine, is often cited as the
world's oldest living tree at 4,500 to 5,000
years. The Norway spruces were

Over the past decade, beetles have

living trees. The Norway spruces were
found high on a mountain side where they
were safe from logging, though exposed to
the harsh weather conditions in the moun-
tains between Norway and Sweden,
according to a Reuters report.

California's "M ethusealah" tree, a great
basin bristlecone pine, is often cited as the
world's oldest living tree at 4,500 to 5,000
years old. Although a single tree trunk can
become at most about 600 years old, the
spruces had survived by pushing out anoth-
er trunk as soon as the old one died,
according to the report.

Beetles help reduce purple loosestrife infestation

Over the past decade, beetles have
taken a major bite out of purple loose-
strife, one of the world's most aggressive
weeds, according to an April report from
the Weed Science Society of America.

Feasted on "the most noxious weeds"
list in 33 states, purple loosestrife
(Lythrum salicaria) is especially a prob-
lem in the Midwest where it clogs
wetlands and waterways.

In the early 1990s, researchers in
Minnesota were among the first to try a
biological-based approach for beating
back the weed.

They released two types of loosestrife beetles (Galerucella calmaniensis and
Galerucella pusilla) that love to munch
on purple loosestrife foliage. Just two
years later, a significant reduction was
noticed, and by five years researchers
were seeing a dramatic reduction in
loosestrife stands.

The successful trial helped pave the
way for beetles to be released across 13
Midwest and Northeast states. To date,
more than 8 million beetles have been
released in Minnesota alone.

Similarly, Nebraska has released
approximately 500,000 beetles per year
since 1997. Two-thirds reductions have
been seen in just eight years in one
Nebraska test area.

The beetles not only stunt loosestrife,
but also cause a delay in the time of the
invasive weed's flowering by stripping
away its canopy, giving it much less time
to produce seeds and spread. It also
means that less herbicide is needed to
control the weed.
Back in 1982, I happened to luck into a job with Bartlett Tree Expert Company doing reclamation work under the big Ram’s Head electric towers (voltage 765kV) from Rockport to Madison, Indiana, which had just been put in. We were doing the finish work on the right-of-way contract. We were nearing the end of the job, and I was glad because of all the steep hills and mud in Southern Indiana. I lost my boots so many times, often ending up face down in the mud and having to, literally, be pulled out.

But this was a fairly sunny day down in Austin, Indiana. The foreman dropped Kathy and I off with one bag of fertilizer, hand spreader, rake and my new Thermos in a locked area loaded with a couple of hundred black angus cattle on approximately 300 to 400 acres and one big tower left to fertilize, to help the grass to grow under the tower. We had to drive off the main road, go down a big field and down to the bottom of this acreage. The foreman dropped us off and left.

While getting organized, we didn’t notice the cows had completely surrounded us, like a wagon train with an Indian raiding party ready to attack. The cows grabbed the bag of fertilizer, shredded and ate it, and then stomped my new Thermos, and all I had was a hard rake.

I happen to be from a small farm, but Kathy wasn’t! She started yelling and I told her to calm down and listen to what I say to do. I said, “The only way out is to hang onto me and don’t fall.”

I then took the rake and hit the cattle on their behinds, and they separated just enough that we barely squeezed through. Once finally out, we saw them turn and start chasing us. We climbed up the tower about 10 feet and tried to sit on those sharp, steel braces. After about 20 minutes, our rumps could take it no more! Those cows stood there, it seemed like forever.

I told Kathy there was a big culvert pipe we could hide in, but we’d have to run to get there. We ran like crazy, but to no avail; the cows came, too, and followed us into the pipe.

I told her we’d have to run to the top of the hill, a good quarter of a mile, and then maybe we can get to a road and flag someone down to get us back to where we can find the foreman.

I ran faster than Kathy and reached the top first. I am screaming, “Hurry; the cows are after you,” and about that time she jumped a newborn calf hidden in the 4-foot-tall grass. The mother then charged her, with me still screaming run, run! About the time we reached the grass lane, one of our trucks pulled up. I jumped in and the driver was being cute and said, “Going my way?”

I said, “Shut up and move over!” Kathy made it with no time to spare, the cows hot on her trail. She slammed the truck door as the cows were licking the truck.

When the foreman arrived and heard the story, the inspector had to be notified and then the Austin Packing Company had to be told what had happened.

We found out later that the cows hadn’t had any mineral blocks put out for them to lick and, to them, the fertilizer was what they thought they needed and wanted. A farmer that worked on the right-of-way with us said the cows would be just fine.

It seems I always have a way of being put in predicaments that I never know are coming.

Marie B. Hawkins and her husband, Rodney K. Wright, own and operate American Tree Experts, Inc. in Loogootee, Indiana, which has been in business since 1985. Their business is now for sale, so Marie can spend more time breaking horses, parachuting and partaking in some of her other hobbies.
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- SAVED ALL GREAT SPECIMEN TREES TRANSPLANTED BY U.S. Army Engineers. FOR LANDSCAPING, WORLD WAR II.
- TWO WEEKS DIFFERENCE IN HYDROSEEDED GRASS STAND, ALONG FREEWAY BANKS FOR EROSION CONTROL. — Maryland State Highways.
- CLEARY ALL TRANSPLANTED PERFEKTLY IN 17 LARGE HOUSES, before and after one without, IN WHICH ALL LOST. — California
- 1200 TREES WITH 4” CALIBER TRUNKS BARE-ROOTED IN DESERT JUNE. NO LOSS. — Tucson, Arizona, City Parks Department.
- BIGGEST TRANSPORTATION OF LANDSCAPE MATERIALS, CALIFORNIA TO FLORIDA, TO PLANT DISNEY World. NO LOSS.
- 1 GAL. PER 2 ACRES GRAPES. DROP 25% MORE YIELD. SWEETER, LARGER, WHILE NEIGHBORS LOST HALF CROP TO SHATTERING STORMS. — Calif.
- ALL PALM SPRINGS DESERT GOLF BUNGALOWS PERFECT WHILE EACH OTHER CRASHED LOST 16 TO 14 BERT GREENS — California.
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