



Consultations continue with FPM employers

The Council is proceeding with work toward integrating the forest products manufacturing (FPM) sector into the Council.

That's the decision made by the Council's Board of Directors in late April after reviewing results of sector-wide consultations and feedback that demonstrated sufficient interest in the Council becoming the health and safety association for the sector.

Consultations will continue this summer. When significant sector interest has been demonstrated, the Council will provide FPM employers with an endorsement package that includes a draft business plan for the health and safety association.

Broad acceptance of the package by a large majority of FPM employers would lead to the Council applying to WorkSafeBC in the fall to become the sector's health and safety association and certifying partner for a SAFE Companies FPM program.

By year-end, the Board would finalize a 2010 FPM work plan and complete any related organizational decision-making.

Work on the FPM safety development is being funded separately from the Council's ongoing budget for timber harvesting initiatives.

Online for you

Progress to report — Keep an eye out for the annual progress reports of the Council and BC Forest Safety Ombudsman Roger Harris, to be posted soon at www.bcforestsafe.org.

Industry news — A free email news digest of forestry issues, including safety, is available from Tree Frog Creative Communications. Check it out at www.treefrogcreative.ca/Daily_Forestry_News/Daily_Forestry_News.html. Subscribe at www.treefrogcreative.ca/join.html.

Our goal: programs that are user-friendly

During the two months since joining the Council, I have had the opportunity to listen extensively to industry people, either individually or at meetings.



The key question has been, "Are all of the efforts being made making a difference?" The good news is that we are beginning to see a reduction in the number of injury claims — even when adjusted for the lower level of harvesting. The improvement is beginning to show with only half of the over 4,000 companies registered for SAFE Companies having achieved SAFE Company certification.

I also heard a lot of support for the objectives of the Council, and a great deal of hope that it can make a difference. But, and it is a big "but," we are at a crossroads. People are concerned the Council's work is becoming bureaucratic and costly in the current difficult industry environment. They want the Council's approach to achieve practical results in reducing injuries with the least amount of paperwork and cost.

It's positive to see and hear that the initial work on the SAFE certification system has raised awareness and is contributing to an injury reduction trend. We now need to improve the system, to make it more user-friendly, with even stronger ties to visibly improving safety and business performance.

REYNOLD HERT, CEO

Arcand takes a new road

Forestry TruckSafe Director MaryAnne Arcand is leaving the Council staff this summer to join the Central Interior Logging Association as co-executive director responsible for membership and services.

MaryAnne will start her new job July 15.

With the Council since 2005, she launched initiatives on resource road safety and worker wellness.



Community forest safety a key association role



This feature is part of a series on organizations making up the Council Board. The BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) joined the Council in 2007.

Promoting better community forest safety has been a key role of BCCFA since its formation seven years ago, according to Kevin Davie, the Association's volunteer vice president and manager of the Sunshine Coast Community Forest. "What affects our safety role is that our members cover a broad range of experience and operations," Kevin explained. "Some harvest only 400 cubic metres a year, others 80,000 cubic metres."

The large operations got "up to speed quickly, jumped on board SAFE Companies and ran with it," he said. "But the smaller ones had no experience with tailgate meetings and documentation issues."

Some community forests hired safety consultants, while others developed their own safety programs. "It was a difficult transition for some, but we worked through it; and community forests have improved and maintained their safety procedures and programs," Kevin added.



KEVIN DAVIE, BCCFA VICE PRESIDENT

The Association fosters those efforts and has been "successful in getting out the safety message," he said.

"We're a resource for our all 48 members, and will continue working to make SAFE Companies more practical and effective for smaller community forests."

Important to that role is BCCFA's presence on the Council board, Kevin added, "as we get information to our members and help them find answers to their questions.

"Our members support the Council. They make good use of its safety advocates and other resources and are well aware of safety issues through the Association.

Information on BCCFA and its May 28-31 annual meeting is at www.bccfa.ca.

Wanted: training grounds

Wanted: wooded areas anywhere in B.C. where the Council can train new fallers, faller supervisors and participants in the basic chainsaw program (story below).

"We need to find people whose need to have trees cut down matches our need for training grounds," said Director of Forest Worker Development Steve Mueller.

This is an ongoing requirement, but critical now because of an immediate requirement to finish training five new fallers.

Phone Steve at 1-877-741-1060 or email mueller@bcforestsafe.org.

Chainsaw basics for all

New training for anyone using a chainsaw should be ready to go later this year, according to Director of Forest Worker Development Steve Mueller.

"This will help meet a need identified by a wide range of industry stakeholders, as well as WorkSafeBC and the province's forestry coroner. In recent years, we've seen numerous serious chainsaw injuries and millions of dollars in compensation claims," he said.

The Council's response is the two-day Basic Chainsaw Operator Course, covering essential saw maintenance, correct chain filing and safe cutting techniques. The training emphasizes hands-on work with minimal class time, and each participant will complete a written exam and practical competency assessment.

"We recognize that participants may have different levels of experience and skill, so it's possible that some can move more quickly to the competency assessment after Day One. The course is designed to allow that," explained Steve.

The Council will train the trainers who will offer the course locally and issue certificates to participants that successfully complete the program. A list of recognized trainers should be posted on the Council website late this summer.

The course was adapted from the BC Faller Training Standard with input from members of the Council's Faller Technical Advisory Committee and WorkSafeBC.

Additional training endorsements may be developed for more advanced chainsaw applications such as silviculture, sawmill or landing and out in the field bucking.

