



## LOOKING FORWARD: A PRESIDENTIAL VISION FOR THE TLA

Reflecting on my term as vice-president, I realize the importance of the TLA's advocacy effort on behalf of our members. This advocacy supports the industry as a whole and the many rural communities where our members live and work. I am truly honored to represent the TLA as president and appreciate the support I receive from the TLA board, staff and membership.

As I look forward to my term as president, my goal is to continue on this path and to use the *TLA 2015-2017 Strategic Plan* as my guide. Fostering relationships that promote our vision and advocating for contractor sustainability will, I believe, benefit the industry as a whole. One only needs to look at the recent layoffs and mill disruption in Port Alberni caused by a contractor rate dispute to understand that we are all in this together. One member of the supply chain cannot benefit at the expense of the others because it puts communities at risk.

### So what are the issues we need to keep working on?

Encouragement and support for supply chain development is critical. Healthy, strong and respectful relationships are another key step to the improvement of the industry as a whole. Relationships with First Nations communities continue to be a TLA focus. We include First Nations editorial in each issue of our magazine to highlight and show our support for First Nations forestry partnerships and success stories. We understand that change happens at a grassroots level and we need to educate the industry about the opportunities that are out there.

Building relationships with other associations also helps to create a unified voice when presenting issues to government. The TLA has been working with the ILA and NWLA and together we are meeting, strategizing and presenting a unified voice to government. Government has appreciated this approach because all

contractor associations are represented at each discussion and our message is clear. An improved working relationship with the Coast Forest Products Association (CFPA) has also helped on many files and although we have some differences of opinion on a few items, many of our objectives are similar.

As we look forward to the 2017 provincial election, it is almost certain that log exports will be back in the media. Any business owner will tell you, one of the keys to success is having access to diverse markets and the coastal forest industry is no exception. And while log exports are part of that diversification, this does not mean that logs will not be available to our local mills. Diverse global markets help the industry harvest the full profile of the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC). This will allow us to better manage our forests on a sustainable basis and will actually result in more wood delivered to our local mills.

ers and organizers for another successful convention. The attendance was excellent and the feedback we received from the attendees was very positive. One of the most powerful talks I ever witnessed was given by Wiremu Edmonds from New Zealand at Wednesday's keynote luncheon. The message was clear in his "Stand in the Gap" presentation: Everyone has someone who relies on them and cares about them and so our workers must come home safely to their loved ones every day. This overriding objective is not negotiable in our industry.

I also welcome Mike Richardson of Tsibass Construction to the Executive as Vice President. Mike brings the unique perspectives of having been on both sides of the fence as logger and contract manager. Such insights will be valuable as we address the advocacy issues I identified above.

Finally, I would personally like to thank Don Banasky for his strong

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At the core of our association is always a desire to advocate for contractor sustainability for our members. To be able to harvest and haul logs; make enough to re-invest in equipment, safety and infrastructure; to be able to support local communities and, in the end, have a business that can attract new employees is at the heart of a successful coastal forest industry. Given the wealth that is evident in the public forests that we all make our living from, it seems this goal makes sense for everyone.

During my ten years on the TLA Board, I've learned that for every question we ask, three more are asked of us. Advocacy is always a learning process. That said, I believe communicating, building trust, and aligning our goals will be key for the success of the TLA, the forest industry and BC as a whole.

I sincerely thank the TLA staff, speak-

leadership and professionalism while leading the TLA over the past two years. He has worked hard for the membership and has represented us well with government, other associations and industry stakeholders. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to watch and learn from him while I was Vice President and appreciate that he will remain an integral part of the TLA Executive in his new role as the Immediate Past President.▲

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