

BIG MACHINES AND BIG HEARTS: TELLING FORESTRY'S STORY IN VERNON

By Brenda Martin

The ILA's 58th Annual Conference and Trade Show was a runaway success! The conference theme, "Be the Change for Forest Safety" marked a change in the program. This year the ILA Conference and Trade Show hosted the 2nd Annual Interior Safety Conference which took place on Saturday, May 7th. Combined with the ILA conference events, the indoor trade show and the spectacular outdoor equipment show, it was an event not to be missed!

On Thursday, before the event started, the ILA was pleased to host the Truck Loggers Association (TLA) Board. And later that day the ILA and TLA Directors sat down together to discuss the challenges both groups were facing. Not surprisingly, contractor sustainability

was at the core of the discussion. This is the second year in a row that the TLA has attended the ILA conference and the two associations continue to value their collaborative working relationship.

The conference officially kicked off on Thursday evening with the Meet & Greet event which gave delegates a chance to catch up with people they hadn't seen in a while and do some networking. Once again, the smorgasbord of appetizers and snacks was delicious! This was also the first opportunity to check out the impressive silent auction. Organized by Canadian Women in Timber, the auction had a wide selection of items including the ever-popular John Deere kids' gator and an impressive barbeque.

Friday morning brought the opening

of the indoor and outdoor tradeshow exhibits at Kal Tire Place. Records were broken this year with 50 indoor booths and 115 outdoor exhibit areas. Forestry was looking good in Vernon! "I'm particularly pleased with the response we had from our outdoor equipment exhibitors," said Wayne Lintott, General Manager of the ILA. "I know it takes time and money for these guys to bring the equipment in and set it up. But these equipment shows are part of our history and it's great to see ours thriving again."

The Minister's Luncheon was well attended this year with delegates eager to hear what Minister Thomson had to say to industry. First, Minister Thomson welcomed Eric Foster, MLA for Vernon-Monashee and a great supporter of the





With 50 indoors booths and 115 outdoor exhibit areas, this is the biggest forest industry trade show Vernon has seen in a while!

forest industry. Then he commended the ILA and the TLA for working together. “These joint meetings are a great chance to listen and hear the key current concerns from across the province,” said Thomson. He acknowledged that he heard a strong theme this year—concerns around contractor sustainability and the need for government to take a look at how government can ensure contractor sustainability. “We’re committed to looking at all of this,” said Thomson. “We need to look at it in a comprehensive way with all the components of the industry involved.” This was good news for contractors who have been struggling with sustainability since the economic downturn in 2008.

Minister Thomson went on to highlight other issues the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is addressing including the softwood lumber agreement, mountain pine beetle and the resulting decline in AAC, and a foreboding fire season that had already got an early start. He also highlighted two programs that he thinks contractors looking for work should consider. The first is the Rural Dividend Program which will make \$75 million available—\$25 million over three years—to protect and grow jobs and diversify communities with populations under 25,000. “I think there are opportunities here for logging contractors and I encourage contractors to contact their local governments to see if there are potential programs that could involve them.” The second is the Forest Enhancement Society of BC which is primarily focused around

forest fire mitigation, but will also focus on forest health and renewal. Minister Thomson believes the work generated will provide some opportunities for logging contractors.

Minister Thomson was also pleased to announce that the provincial government would add \$1 million to the Forestry Service Providers Compensation Fund which brings the government’s total contribution to the fund up to \$7 million. New this year, half of the \$1 million will be put into a sub-account for silviculture contractors. “We think this is a very important component because silviculture contractors provide an important service,” said Thomson.

“This is recognition of the important role silviculture plays within the forest sector,” said John Betts, Executive Direc-

tor of the Western Silvicultural Contractors’ Association. “We remain optimistic about the forest sector in BC. Nevertheless, this will provide some business certainty for our members as they contribute to the future forests of BC.”

David Elstone, TLA Executive Director, was also pleased to hear the announcement. “By his actions, we know Minister Thomson understands that timber harvesting and silviculture contractors are the economic backbone of BC’s rural communities and values the jobs they create,” said Elstone. “We look forward to the future where the Fund will have an ongoing replenishment mechanism. However, we sincerely thank Minister Thomson for his efforts.”

Friday night the Western Night Dinner & Dance kicked off at 6:00 pm. The





During his speech, Minister Thomson said he valued the opportunity to meet with both logging associations to hear their shared concerns and he committed to addressing contractor sustainability.

food was delicious and there was heaps of it! Lee Dinwoodie & Band outdid themselves again and there were lots of people up on the dance floor all night long. The silent auction run by the Canadian Women in Timber also closed on Friday night raising \$7,377 of which \$3,697 was donated to the Canadian Women in Timber to support their forestry education program.

Saturday dawned hot and sunny and the trade show ran all day attracting the public and engaging people in conversation about forestry. But while the public were learning about forestry, forest workers were learning about safety at the Interior Safety Conference, also held at Kal Tire Place.

The BC Forest Safety Council has a full review of the Interior Safety Conference available on their website (<https://>

www.bcforestsafes.org/node/2788). But we'll include some of the highlights here.

WorkSafeBC's Mike Tasker gave an interesting and relevant presentation on how good supervisors are made, not born. It's critical to remember there's a special skill set that must be learned to be an effective supervisor and not everyone has the temperament to be a supervisor. Mike also reinforced the idea that supervisors can't be effective sitting in an office. They must be on-the-ground giving feedback—both positive and negative—and controlling outputs with guidance and advice.

Dave Fennell, of David Fennel Safety, gave an excellent talk in the afternoon about risk tolerance. He broke down ten factors that influence risk tolerance and gave a real-life example of how we can influence people and not even be

aware. The human desire to fit in and be liked in group situations sometimes impedes our ability to assess risk and make safe choices.

Finally, Adrian Sunduk, a log truck driver based in the Interior, told the story of how listening to the Anatomy of a Rollover presentation changed his stance on wearing a seatbelt which only months later saved his life!

Overall, the ILA 58th Conference and Trade Show and the Interior Safety Conference were rousing successes. "I'd like to thank Nancy Hesketh for all her hard work in planning this event, the ILA board for their support and the BC Forest Safety Council for partnering with us this year," said Lintott. "And I'd like to thank everyone who attended and helped make our 58th conference and trade show such a success!"▲



The ILA equipment show was a family affair and a chance to talk about forestry with the next generation.

