



EQUIPMENT AND ADVOCACY: SUCCESS AT THE ILA CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who made the ILA's 58th Annual Conference and Trade Show such a success. Without your support, we could not have done it!

This year, the conference theme was "Be the Change for Forest Safety" and we hosted BC Forest Safety Council's 2nd Annual Interior Safety Conference on Saturday, May 7th. This allowed us to put safety front and centre at our conference and offer ILA members a well-developed program on a topic close to everyone's heart.

Our trade show was the biggest success we've had in recent years. We had 50 indoor booths and 115 outdoor exhibit areas. I know it takes time and money for these equipment dealers to bring the machines in and set them up. I appreciate the manufacturers making our event a priority and getting out there. These equipment shows are part of our history and I'm real pleased to see ours thriving again. As you can see from the photos on page 22, the Saturday of the trade show was a family affair with lots of kids coming out to see the forestry equipment.

The ILA board was pleased to host the Truck Loggers Association Board again this year. After the TLA board meeting, the ILA and TLA Directors sat down together to discuss the challenges both groups are facing. There were several overlapping areas of concern. However and not surprisingly, contractor sustainability ended up being the focus of the meeting.

There was a full house at the Minister's Luncheon this year and everyone was eager to hear what Minister Thomson had to say to industry. Minister Thomson started out by thanking 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 contractor sustainability is an issue across the province and that government needs to figure out how it 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." For the contractors in the room who have been struggling

with sustainability since the economic downturn in 2008, this was reassuring! I think it is fair to say that contractor sustainability is worse today than a year ago when we last heard from the Minister on this topic.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Minister Thomson for his announcement 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. For the first time ever, half of the \$1 million will be put into a sub-account for silviculture contractors who are an important part of the forestry contractor base. While we still seek a permanent funding mechanism for the Fund, this action shows that the government appreciates the unique business risks logging contractors face.

Looking forward, it's shaping up to be another hot, dry summer and I want to remind everyone of the two most important fire tools: preparedness and reporting. They can make the difference between a small blaze that is quickly brought under control, and a wildfire emergency. Make sure you're including fire preparedness in your tailgate meetings and daily planning.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone again for helping make our conference and trade show the success it was. Special thanks goes to Nancy Hesketh who works so hard each year to bring it all together and ensure the event runs smoothly. 🌲

Photo: Kent Silbaugh Photography

