

Welcoming B.C.'s first 50 SAFE-certified IOOs

B.C.'s first 50 self-employed forestry operators have earned SAFE-certification within six months of the Council's SAFE Companies program becoming available to individual owner operators (IOOs).

These pioneering IOOs do business across the province in falling, log hauling, forestry consulting and roadbuilding.

"This accomplishment is so very important because B.C.'s forestry sector depends heavily on owner operators," said SAFE Companies Director Krista Bax.

"We're proud of this first IOO group and the other self-employed individuals committed to working through the only certification program of its kind in Canada."

Bax noted that a total of 1,330 IOOs have registered for the program since it was launched in late February. Those certified by year-end become eligible for rebates on their annual WorkSafeBC premiums for 2008.

Information on IOO certification is at www.bcforestsafesafe.org/content-program-safeco/program-safeco-16-independent_splash.htm.



PLEASED AT BC TIMBER SALES EARNING SAFE-CERTIFICATION ARE (FROM LEFT) COUNCIL CEO TANNER ELTON, MINISTER OF FORESTS AND LANDS PAT BELL AND ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER DAVE PETERSON.

BCTS also certified

BC Timber Sales is now certified under the SAFE Companies program.

"Being certified is an important milestone, one that marks an ongoing commitment to creating safe work sites and pursuing safety improvements for clients, customers and staff," said Minister of Forests and Range Pat Bell as BCTS received its certificate.

In addition to earning certification, BCTS enhances forest safety by requiring SAFE-certification for firms bidding on its contracts after December 31.

Forestry will thrive after the downturn

As the Council's co-chairs, we see National Forest Week, September 21-27, as a good time to reflect on our troubled industry.

Whether B.C. forestry merely survives or emerges as a stronger economic force will depend on how well it prepares for the turn-around we know will come.

Central to that is better safety. It's essential to productivity and profitability, and the reason for the industry's substantial investments in addressing forestry workplace hazards.

We've accomplished a lot, and more and more people today look at the business of forestry through a safety lens.

The SAFE Companies program has become the industry standard for hundreds of forestry operations of all sizes — including the most recent to earn certification, the first individual owner operators and BC Timber Sales (stories at left). As well, BCTS will require certification for firms bidding on contracts after December 31.

More important than their eligibility for WorkSafeBC premium rebates, SAFE-certified companies tend to perform better across the board. Their approach to safety is reflected in more efficient operations generally,

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New Council initiative is focusing on fallers

The Council is working on an “enhanced faller initiative” that anticipates future needs and responds to a recent spike in fatalities and serious injuries among manual fallers. The initiative’s key elements are:

Ongoing registration of certified fallers, evaluation of their skills and upgrading them — The Council is reviewing its approaches to faller evaluation and renewal with the Western Fallers Association (WFA) and the recently-formed Falling Contractors of B.C.

Faller supervisor development and training — The Council will consult industry on ways to encourage enrollment in the supervisor bullbucker course and will develop a faller supervisor safety standard based on work begun by Western Forest Products.

Faller recruitment and training — Consideration will be given to the issue of meeting sector requirements for 100 to 200 new fallers every year.

New falling-related standards — The Council will collaborate with industry, WorkSafeBC and others on a training and certification standard for faller-blasters, procedures for blasting danger trees and standards for specialized falling related to activities like retention logging and topping.

Better faller communications — The Council will create a SAFE Faller Advocate position, expand safety information to fallers and assist with a WFA newsletter.

For more information on the initiative, contact CEO Tanner Elton by phoning 1-888-632-0211 or emailing elton@bcforestsafe.org.

Working on truck safety

Forestry TruckSafe Director MaryAnne Arcand is representing the Council on the board of a new province-wide safety organization created by the British Columbia Trucking Association and WorkSafeBC.

Formed this August, the B.C. Trucking Safety Council will evaluate the causes of trucking incidents, develop prevention initiatives and implement a certificate of recognition program.

Forest week art contest

National Forest Week isn’t necessarily seven days ending September 27. It runs to October 10 for children entering an art contest sponsored by the Council, the Truck Loggers Association and the Association of BC Forest Professionals.

Young entrants are encouraged to use their artistic talents to show how they like to spend time in the forest and what it means to them.

Chapters gift certificates will go to the best entries by artists aged 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12 years.

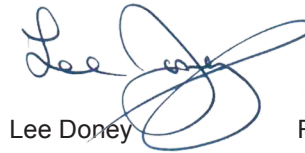
More details and entry forms are available at www.bcforestsafe.org.

More than surviving

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lower staff turnover, less lost time and fewer equipment breakdowns.

These forestry operations can count on more than surviving the current downturn. When it’s over, they will thrive in a revitalized, successful industry — dynamic, diversified and the safest in our history.



Lee Doney



Ron Gorman

Coming attractions

October 23-24 — Work Drug Free Conference of BC Council on Substance Abuse (formerly known as Action North), Prince George; phone 250-649-4000, fax 250-649-4003 or email teresa@workdrugfreebc.com.

October 2 — Forestry TruckSafe Director MaryAnne Arcand speaks at the Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce; phone the chamber for details.

October 16 and 30 — Forest Safety Ombudsman Roger Harris speaks at the Smithers and Houston Chambers of Commerce; phone them for details.

November 1 — One-day conference on human factors driving injuries organized by the Council, other industry groups, USW and WorkSafeBC, Qualicum Beach; contact Chris Warburton, 250-751-8060.

Through December 5 — A series of community and occupational safety summits sponsored by the B.C. Safety Council in Kelowna, Prince George, Victoria and Langley; details at www.safetycouncil.bc.ca/pdf/BCSCSummitConference2008.pdf.

