

BC Forest Safety Council appoints Safety Advocates for SAFE Companies Program

Vancouver, B.C. – (Jan 30, 2007) – The BC Forest Safety Council has assigned its first two safety advocates as part of its SAFE Companies program - an initiative to develop, certify and conduct annual audits on the effectiveness of safety programs in all forestry companies.

The first safety advocate appointees are **John Gooding** of Williams Lake and **Neil Campbell** of Penticton. Both bring extensive forest experience to their new roles. Gooding worked for Lignum Limited out of Williams Lake for 20 years, part of which was spent as a logging supervisor. Along with being a safety advocate, he works with small contractors to develop Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and safety programs. Campbell, a certified faller, is also a Qualified Supervisor Trainer (QST) for fallers and has over 28 years experience in the industry.

“John and Neil are the first of several safety advocates that we will be appointing in the coming months,” says BC Forest Safety Council senior advisor Keith Rush. “Their job is to work with the industry in their area and assist individual companies to achieve SAFE Company certification”.

Rush noted the safety advocates will perform two important roles: working with the forest industry in their area to promote safe practices and attitudes as well as working with small and medium-sized forest harvesting firms, guiding them in the development and implementation of effective safety programs and procedures leading up to their audits.

Safety advocates will be located throughout the province, particularly in those areas where the industry is the most active. “They will add to the safety community the Council is fostering and will be active in identifying safety issues and needs in their regions,” says Rush.

In terms of assistance to companies, the initial focus of the Safety Advocate Program will be with firms of fewer than 20 employees that have applied to the Council to have a safety advocate assigned to them. The advocate will assess current safety programs in place and will provide recommendations to improve the programs.

Participating companies must be registered in the Council's SAFE Companies Program and need to have had one of their employees complete their two-day Small Employer Occupational Health and Safety training course before applying for the services of an advocate.

The advocates, who are on two-year contracts, undergo four days of training on the SAFE Companies program and the audit processes. The BC Forest Safety Council, which is responsible for managing and deploying the advocates, plans to hire up to seven advocates by mid-year to service approximately 1,000 companies throughout the province.

"The role of the Safety Advocate is crucial to improving safety performance and awareness in the forest sector, and to developing a safety culture within the industry," says Rush. "This is all about making our industry a safer place through mentoring, training and continual improvement."

Additionally, the advocates will be available to meet with various regional constituents including local contractor associations, WorkSafeBC representatives, Ministry of Forest senior managers, BC Timber Sales managers, Steelworkers Union representatives and local mayors and senior municipal politicians to discuss the SAFE Companies program and certification process.

The BC Forest Safety Council is a not-for-profit society dedicated to promoting forest health and safety. The Council was founded and is supported by all major forestry organizations in B.C. and works with forestry employers, workers, contractors and the provincial government and agencies to implement changes necessary to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries in the forest sector.

For more information:

www.bcforestsafe.org

Karen Zukas
BC Forest Safety Council
Phone: (604) 696-3959
E-mail: zukas@bcforestsafe.org

Alyn Edwards
Peak Communicators Ltd
Phone: 604-689-5559; Cell: 604-908-7231
Email: aedwards@peakco.com

Note to Editors: Links to photos

[Picture of Neil Campbell, Penticton \(jpg\)](#)
[Picture of John Gooding, Williams Lake \(jpg\)](#)
[Picture of Campbell and Gooding \(jpg\)](#)