

A PRESIDENCY TO REMEMBER: WORKING TO BUILD CONTRACTOR SUSTAINABILITY



My presidency and my time as a TLA director has been an incredible experience. As the TLA celebrates its 75th anniversary, it's clear we're an Association that's still as relevant as our founders intended so many years ago. The TLA was created by logging contractors because their voices were not being heard by government and industry. Today, I am proud to say that we continue to be a strong and unifying voice for BC's forest communities.

Our biggest advocacy effort during my presidency was obtaining government's commitment to take action on the contractor sustainability file. It's clear to many contractors that not all licensees view us as partners. That fact is a shame and it's doing considerable damage to BC's forest industry. However, contractors must remember that while individually we are small players, collectively we create a combined voice larger than even the major licensees. We saw that power in action when the Contractor Sustainability Review was announced by government at the TLA's 74th Annual Convention & Trade Show last January. At the time of writing, the TLA is waiting to hear the final results from the Review and looks forward to working with government and industry to build contractor sustainability throughout our province.

Over the last two years, the TLA developed a new type of associate member—communities. We now have eight communities whose leaders have seen the value of the TLA and the benefit our members provide for their communities. Campbell River, Gibsons, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Powell River, Sayward and Tahsis—we appreciate your support and look forward to welcoming more communities as we grow.

During my presidency, the TLA has continued to work on our strategic goal of building mutually beneficial First Nations partnerships by acknowledging rights and title and engaging First Nations leaders and their communities.

While on the *Truck LoggerBC* editorial board, I encouraged inclusion of First Nations voices in the magazine and we highlighted successful First Nations forestry ventures. More recently, we've shifted the editorial slant to include First Nations perspectives throughout each issue and to ensure our First Nations focused content is relevant to both First Nations people in forestry and those wanting to build relationships with First Nations.

I have also witnessed the strength of a collective voice and I'm proud to say the TLA and ILA have continued to work together on key issues during my presidency. The TLA board meetings held in Vernon to show support for the ILA during its conference have been invaluable. And, at our December board meeting—the last meeting I would ever chair as president—we hosted the ILA executive as our guests.

I'm happy to say that we're doing a better job of telling our good news story as an industry. I've seen a revival of forestry pride both in real life and on social media. The TLA is part of the Forestry Friendly Communities campaign, which tells good news forestry stories through its website and on Facebook.

We also struck a positive note with our "Forestry Feeds My Family" bumper sticker. We've now mailed out over 800 stickers—over and above the 10,000 we inserted in the magazine last fall—to places as far away as Quebec, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Clearly, forestry feeds families across North America and forestry pride is on the rise. This pride needs to continue to grow as we look to recruit our next generation of forestry workers. Also, we must ensure each of us is building a culture of safety within our companies with our own actions and encouraging our employees to put safety first on the ground. Our employees are our biggest asset and their families depend on them to come home safe.

I look forward to celebrating the TLA's 75th anniversary with you at the

Convention later this month. During the first session, Jim Girvan will walk us through 75 years of TLA history. We've also produced a book celebrating our anniversary and honouring our history, which will be available for purchase.

I'd like to thank all those people who supported me during my presidency. First and foremost, to all of my fellow directors—your voice and your commitment are what makes the TLA strong, and your support and friendship were invaluable to me. David Elstone is a devoted executive director who works hard to ensure the TLA's message is heard. Our staff—Stacie, Brenda and Monica—are some of the most dedicated people I have worked with and their commitment helps us meet our strategic goals. The executive—Vice President Mike Richardson and Past President Don Banasky—have provided steady support and good advice over the last two years. The natural progression for our executive is for the vice president to be elected to the role of president. I want to wish Mike Richardson, TLA presidential candidate and partner in Tsibass Construction Ltd., luck in the election at the AGM this month. Mike has provided a strong voice on the executive and would make an excellent TLA president. As every GOPP (grumpy old past president) knows, you would not be able to fulfil your duties as president without strong family support. My mom has always encouraged me to step outside my comfort zone—and this was a huge leap! I thank her for this motivation. And finally, my husband Justin has provided support and encouragement throughout my time on the executive. I couldn't have done it without him.▲

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