

# NEEDLE NEWS

A publication of the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association  
iechristmastrees.org

January 2016

## TREE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP FACT SHEET

### Q: What is the TIP program?

A: The Tree Industry Partnership (TIP) was started in 1995 as a way to work together with state/regional associations to protect and advocate on behalf of the Real Tree industry. Initially, state association members were asked to assess their members \$20, the retail price of one tree at that time.

Since then, TIP contributions have been used to fund a variety of industry programs, including consumer and industry research, holiday safety education, legislative and regulatory efforts, environmental action, the White House Tree presentation and more. While the number of the threats facing the Real Tree industry has increased over the years, the TIP program rate of \$25 per state association member has not increased.

### Q: Does my state participate in TIP? If not, how can we get involved?

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## IECTA Spring Meeting

**Saturday, March 19, 2016**

**The Center at Word of Life  
Community Church**

**6703 North Idaho Road  
Newman Lake, WA**

- ◆ Take I-90 Exit 299 at State Line and go north across the Spokane River.
- ◆ Go 0.4 miles then take a left onto E Wellesley Ave.
- ◆ Go 0.2 miles.
- ◆ Take a right onto Idaho Road.
- ◆ Go about 1.5 miles to The Center next door to the Word of Life Church.

See *Spring Meeting Program* on page 2.

**Check-in: 8:30**

**Program: 9:00**

**\$10.00 per person**

**Just for Fun ...**

**TREE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP FACT SHEET cont.**

**A:** As of 2014, 21 state/regional associations support TIP through their annual contributions of \$25 per member. Inland Empire and Pacific Northwest associations are members.

**Q: What are our obligations as a participating TIP state?**

**A:** Each participating state/regional association is asked to submit \$25 per member and provide NCTA with a current member list annually, to ensure that its members receive all of their TIP benefits. (Reminders are sent to each state association executive at the beginning of each year.) To ensure all listings are accurate, and to give TIP members the opportunity to purchase additional add ons, such as a website link or *Journal* subscription, update forms are mailed to all TIP state members twice a year – in the spring for wholesale listings and in the fall for Choose & Cut/retail listings. Website listing corrections may be made at any time throughout the year by calling 636-449-5070 or sending an email to [info@realchristmastrees.org](mailto:info@realchristmastrees.org).

## Spring Meeting Program

**Saturday, March 19, 2016**

**The Center at Word of Life Church**

8:30 - Sign In and coffee

9:00 - Discussion - Past Lessons Learned

12:00 - Lunch: TBD

1:00 - Business Meeting:  
Reports

**Q: What do we receive in return for our participation in the TIP program?**

**A:** The TIP program helps fund valuable protection and advocacy work that could not be easily accomplished on a local level. TIP programs, such as efforts to improve and maintain fair fire codes, support legislation and regulations conducive to the growth of small business and our industry, combat misinformation about farm-grown Christmas Trees and conduct industry research, benefit ALL Christmas Tree professionals. 🌲

## **Fall Annual Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2015**

The Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association held its annual meeting on September 19, 2015 at the Center of the Word of Life Church beginning at 9:20 A.M. Present were officers and directors: President Mike Yackley, Secretary Alice Rockhill, Treasurer Jim Dietz; Directors, Thomas M. Roberts, Paul Brusvens and absent Dave Tysdale. Committee chair Website manager, Scott Carver, Seedlings chair Tom Leege, and Past President, John Myhre were present with the following IECTA members: Jim and MaryAnn Storms, King Rockhill, Carolyn Leege Annette Brusvens, Lynette Myhre, Maynard Gillespie, and Tom Robert's wife Lynn, Jeff and Jean Kerneen from Bremerton, Jay and Holly Easterwood from Mount Spokane were welcomed. Presenters were Ed Bedell and Kyle McCarty from Vesuvius Marketing Group and Scott Jensen from Country Financial.

The meeting convened with a continental breakfast of sweet rolls, juice and coffee. Members enjoyed a social time of greetings, information exchanges, and "good to see you again" conversations.

President Mike Yackley called the meeting to order at 9:20 A.M and announced that Glenn and Wisten Aldrich were unable to attend, but if anyone wanted to order incense cedar, he or she could do so in advance of their upcoming trip to the Spokane area.

Director Jim Dietz introduced the Visuvius Marketing Group, Ed Bedell and Kyle McCarthy, two full time professionals who had begun Visuvius after hours during the previous four years. They began small and have grown because of "word of mouth" and their effective advertising practices.

The title of their presentation was "Marketing in Today's Environment," a slide show and discussion on using today's digital marketing medias for promoting Christmas trees. They discussed how marketing has changed and is now primarily through cell phones, tablets, and computers; and how today's customer want a positive experience with a connection to the seller via social media, such as Facebook and twitter.

Interesting to IECTA members were explanations about the back end of Facebook where users can see how many hits were counted, the need for links to individual websites, and how paid google ads, called boosts, increase ranking (the order of sites listed on a page in a google search). Because there are 40,000 google search queries per second, it is increasingly important to choose keywords carefully and to keep advertising simple, memorable, timeless, versatile and appropriate. There is still a place for traditional media, but it is not as trackable, focused, or flexible.

**Fall Annual Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2015 cont.**

Ed and Kyle's presentation explained how important it is for Christmas tree sellers to join the digital age for marketing their trees.

After a short break, Scott Carver introduced Scott Jensen from Country Financial. Scott explained the values of his company where customers are considered as shareholders and their liabilities are protected. Founded by farmers in 1925, Country Financial offers more coverage than other commercial agencies, such as animal mortality and harvested crops. He emphasized the importance of reading your insurance policies for what they do not cover as well as what they cover, and that an annual review of your policy with your agent is a must to stay current with your circumstances.

Lunch was a delicious combination of pulled pork with beans and barbecue sauce, and corn pasta. Members and guests enjoyed conversation over the morning's topics and many vowed to get to those issues in the near future.

President Mike Yackley opened the business meeting at 1:30 P.M. with a slight change in the agenda. Website manager Scott Carver updated information on the website because of family obligations later in the afternoon. He suggested IECTA add a current event spot to list activities taking place among the growers, including membership forms and meeting dates, places and times. He also said that keywords, links, and formatting will need to be updated to secure the greatest number of contacts.

King Rockhill moved to accept the Spring meeting minutes as printed. Seconded by John Myhre and with a voice vote, the motion passed. Jim Dietz presented an informal treasurer's report: IECTA has nearly \$10,000 in the bank. New members, Charles and Linda Mautz from Payette and Shelley and Curtis McLamb from Elk River were noted.

Other IECTA business included the reminder that members need to let President Mike Yackley know if they choose not to be listed on the national organization's list of tree growers. Jay Easterwood asked about used equipment. The best source might be Capitol Press newspaper out of Salem, Oregon. Lynette Myhre is retiring as newsletter editor and a volunteer is needed to take her place. All newsletters are sent out digitally as pdf files.

Committee Chair for Seedlings, Tom Leege, reported that there are no cones this year at the Grand fir seed orchard in Sandpoint. IECTA has 4.75 pounds of Grand fir seed remaining, a quantity that may supply seedlings for two more years. Members are asked to contact Tom or Dave Tysdale for seeding requests for 2018 now.

**Fall Annual Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2015 cont.**

Thirty best Blue Alpine or Corkbark seed trees are being developed at the seed orchard. A work party will need to gather in early November or before Thanksgiving to complete the cleanup work that was begun last spring. There will be 50 to 100 usable cut Christmas trees available during the work party. Also, a sign is needed to prevent theft of trees. And finally, there are 50 plus Serbian spruces producing cones; however, the source of these seeds is unknown. IECTA's policy is to raise the "best of the best" in seed production, so sprouting unknown seeds is not a step up toward improving the species.

Sales of seedlings went well this year with a few problems in distribution. Seedlings are now purchased by the bag, but some bags were opened and left without an accurate count and one bag disappeared. Growers report mixed success with seedlings this year. The drought killed many new trees even with irrigation. Again members are reminded to order their trees by the bag for next spring. There are 120 to 160 trees per bag.

Turkish, Nordman, Algerian, and Trojan seedlings from the Leeges and Brusvens will be grown out by Glenn Aldrich and will be ready by 2017. Contact Tom Leege if you are interested.

The spring meeting will be held on March 5, 2016 at the Center of the Word of Life Church. The summer meeting is to be announced and the Annual Meeting in the Fall will be held on September 24, 2016 in the same location as the spring meeting.

Door prizes were awarded as follows:

- Jim Dietz - flowers in a vase donated by Lynette Myhre
- Alice Rockhill - a glitzy purse given to MaryAnn Storms, donated by the Rockhills.
- Jean Kerneen - a basket donated by the Storms
- King Rockhill - a loaf of pumpkin bread donated by the Storms
- Holly Easterwood - kitchen towels donated by the Rockhills
- Mary Ann Storms - socks donated by the Rockhills
- Carolyn Leege - socks donated by the Rockhills
- Paul Brusvens - tulip bulbs donated by the Leeges

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M. by President Mike Yackley

**Fall Annual Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2015 cont.**

Note: The reelection of officers was left off the agenda. Please email your acceptance of the position you now hold to President Mike Yackley and a vote for a unanimous slate. Members please send an email to Mike with a unanimous vote for the present slate so that we have a quorum of votes to re-elect our officers. Thank you.