

Voices From the Crowd: Another Day in the Life of a Timber Faller

By Dennis Nelson

I was having one of those really bad days that we're all prone to, occasionally.

When a Timber Faller is having a bad day, terrible things can happen. Men can be injured or killed on a bad day in the woods.

On this particular day, everything I did went wrong. My chain flew off, my saw kicked back. I had wood chips in my eyes and limbs bashed my shins. Some of my trees broke over stumps, others got hung up in their neighbors and refused to fall until I turned my back.

I was totally frustrated and drained of all confidence when the timber company Scaler showed up. He worked with all the fallers to make sure we were cutting the log lengths that were most marketable at any given time.

My next victim was a tall, straight, beautiful second-growth fir about three-and-a-half feet in diameter. As I was cutting, the Scaler was watching from the opposite side of the tree.

I put too small a face in that tree and it started falling too fast to keep up with the back cut. The face closed too soon. There was a great, ripping, tearing explosion as it "barber chaired," split up thirty feet and fell over to the side where the scaler had been.

My training was to leave the stump at an angle and watch out for flying limbs, so I was safe. My fear was that I had killed the Scaler. To my relief, I saw him humping it out of there as quickly as he could with eyes the size of saucers.

The next morning, my boss arrived with steel in his eyes. He said, "Nelson, you're working with me today!"

I followed him to the edge of the clear cut. I

knew my job was on the line.

He said, "Put that tree between those two stumps."

I did it perfectly.

He ordered me to take that tree and bounce it across the butts of those two logs. I did that, too.

I did everything he asked quickly, efficiently, and accurately.

He tested me several more times in various ways, and then sent me back to my regular strip to continue the work I'd left off the day before.

The next morning, the boss came again. He threw a brand new leather wedge pouch down at my feet and told the whole crew that I'd earned it yesterday.

Almost thirty years have passed, but I still have that wedge pouch. Every time I see it, I'm reminded of one nearly disastrous day and the almost perfect one that followed.

As Budgets Tighten, PCC's Enrollment Keeps Growing

PCC Grew by 5 Percent Winter Term and Has Increased by 30 Percent in Student Enrollment During the Last Two Years

For the 14th straight term, Portland Community College's student population has grown despite a tighter budget future.

During winter term, PCC grew by 5 percent in total headcount to 43,019 students (a gain of 2,030 people) and by 5.2 percent in full-time equivalent students (FTE) a surge of approximately 449 FTE to a total of 9,031 for the term. The enrollment figures reflect the number of students taking classes for that specific term. These numbers cannot be added to other terms' totals to get an overall enrollment number, as many students who are enrolled throughout the year would be counted more than once. FTE is the total number of full- and part-time students added up to calculate one full-time student.

"During the last two years our enrollment has grown by more than 30 percent, which represents more than 7,000 additional full-time equivalent students who are coming to us for education, training and lifelong learning," said District President Preston Pulliams. "I am so appreciative of the amazing work our staff and faculty are doing to support the students."

The official enrollment statistics released during the fourth week of the term comes as the budgeting process in Salem officially begins. This is important to PCC because 42 percent of its general fund budget comes from the state.

Every other year, the governor of Oregon proposes a budget for the coming two years, or biennium. This year, with John Kitzhaber taking over the governorship, and facing a \$3.5 billion shortfall for 2011-13, his proposed budget included a total of \$410 million for Oregon's 17 community colleges. To put that in perspective, the budget for the community colleges was \$500 million just a few years ago. That dropped to \$450 million in the middle of the recession, then down to about \$417 million currently, which means that all community colleges are serving a lot more students with less state funding.

"Even as state funding has declined, we continue to look for new ways to improve our student services and instruction," added Pulliams, who is touring the PCC district to host budget forums with staff, faculty and students during winter term. "The recently launched Grad Plan, which will enable

students and advisors to track movement toward degree completion, and the progress we are making on assessment of student learning, are just two examples of the innovation and continuous improvement that are integral to PCC's culture of service to students."

To help serve the additional students, the PCC Foundation is in its third, and final, year of the Miller Foundation's Scholarship Challenge where the college has an opportunity to make it easier for hundreds of students to reach their educational goals via scholarships. The Foundation has about \$92,000 left to raise before March 31 in order to earn \$320,000 in additional scholarship funding through Miller.

To read more about the Miller Challenge, visit: <http://www.pcc.edu/foundation/events/miller-challenge/>

In the next step, the Legislature's budget-writing Ways & Means Committee, and its various sub-committees, debates the proposed budgets for each state agency. That process takes many months. It also usually hinges on the quarterly revenue forecast, which will be presented by the state economists in May. The final

decision generally is reached around June.

By campus, here is how winter term enrollment has unfolded across the district:

Rock Creek Campus (17705 N.W. Springville Road) Credit students increased by 5.8 percent and total headcount by 8.3 percent.

Cascade Campus (705 N. Killingsworth St.) It grew by 2.4 percent in FTE and 7.2 percent in overall headcount.

Southeast Center (2305 S.E. 82nd and Division) The center's core enrollment increase by 4.5 percent.

Sylvania Campus (12000 S.W. 49th Ave.) It experienced a 3.3-percent increase in total student enrollment and 2.9 percent growth in its FTE.

About Portland Community College:

PCC is the largest post-secondary institution in Oregon, serving approximately 93,800 full- and part-time students. It is also one of the top-20 largest employers in the Portland metro area and the 41st largest community college in the nation in terms of degrees issued. PCC, which is roughly the size of Rhode Island, has three comprehensive campuses, five workforce training and education centers, and 200 community locations in the Portland metropolitan area. The PCC district encompasses a 1,500-square-mile area in northwest Oregon and offers two-year degrees, one-year certificate programs, short-term training, alternative education, pre-college courses and life-long learning.

Tobacco Trends in Columbia County

Cigarette smoking is up slightly across the state, but has declined in Columbia County, the Oregon Health Authority reports.

The "2011 Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws," says that 17.1 percent of adults smoked in Oregon in 2009, up from 15.7 percent in 2008. Smoking rates in Columbia County have decreased from 20 to 17.1 percent of the adult population.

"There is a lot more work to do, but it is nice to see some good news in this report," said Sherrie Ford, Tobacco Prevention and Education Coordinator for the Columbia Health District.

Both sets of statistics are part of an overall downward trend. Smoking has declined steadily since 1996, the first year the state began gathering data as part of the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. The Oregon-wide smoking rate was 23.7 percent in 1996. The number of cigarettes consumed has dropped much faster. Since 1996, per capita cigarette consumption decreased 48 percent.

Although tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable death

in Oregon, tobacco-related deaths are also going down in Oregon. Deaths went down from 93.6 per 100,000 people between 1996 and 2001 to 89.2 per 100,000 between 2002 and 2007, a 4.7 percent drop.

In Columbia County, 7,143 people regularly smoked cigarettes in 2009. The latest report says that 6,318 people regularly smoke cigarettes in the county.

Ford and other public health officials attribute the improvements in part to the Smoke-free Workplace Law that took effect in 2009.

"As smoking becomes less socially acceptable," Ford said, "people are more willing to institute non-smoking or tobacco-free policies." Columbia Community Mental Health adopted a tobacco free property, as well as all the school districts in Columbia County.

The teens of Columbia County exhibit a different trend among tobacco use. In Columbia County 11 percent of 8th Graders smoke (state rate is 9 percent) and 20 percent of 11th graders (state rate is 16 percent). This is an increase by one percent among 8th graders and a one

percent decrease among 11th graders from 2009.

The report also highlights the cost of smoking. Columbia County residents spend \$14 million on medical care for tobacco-related illnesses every year. Statewide, tobacco users spend \$1.2 billion every year. Together with the indirect costs of lost productivity due to premature death, (reported at \$1.1 billion), the report estimates the total annual economic cost to Oregon due to tobacco at \$2.3 billion. The total financial burden to Oregonians of each pack of cigarettes is \$13.27 according to the report.

The Columbia Health Coalition is seeking opportunities to improve healthy behaviors in Columbia County. If you have tobacco or smoke-free property, or would like assistance in creating a policy that works for you, please contact Sherrie Ford at sford@chdpublihealth.com or (503) 397-4651x2021.

The Tobacco Quitline is a free coaching resource to help anyone quit, please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or got to www.quitnow.met/oregon/.

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