



AMTOPP News



January 2020

Confirmation That Landscape Is An Essential Business

From: Amber Conger
Communications Director
Department of Administration
COVID-19 Information

In the Governor's Stay At Home Directive, Section 11. Essential Businesses and Operations for guidance on landscaping businesses. Business building management and maintenance is considered an essential operations.

Essential businesses and operations and those businesses engaged in minimum basic operations must take proactive measures to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements, including where possible:

- Designate six-foot distances. Designating with signage, tape, or by other means six-foot spacing for employees and customers in line to maintain appropriate distance
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing products. Having hand sani-

tizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers

- Separate operating hours for vulnerable populations. Implementing separate operating hours for elderly and vulnerable customers; and
- Online and remote access. Posting online whether a facility is open and how best to reach the facility and continue services by phone or remotely.

To stay up to date on information related to COVID-19 please visit [COVID19.mt.gov](https://www.covid19.mt.gov).

As a reminder, please follow your local County Health Department's recommendations, wash your hands as instructed, and stay home if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms.

In Montana, prevention is treatment.

Conference 2020 Review

By: Lydia Hesper
Director

AMTOPP's 30th Annual Winter Conference at Fairmont Hot Springs was outstanding this year.

Many attendees were able to acquire certifications, or receive an important class in acquiring a certification, and testing opportunities. We were also able to have equipment and demonstrations to assist those wanting to add to their service. Attendance was at an all time high. One hundred eighty-five registered between attendees, speakers, and exhibitors. Thirteen were no shows and one was added at the door for a total of one hundred seventy-three. We are definitely still growing.

There was a change in the schedule this year. Instead of the pre-con-

ference starting on Sunday, it started on Wednesday followed by the general conference continuing on Thursday and Friday. This seemed to work better for most companies and Municipalities to send people to classes during the week instead of the weekend. We have decided to stay with this schedule since it worked so well for so many. Mark your calendars for January 20, 21, and 22 for the 2021 conference.

Continuing with the Irrigation Tract provided last year, we had a Certified Irrigation Technician Class taught by the Irrigation Association. Nick Millward of City Rain Inc. & Irrigation Assoc. taught the

See Conference on page 11



I Won the 50/50



Larry Treleven, Sprague Pest Solutions, Tacoma WA
winner of the \$350 gift certificate from Cabela's



Congratulations Mickie O'Brien from the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation - Winner of the STIHL MSA 220C Battery Powered Saw. donated by Shan Jones, RDO Equipment Missoula (L) and Danny Lamb, STIHL (R)



Board of Directors: Back Row: Dudley Marburger (2020 Vice President); Steve Jonas; Craig Stensby; Chris Galanti; Jessie Carr; Tom Molitor (2020 Secretary/Treasurer); Lydia Hesper; Stephen Pulley (Front) Cooper Elwood-2020 President; Rob Dillon; Jason Stringer (2020 Past President); and Danny Lamb

President's Message



Yep, it's that time of year once again; time to put away the snow shovels and pick up the rakes, springtime has arrived!

Although it seemed to be a mild winter this year (at least tucked away here in the Missoula Valley it was!) I will be

looking forward to the rejuvenation and fresh start that springtime always brings. Not only is it time to begin our spring routine of starting up for the year and beginning another work season, but also to fire up the grill and spend some much needed time enjoying the outdoor spaces that we work so hard to keep pristine.

Your board members have many great things in store for this coming season, including a few changes to our summer field day schedule, our annual day of Renewal and Remembrance, and planning our next conference for the winter of 2021.

Summer Field day has always been a great time for the board and the membership to get together in fellowship for a day of volunteering for others that may need a helping hand. This year, in contrast to years past, we are planning on having a few different field day locations in an attempt to make the event more accessible to our membership. One of my favorite things about Montana is the vast span of ground it covers as well as the diversity of people and landscapes held within it. Unfortunately, this physical expanse can also become a hinderance, especially during the throes of the season when we are stretched for time and trying to make as much hay while the sun shines as possible. We are hoping that by having 2 or 3 smaller field days spread throughout the state we can make a bigger impact on our local communities, as well as make the events as easy to attend for our membership as possible. More details will follow!

Renewal and Remembrance is one of the highlights of any year and one of the great perks of serving on the board of directors. For those of you who may not know, Renewal and Remembrance is an

annual gathering at Arlington National Cemetery where individuals and organizations come together to volunteer for our fallen heroes and honor our nation's service members. Last year we were able to not only help spread fertilizer and maintain the irrigation system on the grounds, but we also were able to assist in the installation of lightning protection in some of the magnificent and iconic oaks around the grounds. As a tree climber in Montana, sometimes I get pigeon-holed into climbing Siberian elms and ponderosa pine and being able to experience the spreading canopy of a red oak or zelkova is a welcome change of pace. Being able to participate in such a worthy event while climbing said trees really is a dream scenario!

This year we also have an added complication of COVID-19, which is becoming more of an issue by the day. While I am certain that we can come together on the local and national scale to curb the spread and scope of this disease, stay tuned for more information on how this will impact our events for this year. As of right now we are going forward with our plans and activities for the year and hoping that we will be able to continue our business as usual, we also may need to make adjustments to the schedule and locations as information becomes available. Thank you in advance for your flexibility.

Of course, it is never too early to begin planning our conference for the next year. I can say with resounding certainty that this conference was my favorite AMTOPP conference yet! We certainly have set the bar high for this coming year, and I have every confidence that we will exceed all expectations and bring the best AMTOPP conference to date!

As always, please feel free to contact myself or any of the board members if you have any questions, concerns, or if there is anything we can do to assist you this spring. Our doors are always open, and we look forward to serving you for this coming year!



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ktierney@arborwear.com or call
808.265.1125

International Society of Arboriculture-Rocky Mountain Chapter

Patrick Plantenberg
RMC-ISA MT Director

Upcoming Montana Events

Tree Board Retreat

On March 19 and 20, Paul Ries was to teach a Tree Board Retreat in Choteau, MT. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Urban and Community Forestry Program, the Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association (MUCFA), and ISA-RMC are sponsors of the event. The event has been postponed until next spring because of the corona virus.

Tree Worker Academy

MUCFA, ISA-RMC, the City of Helena, DNRC, the Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals (AMTOPP), and Vermeer are offering our second Tree Worker Academy to be held in Helena May 6-8. Dave Sexton and three other Ft. Collins, CO Urban Forestry personnel will be the instructors. Attendance will be limited to 20 students. To register go to: <http://mucfa.com/get-involved/treeworker>. The event may be cancelled depending on the status of the corona virus pandemic.

ISA Exam

The City of Kalispell is hosting the ISA written exam on April 10. Registration deadline is March 25. For more information call Fred Bicha 406-314-8598.

Montana Trails, Recreation, and Parks Association Conference

DNRC, MUCFA, and ISA-RMC had sponsored an arborist track for the Montana Trails, Recreation, and Parks Association meeting in Butte on April 19-22. Unfortunately, the conference has been called off because of the corona virus.

Helena VA HealthCare Facility Earth Day Tree Planting

We are looking for volunteers to help plant 22 trees on Earth Day April 22 at the VA Health Care Facility in Helena. Please let me know if you can help.

ISA International Conference

The ISA International Conference is being hosted this year by the ISA-RMC in Albuquerque, NM. I am on the Planning Committee and hope to see you all there August 7-12. For more information see: <https://www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventsCalendar/index?id=9816> and <https://www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventsCalendar/index?id=9713>.

Saluting Branches

Plans are being made for the annual Saluting Branches event September 16 where arborists donate a day of tree work at veterans' facilities. Watch for updates in the AMTOPP Newsletter.

Northern Rockies Tree School

The 2020 Tree School will be held in Sheridan WY October 5-7. For updates, check out the NRTS Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/northernrockiestreeschool> and the new NRTS website at: <https://sites.google.com/wyo.gov/northern-rockies-tree-school>.

The Spokane Conservation District Training Event

There will be a training conference to be held in Coeur d'Alene, ID October 4-8. I will let everyone know what is being offered when more detail is published.

Montana League of Cities and Towns Annual Conference

Montana urban forestry partners are hoping to put together an arborist track at the MLCT annual conference in Kalispell in Fall of 2020.

TRAQ Course and Requalification Course

Vince Urbina may return to Montana to teach the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) courses sometime in the spring of 2021.

Any questions about any of these events please call me.

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You Don't Always Have to Fear When Wasps Are Near

By: Dr. Laurie Kerzicnik
MSU Ext. - Schutter Lab

Most of the wasps we are familiar with are social wasps, such as western yellowjackets, baldfaced hornets, and European paper wasps. Social wasps build large colonies and are predators of other insects, bringing prey back to their young. Most often, they are docile unless you get close to their nest. One exception is the western yellowjacket, which can be a nuisance and a big source of stings later in the summer when scavenging for sweeter foods. The wasps abandon their nests in the fall; only the fertilized queens survive the winter, and they start new nests in the spring.

Many wasps, such as hunting wasps, are solitary, beneficial, and are harmless to humans. They don't build large nests. Although they have a stinger, it is used to paralyze prey to bring back to the nest; human stings are rare and mild, if encountered. After paralyzing the host, the female wasp drags it back to the nest for her developing young to feed upon. Hunting wasps have many different types of habitats, including the canes of roses and raspberries, sandy soil, or burrows. One common wasp in Montana is the black and yellow mud dauber. It builds mud nests under eaves and protected areas, packing its nest cells with paralyzed spiders. Another group of solitary wasps are parasitic wasps. Unlike other solitary wasps, they lay an egg inside of the host, which develops within the host; they do not have nests. Many are significant predators of soft-bodied pest insects. Adult wasps feed on pollen and nectar.

Aside from some pesky and persistent western yellowjackets at the end of the summer, most wasps are likely keeping away some unwanted pests in the yard. To keep western yellowjackets from establishing nests in the yard, traps are available and are most effective when placed outside in early spring before colonies become large. The traps don't attract any of the other common wasps or hornets (except for the common yellowjacket and the German yellowjacket, which are not common in the state).



Figure 1. Western yellowjacket.
Photo by Jim Moore.



Figure 2. Black and yellow mud dauber. Photo by Laurie Kerzicnik.

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Conference Happenings

Patrick Plantenberg Receives Honorary Member Award

A long time member, Patrick Plantenberg who never misses an opportunity to promote AMTOPP and is always ready to lend a hand, received honorary member status during the conference and was awarded a plaque, noting this achievement.

Thank you Pat for all your support over the years.



Patrick Plantenberg (L) Jason Stringer, AMTOPP 2019, 2018 President (R)



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Celebrating 30 Years With AMTOPP

As most of you know AMTOPP reached the 30 year mark with this year's conference. While over the years many have come and gone, there are a few who remain today, still strong and supporting after 30 years.

On Thursday, January 22, six members were recognized for their 30 years of support, with a plaque to thank them for their commitment to AMTOPP.

Nitro-Green of Great Falls - Kevin Ferguson

Nitro-Green of Helena - Clint Culver

TruGreen Bozeman - Eric Belden

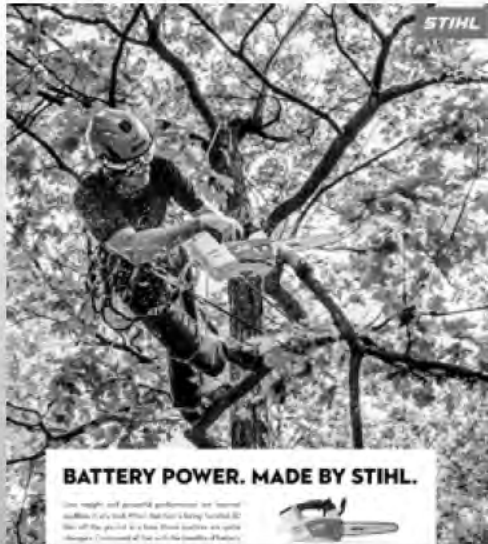
TruGreen Billings - Robert Worden

Warne Chemical & Equipment - Victor Gust

Wilbur-Ellis - Rob Warehime



*Nitro-Green Great Falls
Kevin Ferguson*



*Nitro-Green Helena
Joel Howard accepting the award on behalf of Clint Culver*

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Celebrating 30 Years With AMTOPP



*TruGreen Bozeman
Eric Belden*



*TruGreen Billings
Robert Worden*



*Warne Chemical & Equipment
Victor Gust*



*Wilbur-Ellis - Mike Doty accepting the award
(not present - Rob Warehime)*

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Celebrating 30 Years With AMTOPP

A Look Back At The History Of Amtopp And How It All Got Started:

The lawn care industry is relatively new in Montana. When I first started my business over 25 years ago, in Helena, there weren't very many of us that specialized in just spraying lawns. Arborists, nurseries, landscapers and the like had been established for some time and had their organizations to support their various industries. Most of us in lawn care belonged to the national organization PLCAA or the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.


This has since changed to PLANET of which AMTOPP is an associate member. I met John Bass when I started another Nitro Green in Missoula. John owned Lawn Master. It was at a PLCAA conference in Las Vegas that John and I were attending that the idea of AMTOPP was born. Bob Andrews was a past President of PLCAA and at the time was in charge of directing state chapters such as AMTOPP. He approached John & me about the possibility of

starting an organization for Montana. We all felt like it was a good idea and the timing was right. At the time, there was a lot of political pressure on the entire pesticide industry. Bob set a date of January 27, 1990, that he would come to Montana and help us put on an organizational meeting. Not long after that, John Bass flew to Indianapolis for a two-day training in organizing state associations. My wife Robie and I attended state association meetings in Bismarck ND, and in Boise ID to learn the ropes and to start securing support from vendors. Lesco and Wilbur-Ellis were a couple of companies that put up money directly in support of us in that first year. Our next task was to try to contact all the people who were in the pesticide industry in

Montana. Remember there was no such thing as Google then so we were going to attempt to locate businesses and individuals in all the various phone books of Montana. The Dept. of Ag has always been a good ally to us, so I went to them with our idea. They all agreed it was a good idea and something that was needed in our industry. Janet Kirkland even produced a listing of all the licensed applicators in Montana. This was going to be easy! You can imagine my disappointment when someone mentioned that it was the department's policy not to give out lists of its applicators for fear they would be used for solicitation-even a reason as good as AMTOPP. So I was surprised the next day when Janet Kirkland called me up to tell me to come and get the list. When I arrived she gave me the same list as the day before; this time, with the official Dept of Ag logo, cut off. Amazingly she had found a way to cut thru the red tape. She convinced the Department to adopt a caveat that would allow them to give out lists if the purpose was for education or certification, but until that rule was adopted, the list could not have the Dept. of Ag letterhead.

At our first meeting, we had 25 individuals from a diverse group show up at Jorgensen's Motel & Restaurant, in Helena. Initially, we used the acronym MPTOA, Montana Professional Turf, and Ornamental Association. The first order of business was to find a final acronym and name for the association. After a very lengthy brainstorming session, we came up with the acronym AMTOPP, Association of Montana Turf and Ornamental Professionals. We almost got it right, as you know we have added "and Pest Professionals." Bob Andrews explained to all of us what committees we needed and what we needed to do. John Bass was elected Presi-

See History Page 11



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Arborist Training – Grants – Awards



Conference continued from page 1

all day class on Wednesday during the pre-conference. It was well attended and there was a testing opportunity on Thursday for those who wanted the certification. Because this certification requires CEUs, we plan on continuing to offer this tract. Also on Wednesday, we offered an EHAP class. Unfortunately, Dr. Ball, who was advertised to be teaching, was unable to come due to circumstances outside of our control. Dr. Ball has assured us that he will be there for the 2021 EHAP class and more. We are going to have the First Aid class on a different day so people wanting to get certified can go to both classes. We are hoping to add more to this opportunity so stay tuned for more information. Thank you to Sam Kezar for filling in for Dr. Ball. Wednesday also offered First Aid/CPR for those needing certification and ISA testing.

Thursday marked off the first day of the regular conference with a keynote address from Donna Gaukler with Missoula Parks and Recreation. Donna gave an inspiring talk reminding us all of how important the work we do in the green industry really is. This was followed by workshops including an all day Chipper Certification class. We were thrilled to have Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, from Colorado State University, who gave several talks on insects both harmful

and beneficial for plants, and some solutions for working with them. There was plenty of opportunity for a variety of CEUs for ISA, Montana Department of Ag, and IPM program.

Pete Nieves-Sosa, "The Crane Man", was back to give us a crane demonstration. We received permission from Fairmont to remove a tree using the crane. Among the many aspects of this class, attendees learned how to balance loads using multiple slings, and how pieces come off of the cut. Fortunately the weather was great and we had a good turn-out. This has been an exciting addition to the conference. Jason Stringer with Tree Amigos brought his company's spider lift for people looking into adding this equipment to their companies. Multiple attendees were able to operate the lift. All Access Equipment also had a representative there to answer any questions regarding these lifts.

There were two new Directors voted in on the board, Jessie Carr of NorMont Equipment, Black Eagle, MT and Danny Lamb of International STIHL, Helena, MT. The board of Directors would like to make it easier for members to bring ideas and legislative events to our attention. For Legislative and Ethics committees contact Dudley Marburger, Steve Jonas, Tom Molitor, or Lydia Hesel. For Membership and

Nominating committees contact Jason Stringer, Steve Pulley, or Craig Stensby. For Public Relations and Education committees contact Chris Galanti, Jesse Carr, or Danny Lamb.

The end of the conference revealed the winners of the raffles. Bing Cherry of Yellowstone Environmental Contracting in Miles City, MT won the 50/50 raffle. Ted Parsons from Hulett, WY won the \$50 gift certificate and stay at Fairmont Hot Springs. Joe Parsons from Saratoga, WY won the \$700 Cabela's gift certificate, and Larry Treleven of Sprague Pest Solutions from Tacoma, WA won the \$350 Cabela's gift certificate. The winner of the STIHL MSA 220C battery power saw donated by Intermountain STIHL and RDO Equipment was Mickie O'Brien of the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation.

The AMTOPP Annual Winter Conference was an inspiring week of networking, demonstrations, informative and educational workshops, opportunity for certifications and CEUs, and having a good time with friends. We hope that you all have a very successful 2020 season and see you all next year January 20, 21, and 22 in 2021.

History, continued from page 10

dent, I was elected Vice President. We voted in a slate of directors. Bob Andrews presented and helped us adopt a set of by-laws, and we were off and running. John Bass shared some memories with me. One of the membership application forms in the first newsletter lists AMTOP's annual dues at \$35. The cost to attend the trade show/conference in 1991 was \$70 with additional guests at \$35.

Our timing could not have been better. The next January the legislature was in session, and we faced our first major posting bill challenge. Thank God for Pam Langley! Pam was the Executive Director and lobbyist for MABA (Montana Agri-Business Association) and the Grain Growers. She was the lobbyist for the Aerial Applicators and had some other affiliations that I can't remember as well as several national groups. Not only was Pam familiar with our industry, but she was also truly a master in the halls of the Capital. She knew all the legislators and how best to approach them. For most of us, it was our first time testifying before a committee, and I can tell you we were all scared & intimidated. Pam took us under her wing, helped us write our testimony, taught us how to address the committee, and helped us defeat a very onerous posting bill. Many of you will remember, had this bill become law, we would have had to post every pesticide application 48 hours prior to, and for 72 hours after the application with a fluorescent orange or yellow sign measuring 8.5" X 11" containing a skull & cross bones, the scientific name and common name of the product, name of the applicator, date and time, etc. etc. Not long after that, we successfully defeated a posting ordinance bill in Missoula with the help of PLCAA and RISE. With Pam's help, AMTOPP has successfully defeated several challenges to our industry. Pam's tragic passing leaves a gaping hole, and she will be deeply missed by all.

AMTOPP not only promotes and brings professionalism to our industry; it helps promote us as individuals. I will always treasure the two trips that I got to take to Washington DC for our Day On The Hill representing AMTOPP. For those of you who have not yet had a chance to serve AMTOPP, you are in for a treat, and for those of you who are currently leading us, thank you. Here's to the next 20 years.

This was written in 2010, by Brad Culver, Past President 1991



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Term Expires: 2/2022

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Term Expires: 2/2023

Secretary/Treasurer - Tom Molitor, Big Twig Tree Care; (406) 600-9365; tom@bigtwigtreecare.com;

Term Expires: 2/2024

Past President: Jason Stringer, Tree Amigos; 406-268-8733; jcstringer12365@msm.com;

Term Expires: 2/2021

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Lydia Hesel, Hesel Tree Service; (406) 740-0931; clheser@gmail.com: Term Expires 2/2022

Stephen Pulley; City of Missoula; (406) 214-1316; spulley@bresnan.net: Term Expires 2/2022

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