

# Fee Increase. It's Time.

**BY NOW, YOU'VE HEARD THAT THE ABCFP IS** seeking a revenue increase from our members. I can assure you that a lot of discussion took place as to whether or not we should ask for a revenue increase. Council was committed to asking for an increase in 2008 and then again in 2009 but postponed it until this year because of the economic conditions. Since 2007, we have been realigning what we do and cutting costs. We have also been trying to do more with less. For example, we have started to offer our workshops online to members. In that way, the workshops are more accessible to a large group of our members at a cost that is cheaper than attending workshops in person.

Many of you have said in response to the proposed fee increase—tighten your belt and do more with less. Well, we have been and we've tried to think of everything we can do to get the job done with less. So I realize that this year may be no better than others to ask for an increase, but the profession is at a crossroads and unfortunately either we keep moving forward, or take one giant step back.

If we continue to move forward and lead as a profession, there are major changes we are dealing with including an increase in the focus on professional reliance by the Ministry of Forests and Range. The increased focus of professional reliance means that the ABCFP is

spending more on: our complaints system (to ensure only ABCFP members are practising forestry, that members are practising properly, and to deal with the large number of complaints coming in from the public); ensuring member competency (including practice reviews); and a large increase in the number of guidance papers published.

Other changes that the ABCFP must respond to include the government's move towards managing the land as a whole as opposed to individual resources (the Resource Management Coordination Project) as well as climate change and the move to stand-as-a-whole cruise-based billing. In each of these areas the profession would be worse-off if the ABCFP did not participate in the issue.

As I mentioned, we have spent several years cutting as many costs as possible. Some of the major cuts have included reducing two full-time positions to part time (a 7% workforce reduction); a two-year staff wage freeze and moving to smaller, cheaper office space. Spending has been cut on important but discretionary items such as advertising and recruitment. Other cost-cutting actions include having staff instead of consultants conduct practice reviews (which means fewer can be done each year) as well as reducing training for some of our key

committees. We've also been saving money by using web conference technology instead of meeting face-to-face for all committees including some council meetings.

Members have not approved a fee increase in 17 years. In those 17 years, there have only been three minor inflationary fee increases—\$2.88 in 1997, \$7.10 in 2002 and \$6.00 in 2008.

While the cost cutting and increased revenue streams have helped, the ABCFP still needs an additional \$800,000 a year in order to continue to deliver our mandate. This works out to \$165 per member per year. There are a number of ways we can collect these funds and you will have the opportunity to vote on which method you prefer in August.

If you do support the increase, you can then choose whether the increase should happen in one year or split it over two years. If the fee increase is not supported by a simple majority of members, the ABCFP will implement a special levy of \$165 per member.

I'm sure none of you are happy to hear that a levy is an option. We have been accused lately of not treating members with respect, being heavy handed, authoritarian, undemocratic and out-of-touch. I apologize if the announcement of the levy came across in any of those ways. It certainly was not intended to be unnecessarily harsh. I can assure you



# CEO's Report

By Sharon Glover, MBA

	Annual Fee Increase in One Year	Annual Fee Increase Spread Over Two Years	Special Levy
	The full \$165 fee increase is implemented in fiscal 2011.	The \$165 fee increase will be spread out over two years. The first year (2011) will have an \$85 increase and 2012 will have a further \$80 increase	If the fee increase is not supported by a simple majority of members, the ABCFP council will institute a \$165 special levy for the 2011 fiscal year. Special levies will follow in subsequent years with the amount at the discretion of council.
PRO	Members may have this increase paid for by their employers on an ongoing basis. The increase may be tax deductible for self-employed members and members whose employers don't pay for annual fees. The ABCFP receives the funds it needs to carry out its mandate immediately.	Because the fee increase is spread over two years, members are better able to plan for it. Members may have this increase paid for by their employers on an ongoing basis. The increase may be tax deductible for self-employed members and members whose employers don't pay for annual fees.	The ABCFP receives the funds it needs to carry out its mandate immediately.
CON	Members may find it difficult to absorb a large fee increase in one year.	The ABCFP will continue to have a reduced ability to deliver its mandate until the full increase is realized.	The amount of the levy can vary from year to year making it difficult for members to plan. Special levies may not be paid by an employer and may not be tax deductible, as they are distinct from annual membership dues.

that council does not like the idea any more than you. The problem is that a “no” on a fee increase will seriously impact our ability to carry out our mandate. And as a profession which has a responsibility to be good stewards of the forest—this is not really an option at all.

So as I mentioned earlier, you are truly, as a profession, at a crossroads. Your peers on council who you have voted to lead the profession have made a very difficult and unpopular choice. Some of them have participated in the discussion about fees for years at council while others have joined the conversation more recently.

As the CEO, I can assure you that the staff has been asked many difficult questions

by your council and have been asked to explore many different options. Your council keeps itself well-informed as to what the association is doing and are not afraid to challenge staff conclusions on issues. They represent you well. However, when we discuss revenue opportunities at the ABCFP, we all keep ending up at the same place.

The ballot will ask you to vote in favour of one of the following options:

*I support a fee increase of \$165.*

*I do not support a fee increase and understand that a special levy of \$165 for each member will be assessed.*

If you selected *I support a fee increase of \$165,*

please indicate your preference for a one or two year plan.

*I prefer:*

*\$165 to be applied in the 2011 fiscal year.*

*\$85 to be applied in the 2011 fiscal year and*

*\$80 to be applied in the 2012 fiscal year.*

All members will receive a ballot in early August and will have until mid-September to vote on which option they want. You can find more information on the proposed revenue increase in the special insert in this issue of the magazine and on the website. We welcome your comments and questions. Please contact us at revenue2010@abcfp.ca or 604.687.8027. 🐿️