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Greetings,

This year's American Tree Farm System (ATFS) National Leadership Conference was held in Englewood, Colorado on February 23-25, 2011. A total of thirty-nine states were represented with over 150 participants. The national staff led by Tom Martin, American Forest Foundation (AFF) President and CEO, Bob Simpson, Senior Vice President of ATFS and Liz Sandler, Director of ATFS, made it very clear to attendees that ATFS is strongly looking into the future to provide the necessary tools for leadership to support and better serve Tree Farmers across the nation.

The conference started out with a general session which focused on "Investing in Tree Farm, Investing in Woodland Owners" followed by regional breakouts. Regional breakout sessions gave leaders from within one's own region new ideas on how to better serve tree farmers and lessons learned from activities that didn't work. There were states that for one reason or another had to start from square one to get their tree farm program running again to states that have it all figured out with tree farmers running their state committees (an ideal situation). Next on the agenda were concurrent sessions with such topics as "Building an Effective Grassroots Advocacy Network in your State"; "State Leadership Resources"; "Choreographing an Effective Meeting" and "How to Give an Effective Presentation" just to name a few topics. In addition, we also celebrated 70 years of AFTS which represents the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America.

A new tool that was introduced at this year's conference is called "Telling the American Tree Farm System Story: Brand Strategy". Research was conducted in 2010 which included focus groups and a national network survey. This Brand Strategy was developed in response to what national heard. In turn they are giving national leadership the tools we need to more effectively communicate to landowners, foresters, industry, policy makers, and environmental groups about the importance of family forests and the vital work that we all do as part of the ATFS. We all share the same goal of ensuring a future of sustainable forestry on our nation's family forests. In order to reach these goals, we need to better deliver the ATFS value proposition and reach more family forest owners. This Brand Strategy is one tool to help achieve that goal.

Arnie Friedt, Tree Farm Inspector, NM State Forestry Division, Cimarron District
& excerpts from "Telling the American Tree Farm System Story: Brand Strategy"

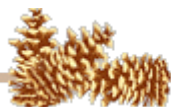




Photo: Joe Stehling, right, and Arnie Friedt second from right, discusses 2011 policy initiatives with American Forest Foundation Staff, Amy Yambor, Operations Manager and Bob Simpson, Senior Vice President of ATFS at the National Leadership Conference in Englewood, Colorado.

From the Chairman: I would like to thank the 30 Tree Farmers who sent me comments on the survey sent out in January. I am collating the responses and will have an article in the next Newsletter on the results and how I plan to address the issues. I encourage those who have not completed the survey to send it to me so I have a better idea of how you think the Tree Farm program should be run. If you have misplaced the survey, contact me and I will send another copy. Additionally, the committee is in need of a secretary. If you would be willing to support your committee, please let me know. We only meet four times a year, so it is not a terrible burden, but is very important.

Don't forget to put the Tree Farm National Convention on your calendar, 09-11 August 2011 (www.treefarmssystem.org).

