

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead (1901–1978)

This quotation is one that has inspired me since the day I read it, and in my position as executive director of ISA, I see it happen nearly every day. The recent response to the call for volunteers by ISA and Society of Municipal Arborists to assist hurricane-devastated communities with tree damage assessments was a tremendous success. Over a period of four months, 34 ISA/SMA volunteers from 16 different states, three Canadian provinces, and Argentina performed tree damage assessments for ten different communities affected by Hurricane Katrina. Each team, consisting of two or three people, spent two weeks of volunteer time surveying damaged trees so that the affected communities could submit damage reports and emergency aid funding requests to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Final numbers have yet to be tabulated, but one community alone contracted more than \$300,000 in tree work, using the information gathered by the volunteers. One of the benefits of using professionals to conduct the surveys is that a greater portion of funding will be used to prune and restore damaged trees, rather than just for tree and debris removal.

A more detailed report on this project and a list of participants are included in the article about the Gulf Coast Tree Assessment program elsewhere in this issue. If you know any of the members who volunteered, please take a moment to call and thank them for their efforts. From the notes I have received, I can tell they had the experience of a lifetime, and I am sure they are willing to share their experiences if asked.

I would specifically like to thank a number of ISA/SMA members who worked behind the scenes to make this project happen.

Thank you to Paul Blumhardt and Bob Benjamin for bringing the idea to the attention of other ISA/SMA members and for seeing it through to completion.

I would also like to thank Melinda Jones for the time she spent with Bob, writing, reviewing, and presenting the proposal to the USDA Forest Service and ISA/SMA boards.

Special thanks go to SMA Executive Director Jerri LaHaie and SMA President Steve Schurtz for recruiting volunteers, and Ed Macie, Dudley Hartel, and the USDA Forest Service staff, who coordinated volunteer activity and found housing, transportation, food, and supplies to keep the arborists comfortable and working efficiently during their visits.

I would also like to thank the team from the Davey Resource Group for their help in procuring the computer hardware needed and for providing software

training to the volunteers.

Another volunteer effort that has recently wrapped up is the revision of the American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations—Safety Requirements (Z133.1-2006). Again, the effort of a small committee made a difference by improving safety in the tree care industry as a whole. Yes, I say “the industry” in a global sense, because many of the work standards that have been developed around the world depend on the Z133 as a model standard.

To keep you up to date, Z133 Committee Chair Dennis Ryan, with help from Steve Chisholm and Brian Kane, has written a series of articles to help you familiarize yourself with the changes in the standard. The June issue of *Arborist News* focused on personal protective equipment and electrical hazards, and in this issue you’ll be updated on safety standards related to crane operations. In October, you’ll find the update on chain saws, rigging, and felling. Printed copies of the standard should be available from ISA in August.

These are just a few examples of the outstanding work being performed every day, by a small number of thoughtful, committed citizens of our industry. ISA has 18 active committees, 38 chapters, four professional affiliations, and three associate organizations, all of which have dedicated volunteers who help make a difference on a global scale. Throughout the year, I plan to highlight the activities of these groups in my column.

ISA reached a milestone this summer and surpassed the 18,000-member number and may by the end of August have 19,000 members worldwide. With a global population of more than 6.5 billion, our numbers appear small; however, I am confident that together we can work for change and make the world a better place, one tree at a time.

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