

PARALLEL LINES

The Newsletter of the Association for Challenge Course Technology, Inc.



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Jim Wall
Board Member

Charlie Williams
Board Member



ABOUT ACCT



The Association for Challenge Course Technology, (ACCT) is a recognized standards developer by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and was responsible for the development of the first Challenge Course Technology standards originally published in 1994. These internationally recognized standards are currently being maintained by ACCT through our accredited ANSI public comment process.

ACCT has served as the leading trade association for the Challenge Course industry, (including Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses, and Climbing Structures) worldwide since its inception. Currently ACCT has 41 accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVM's) and over 2600 Individual and Organizational members globally.

What is a Challenge Course?

Challenge Courses are organized environments relying on structures that are composed of, but not limited to, poles, buildings, trees, beams and cables. They may incorporate, but are not limited to, specialized technology and components such as fall arrest systems, trolleys, pulleys, harnesses and ropes. Operation often includes, but is not limited to, staff managed and participant-directed activity by groups and/or individuals navigating challenges where the perception of risk is an essential component to the overall experience. They are managed by qualified professionals functioning under standards including those developed by the Association for Challenge Course Technology.

Examples of Challenge Course Technology include Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses and Climbing Structures.

ACCT

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Letter from The Board Chair



Six years ago – our association took a survey of members and non-members and with that feedback you helped to provide the Board of Directors created some Goals and Objectives – actually what was created was called a “Strategic Plan”. That plan was shared with you the membership at conferences and symposiums as well as via e-mail and the website.

During these past six years –your committees, task forces, board members and ACCT staff have been working on incorporating this feedback into changes for this association. We have struggled with many things during these years and at times progressed slowly as we depend significantly on our volunteers to still do much of the work of this association.

Four years later, after having finished many of the goals within the original Strategic Plan, surveyed both members and non members again. The voice of our membership has been heard and from that feedback. . . came new goals and new objectives for the association to strive toward.

Not too long ago, we were an association of few – now we are an association of many. We were once an association primarily of builders, inspectors and trainers. And while this was true for many years - it has also not been true . . . for almost as many years.

With the changing faces of our membership . . .and not just the numbers of them we see today, but the variety of work you all do – we are no longer that same association founded back in 1993.

Today our association is proud to serve many trades - and has actively been looking at how to increase the value of membership for all the service providers and interested parties who use “Challenge Course Technology” and choose to call ACCT home.

At the recent conference in Minneapolis we publicly embraced this change to our association with a new logo for our association. This development is a work that has been in progress for a few years now. This work comes before us today the efforts of many in ACCT leadership (both current and past), specifically our Membership Committee, Our PR and Marketing Committee, the Board of Directors and the Staff of ACCT – and our members who have asked for it.

Why a new logo many of you will ask?

While the PR Marketing Committee will explain the design behind the logo I will share why we chose to change logos at this time. The Association for Challenge Course Technology has continuously been evolving to meet the demands of our industry for many years – and for many of those years we have been recognized as a trade association for Professional Vendor Members (PVM’s). Over the years our membership has changed and this perception doesn’t accurately reflect our entire membership or the current vision of your Board of Directors and ACCT staff members.

We are a trade association – this much is still true. We are a trade Association that represents all trades within the Challenge Course Industry and most importantly - all of our membership.

So with our new logo we expand on this concept of serving all membership. You, our Tradesmen and Trades-Women – the

professionals who work with “Challenge Course Technology”. The introduction of our new logo with its multiple strands represents the variety of the trades our association has served and now actively intends to provide more services for: Facilitators; Builders; Challenge Course Managers; Program Providers; Distributors; Trainers; Owners; Equipment Manufacturers; Inspectors; Regulators; to name only a few.

So what does this mean for me? The new logo comes in a variety of options, as we have integrated three different taglines that currently allow for a variety of uses with our association and for our association members.

The first tagline includes The Association for Challenge Course Technology as seen within this newsletter for general ACCT use. The second tagline is a logo for our Accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVM’s). And the third tagline is a logo for Institutional Member use.

In the coming months Institutional Members will receive information about use of the logo and their ability to use it on their internal and external printed and electronic materials. A value you have long been asking us to provide to you and are delighted to now provide it!

With this new logo we at ACCT look forward to continuing to advocate for. . . and providing a place all trades can continue to call home, while continuing to fulfill the original mission that brought our association together – a need for a guideline on acceptable practices or “standards” for Challenge Course Technology and for all the professionals who use that technology in their construction and inspection of structures, the training of staff and practitioners and the art of facilitation with the diverse population our work touches across the globe.

In addition to the new logo, I want to share several of our ongoing initiatives within the association (read more about them in this issue of Parallel Lines):

ANSI - As an ANSI accredited Standards Developer ACCT has ongoing work through the American National Standards Institute for standards development that ensures all facets and trades (stakeholders) in this industry have the opportunity for an equal voice. Our ANSI Consensus Group has been working diligently to respond to the over 300 public comments we received from both members and non members, and soon if not already formal responses will be sent to these commenter’s and we will again engage in a second public comment period for all interested and affected parties to influence and comment on this standard - our industry standard.

Change in Board Structure - We have also seen in the past three years an increased voice for all levels of ACCT Membership which started with an active search for membership on the ACCT board from all trades within board leadership, committees and task forces. While many of us know that we have always had “non vendors” on committees and within the boardroom, we are pleased that we have now elected our third position to the board voted on exclusively by the institutional and general membership. Please know these positions on the board are extremely important for all members to have a voice within the association and in ensuring the work of the association gets done.

* Continues at page 11



ACCT Today

by James Borishade



The conference is complete, and the snow has melted (in Chicago at least), and I have just completed my first year as Executive Director. The year seemed like it went by so quickly. You know what they say, "Time flies when you're having fun!" Throughout this issue of Parallel Lines, you will read about a number of things that are taking place within your association. Allow me to highlight a few of them.

Election of Officers

Each year new board members are elected at the conference. This year Michelle Hepler was reelected to the board. Newly elected members include Todd Domeck, Niels Damman, and Charlie Williams. On the Sunday at the end of each conference, the board has a meeting scheduled to elect the Executive Committee. This year your Executive Committee Members are: Keith Jacobs, Chairman of the Board; Michelle Hepler, Vice Chair; Josh Tod, Treasurer; and Jamie Barrow, Secretary. We thank everyone who stepped up and ran to serve on the Board of Directors. We would also like to thank our outgoing board members Jeff Boeke, Jen Stanchfield, and our outgoing Chair, Erik Marter, for your years of valuable service to the industry and association. Your leadership has brought us this far, and we are grateful for your service!

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome new committee chairs Lindsay Walton, Chair of the Membership Committee; T. Grant Lewis, Chair of the Research Committee; and Adam Bondeson, Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Policy Reviews and Revisions

Several years ago the dynamics of our association membership began to change. While we will always remain true to our roots, we are now an association with a growing population of members from a number of different trades within the challenge course industry. ACCT now proudly serves builders, facilitators, challenge course managers, distributors, trainers, program providers, owners, regulators, equipment manufacturers, inspectors, insurance providers, and many more.

With our growing association, it has become important for us to look at all of our policies and ensure they aligned with our current strategic plan. Your Board of Directors is currently in the process of reviewing and updating (when necessary) the policies and procedures that govern this association.

Website Update

The website upgrade is starting now, and we would like to hear your thoughts. The Membership, PR Marketing and Conference committees are playing key roles in the website update. We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback. Please consider contacting your committee members to share your feedback.

Have Your Voice Heard in ACCT

As ACCT continues to grow not just in membership but in our services to our members, it is imperative that we hear from you. Your feedback is of paramount importance to all of us. To ensure that you are kept informed and given an opportunity to provide feedback, we will be sending out information about board meetings prior to those meetings and encouraging you to contact your respective board members to share your feedback directly with them. Board minutes must be approved

prior to their dissemination and therefore will be posted after the next sequential board meeting. For a list of current board minutes, please visit us on the web at www.acctinfo.org, click on the Leadership link located on the left hand side of the site, and then follow that link to the board page. You may also use the following link to immediately be taken to the board minutes: www.acctinfo.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlebr=92.

2012 Conference Planning

Conference planning for 2012 is already underway. Boston, Massachusetts, is our destination in February 2012. The dates for next year's conference are February 9-12, 2012. More information will be posted on our website and will be sent out to our members as the details unfold. Please be on the lookout for the Call for Presenters Form that will be posted on the website over the summer. This year we had a record number of workshops, and we are looking to continue that trend.

These are just some of the exciting things happening within ACCT today! Our committees are hard at work and continue to be the backbone of this association. Many of our committees have one or more open seats and are currently accepting applications. If you are interested in serving on an ACCT committee, please visit our committee page for a downloadable application. (Go to acctinfo.org, click on Leadership - Committees, and find the link for the application at the bottom of the page. That address is: www.acctinfo.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlebr=1.)

While I only highlighted a few things happening within your association, our committee chairs can speak directly to what is happening within their respective committees. For more information on ACCT Today, I turn you over to our faithful and dedicated volunteers...

Help Wanted !

If you are interested in serving on an ACCT committee, you can find an application in the Leadership section on the committee page of the ACCT website: www.acctinfo.org or email ACCT's main office info@acctinfo.org.

Openings are available for the following committees: PR/Marketing, Membership, Operations/Certification Standards Committee, Ethics Committee and Review Committee.



Conference Recap

by Cynthia Paris

Conference Committee Chair
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A great big "Thank You!" to everyone that managed the blizzard and attended our annual conference in Minneapolis, Feb 2-6th!

With more than 600 attendees, this was our 2nd largest conference, despite the travel challenges! The biggest issue for most was departing from their own cities during this year's storm that closed over a dozen airports. Not much halts this dedicated group however, as quite a few presenters and exhibitors proved. They saw the news and jumped in their cars at the last minute, anticipating airport closure. Driving as much as 20hrs - they still arrived cheerful and ready to go! "Oh that's all in a day's work for us" said one exhibitor. We appreciated your tenacity! Fortunately, Minneapolis is well-organized for snowy weather. Once people arrived, they found clear streets and business as usual in this winter town

Karl Rhonke energized us all as he returned to the conference as our Keynote speaker. He recounted stories of some of the earliest ropes courses built in the US. He made us laugh sharing candid stories of follies and lessons learned. "Ever work such long hours that at the end of the day you discover you built yourself into the course?" he asked the crowd. Well times haven't changed that much, as many admitted they have! He shared his love for this unique industry and people here. He said how much he appreciated talking about belay cables, challenge equipment and facilitating without people looking at him oddly. Thanks for sharing Karl- we feel the same way! That's one of the best parts of the annual conference, connecting with others from around the world that share passion for our unique work with challenge courses, canopy tours and Zip Lines!

Pre-conference was a hit with workshops on: Harnessing the Power of Experiential Education to Promote Spiritual Formation; Partner Activities for Groups of 2 or 200; Unlocking the Mysteries of Legal Liability and Insurance Protection; Trees and Challenge Courses; An In-Depth Look at Challenge Course Management; Facilitating Self Efficacy; Choosing Safe and Effective Rescue Strategies; Zip Line and Canopy Tour Design, Installation and Program Development.

With such high attendance, we are considering adding additional sessions, days or opportunities for added learning next year. If you have ideas for topics or schedule times - email them now.

Wowee were there workshops! Friday and Saturday hosted 96 different sessions in each of our topic tracks: Canopy & Zip Line Tours, Industry & Business, Operations & Management, Facilitation & Programming, and Technical Topics. With most workshops on either ground floor or one level up, getting around was fairly easy. Well, at least after they fixed the escalator during the pre-conference day. That said, with so many workshops to attend, some of the challenge was choosing! Participants commented on the high quality selections on topics they wanted to attend. Thank you to everyone who presented for sharing your knowledge! As the conference continues to grow, we may consider extending or re-arranging the schedule. Would you enjoy an extra full or half day or an extra session in the late afternoon? If you haven't already done so, please respond on the conference evaluation.

How fast can you eat your lunch on a busy day? Well some found out in a hilarious competitive event in Builders Olympics this year. After seeing that mess, many of us will never tell our staff to "Hurry Up!" again! Speed splicing separated the pros from those still learning the art. The crowd cheered loudly as competitors shared/fought over supplies and gear in many of the events. After assisting to build a platform tower, one of our smallest helpers stood tall on top of a shaky creation- Thanks B!

This year's Critical Link Award recipient was rendered speechless amongst the standing ovation he received. Yes, that speechless man was our very own Tom Leahy! Thanks so much for all your hard work over the years Tom- we appreciate you!

A great big thank you to former Board president Erik Marter who finished his term this year! Your guidance has been helpful to many, and again we all say thank you! The conference committee would also like to extend a warm welcome to newly elected board members Niels Damman, Todd Domeck and Charlie Williams. Welcome!

Thank you to the hard working conference committee! It's a long year of planning and coordination to provide our annual event. We barely have a chance to unpack from this year and planning for next year starts again.

Thank you attendees, presenters, exhibitors and sponsors for making it worth the effort! See you next year in Boston! (P.S. Yes- I will still be laughing loudly and fervently!)

ACCT Would like to Extend a Special Thank You to All of Our Conference Sponsors!





Building teams Reduces Stress

by Lindsay Walton



The young man in his twenties had been throwing up blood for months by the time I saw him in my classroom. His doctor had told him it was due to the high levels of stress he was experiencing from the death of his brother in a car accident earlier in the year. It was only recently that our company had become an authorized provider of the Stress Winner™ Stress Reduction program based on the teachings of Dr. David Rainham, an internationally recognized expert on the subject. We were intrigued by the idea of providing stress reduction training to bring hope to people who feel overwhelmed and isolated by their struggles. We were not prepared for the response we got to the material.

While we expected participants to be interested in what we were teaching, what shocked us was the desperate look of hope that showed on so many of the participants' faces. For the first time, people were hearing that life could get better, that they could be healthier, that there wasn't something wrong with them for feeling the way they felt. And these were new concepts? I have been very fortunate to grow up with parents who taught me to always have hope, to rest assured, that no matter how dark life may seem at the moment, I am never alone, and good things are waiting for me on the other side of my struggles. I have taken those lessons for granted thinking everyone else knew these basic truths and didn't realize how well that knowledge has served me when life and the universe have tried to crush me on occasion. I was looking at a classroom filled with people who had never been given that hope and who were holding on to my every word as if it were a lifeline.

The training lays out some foundations to help participants understand what stress is, how it is currently affecting their health, and identifying where that stress is coming from. The rest of the day is spent looking at the twelve key principles to reducing stress. Being completely geeked-out on human psychology and on team building, I was given a lot to think about after the first few courses I facilitated. The following are the two most significant thoughts I've walked away with so far, helping me connect team building to the concept of reducing debilitating stress:

People rarely, if ever, give themselves credit for having survived difficult life circumstances and don't know that it is natural and normal to feel stressed or broken after not only a life crisis such as death, divorce, or assault, but also after a life transition such as a new job, new home, or even returning from a significant vacation. So many people think there is something wrong with them for feeling the way they do, and so they keep their thoughts and their pain to themselves and withdraw from people, trying to hide their weakness. People subconsciously isolate themselves because they're embarrassed and don't recognize their own strength, possibly for having even just gotten out of bed that day. One teenage girl had recently experienced a miscarriage, losing the baby of a boyfriend who had abandoned her. In her mind she thought she should logically be happy about not having to raise the child alone, especially when the father was someone she was so angry with, but after only a short time into the course, she had a light-bulb moment. Nothing was wrong with her for how she was feeling. Nothing was wrong with feeling desperately alone even though she was now out of an unhealthy relationship. Nothing was wrong with her for mourning the death of her child even though she had never met him. I was watching something very broken start to piece itself back together. So many people in pain walk around with their guts ripped out by life, invisibly piled up in their arms, being carried around from day to day. I was watching a small piece of this girl's heart, a small part of that pile of guts, get put back into place, and to watch any kind of healing happen in front of you is a privilege I can't even begin to describe.

North American culture has put way too much emphasis on the self-help approach to life. People are walking around thinking something is wrong with them for feeling like they need help from others, and they beat themselves over the head thinking it is another weakness they have to hide. The stress reduction training has a section on support, looking at the need for support networks and healthy relationships to help us make it through life. In other words, it emphasizes our basic human need to belong to communities, to be a part of teams that watch out for and take care of each other. It identifies that we are wired to be in connection with other human beings, and when we become isolated we become physically, emotionally, and mentally sick. Isolation in a sense brings death while healthy teams and communities have the ability to bring life and well-being. Hearing the words "we are not meant to be alone" and acknowledging that everyone has a basic human need – a desire to find support from other people – keeps sending shock waves through my classes. Hopeful eyes light up. There isn't something wrong with me. I don't have to do this on my own. I'm going to be okay.

While I have always believed in the immense life-giving potential found within team building because of the ability to open up lines of communication, identify team member's strengths, encourage new leaders and more, a fresh wind has stoked the fires of my excitement for what I do as a facilitator. By building teams we help to reduce stress, bringing increased health and quality of life to our participants, and that makes for a day that I will always feel privileged to be a part of.

Lindsay Walton is the Lead Facilitator of Open Door Development and has been active in the outdoor and experiential education industry since 2001. With a Bachelor of Arts in Recreation and studies in Sociology and Social Work, she is passionate about using hands-on activities to bring people in from the fringes and create thriving communities. Anyone interested in learning more about participating in or providing Stress Winner™ Stress Reduction Training can contact CSI Serve at info@csiserve.com.



The Government Relations Committee Report

by Gregory J. Allen

The Government Relations Committee continues to see a flurry of activity on the radar, and continues to work hard to address these issues. Below is a quick synopsis of the issues and work we have been doing.

There has been some activity in Hawaii, where there was a proposed bill (H.B. 1246) to have Zip Lines added under the amusement definition, and the creation of a "boiler and elevator branch" to inspect and enforce the rules adopted in this bill. The bill died without being rescheduled.

In West Virginia, where a bill (H.B. 2532) has been proposed to regulate zip lines and challenge courses. The bill has specific language referencing ACCT or equivalent standards.

In New York, where the Recreational Environmental Health Section of the Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection, (who regulates children's camps on the state level), have established policies requiring camps with challenge courses to construct, inspect and operate their programs in accordance with ACCT or equivalent standards. The department has requested a copy of our most recent standards.

With the help of a special advisory committee, we were able to complete the official ACCT position statement regarding the regulation of canopy tours, zip lines, adventure parks and challenge courses. This statement was accepted by the board and will be available to view on the website at www.acctinfo.org in the very near future.

Most recently, the GRC has been working on spreading information regarding, The Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2011. Please see below for some specific information and tools you can use to make a difference in how this legislation moves forward.

Lastly, we have started working on preparing some legislative models that favor our industry, so we can be more proactive as future legislation evolves globally. We will keep you posted on the progress of this project.

As always, if you have any questions or information regarding specific regulations in or around your area, please contact your professional vendor member immediately, or me at: greg@visionaryadventure.com.

Government Relations Alert



As many of you know, the move towards legislation has been occurring in many states, provinces and countries, which directly affect our industry. The government relations committee is writing this letter to inform you of federal bill H.R. 765, known as "The Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2011."

The bill amends the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986, which allows only ski-related activities in Forest Service ski areas. The bill's main purpose is to open up summer and shoulder season recreation opportunities for these areas, including, but not limited to, zip lines and ropes courses.

We feel this bill is good for our industry for a number of reasons. However, the most notable impact that this bill will have to our industry can be seen in Sec. 3 under "Inclusions" and "Exclusions." Zip lines and ropes courses are permitted, but amusement parks are not permitted. This will document in a federal bill that zip lines and ropes courses are not amusement devices and should not be regulated as such.

Please take time to read this bill for yourself. If you agree with our position, we encourage you use the accompanying letter (**found on page 8**) to ask your congressman to support Bill H.R. 765. The link to the bill is: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.765.IH>

The address you can use to help locate your congressman is <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/relookup.xpd?all=1>.

PR / Marketing

The PR/Marketing Committee has recently outlined projects that we will be focusing on in 2011. We will be supporting the ACCT staff to provide feedback on updates to our website and will be working with the membership committee and other potential committees when responding to some of the questions or comments that were presented in the membership survey results. We are continuing our work on a media kit as well as putting more of a focus on the public relations (education) component of our committee. We were excited to be present for the logo unveiling at the conference in Minneapolis. As a committee we were happy to see our work over the past year shared with the conference community. In addition to sharing the logo designs with conference attendees we created a story behind this new logo.

The story behind the new ACCT Logo



Why a new logo?

The Association for Challenge Course Technology is continually evolving to meet the demands of the Challenge Course Industry. The association was originally founded by builder, but now ACCT has membership that represents a variety of trades. This growth in membership over the years allows us to define ourselves as a trade association representing all of our members, so our new logo expands on this concept. The introduction of our new logo with its multiple strands represents the variety of trades our association serves: facilitators, builders, managers, program providers, distributors, trainers, owners, equipment manufacturers, and professional service providers, to name a few.

Why the knot?

The two ropes creating the knot tie together the diverse concepts, thoughts, people, and ideas, which are the strength of our association—standardization and innovation, group interest and individual interest, veteran and novice, tradition and innovation, local and global. This new logo utilizes the color green as a symbol of growth as we continue to grow and expand who we serve. The Association for Challenge Course Technology's new logo now symbolizes our purpose and function as we join together our members and industry to make a whole.

What does this mean for me?

You will notice that the new logo currently has three different taglines that represent the variety of memberships in our association. The logo now expands and allows for future expansion of who can use the logo. The first tagline includes the Association for Challenge Course Technology or no tagline for general ACCT use; the second tagline is a logo for our Professional Vendor Members (PVM); and the third tagline is a logo for Institutional Members.

(Specific details about who can use the logo and how the new logo can be used will be available soon.)



THE STREAM

There is a stream you were born in.
You didn't know you were in it. You sang,
rhymed wild sounds, drew pictures
of a grinning boy with flames shooting from his hair.
Then over the slow accumulation of days
people tugged at you, fished you out
into unfamiliar streams, their murky waters.
At first you fought. But their tackle
was too powerful, led to slow deadening.
You didn't even know you were out, or when.
Still you survived. Got older. Matured.
Memory of your stream tugs at you, an adult.
Always there, a stream is yours.
Always buoyant, it will bear you up.
No one can dam it any more,
except you. Listen to its good voice
as it rushes over rocks.

David Markwardt

Poetry Works



SWIM IN YOUR STREAM *by Faith Evans*



Over the years I have facilitated adult and corporate challenge course programs that were breakthroughs for people. They experienced a 'wake-up call' which was a catalyst for significant personal change.

As a witness to their experience, I feel blessed. Perhaps you have had this 'high' experience too. Perhaps it is the reason you continue to do this work, running the same events again and again, hoping for something life-changing to happen.

Sometimes adult participants are in a rut when they come to a challenge course program. Maybe the rut is physical; they've become sedentary and haven't done anything physically challenging for years.

Maybe the rut is psychological; they've become accustomed to thinking their body can only do certain things and not others. They have limiting belief systems about what they can do and how far they can go.

Challenge courses give them opportunities to step out of their 'rut' zones. Consider using "The Stream" as part of the framing of the day to encourage participants to listen to the call of the voice within. "The Stream" also works well when framing high events like the Zip Line or the Pamper Pole.

Questions to consider:

- What is the stream you were born in?
- What is your life's purpose?
- Are you following your passions?
- What is the irresistible thing in your life that you can no longer live without?
- What do you need to let go of to follow it?
- What belief systems are holding you back?



David Markwardt, David Markwardt Consulting and Faith Evans, PlayFully, Inc. davidmarkwardt@comcast.net and faithevans@aol.com

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Canopy/Zip Line Tour Committee Report



The 21st Annual ACCT Conference in Minneapolis was a great success for the Zip line and Canopy Tour Industry. Having a specific track (sp?) brought in some interesting presenters and topics including: The Feasibility of Canopy Tours; Bolting or Wrapping; Tree Anchor Systems for Canopy Tours; Canopy Tours Design vs. Operation; Zip Line Braking Systems; Legal Issues for the Zip Line Operators and many more...

It is always important to get feedback and comments from members in order to keep moving forward on different issues and topics you want hear about. Please contact Victor Gallo (CZLTC Chairman) at vgallo@adventureplaygd.com with your input.

The committee is currently comprised of diverse group of members. With the expertise and diversity of our members we are being more global and inclusive of the different branches of the industry and at the same time keeping up with current and future technology. As part of the revisions that are being made to the Installations, Operations and Certification Standards this committee has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis in order to fulfill our obligations. Since August 2010 we have worked on "Tree Assessment" standards, braking standards and currently we are working on Operations standards, which will progress onto Certification standards for the Canopy Zip line Tour Industry. This is a joint effort with the Installations and Operations committee.

Sample Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2011 Support Letter (For full story see "Government Relations Alert" on Page 6)

Your COMPANY or Personal Letterhead **OR**
 Your full name, Your P.O. box or street address, Your town, state and zip, phone number

The Honorable (*full name of senator*)
 (*Room #*) (*Name*) Senate Office Building
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Date

RE: H.R. 765. The Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2011

Dear Senator (*Last name*) or Dear Representative (*Last name*):

I am writing to you to express my support for Bill H.R. 765. This Bill would amend the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture regarding additional recreational uses of National Forest System land that is subject to ski area permits.

I am asking that you will support this bill in Congress.

The potential for increased supervised recreational opportunities on federally owned land could generate much needed revenue for our government via an increase in concession service fees provided by operators. Simultaneously, this opportunity would generate and prolong local tourism and help local economies grow by providing jobs and additional income to other community businesses including but not limited to:

the construction industry, the hotel industry, the restaurant industry, the recreation industry, the rental car industry, the airline industry, the retail shopping among others.

All of these industries and our citizens could benefit from the passage of HR765.

Currently, many ski area facilities shut down seasonally; this has a trickledown effect on the economy of local communities. An opportunity for additional land uses outside of the normal ski season would help, keep business open (thus lowering unemployment) and drive additional visitors to federally owned land (helping the economy).

My strong opinion on this matter is that H.R.765 should be approved by Congress.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

Your name



Facilitator's Toolbox "Strong Beginnings"

by Jennifer Stanchfield

During the Facilitator's Toolbox Live workshop at the annual conference in Minneapolis, our group engaged in a conversation about the value of great introductory activities. One participant commented, "This is where you make your money," saying that the time spent up front building a strong foundation of rapport and trust pays off later in improved group performance.

According to brain researchers, the activities or events that take place the first time people are exposed to information greatly impacts their ability to retain that information. John Medina, author of *Brain Rules* states, "If you are trying to get information across to someone, your ability to create a compelling introduction may be the most important single factor in the later success of your mission" (Medina, 2010).

The first few minutes of an experience or lesson are a key time to hook and engage learners. Evidence shows that people remember most the first few minutes of a learning experience, and secondly, the last few minutes of learning experience. (Sousa, 2005; Willis, 2010). Some educators and cognitive neuroscientists call this the primacy-recency effect (Sousa, 2006).

I have found this research exciting because it validates a practice I have embraced in my own teaching and group facilitation—the value of offering an engaging opening activity and providing some reflective prompt to tie it all together or bookend a learning experience.

Engage participants from the moment they walk in the door. Involve learners in an activity that helps them transition into the learning environment, makes positive connections with their peers, and shifts their focus to the here and now. Providing an activity for participants to involve themselves in as the group gathers together prior to a session or meeting can create a welcome focus during what can be an awkward time for some people.

Using pictures from magazines and postcards or from other sources is one method to draw in participants. I often use my postcard collection as a get-to-know-you activity on the very first day of a program or as a way to welcome clients back after a break between sessions.

For an introductory rapport-building activity, I lay out a collection of postcards or image cards on a table. As participants walk in the door, I ask them to choose an image centered on a reflective, goal-setting, or conversation-starter topic. Topics might include a card that represents a goal they have for the program or a unique perspective they bring to the group.

Either mid-way through a program or as a closing activity I often display my postcards or image cards during a break or before a session. I ask participants to choose a card they would send to a friend to describe the training, program, or conference experience.

Depending on your group size, goals, and dynamics you can ask participants to share their choice with a partner or share with the entire group. I like to blend this activity with an interactive partner icebreaker such as "handshake mingle" or "concentric circles" (see previous toolbox articles for partner dialogue methods).

In the Facilitator's Toolbox session at the Minneapolis conference, we combined the introductory postcard activity with a group mingle and dialogue activity that Anthony Curtis of Adventureworks shared in a previous Toolbox installment. In this activity that he calls "Incorporations," the facilitator asks the group to mingle (move around the room) and then



stop. At the stop the facilitator states something such as "Find groups of three to five with others who used the same toothpaste as you;" or "Form even-numbered groups with people born in the same month;" and so forth.

During that same workshop, we experimented with forming groups based on our individual postcard choices as a kinesthetic way to share individual perspectives within a large group. I asked participants to form groups with others whose postcards shared a similar theme. Group members engaged in dialogue and problem solving around their card choices and formed groups based on their interpretations of their images and reason for choosing the image. Groups formed around themes such as "the value of healthy risk taking," "the importance of global vision," and "the value of humor in group facilitation."

Some of my other favorite ways to help group members find common ground, build connections, and spark creative thought around a specific topic or issue is through quotes, slogans, and objects (see March 2010 Facilitator's Toolbox article).

Spending time early on in a program with icebreakers and reflective partner and small group dialogue and connection activities leads to better processing and transference of learning later in the group's experience. These activities build comfort with reflective practice and dialogue.

Reflection becomes an enjoyable, interesting, ongoing part of a group experience rather than a chore that takes place after an engaging challenge. The methods that work well to build rapport and dialogue at the beginning of a program also make for great reflection or closing activities. As mentioned previously, research on the brain and learning emphasizes the importance of a hook at the beginning and a good closing activity to tie it all together. I often use the same activity for both purposes to bookend an experience. When using objects, quotes, and images in this way, I invite participants to take the object, image, or quote as a memento of the experience to create a lasting reminder of the lessons learned.

Through strong beginnings and meaningful endings, there is great opportunity for positively influencing learning outcomes with participants. The tone we set in the learning space and the frame and context we set for a lesson or experience can greatly impact participant engagement and retention of information.

Please share your thoughts on this subject or contribute to future posts by contacting Jennifer Stanchfield at jen@experientialtools.com.



The **ASSOCIATION FOR CHALLENGE COURSE TECHNOLOGY** is a non-profit trade organization serving the global challenge course industry since 1993. Comprised of more than 2600 MEMBERS, the goal of ACCT is to be the **LEADING PROVIDER** of resources for those who create **SAFE** and **EFFECTIVE** challenge course programs that **FACILITATE** learning and **POSITIVE CHANGE** in individuals, groups and communities.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES ACCT ENGAGE IN?

Sets standards for installation, maintenance and management of challenge courses / Conducts forums for education and professional development / Advocates for the challenge course industry / Monitors legislation that affects challenge courses Lobbies for improved legislation and regulation as appropriate / Provides networking opportunities for programmers, managers, owners, entrepreneurs, builders, and educators.

BENEFITS OF ACCT MEMBERSHIP

- Participate in the largest challenge course association in the world.
- Keep informed of changes in the industry through
- Receive a copy of the standards upon joining and keep current as new standards are adopted.
- Gain access to the ACCT-sponsored insurance program.
- Attend our annual conference at a discounted rate.
- Network with other challenge course and canopy/zip line tour professionals.
- Gain access to the Members Only section of our website.
- Share your knowledge of the field with others in the industry.
- Receive direct notification of industry issues, new regulations, product recalls, and events.
- Support the growth and development of the challenge course and canopy/zip line tour industry.

P.O. BOX 47, DEERFIELD, ILLINOIS 60015

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The Future of PVM Accreditation

by Bill Weaver, Professional Services Manager

Whenever I have a chance to chat with folks regarding the many services ACCT provides, whether over the phone, in e-mail, or face-to-face, two services typically draw the most interest. It should not be a surprise that both of these services make up the very foundation, core values if you will, of the association: Standards Development and Vendor Accreditation.

First and foremost, ACCT's long-time reputation within the challenge course and canopy/zip line industry as standards developers is well documented. From the publication of the first edition in 1993 through six subsequent revisions to the current 7th edition, ACCT standards represent consensus standards adopted by the voting members. ACCT standards are recognized around the world, establishing ACCT as a credible industry standards developer. In 2006 ACCT was awarded the status of Accredited Standards Developer by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). As an ANSI-approved standards developer, ACCT is committed to meeting the Institute's essential requirements for openness, balance, consensus, and due process. To achieve these goals ACCT is committed to including the industry at large in the consensus process.

Next is the Professional Vendor Member (PVM) Accreditation. For as long as ACCT has been involved in the standards development process we have provided accreditation services for challenge course installers, inspectors and trainers worldwide through a peer review process. Over the years, more than forty companies have successfully completed ACCT's PVM application process and participate in a three-year cycle of re-review site visits conducted by their peers. ACCT's vendor accreditation process is recognized around the world for its commitment to the highest standards of excellence. ACCT's peer review system has served the industry for more than 17 years.

Letter from The Board Chair

*Continued from page 11

Accreditation - A few years ago the Association took on a new position to manage accreditation and to help standardize the process and increase the professional nature of how vendors get accredited. We are pleased to have increased the number of accredited vendors from what was once a small group to now 41 companies, with more new companies with more new companies starting the accreditation process. As we move forward ACCT is looking at ways to increase the value of accreditation by exploring other accreditation models to help increase the consistency of what it means to be "Accredited" by ACCT.

Our goal is to continue to provide assurance to organizations and end-users that the work being done by an accredited member continues to meet or exceed the continually evolving standards and changes within technology and its use in our industry.

Technology - our membership has grown to include those going further, faster and from higher places, were seeing structures designed for higher throughput and innovations in safety with our equipment. ACCT has embraced and is continuing to embrace these innovations and "non-traditional" applications such as Canopy Tours and Adventure Parks while intentionally not losing focus on our peers in education, summer camps and therapy to name a few.

Regulations - No longer do many of us have to explain to our families what it is we do for a living. They know! They're reading about it in the local and the international press. Challenge courses are on billboards, magazine covers, movies, television shows and commercials. No longer can we be ignored. We have been recognized and with that recognition comes scrutiny. Within the past few years we have seen an increase in regulation by states, providences and countries. Many of the states and providences in North America have chosen to call all the uses of our Technology an "amusement" while others have just selected a sub-section of our membership to regulate (like climbing walls and zip lines).

In recent years there has been a major expansion of reviewable services offered by current PVM's and new applicants alike, including practitioner certification, various unique and specialized belay and braking systems, canopy / zip line tours, adventure parks, etc. During this same period, the number of new Professional Vendor Member applications has steadily increased as well. These factors have been instrumental in placing additional strain onto an already taxed volunteer work force represented in our PVM community.



In recent discussions with our ANSI consultants we have been encouraged to consider the benefits of a "third party" system. Based on our knowledge and commitment to the ANSI accreditation process as standards developers, we are inclined to believe further exploration of a third party system may have merit. Currently, ANSI accreditation programs include both product certification as well personnel certification. ANSI has a wide variety of conformity assessment services which may assist ACCT in establishing itself as an accredited third party / certifying body.

It has been suggested, that by becoming a third party certifying / body, ACCT would encourage openness, balance, consensus, and due process as outlined in the ANSI essential requirements. In an effort to raise the level of consistency and credibility for our PVM accreditation process we will continue to explore all options. Our intent is to continue to raise the standards of excellence for our qualified challenge course professionals. We are committed to hearing from our industry as we weigh whether or not to consider this as a viable option. Please feel free to share your thought directly with me at bill@acctinfo.org. I look forward to hearing from our industry.

No matter your location ACCT is committed to advocating on your behalf for reasonable and appropriate regulation. We are working today to have agencies recognize the existing ACCT standards as the proper standard to use for this regulation. At the same time we have ACCT staff and volunteer members working within ASTM (the folks that write the amusement standards) to ensure that a reasonable standard exists within the system these states already operate within. While states, providences, and countries are all handling regulation in different ways their ultimate goal has always been one of our top priorities - Public Safety. ACCT is working with these different entities to ensure your low ropes course and climbing tower are treated as such, we understand that you are not a roller coaster or a Tilt A Whirl. We know how important safety is to our membership, the importance of regular inspections on structures and equipment, we understand the time and sincerity you put into your staff training and we understand your mission with your clients. We are an advocate for all members, and are doing more every day to advocate for you.

So with these changes and innovations we stand here today, not a small group of people who formed this association but as an association of more than 600 attendees at our most recent conference and a membership of over 2,600 (and growing) companies, organizations and individuals whose needs are many and whose work impacts tens of millions of individuals each year with your unique style and distinct application of . . . Challenge Course Technology!

I ask you now to embrace ACCT and our new logo as our commitment to you our members; to maintain the legacy of the association's original foundation while embracing and acknowledging the association we have become over the years and the new tasks and challenges we will face together. . . united . . . as a place all trades who utilize "Challenge Course Technology" can call home.



ASTM & ACCT

Partners in Standards Development



by Rich Klajnscek

Lately ACCT has been busy making friends in the standards world. Our newest friend is ASTM International—yet another four-letter association starting with “A.” (For those of you who aren’t there yet, AARP is next.) ASTM International is a globally recognized leader in the development and delivery of voluntary consensus standards. To get an idea of its size, ASTM has 141 technical standards-writing committees—definitely making them the three zillion-pound gorillas in the standards world! In case you were wondering, they are also an ANSI-accredited, standard-setting organization.

Over a year ago, the ASTM subcommittee responsible for standards for “Amusement Rides and Devices” (called the “F24” committee in ASTM-speak) decided that it was time to create an ASTM standard for zip lines and challenge courses (among other “Patron Participatory Rides”) and were under way in developing the standard. At precisely the right moment, enter Bill Weaver from ACCT and Josh Tod, Keith Jacobs, and Jim Liggett (representing their respective companies). ASTM had been looking around for the right wagon to hitch their new horse to, when along rolled the wagon right into the room. This fine group of gentlemen obviously made an impression because, when all was said and done, ACCT became one of few accepted (even welcomed) partners in writing the new standard. Other people in the group include representatives from Disney, the U.S. Forest Service, TSSA—Technical Standard and Safety Authority (Ontario), amusement device engineers, ski lift designers, and regulators, among others. So, over the past year, this task group has plugged away at a standard pretty much focused on zip lines, even though the standard was to have included many more “rides” under this classification. Most meetings are by phone, but there are face-to-face meetings each year (for all of F24), in both October and February. I have represented ACCT at the past two face-to-face meetings.

Last month in New Orleans, our task group spent a total of 17 hours with our heads together. Let me assure you that ACCT members are influential in this group, and the powers that be remain eager to have our assistance in creating the new standard. At the same time there are other influential voices in the room whose opinions differ from ones you might hear in, say, a room full of challenge course people. This makes for some challenging discussions where I have learned plenty. Although we don’t have a lot of written material to show for it, much has been accomplished. Until the meeting last month, the standard we were working on had the catchy title of Standard Practice for Design, Manufacture, Installation, Operation, Maintenance, Inspection, Auditing and Major Modification of Patron Participatory Rides and Devices. From the title, it would be hard for a normal (non-ASTMified) person to figure out from the title what the standard is for. We don’t have to worry about that any more. The proposed scope has been narrowed down so that includes only zip lines, ropes courses and challenge courses (and not Zorbs, mechanical bulls, and so on). In its current form, it applies when the elements or courses are specifically intended for concession, commercial recreation, or amusement purposes and does NOT apply to elements or courses used for educational curriculum, physical fitness purposes, accredited competitive events, therapeutic programs, training purposes, non-commercial recreation, and non-commercial team and confidence building.

In my opinion, this change is a good thing. By reducing the scope, it will be a far better and more effective standard—much more focused, specific, and understandable. It will also be done a lot sooner. There is no deadline for completion, and voting on the standard is a big unknown. My assumption is that it will become “real” in the next year. Both “ropes” and “challenge” courses were included because we consider both names to mean the same thing and don’t want to unintentionally leave any operation out that should be covered by the standard.

It’s obvious that this change will affect our industry as a whole and ACCT particularly, especially as it is adopted and applied by government regulators, insurers, and so forth. Since I believe that it will be a good standard, it will actually help these people apply the most appropriate standard to fit a given situation—ASTM for commercial operations and ACCT for everything else. I can’t really tell you how the two standards will compare when they are done, but I can tell you that we are doing our best to

ensure that they are complementary and will make sense when compared with each other.

We already know that we can’t control how government regulators and other bodies will look at the systems that we create. I think that once the new ASTM standard exists, these people will have a better place to go when looking at commercial operations. The logical conclusion for me is that zip line tours, canopy tours, and adventure parks will be most affected by this change. It would be hard to argue that these types of facilities would not fall under the scope of the ASTM standard. Whatever the transition, we will work toward making it as painless as possible. Rest assured that ACCT is fighting for you!

MORE ABOUT ASTM

Anybody can join ASTM International for a \$75 annual fee. Included in the membership is the right to download the whole library of standards in one area of interest (ours would be all F24 developed standards). It takes a while to figure out what is going on. Hopefully the following summary that I created for a workshop at the recent ACCT conference will help somewhat. The ASTM standards that we are mostly interested in are those for Amusement Rides and Devices. There are a number of ASTM subcommittees that have varying degrees of relevance to us. They are also listed below, with ours in bold:

F08 – Sports Equipment and Facilities

F08.21 Climbing and Mountaineering
 F08.53 Headgear and Helmets
 F08.63 Playground Surfacing Systems

F15 – Consumer Products

F15.29 Playground Equipment for Public Use

F24 – Amusement Rides and Devices

F24.24 Design and Manufacture
 F24.30 Maintenance and Inspection
 F24.40 Operations

F24.60 Special Rides and Attractions

New standard for Zip Lines, Ropes Courses and Challenge Courses

Selected ASTM standards that are relevant:

F747-06 Terminology for Amusement Rides and Devices
 F770-06a Ownership & Operation of Amusement Rides and Devices
 F853-05 Maintenance of Amusement Rides and Devices
 F893-10 Inspection of Amusement Rides and Devices
 F1159-03a Design and Manufacture of Patron Directed Artificial Climbing Walls for Amusement
 F1193-06 Manufacture and Construction of Amusement Rides and Devices
 F1740-96 Inspection of Nylon/Polyester Kernmantle Rope
 By rescue personnel for rescue ropes to Know About
 F1772-99 (2005) Standard Specification for Climbing Harnesses
 For the sports of rock, ice, and snow climbing
 F1773-09 Climbing and Mountaineering Equipment Terminology
 F1774-99 (2005) Specs for Climbing and Mountaineering Carabiners
 For the sports of climbing and mountaineering
F2291-09b Design of Amusement Rides and Devices
This standard is the “hub” of the amusement standards wheel
 F2375-09 Design, Manufacture, Installation and Testing of Climbing Nets and Mesh for Amusement Rides





PVM Symposium Recap

On behalf of the PVM Symposium Committee, (Jennifer Marter, Mike Anderson and Dave Mueller) we would like to say Thank You to all of the Professional Vendor Members of the Association for Challenge Course Technology who attended the Winter Symposium in Minneapolis. Several of you braved snow storms and cancelled flights to be there and it is appreciated! We hope you enjoyed the time together and we look forward to seeing you this summer.

We also want to thank our presenters who worked with us to create educational and meaningful components to the Symposium. For those of you who could not make it to the Symposium here is a snapshot of what you missed...

Representatives from the Board addressed the PVM Community regarding work that the Board has been doing throughout the year and engaged all attendees in a lively discussion regarding new things on the horizon.

We then had a fantastic session lead by Kathy Haras of AdventureWorks! Associates, Inc., on the topics of Accreditation and Certification. Kathy lead us through creating a vision and application for some potential new models being discussed for Certification and Accreditation. Information generated in this workshop will be used as future discussion points for the Board of Directors, ACCT Staff and Committees.

We ended the formal session with an open honest and humorous presentation from Todd Domeck entitled "Things I Learned the Hard Way." Todd's presentation was so well received by the PVM Community that we are considering adding it to our line-up at each Symposium. We are sure Todd could fill many Symposiums with all of the things he learned the hard way but we would also like to hear from other PVMs as well. If you are willing to share some of your less-than-finer moments that provided you with good life lessons we want to hear from you! Please consider speaking at this summer's symposium.

As we look to the future of the PVM Symposiums you will notice that they will take on a more educational flavor. We will still have ample opportunity to engage in open dialogue with the ACCT Board, staff and leadership but you will also find much time spent on topics designed to enhance business practice, offer new insight and help you serve your staff and clients better. We are looking to invite presenters that can offer workshops rich with information that Professional Vendor Members and their key staff will find valuable. Please contact any one of us with ideas and feedback on the Symposium content. We welcome your thoughts!



Summer 2011 PVM Symposium: August 3 & 4, 2011, located at the Essex Inn, Burlington Vermont

ACCT Membership

▼

Associate Membership
This level is open to all interested individuals and organizations. Associate Membership benefits include a copy of the ACCT Challenge Course Standards at the time of joining; a subscription to our newsletter, Parallel Lines, that is published three times a year; a discount for the annual ACCT conference; and access to the ACCT sponsored insurance company coverage for challenge course programs. Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$85 USD

Institutional Membership
This level is open to any interested organization. Institutional membership benefits include four copies of the Standards at the time of joining; four copies of Parallel Lines; and discounted rates for four employees to attend the annual conference. Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$275 USD

Professional Vendor Member
This level is available to challenge course service vendors who have successfully completed the ACCT Professional Vendor Member (PVM) accreditation process, accumulated the required number of days of experience, and who provide challenge course and/or canopy / zip line tour installation and inspections and/or facilitator training and certification services. Contact the Professional Services Manager for additional information. Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$1,800 USD

ACCT Membership Office
The ACCT Membership Office handles membership services, conference registrations, standards sales, and general office duties for ACCT.

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ACCT Association for Challenge Course Technology®





Builder's Toolbox UNICORN?



I have been searching for many years for a perfect all in one, or most in one tool for every day use in challenge course installation and maintenance. To this end I have ordered catalogs, tried other industries and even partnered to manufacture my own designs. All of the options have been either too heavy or too expensive. Recently while flipping through a catalog of lineman's tools I found what could be the closest tool to the unicorn that I have been searching for.

Speed Systems is a mid sized American company located in the mid west. They specialize in tools for linemen and others that work with A/V and electrical systems. They produce the Over Head Wrench or OHW in both a deep socket or standard version. The OHW comes with two ratcheting heads, one on each side. The larger side accommodates $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 1" and 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " square nuts. The $\frac{3}{4}$ " square is not very useful to a challenge course professional, but the other two cover two of the most common square nuts use for pole line hardware. Although not intended in the design, the larger head also accommodates a 15/16" hex nut, like those found on nut eye bolts. The other side of the wrench has a double sided pass through that has 9/16" on one side and 3/14" on the other. The $\frac{3}{4}$ " head has just enough flange sticking out to be able to slip over a nut on a standard wire rope clip. This side of the wrench is not as handy as a standard socket, but works well for tightening and inspection.

Over all, the wrench is well built and very light to carry. It packs many useful sizes into a small package. Which brings me to my only complaint, the whole unit could be 2 - 3" longer. The size makes it easy to carry in a tool pouch, but a little more length would make the whole thing more useful. Over all a well made tool with many uses. A list of dealers can be found on the Speed Systems website. The price is listed at around a \$100.00, but I found it for \$85.00 through a dealer.

Building Relationships in the Commonwealth

by Bill Weaver, Professional Services Manager

In February each year the State of Pennsylvania hosts an Amusement Ride Safety Seminar to educate, train, and test ride inspectors and vendors throughout the commonwealth. ACCT was contacted last year by seminar coordinators to provide training workshops specifically related to zip line inspection. The response was overwhelming, and seminar coordinators received numerous requests from seminar attendees for additional training related to other extreme sport apparatus already under the jurisdiction of the state regulatory process. They responded by requesting ACCT to facilitate the entire seminar schedule devoted to extreme sports.



ACCT accepted the challenge by having five Professional Vendor Members (PVMs)—which included four companies with representatives based in Pennsylvania and ACCT's Board Chair—volunteered their time and services to expand the scope of training to nine hours and covering more than seven topics. Workshop titles requested by seminar coordinators included Climbing Wall Operations Maintenance and Inspection; Inspection of Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tours; Equipment for Challenge Courses, Canopy/Zip Line Tours, and Adventure Courses; ACCT Challenge Course and Zip Line Installation Standards; Regulation of Challenge Courses, Canopy/Zip Line Tours, and Adventure Courses; Development, ACCT Best Practices, ANSI Standards, and ASTM Standards for Zip Lines, Ropes Courses, and Canopy Tours.

ACCT was also invited to set up a display and distribute literature to attendees describing our association. In addition, we were encouraged to make our standards and membership applications available to attendees. Interest at the association booth was brisk with numerous inquiries, requests for literature, and the purchase of standards and memberships. It should also be mentioned that the recently completed "ACCT Position on the Regulation of Challenge Course Technology" was available and more than 50 copies were distributed.

Through candid discussions among the PVM presenters, all agreed ACCT's presence was both beneficial and essential toward building positive, professional working relationships between the State of Pennsylvania and ACCT.

If you would like more information regarding upcoming seminars, go to www.paridesafety.com.

ACCT Challenge Course & Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards

The Seventh Edition of the ACCT Challenge Course & Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards is available from the ACCT Membership Office. Individual copies are \$60 U.S., plus shipping. Discounts are available for multiple copies. Order online or use the order form which is posted online and available from the ACCT office. Contact the ACCT office to order more than 5 copies.

*Checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, American Express and purchase orders (U.S. Only) are accepted. A copy of the purchase order must accompany any order.





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Outcome Assessment and Program Evaluation: Focusing the Process

By Jude Hirsch and Liz Speelman, both at Georgia College & State University

researchers, and the like. In order for program evaluation data to be useful, consideration of potential users, their values and needs, is important so that multiple pictures can be built into a single process or multiple processes can be developed.

Outcome assessment is about understanding if programming has the desired impact on participants. A focus on outcomes means there is an intent to achieve something that is definable, recognizable, achievable, and measurable. Often intent is described as specific knowledge, skills, developmental attributes, behaviors, or attitudes that participants actually develop as a result of programming. Intent implies starting with the end in mind, clearly articulating program goals, and developing activities and strategies for achieving them. The challenge is most often the assessment plan. Another challenge is assuming that assessment data is linked to the complexities and variations that normally occur in program delivery, other contextual factors, or happenstance. To return to the camera analogy – the better your camera and the more pictures you take; the more likely it is that you will get good results – and the good thing is that there are lots of experts out there making cameras and other folks taking good pictures of the same thing you are!

In a previous article (Parallel Lines, Fall 2009) Lee Gillis and Liz Speelman wrote about knowing what you want to evaluate or assess. Their article, based on their meta-analysis of the effectiveness of challenge courses, highlights the relationship between program evaluation and outcome assessment. They discussed the need for knowing by whom and how program evaluation data will be used and its mission relevance, as well as factors that impact the quality and process of outcome assessment. In Parallel Lines, Spring 2010 and Fall 2010 Liz and I (Jude) wrote about creating a culture of assessment and recording detail about challenge course programs. We discussed the need to know what you are already doing that may contribute to evaluation (program or outcome) and offered strategies for creating a plan of action for determining if your needs are focused on program evaluation (program quality), outcome assessment (goals and objectives), or markers that may contribute to the utility of demographics, delivery, and context. The next article will focus primarily on some outcome assessment essentials and provide some information about resources that may be helpful for clarifying goals and objectives and selecting assessment strategies.

A great source of evaluation advice once said to me (Jude) focusing the evaluation process is like a journey – it sets direction and establishes a tone that ultimately defines the rest of the trip. He also said that evaluation is an often misunderstood and complex process that results in frustration because it doesn't get used. So we have decided to focus (yes focus) Part 3 in this series on the meaning of and relationship between the terms program evaluation and outcome assessment in the hope that it will help you effectively implement and use the results of both.

Simply put, program evaluation is an umbrella term. It should include outcome assessment because if you can't see success, you can't learn from it and if you can't see failure, you can't correct it. Think of it as a bank account – money in, money out – program evaluation concentrates on the “money in” side of the equation – what we are doing, what we are doing well, and what we can do better. Outcome assessment concentrates on the “money out” side of the equation – what are participants learning, is the learning what we want it to be, and how significant and lasting is it. If the right amount of currency isn't put in the bank account, it is unlikely to result in the purchase power intended.

The point of program evaluation is to take a picture of what is going on so that a program stays healthy. However the camera can only capture what you point it at and only at a particular point in time. Most of us are lucky if we get one great picture out of every twenty pictures taken. Program evaluation is about the activities, characteristics, and delivery of programs. It is used to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and make decisions about future programming. To do so, program evaluators systematically collect information about a broad range of topics for a variety of possible uses by funders, decision makers, policy makers, planners, program staff and administrators, clients, future evaluators or

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Announcements

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Calendar of Events

Date	Event
April 4 - 5	Board Meeting
June 24	Finalized Budget
July 15	Parallel Lines Summer Issue Deadline
August 2 & 4	Board Meeting – Burlington, Vermont
August 3 - 4	PVM Symposium – Burlington, Vermont
August 15	Parallel Lines Summer Issue Published
October 17 - 18	Board Meeting
February 9 - 12	ACCT Conference – Boston, Massachusetts



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