

Northeast

DEALER

The Newsletter of NORTHEAST EQUIPMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Cyber Attack Frustrates Equipment Dealers

Dealers forced to use manual processes after software provider hacked

By GERALYN WICHERS and JOHN GREIG

Glacier Farm Media - A cyber attack on a major software provider has made providing parts and service difficult for some agriculture equipment dealers.

"This is certainly completely disruptive to our equipment dealers that are using the CDK platform," said John Schmeiser, president of the North American Equipment Dealers Association, Canada.

Tech firm CDK's software was taken offline last week after a cyberattack by the BlackSuit ransomware group. CDK is being asked to pay tens of millions of dollars by the hackers. Reuters reports that the company expects dealers to be offline until at least June 30.

CDK provides business management software to dealers of all makes of farm equipment, so major dealers of John Deere, CNH and are working without digital systems across the country. CDK is also the leading provider of management software to automobile dealers and thousands of those dealerships are offline.

CDK says it has 15,000 North American dealers on its system.

Wawanesa, Man. farmer Jeff Elder said he was able to get the parts he needed at a Rocky Mountain Equipment dealership in Brandon, however staff were relying on memory to find parts or looking them up on their phones.

"They had resorted to writing down orders on paper," said Elder via text. "He couldn't invoice me and said I would receive an invoice by email whenever they could get that done."

Rocky Mountain Equipment declined to comment.

"Everything is being done manually," said Schmeiser. "You can just imagine the amount of time that our dealerships are spending on manual processes."

Parts are tracked and managed through digital inventory systems.

"We have to actually know where the part is, to go out and find it and fulfill that customer's order without using our computer system to tell us where it is or how many that we have on order."

Invoicing also has to be manual, said Schmeiser.

Equipment can be sold, but the process is manual and inventory isn't available on a computer system. Tracking orders is also challenging.

[Read entire article.](#) See related article on page 10.

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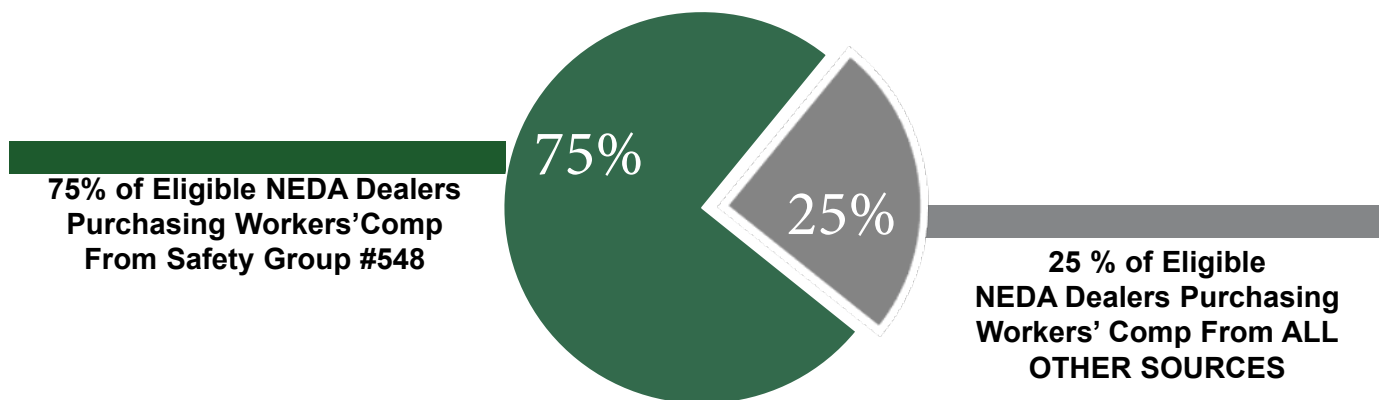
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2019-2020	35.0%
2018-2019	40.0%
2017-2018	40.0%
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Observations

from the **FIELD**

While participating in a recent conference and conversations with others working in our industry, it seemed to me that workforce development, interest rates, and bonus depreciation were the top three issues on dealers' minds.

Of the three issues, I'd argue that interest rates would be the only issue that we as dealers have virtually no opportunity to influence. It appears the FED is fully committed to ensuring that inflation reaches their 2% target rate. Based on the economic reports I've read of late, it seems that inflation is heading in the right direction. It remains to be seen if the recent progress will be enough for the FED to start lowering interest rates this fall. **Let's hope that it does!**

As has been reported, the full House passed late Wednesday, by a 357 to 70 vote, H.R. 7024, the [Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024](#), which includes **100% bonus** depreciation, as well as research and development expensing and an expansion of the Child Tax Credit. <https://www.thinkadvisor.com/2024/01/31/house-passes-tax-bill-with-100-bonus-depreciation/> Unfortunately, once again political interests seem to be derailing compromise and the legislative progress, with Senate Republicans working to ensure that the Biden administration isn't perceived as notching another "win".

While I understand the political strategy, I want to take this opportunity to encourage equipment dealers to contact their Senators before they leave for the summer recess and encourage them to pass/enact the legislation, knowing that the legislation will help bring a modicum of predictability to our dealerships, the manufacturers we represent and the customers we serve. I'd argue that compromise/working in the public's interest should be the rule rather than the exception.

At that same conference I talked to one multilocation dealer who told me that they'd hire 20 technicians tomorrow if "we could find them". Thinking back over my career, with the association and the dealer visits/conversations I've been privileged to have, finding, hiring, and retaining well qualified service technicians would hold the #1 challenge mentioned by an overwhelming margin. Clearly there isn't a single/simple solution to the challenge, more especially it is my opinion that the challenge will require a multipronged approach and cooperation of "competing" dealers, manufacturers, and industry associated organizations. Ignoring the challenge/refusing to work collaboratively will likely lead to significant consequences for our industry, negatively impacting sales of wholegoods, service labor, and parts.

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself!"

— Henry Ford

Business fumes as Democrats blast GOP for blocking corporate tax credits

Senate Democrats say Senate Republicans are blocking an expansion of the child tax credit and a package of corporate tax credits, even though business groups are clamoring for its passage, because they want to deny President Biden a legislative victory five months before Election Day.

Read in The Hill: <https://apple.news/Ajv1yq95ZShSnq8aolxKcWw>
Shared from [Apple News](#)



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ASSOCIATION & MEMBER NEWS

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Chappell Tractor Opens New Location

For five generations, Chappell Tractor has been serving northern New England contractors with some of the most sought-after construction equipment products in the industry. Founded 69 years ago in Milford, N.H., the company expanded in the 90s and 2000s with locations in Brentwood and Concord, N.H.

"With a reputation for a commitment to customer satisfaction and product support second to none, the Chappell family has developed a great following," said Brad Chappell, partner of Chappell Tractor.

Chappell Tractor has now opened its fourth location at 9 Rosenfeld Drive, Hopedale, Mass., formerly The Nice Company.

"We made the move to open up a Massachusetts facility to support the Hitachi product line and our Hitachi customers," said Corey Chappell, president of Chappell Tractor.

When Hitachi expanded its product offering to include excavators, Chappell Tractor was named the exclusive dealer of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and parts of Connecticut.

"With 26 in-house technicians, nine mobile technicians, 16 parts reps and nine sales representatives, we are well prepared to support the 7,500-square-foot facility that we have opened in Hopedale, Mass.," Chappell said.

Chappell Tractor's new facility has been recently remodeled and offers four service bays, a well-inventoried parts department and a great selection of Hitachi machines available for sale or rent. The Hitachi product offering includes 12 models of compact excavators, along with five models of compact wheel loaders, 28 mid-sized to large excavators, 18 mid-sized to large wheel loaders. Hitachi's mining equipment division offers 17 quarry sized excavators and six haul trucks.

Mark Westberg will be the general manager of the Massachusetts facility, and Chris Lajoie and Josh Stack are the newest members of the equipment sales team at the Massachusetts store.

For more information, visit www.chappelltractor.com.

► Published online ConstructionEquipmentGuide.com | Northeast Division | 6.13.24



CEG photo



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Chappell Tractor has opened a new facility in Hopedale, MA.

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WL15F-V2	\$20.64	\$19.61	\$18.57 x 20
WL18RCT-V2	\$19.06	\$18.12	\$17.15 x 20
WL48F-V2	\$35.12	\$33.36	\$31.61 x 20
WL83FR-V2	\$24.15	\$22.94	\$21.74 x 20
WL93FR-V2	\$25.87	\$24.58	\$23.28 x 20
WL93FW-V2	\$25.87	\$24.58	\$23.28 x 20

WL83FR-V2

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BLOG

What the New Overtime Rule Means for Workers

Filed in Wage and Hour Issues Wages and Benefits - 4.23.24

By JESSICA LOOMAN

One of the basic principles of the American workplace is that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Simply put, every worker's time has value. A cornerstone of that promise is the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) requirement that when most workers work more than 40 hours in a week, they get paid more. The Department of Labor's new overtime regulation is restoring and extending this promise for millions more lower-paid salaried workers in the U.S.

Overtime protections have been a critical part of the FLSA since 1938 and were established to protect workers from exploitation and to benefit workers, their families and our communities. Strong overtime protections help build America's middle class and ensure that workers are not overworked and underpaid.

Some workers are specifically exempt from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime protections, including bona fide executive, administrative or professional employees. This exemption, typically referred to as the "EAP" exemption, applies when:

1. An employee is paid a salary,
2. The salary is not less than a minimum salary threshold amount, and
3. The employee primarily performs executive, administrative or professional duties.

While the department increased the minimum salary required for the EAP exemption from overtime pay every 5 to 9 years between 1938 and 1975, long periods between increases to the salary requirement after 1975 have caused an erosion of the real value of the salary threshold, lessening its effectiveness in helping to identify exempt EAP employees.

The department's new overtime rule was developed based on almost 30 listening sessions across the country and the final rule was issued after reviewing over 33,000 written comments. We heard from a wide variety of members of the public who shared valuable insights to help us develop this Administration's overtime rule, including from workers who told us: "I would love the opportunity to...be compensated for time worked beyond 40 hours, or alternately be given a raise," and "I make around \$40,000 a year and most week[s] work well over 40 hours (likely in the 45-50 range). This rule change would benefit me greatly and ensure that my time is paid for!" and "Please, I would love to be paid for the extra hours I work!"

The department's final rule, which [went] into effect on July 1, 2024, will increase the standard salary level that helps define and delimit which salaried workers are entitled to overtime pay protections under the FLSA.

Starting July 1, most salaried workers who earn less than \$844 per week will become eligible for overtime pay under the final rule. And on Jan. 1, 2025, most salaried workers who make less than \$1,128 per week will become eligible for overtime pay. As these changes occur, job duties will continue to determine overtime exemption status for most salaried employees.

The rule will also increase the total annual compensation requirement for highly compensated employees (who are not entitled to overtime pay under the FLSA if certain requirements are met) from \$107,432 per year to \$132,964 per year on July 1, 2024, and then set it equal to \$151,164 per year on Jan. 1, 2025.

[Read entire blog.](#)

► Published online [Department of Labor](#) | 4.23.24

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

In mid-June, the VT House put forward an amended draft and asked the VT Senate to suspend their rules and take up House amendments. Although the Senate did suspend the rules and took up several other pieces of legislation, they did not take up H.81 (VT's AG Equipment R2R bill). To be sure, their inaction on H.81 was a win for AG equipment manufacturers and dealers (in our opinion), but the fact that the bill got as far as it did is concerning. Worse, in my opinion, was the specific reference to workforce (technician) shortages in the AG/Forestry equipment industry incorporated into the findings and purpose.

"H.81, Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

(6) Due to workforce, seasonal workload, and geographic constraints, authorized repair providers are not always able to meet the demand for timely diagnosis, maintenance, or repair services to farmers and foresters in this State.

(7) As for many Vermont employers, critical workforce shortages prevent authorized repair providers from operating at full staff capacity, which can contribute to costly delays in performing diagnosis, maintenance, and repair services.

(8) The need for more accessible and affordable repair options is felt more acutely among specific sectors of the population, notably Vermont residents in more rural and remote areas.

(9) Original equipment manufacturer shops and authorized repair providers are sometimes not located close to owners or independent repair providers, which may require owners or independent repair providers to travel long distances for repair or to be without functioning agricultural or forestry equipment for longer periods of time."

Legislative findings are used by legislators to justify and explain their reasons for interference in contracts, regulations, etc. to the courts who reference them when determining the legislature's intent and, ultimately, deciding if the legislation is constitutional or not.

Knowing that the issue will again be brought before the legislature sooner than later, it's clear that we as dealers and manufacturers must work cooperatively to recruit, train, and retain quality parts and service staff. "We" (dealers) must take active and aggressive action focused on clearly identifying the career pathways. In addition, we must actively support and manage candidate successes progress, adequately fund that work, identify quality education partners, and ensure that pathways incorporate adequate flexibility/customization. We must also partner with vetted independent third-party validation providers, actively advertise and communicate opportunities to parents, students, teachers, guidance counselors, legislators, and governmental staff (specifically Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education).

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Digital Defence Must Start With Prevention

By JANELLE RUDOLPH and DIANA MARTI

Saskatchewan cybersecurity expert Brennan Schmidt and Ali Dehghantanha of the University of Guelph offered the following tips to prevent a cybersecurity breach, handle an attack and mop up the fallout.

TO PREVENT A BREACH

- Take a comprehensive inventory of all technology and identify the most important and potentially vulnerable pieces.
- Use unique, solid passwords, enable multi-factor authentication where possible and consider using a password manager program.
- Limit farm system and sensitive information access to essential personnel.
- Educate the team to recognize cyber threats like unauthorized access to feeding systems.
- Conduct routine audits and simulations with security specialists and partner with trusted companies with strong cybersecurity measures before sharing data.
- Use updated systems and an encrypted Virtual Private Network to separate home and farm business access. Keep the farm network inaccessible to guests and suppliers.
- Engage with cybersecurity professionals for assistance and use automated and remote monitoring systems.
- Always back up information to external drives with no

internet access and secure clouds and maintain detailed records of communications/transactions to identify discrepancies. Schmidt added that storing an external hard drive in a separate location, away from the farm, can keep information safe in case of an emergency such as a flood or fire.

DURING A BREACH

- Remain calm and immediately report the incident to your cybersecurity service provider. It will advise on next steps.
- Attempt to determine the scope and impact of the breach.
- Do not negotiate with hackers directly. Leave that to professionals, who will negotiate for lower ransoms if necessary.
- Never pay a digital currency ransom with your virtual wallet. Let the professionals handle that if payment is necessary.

AFTER A BREACH

- Monitor all systems to ensure they are safe and meet security standards.
- Identify and address system vulnerabilities to stave off future breaches.
- The evolution of cybersecurity is ongoing; keep up to date on current threats and educate employees on changes.
 - ▶ Published online [The Western Producer](#) | 6.17.24

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS BEGINS AGAIN WHILE FUTURE OF FARM BILL REMAINS UNCERTAIN

JUNE 13, 2024 BLOG

www.farmaid.org

[Read more here.](#)

On Monday, June 11, the House Appropriations Committee released their proposed funding bill for the 2025 fiscal year. Appropriations bills are passed annually and determine how much funding different parts of the federal government receive. The Agriculture Appropriations bill determines how much funding USDA and important agriculture programs receive. Disappointingly, the House's proposed funding bill makes spending cuts – cutting total funding by 3.6% from 2024 – to every Farm Aid priority program, cuts SNAP funding and includes very harmful “riders” (unrelated policies tacked onto a spending bill.) Among these riders are measures to eliminate protections for small meat and poultry producers against large companies, prohibit equity, diversity and inclusion programs at the USDA, and allows individuals and organizations to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ people on the basis of “sincerely held religious beliefs.” The proposed bill passed along party lines over the course of a very quick 30-minute vote. The bill will be brought to the whole House for a vote in July.

Meanwhile, on June 12, Republicans on the Senate Agriculture Committee released a very general framework for their version of a Senate farm bill. The summary lacks any specific funding details and is a very high-level overview, but at first glance appears to be very similar to the House's Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 (otherwise known as the farm bill) that passed in May. The move could signal that there is momentum building in the Senate around an effort to pass a farm bill before the end of the year.



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A photograph of several wind turbines silhouetted against a bright, orange, and yellow sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong glow behind the turbines.

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PROTECT WITH A PERMIT!

Spotted Lanternfly Permit Requirements and Guidance

Spotted lanternfly (SLF) is an invasive insect from Asia currently found in Pennsylvania (PA) and some neighboring states. This pest threatens important agricultural commodities including grape, hardwood, fruit trees, landscape and nursery industries that contribute \$19-



25 billion dollars annually to PA's economy.

The PA Department of Agriculture issued a Spotted Lanternfly Order of Quarantine and Treatment to stop the movement of SLF to new areas within or outside of the quarantine, and to slow its spread within the quarantine.



All AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL businesses, agencies, and organizations working within the quarantine, which move products, vehicles or other conveyances within or out of the quarantine are required to obtain an SLF permit. Businesses located in SLF infested areas of other states must also have a permit if traveling or transporting goods into PA.

The permit process:

- The permit process requires managers and/or supervisors to complete the online permit course to demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of the pest and quarantine requirements. The permit course will teach the participant how to protect their businesses, customers and communities from SLF.
- After successful completion of the permit course, that person is considered a trainer and will be responsible for training all employees for whom the trainer is responsible on what to look for and how to safeguard against moving spotted lanternfly on products, vehicles and other conveyances.
- The course includes educational materials and other resources that may be used or adapted for employee training and documentation purposes. Individual employees should not take the online permit course.
- The free online course is located on the Penn State Extension website: <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-permit-training>

- The course may be completed in one session or in increments as the participant's schedule permits.
- Print the course certificate of completion; copy and use as a temporary permit(s). The official permit will be sent to the email address listed on the course registration in 1-2 weeks. The permit holder may print copies as needed.
- Permittees should then train employees and provide them with a permit copy. Employee training PowerPoints are available through Penn State: <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-permit-training-powerpoint-slides>
- Recordkeeping of training, inspection of vehicles, and control measures taken (such as destruction of living lanternfly, etc.) must be maintained for a minimum of two years.

For more information about SLF, visit agriculture.pa.gov/spottedlanternfly

Direct additional questions to SLFPERMIT@pa.gov
▶ Published online www.agriculture.pa.gov

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Troy Ott Named Dean of Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA — Troy Ott, interim director of the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, has been named dean of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, effective July 1.

Ott succeeds Laszlo Kulcsar, professor of rural sociology and demography, who served as interim dean of the college for nine months, following the retirement of Rick Roush.

As dean, Ott will oversee all aspects of Penn State's oldest college, which awarded the nation's first baccalaureate degrees in agriculture in 1861. Today, the College of Agricultural Sciences is a world leader in agricultural research and education, with faculty, staff and students who pursue discoveries and solutions that promote the well-being of people in Pennsylvania, the nation and the world.

Ott was selected for the position following a national search.

"Dr. Ott's deep connection to Penn State, gained through his tenure as an administrator, faculty member and former undergraduate student, has enabled him to develop a strong vision for the future of the College of Agricultural Sciences as the cornerstone of the University's land-grant mission," said Tracy Langkilde, interim executive vice president and provost. "His ability to communicate his passion and vision will allow him to engage broad

audiences, including Pennsylvania's legislature, which is essential to Penn State's success. I am delighted that Dr. Ott has accepted the role of dean, and I am confident that the college will thrive under his leadership."

"The College of Agricultural Sciences is at the core of Penn State's land-grant mission to serve the citizens of the commonwealth," Ott said. "Having grown up in a rural community in upper Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where I participated in 4-H and was employed in production agriculture from a young age, I experienced firsthand how the college can transform the lives of Pennsylvanians and how this impact radiates out across the country and around the world. The opportunity to work with such an accomplished team of faculty, staff and students to build upon that legacy is both humbling and energizing."

Ott said that among the college's strengths are the scope, scale and quality of the research, teaching and Extension work.

Importantly, he said, the college's success ultimately depends on the quality of the education it provides to its students, who are the next generation of leaders in agriculture, natural resource management and the bioeconomy, among other areas.

[Read entire article.](#)

▶ Published online [Penn State News](#) | 6.4.24

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Due Diligence Dynamics

By IAN C. PERRY and ROMAN A. BASI

Before a prospective buyer's commitment to purchase a target company (a company being sold), the buyer will want to fully understand the company it's buying and the obligations it's assuming. More specifically, the prospective buyer wants to understand the target's liabilities, risks, synergies, and value. To do so, the buyer and target company will engage in due diligence. Due diligence is a comprehensive appraisal of the target company by a prospective buyer. The target company will be tasked with turning over some of its most sensitive information, a process that will make most business owners uneasy. The unease grows as many prospective buyers are direct competitors who can gain a competitive advantage by obtaining the synergy, financial model, and client, vendor, or supplier lists of the target. All of these are items that hold a tremendous amount of value and are generally disclosed to the prospective buyer before the close of the transaction. Releasing such sensitive information to a prospective buyer is a task that requires a strategic disposition. As you can see, the complexities of due diligence vary and the importance of an experienced Merger and Acquisition (M&A) due diligence team is vital.

Generally, there are two driving aspects of due diligence. One is financial due diligence which encompasses an in-depth review of the target company's financial statements, processes, business structure, and value. The other is legal due diligence which assesses any legal risks, the target's contractual obligations, the structure of the target company, and the overall viability of the transaction. From the target company's standpoint of the transaction, a third aspect is immersed in both the accounting and legal due diligence phases. The aspect of having a due diligence strategy that encompasses the awareness and understanding of not only the logistics of due diligence, but also the ability to control the data room, knowledge of the need for potential redactions, and most importantly, the insight on how to protect and provide the target company's most sensitive documents and business secrets to the buyer. In essence, your due diligence team must maintain a sound path for the transaction, understand the buyer's intent, and release sensitive information as required, while protecting the interests of the target company.

Due Diligence can often be categorized as "hard" or "soft" based on the approach used. Hard due diligence is often concerned with financial statements such as the balance sheet and income statement. This typically entails fundamental analysis and the use of financial ratios to get a grasp on a company's financial positions and make projections for the future. This type of due diligence often identifies red flags or accounting inconsistencies. Soft due diligence acts as a counterbalance and focuses on a more qualitative approach looking at aspects such as quality of

management, people within the company, and the loyalty of the customer base. There are typically many drivers of business success that numbers cannot fully capture, such as corporate culture, employee relationships, and leadership. Most M&A deals (70%-90%) if failed, are often due to the human element being ignored.

It is very common in these types of transactions for a buyer to engage with an accounting team, legal team, and various real estate or insurance teams to cover all aspects of the transaction. As a result, the complexities and variety of due diligence requests range on a wide spectrum depending on the target company. Employing an M&A team with the requisite knowledge and strategy to cover all aspects of the transaction is rare, but if found and employed adds tremendous value to the logistics, insight, and negotiations that often take place throughout the due diligence process. Additionally, an M&A team that can pinpoint a suspicious or questionable buyer aimed at undermining its competition through due diligence disclosures is necessary in some cases as occasionally buyers do not act in good faith. Ensuring the protection of your company's data must be a focal point in the due diligence process.

At [The Center for Financial, Legal & Tax Planning, Inc.](#), (The Center) our M&A team is equipped with attorneys, CPAs, and Real Estate Brokers to handle all spectrums of the transaction. Moreover, our team is equipped with the know-how to meet the needs of buyer's requests while maintaining a sense of control necessary in an M&A transaction. If you are in the process of selling your business or selling your business has crossed your mind, please contact The Center for a free consultation. Allow our team to provide a strategic plan to protect your interests and efficiently maintain the logistics of due diligence.

Ian C. Perry is a staff accountant for the Center for Financial, Legal, & Tax Planning, Inc.

Roman A. Basi is an expert on closely held enterprises. He is an attorney/CPA and the President of the Center for Financial, Legal, & Tax Planning, Inc.



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Six More Success Traits of Top Salespeople

In last month's article, I wrote about six success traits of top salespeople. In this article I'll cover six more. As a refresher, here are the first six: a positive attitude, being action oriented, being prepared, being businesslike and business-savvy, the ability to stand out from the crowd, and finally, likeability, trustworthiness, and the ability to build relationships. Now, here are the additional six.

1) Persistence and perseverance

Top salespeople have thick skin, they don't take rejection personally, and they are able to handle massive amounts of it without losing their drive and enthusiasm. It doesn't matter how many times they get told 'no' or get knocked down, they just keep getting up again and again and again.

2) Effective communication

Top salespeople are great communicators, knowing what to say and when to say it. They actively listen to people and are able to hear them well and read between the lines. They ask many questions, listen well to the answers, and take notes.

Top salespeople don't confuse people by giving them more information than they need; yet they give them enough information to make a well-thought-out buying decision. Top salespeople are clear and concise in the information they convey.

Top salespeople have frank, direct conversations with people and talk to them the way they want to be talked to.

Top salespeople also get the information they need such as finding out who the decision-maker is and making sure the prospect is qualified.

3) Empathy

Top salespeople have empathy for their customers and prospects. They are able to put themselves in other people's shoes and become emotionally involved. Top salespeople genuinely like people; in return, people feel their understanding and compassion. Top salespeople enjoy helping people and they believe, with every fiber of their being, that buying and owning their product or service will help people.

4) Professionalism, integrity, and work ethic

Top salespeople are complete professionals with complete integrity. In addition, they have a great work ethic. Everything about them conveys that they are professionals.

Top salespeople do not burn bridges. They do not talk negatively about the competition. They are always on their



BY JOHN CHAPIN

best behavior because they're aware that they never know who is watching and listening.

Top salespeople are honest. If they don't know an answer, they admit it, and then find the answer and follow up promptly. Top salespeople don't encourage others to become involved with their product if it isn't right for them. They are straightforward with people.

Top salespeople work both hard and smart. They prioritize customers and prospects. Top salespeople recognize their bread-and-butter clientele and focus closely on nurturing those relationships and finding more people like them. They are willing to work as hard as possible to get the job done, while at the same time realizing that working smart is the

ultimate goal.

Top salespeople go the extra mile. They always deliver more than they promise and never leave anything to chance.

Top salespeople always follow up, doing what they say they will do, when they say they will do it. They return phone calls and reply to correspondence promptly. They follow up on unfinished business.

Top salespeople take 100 percent responsibility for everything they do, both in their professional and personal lives.

5) Team player and leader.

Top salespeople are team players. They look for ways to contribute to the team. They share information such as success stories that may help the other salespeople in their company. They pull for their peers and colleagues. They use a big sale by another person in the office to motivate them. They are focused on becoming better as individuals and believe that by doing so, they help the people around them improve and make their company stronger.

Top salespeople work well with other departments. They develop strong professional relationships with co-workers. They get along with everyone, including the person no one else can relate to. They let the people they work with know they are appreciated.

Top salespeople expect to be at the top and they are comfortable there. They do not look down on or see others as inferior. Top salespeople realize that others do certain, non-sales-related things better than them, yet in the world of selling, they always see themselves at the top of the mountain. They help other salespeople to be successful. They lead by example.

continued on page 18

Federal Budget Outlines Plans For Consultations on Equipment Interoperability and The Right To Repair Machinery Law To Prevent Machinery Lockouts Stalled In Senate

By **SCOTT GARVEY**

Canadian short-line agriculture equipment manufacturers raised the alarm recently when manufacturers of major brands locked the onboard digital systems on selected machines.

The move effectively prevents short-line manufacturers from connecting their attachments to those machines, which locks them out of the market. It has particularly affected Canadian short-line manufacturers who build combine and swather headers.

Why it matters: The question of who has the right to repair has been hotly debated in North America.

A lobbying effort by short-line manufacturers and others in the industry grabbed the attention of politicians last year and led to introduction of Bill C-294, a private member's bill that received rare unanimous approval in the House of Commons.

The bill is an amendment to the Copyright Act, a legal starting point to prohibit major brands from denying short-line companies the necessary codes to synchronize their equipment to a major brand machine's digital system.

Bill C-294 moved to the Senate June 15, 2023, and has been given first reading there. However, it still has a long way to go before becoming law.

"The bill needs to be debated and adopted at second reading, studied in committee, then debated and adopted at third reading before it can receive royal assent and become law," said the Senate's Communications, Broadcasting and Publications Directorate in response to questions about the delay.

"If the Senate makes any changes to the bill, it would then have to go back to the House for another vote."

As of early April, the bill's second reading status on the Senate's LEGISinfo web page shows "no activity," meaning it has stalled for the moment.

In its spring budget, the federal government further addressed the interoperability issue, saying aside from amending the Copyright Act, which Bill C-294 will do, it will be "amending the Competition Act, as announced in the 2023 Fall Economic Statement, to prevent manufacturers from refusing, in an anti-competitive manner, to provide the parts, tools or software needed to fix devices and products.

[Read entire article.](#)

▶ Published online [Farmtario](#) | 6.12.24



Six More Success Traits

continued from page 16

Top salespeople lead prospects and customers to the right decisions. They skillfully set the ground rules for the buying process and they are not at the mercy of the buyer or the buying decision.

6) Continuing education and training.

Top salespeople are committed to being the best they can possibly be. They are always getting better at selling. They read sales books, listen to sales information at home and in their car, watch videos, and talk to other successful salespeople. They know selling and they know their business, yet they also know there is always more to learn. Top salespeople are teachable.

They study their competition inside and out. Often they know more about the competition's product than the competition does.

Top salespeople stay up-to-date on all new developments in their industry and anything that could affect business. They are constantly looking through trade

publications and magazines. They study all news sources for any news on their industry or the customers they serve.

The above six success traits, added to the previous six for a total of twelve, may seem like a lot. That said, being a top salesperson really comes down to having a great attitude, a sincere interest in helping other people, and a burning desire to succeed. With those elements in place, everything else will follow.

John Chapin is a motivational sales speaker, coach, and trainer. For his free eBook: 30 Ideas to Double Sales and monthly article, or to have him speak at your next event, go to www.completeselling.com. E-mail: johnchapin@completeselling.com. John has over 36 years of sales experience as a number one sales rep and is the author of the 2010 sales book of the year: Sales Encyclopedia (Axiom Book Awards).

You can subscribe to his YouTube for great sales tips. Latest video: [The Foundational Basics Necessary for Sales Success](#).

U.S. Headed for Record Ag Trade Deficit

Forecast \$32 billion deficit is caused by a multitude of factors

WASHINGTON — After decades of substantial U.S. agricultural trade surpluses, the U.S. is forecast to experience a record trade deficit for the second year in a row. American Farm Bureau Federation economists analyzed the factors contributing to the deficit in their latest Market Intel report.

According to the analysis, the forecast \$32 billion deficit is caused by a multitude of factors, one of which is rising imports of fresh fruits and vegetables. American produce farmers face significant challenges in competing with less expensive foreign-grown produce, most notably a lack of affordable and available farm labor.

"Production of many fresh fruits and vegetables is extremely labor intensive," AFBF economist Betty Resnick writes in the Market Intel. "For U.S. agricultural production broadly, labor accounts for about 10% of expenses. For fruit and vegetable production – [labor costs account](#) for 38.5% and 28.8% of input costs, respectively."

Factors contributing to decreased agricultural export values include falling commodity prices for American crops and a strong U.S. dollar.

"The strong U.S. dollar is making U.S. products less competitive on currency exchange alone," Resnick explains. "For instance, Japan is consistently a top-5 market for U.S. agricultural products. The

Japanese yen is the lowest it has been against the U.S. dollar since 1990 and half of its value from only 12 years ago, in 2012. While this exchange rate is great for U.S. tourists visiting Japan, it is very difficult for Japanese consumers seeking to purchase quality U.S. products."

Further complicating matters, the U.S. has not entered into trade agreements with new countries since 2012 while other countries have signed agreements of their own.

"This is a difficult time to be a farmer, and looking ahead at another year with a record ag trade deficit proves that," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Our farmers are facing high labor costs — if they can hire help at all, competition from growers in other countries and stagnant, outdated trade agreements. I hope Congress and the administration see this historic deficit as a wake-up call and work to implement policy changes to address these challenges."

This is the fourth time in six years the U.S. has faced an agricultural trade deficit. Prior to fiscal year 2019, the U.S. had not experienced an agricultural [trade](#) deficit since at least 1967, and possibly not in its entire history.

[Read entire article.](#)

► Published online [Morning AgClips](#) | 6.20.24

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Farmers Are Now Being Offered \$1,000 Per Acre or More to Lease Their Land For Solar

By TYNE MORGAN

The push to add solar energy is gaining traction across the U.S., and it's coming with sticker shock on just how much solar companies are willing to pay farmers to lease their ground. A survey of farmers shows the majority of farmers are being offered more than \$1,000 per acre by companies for solar leasing, and that could also drive up the price of cash rental rates.

The Biden administration has a goal of a net-zero electric grid by 2035, with solar and battery-powered energy as three vehicles to get there. As the administration works to accelerate their "clean energy" plan across the U.S., land is in high demand, especially for future solar projects.

Michael Langemeier, an agricultural economist with Purdue University, says the Ag Economy Barometer is revealing the sticker shock of solar leasing rates. The survey of 400 agricultural producers, is now asking farmers how many had actively engaged in discussions with any

companies about leasing farmland you own for solar installation, and the response was surprising.

"It was 19% who said they have engaged in discussions, and so think about that, that's a huge percentage of the survey respondents have actually engaged in someone about leases. That doesn't mean they've signed a thing, but that means that they've actually been approached," says Langemeier.

With expanding renewable energy installations such as wind and solar, The Top Producer Podcast host Paul Neiffer asked David Muth of Peoples Company Capital Markets, the Investment platform for Peoples Company, how those land uses change long term land values.

[Read entire article.](#)

▶ Published online [AgWeb Farm Journal](#) | 5.8.24

New Pennsylvania Law

New Distracted Driving Law Bans Use of Handheld Devices

A [new law](#) prohibits the use of handheld cellular and other devices while operating a vehicle on a Pennsylvania highway or traffic way. Drivers may still use their phone if they are using hands-free technology, such as a docking station, Bluetooth, or speaker technology.

For the first year, only warnings will be issued for violations. After that, there will be a \$50 fine.

Distracted driving fatalities in Pennsylvania surged to a decade high in 2022, claiming 80 lives. The AAA Traffic Safety Culture Index [found](#) that the majority of drivers believe distracted driving has outpaced all other traffic-related issues as a growing safety concern. All of Pennsylvania's border states and 28 others have enacted hands-free laws.



40% of Businesses Never Reopen Following a Disaster

Severe weather and natural disasters continue to occur regularly across the United States. The aftermath can be devastating, leaving businesses damaged or destroyed. In fact, 40% of those never reopen their doors again. This summer, Federated Insurance® is reinforcing the message that you can't control the weather, or always prevent disasters, but you can plan ahead to increase the chances of your business recovering.

Recently, Federated Insurance sent member clients an informative email highlighting the regionally-specific severe weather and natural disasters that could impact them. The email will connect member clients with:

- [A Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery Plan](#)
- [A Tornado Preparedness Plan](#)
- [A Wildfire Safety Zone Guide](#)
- Additional severe weather and disaster training resources are located in [mySHIELD®](#), Federated's personalized and customizable source for risk management resources available to clients.

Federated® is encouraging member clients to take action today with the help of disaster planning and recovery risk management resources. To discuss your unique disaster planning needs, reach out to your local [Federated Insurance marketing representative](#).

¹ Forbes. - Accessed 5/13/2024.

Echo Shows New Backpack Blower

By **GLENN HANSEN**

Echo recently released its new PB-5810, a backpack blower designed for both commercial and homeowner use. It's available at an MSRP of \$430 and is offered with either a hip or tube-mounted throttle. This is the second gas-powered backpack blower the manufacturer has introduced within the past year. Echo said its PB-7910 expanded its commercial-grade lineup and it the most powerful blower on the market under the \$600 MSRP.

"As demand for outdoor power equipment continues to rise, Echo remains committed to innovation, for all types of users and applications," said Jason Wilk, Echo senior product manager. "The PB-5810 is a high-performance addition to our lineup, offering dependability, comfort and power. With features that users have come to love, this model underscores why Echo has maintained its position as a leading manufacturer for more than 50 years."

[Read entire article.](#)

▶ Published online [OPE+](#) | 6.24.24



Kawasaki Gas Engines Used in Lawn Mowers and Utility Vehicles Recalled for Fire and Burn Hazards

The engines are used primarily in riding mowers from Cub Cadet, John Deere, Kubota, and other brands

By **PAUL HOPE**

Kawasaki Motors USA announced today the recall of about 68,500 gas engines used in riding and zero-turn-radius lawn mowers and utility vehicles.

The recall involves eight engines that were sold independently or built into lawn tools from Bad Boy Mowers, BigDog, Bobcat, Cub Cadet, Hustler, John Deere, and Kubota. The recalled engines can overheat, posing fire and burn hazards, according to the announcement from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Kawasaki has received eight reports of fires involving the recalled engines but no reports of injuries. The recall covers more than two dozen models of riding mowers and utility vehicles. It also includes eight different models of engines, sold as stand-alone products, all with the Kawasaki name. The full list is below.

The engines and/or lawn mowers and utility vehicles with the engines installed were sold at Bad Boy Mowers, BigDog, Bobcat, Cub Cadet, Hustler, John Deere, Kawasaki, and Kubota dealers nationwide from April 2021 through December 2023. They cost \$4,000 to \$15,500. If you own one of the recalled products, you should immediately stop using it and follow the manufacturer-specific directions below for a remedy.

[Read entire article.](#)

▶ Published online **Consumer Reports** | 6.13.24

Deere Cuts Jobs Due to Weak Demand

By **REUTERS NEWS SERVICE**

CHICAGO (Reuters) — **Deere** said it would cut an unspecified number of production and salaried jobs to save costs as it grapples with a downturn in farm equipment demand.

The cuts will reduce "overlap and redundancy in roles and responsibilities," Deere disclosed in a filing.

The news comes weeks after the company trimmed its annual profit forecast for the second time and projected steeper declines in sales of large agriculture equipment.

Lower crop prices are leaving agriculture equipment sellers with an excess of unsold tractors and combines, leading some to offer discounts and suspend new orders.

▶ Published online

[The Western Producer](#) | 6.17.24



Screencap via [deere.com](#)

AGCO Invests in Innova Ag Innovation Fund VI to Drive Next Generation of Farming

AGCO, a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of agricultural machinery and precision ag technology, announced its recent investment in the Innova Ag Innovation Fund VI of venture capital firm, Innova Memphis.

This fund investment is the first executed by AGCO's recently launched corporate venture capital initiative, AGCO Ventures. The deal aligns with AGCO's approach to support the next generation of farming through advanced solutions that promise a more automated, digitized and sustainable future for agriculture.

The Innova team is renowned for its focus on nurturing early-stage startups revolutionizing agriculture.

"We are excited to announce our investment in Innova Ag Innovation Fund VI, a move that reflects our unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of what's possible in agriculture," said Seth Crawford, AGCO senior vice president and general manager, PTx.

"This partnership enables us to tap into the latest innovations in the field, from automation and digitization to sustainability and efficiency, ensuring that we continue to provide our customers with the most advanced and effective solutions on the market."

Through this partnership, AGCO intends to leverage Innova's expertise in identifying and supporting high-potential startups at the forefront of agricultural technology.

[Read entire article.](#)

► Published online
[ConstructionEquipmentGuide.com](https://www.constructionequipmentguide.com) -
6.5.24

Stihl Powers Up Sustainability Efforts on New York City's Governors Island

By **JOHN KMITTA**

Stihl donated \$45,000 worth of professional battery-powered outdoor equipment to The Trust for Governors Island in New York City. The donation will enable the island's horticultural team to maintain more than 120 acres of open space at the popular public destination. In addition, Stihl donated \$10,000 to further The Trust's mission to educate the public about urban climate solutions and the impacts of climate change on our natural surroundings.

"At Stihl, we believe that as a leader in the outdoor power equipment industry, it is our duty to set the example in sustainability and continue to invest time, energy and resources in innovative technologies, programs and partnerships that promote responsible environmental stewardship," said Dr. Nikolas Stihl, chairman of the Advisory and Supervisory Board of Stihl. "Our values align closely with those of The Trust for Governors Island, and we're excited to see Stihl battery power in action here in New York."

The donation includes the new Stihl RZA 760 battery-powered zero-turn mower, professional battery-powered trimmers, blowers and KombiSystems, as well as battery charging solutions. The tools will be used to maintain a mix of historic and newer, manmade landscapes — many of which were created to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

"We are so thankful for the Stihl donation as Governors Island continues to grow as an accessible, year-round destination for our nearly one million visitors," said Clare Newman, president and CEO of The Trust for Governors Island. "Using equipment that produces zero exhaust emissions while eliminating the need for fuel will enable us to care for the more than 120 acres of open space for our visitors to enjoy in a quiet, sustainable manner."

► Published online [OPE+](#) | 6.25.24

Bobcat Expands Tractor Lineup With Introduction of Utility Tractors

Bobcat Company is expanding its tractor lineup with the launch of three utility tractors: the Bobcat UT6066, UT6566 and UT6573. Bobcat utility tractors are built for heavy-duty work, while making it easier for operators of all experience levels to accomplish more on their acreage.

Bobcat Company, a global equipment, innovation and worksite solutions brand, is expanding its tractor lineup with the launch of three utility tractors: the Bobcat UT6066, UT6566 and UT6573. Bobcat utility tractors are built for heavy-duty work, while making it easier for operators of all experience levels to accomplish more on their acreage.

"Designed with intuitive, operator-friendly controls, Bobcat utility tractors are dependable, easy to operate, and highly versatile machines that maximize performance and productivity," said Jonathan Widmer, Bobcat senior product specialist. "There's less demand on operators so they can focus more on leaving behind great results, whether they're putting an implement to work or moving material with the tractor's loader."

[Read entire news release.](#)

► Published online [Bobcat.com news release](https://www.bobcat.com/news-release) | 6.10.24

Bush Hog Releases New App

Bush Hog celebrated the release of its new app at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Kentucky. With the new app Bush Hog aims to enable and strengthen its customer base, sales force, and dealer community. The Bush Hog app will be updated frequently to continue to provide value.



"There is no better venue to launch Bush Hog's app than the National Farm Machinery Show," says Dan Bratt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "With the Farm Machinery Show, we were able to connect with thousands of current and potential customers - all in one place. We are very excited to make it easier for our customers to contact our live customer support team and connect with their local dealer."

Bush Hog dealers and sales reps can also log in to the dealer portal directly from the app. It can be downloaded by searching "Bush Hog" in your App Store. The Bush Hog app works in partnership with Bush Hog's customer support team to provide Bush Hog equipment owners the ability to register their product, configure new products, locate local dealers, and gain the knowledge needed to maintain their equipment.

[Click for more information.](#)

► Published online [Bush Hog website](#)

Used Farm Equipment: Big Deals On The Way?

By **MATTHEW J. GRASSI**

Demand for pre-def tractors is "still strong," according to Machinery Pete - Greg Peterson, and there are some in the market that think farmers should maybe consider the potential to score attractive sales promos later in the season.

"Pre-def" is a term used to refer to tractor models that do not have government mandated selective catalytic reduction (SCR) systems that require Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF). Models containing these systems are often more complex to repair and troubleshoot.

"The demand is still strong, but I would say that maybe the edge is a little bit off (that market)," Peterson tells AgriTalk Radio fill-in host Michelle Rook during his weekly appearance on Monday. "Pre-def tractors - the very, very nicest ones - are still attracting tons of buying interest."

Speaking of interest, high interest rates combined with low commodity prices are among the factors that may entice equipment dealers to roll out some aggressive special offers later this summer.

Also consider that brand new equipment remains expensive and will stay that way for the foreseeable future, and farm equipment sales are cooling down as farmers focus on planting, spreading, and spraying with what they have on the farm. And then seemingly before anyone can blink - BOOM - the summer's over and the time crunch of harvest season is here. For some, the local dealer lot is the furthest thing from mind during that all-out-sprint.

With some dealer lots reportedly stocked full of shiny like-new and new iron that has just been, well, sitting around most of the summer and into the fall, there is a sense that dealers could try to reprime the market by incentivizing buyers.

"Some of these larger (dealer) groups, they've quickly pivoted," Peterson says. "They'll still sell you the new stuff, but I mean, their head is on moving used. That's clear."

[Read entire article.](#)

► Published online [AgWeb Farm Journal](#) | 5.23.24

Ignite Attachments Launches Mini Grapple Lineup

Ignite Attachments, a manufacturer of compact equipment attachments, adds to its growing lineup of direct-to-you products with three new mini grapple offerings.

The new mini bucket, mini rock and mini rake grapples are available in 36- and 44-in. working widths. An innovative dual interface ensures easy, hassle-free paring with any brand of mini track loader making this an ideal solution for rental centers and mixed-fleet landscape operations.

The new attachments continue Ignite's tradition of durable, cost-effective grapple solutions, providing high-quality workmanship, smart engineering and ideal performance, according to the manufacturer.

"When it comes to working in the tightest spots, more and more people are turning to mini track loaders or skid steers," said Trisha Pearson, business director of Ignite Attachments.

"Ignite Attachments works to meet owners/operators where they are, not the pigeonhole our stagnant industry tries to put them in. We recognize the need for cost-effective mini solutions that are dependable, versatile and easy to use."

[Read entire article.](#)

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How Do You Retain Your Top Talent?

Private bonus plans provide strong incentive for top team members to remain with your business — while also helping you stand out among other employers.



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