

Meet the Trainer - Ben Lavery III - Founder of CSTC

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We have a lot of great trainers here at CSTC. We wanted to do some interviews so you could get to know them better.

First interview we thought was fitting to meet the founder of CSTC, and learn how the company came to be.

Transcript below

What is your name?

I am Ben Lavery, Dr. Ben Lavery III, California Safety Training Corporation.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Taft, here in Kern County California and was raised in Shafter California, just at the end of World War II.

What did you do before Safety Training? Do you think it helps you as a trainer?

I've not always been a safety trainer. I have been a farmer at one time, I farmed for 18 years and was an international agricultural consultant for another five years working in several countries. And one day the farmers asked me to be, teach them safety. So I looked at it and tried to try to help them. That's my nature and I loved it and 33 years ago changed what I did.

What are your strengths as a safety trainer?

Well I for some reason I'm very very good with reading regulations and sorting out what is required and what isn't required so I think that that's an advantage that comes with me. I have the ability to make people very very comfortable and I enjoy challenges of which my best challenge is when everybody else gives up on somebody and training them, I like to go and give it a shot and and train them my way and and it works has worked very very well.

What are you doing to become a better safety trainer?

Every day I read regulations, every day I have somebody bring me a new Cal OSHA problem, every day they changed the regulations, so it's a constant research and analysis of what changes are required, so I do that. Additionally I am a certified safety professional and have been for years. I continue to keep that designation up, that also helps me to be a better safety person. I'm also a fellow with American College of forensics examiner's, so I spend time in the field doing investigations from a forensics standpoint. This is not debate, this is not CSI like criminal scene investigation. This is civil scene investigation, although I do testify at some court cases.

What classes do you teach most often. What is your favorite class to teach?

My most often the class would probably be pesticides, also my most enjoyable. I like the challenge of the chemistry of pesticides and the desire to convince people that the pesticides are certainly require respect no matter whether they're danger, warning, or caution, category one two or three everything requires with respect.

Tell us about an event during your time as a safety trainer, you will never forget.

Whoo I've had quite a few but I'll go back and say that at one time, I did consulting work for a large oil company and they were making a movie over on the coast. I was the host and brought people from New York into the sand dunes by letting the air out of the tires on the Jeep and built a camp for them and cook for him and the like. That was a 48 hour run that I got about two hours of sleep and then drove back to Kern County to make an appointment with a farmer out on the west side and did a pesticide class. And every break and every lunch I laid down and got a quick 10 minute or 25-minute nap, it was kind of like the extreme side of what person would do from a safety trainer side.

If you could pass on any wisdom to your friends and family, from your safety training, what would you share?

Respect yourself, respect your gut, if you're in a situation where your guts telling you that something is wrong, time out, step back take a look at it and even if you get somebody else to tell you to take a look at it with you. I guarantee you there's something wrong and you'll be lucky if you make it out.

What is your dream vacation?

Well I just came back from vacation. I spent 31 days out of the country, visited 8 different countries. We enjoyed that immensely. My most just flat enjoyable peace time is spent up at the mountain house,

at 6,000 feet and where nature's there, and the birds are there, the scrub jays and the squirrels are, I usually feed them. And the my three little dogs like to that challenge them although we keep them in a fence and I enjoy that very much.

What is one of your hidden talents?

Well, probably have two. One is that many many people don't know that I'm an auctioneer. In the past I have been an auctioneer for many of the benefits whether it be links for life or California Animal Living Museum or Cancer Society doesn't matter. I've done that for years for free. From that, that came from being able to sing the auctioneer song, that was done by Leroy Van Dyke in 1952. For some reason I can sing and play things that people would not know. I play the harmonica and Irish tin whistle, the six string, six string and twelve string guitar. I like to sing with people not for people. A lot better. Many people don't know, that because I'm older I'm 73, but I was a professional athlete. I was a 10.2 yard halfback in Shafter High. A couple championship teams in Bakersfield College, on to BYU for the first championship team in the history of their school. And then went on to play for Calgary Alberta Stampeders and I punted. My longest pump was 79 yards and then in Calgary was 72 yards. So I don't know that that's why say a past talent I'm not sure I could do that today.

What would you like to tell all of CSTCs clients?

I'd like to tell everybody and encourage everybody to follow the regulations. Do what they should do, don't try to cut corners because the penalties the citations are many more citations, in addition, what was in the early days 5000 or 7,000 now could be 25,000 and repeat or a willful violation can be up to a hundred and

thirty thousand for each one of those willful or repeat violations. We've been encouraged with our progress, but seems that the government wants to encourage us more with higher penalties.

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