ETCP Certification raises the industry to a higher standard
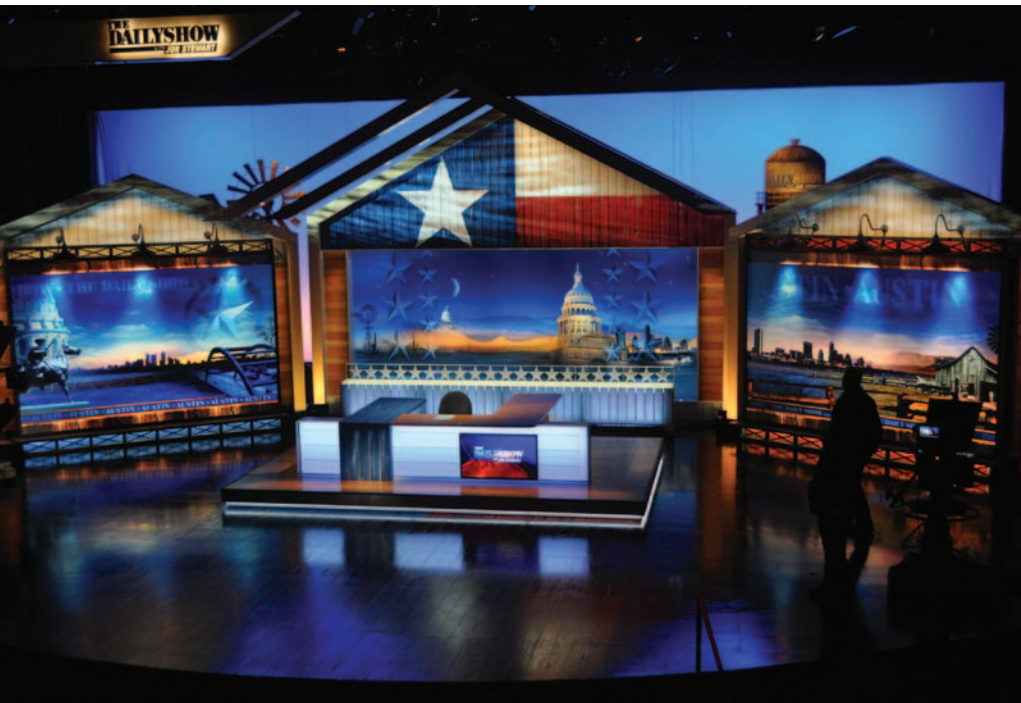
Yes, ETCP Certification is important to our industry.

On the set of *The Daily Show.*

WHY SHOULD ETCP CERTIFICATION be important to you? Here are some questions you might ask…

How important to you is safety on the job? Is it important for you to gain greater knowledge about your chosen field? What does career advancement or greater job choices mean to you?

> " **Why not go for the highest professional standard you can to increase your value to a show?** "

There are so many excuses that I have heard when talking to stage crews about training and certification. Why is ETCP certification a big deal? Why should I take an exam about work I do all the time? I don't have time to prep for a test.

I answer this with a question. Would you make time to advance your career? I believe the answer is a clear, yes. I want to work with the best people. It just makes sense. When I work with gifted, knowledgeable stage technicians that are ETCP certified, I feel that I can do my best work. This is

the main reason why ETCP certification is important to me.

All the stage crews I work with seem to have the same thirst for knowledge about all the new technology, safety, and standards in the entertainment field. Why not go for the highest professional standard you can to increase your value to a show? It only makes sense to put your skills at the highest level with an ETCP certification.

> " **… just having someone show you rigging doesn't give you all the knowledge you need.** "

When I was starting out in the entertainment industry, there was a knot class at one of the few remaining hemp theatres on Broadway. The stagehands I worked with wanted to work, not take time out for a simple knot class in a hemp house. I heard all the same excuses that I hear today about technicians attending training, and after speaking with the ones who did go, it seemed like their minds were changed about the training.

The old timers who taught the class were very generous with their time and knowledge. They taught the importance of a specific knot for different types of work. To really get good at tying knots, they told the stagehands to practice tying knots behind their backs, so if they were in the dark backstage during a show, they could make a line safe or do a bag tie. This was a start at training how to be a professional

and keep your co-workers safe.

There is a history of passing stagecraft knowledge onto young stagehands to help them learn their craft, but ETCP gives a benchmark for passing on correct information. These days, the pace moves so fast that just having someone show you rigging doesn't give you all the knowledge you need. The expansion of technology in the areas of scenic automation, LED lighting, automated luminaires, and everything else that moves in shows has made formal training more necessary than ever. The best thing that ETCP has done for the industry is to encourage training.

> **Employers look . . . for proof of professionalism, now an ETCP certified applicant stands out as the one to hire.**
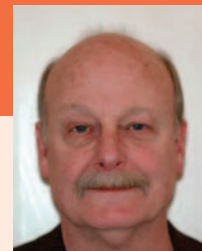
Corporations are bringing in safety directors on-site to all theater and TV productions more and more these days. Safety starts with well-trained stage crews. In talking with a safety director recently, he indicated that it is important to note the ETCP Certified Technicians on the call sheets because their corporate bosses all like to see that ETCP Certified Technicians are working on the shows.

Entertainment companies are being charged higher premiums for insurance because of safety risks. The main way employers can keep rates down is to prove that they are promoting higher levels of formal training. Encouraging their employees to become ETCP Certified is the best way to show that these companies are maintaining the safest workforce they can. Once entertainment companies realize that their most important assets are their employees, it makes them more willing to train their employees to an industry standard.

I feel strongly that ETCP Certification is the future for all industry professionals. The ETCP Certified Technician certainly will have an advantage in career advancement

Insurance program available for ETCP Certified Technicians

By Neil Huff

ProSight Specialty Insurance is offering a policy to cover ETCP Certified Technicians (riggers and electricians) when they are doing freelance work outside their normal employment. Depending on the number of Certified Technicians that participate, the premium may be **discounted up to 50%** off of currently available minimum premiums.

Many Certified Technicians do some freelance work outside of their normal employer (day job or IATSE). The freelancer would be an independent contractor and would be paid under a 1099. As an independent contractor, accidents caused by the freelancer would be covered by the producer or promoter's general liability policy. However, **the freelancer would not be covered.**

If an accident occurs on a show, the injured party's attorney sues everyone that is even remotely involved in the show. Even if you are in no way responsible for the accident, you would still have to pay an attorney $10,000 to $20,000 in legal fees just to get yourself dismissed from the lawsuit. If you are doing such freelance work you should do **at least** two things.

First, you should **incorporate**. If you are not incorporated, your personal assets (home, car, investments, etc.) are at risk. In most states, you can incorporate for a onetime fee of less than $500.

Second, you should purchase a liability insurance policy. The insurance company is required to **provide and pay** for your legal defense. In most cases, legal expense is provided **in addition to the policy limit**. The type of work that you do creates unique exposures not faced by other types of businesses. As entertainment insurance specialists, we are familiar with these exposures and we tailor the coverage to your unique needs.

This program is offered exclusively by ProSight Specialty Insurance through Neil Huff at Taylor & Taylor Associates. Neil has served as the insurance broker for TDA/ESTA/PLASA since 1988. If you are interested in this program, please send an email to Neil at nhuff@taylorinsurance.com or 864-836-4197. Please include your name, address, and phone number.

To maximize the benefits of this program, at least 100 individual technicians must sign up by June 1, 2015. So please do not delay.

and job placement. Employers have always looked at resumes for proof of professionalism, now an ETCP certified applicant stands out as the one to hire.

It is exciting to see that union locals are setting up training funds for their members. As an IATSE Local One member, I am proud that our Executive Board has been at the forefront of the entertainment industry by starting their training fund, The Training, Education, and Technology Fund (TET). I am even more proud to say that our members are taking full advantage of all that it has to offer. Local One is encouraging employer contributions to the TET by including it in contracts and annual fund raising events are used to create interest and

add dollars to the funds so members receive the training they need.

Our Local also feels it is extremely important to require that new union members receive multiple training courses, which in turn, gives them the foundation to become stronger technicians. ETCP has already codified the necessary craft knowledge in the way of the content outlines for riggers and electricians, which makes the information much easier to communicate. Ultimately, the way to test those skills is through ETCP Certification.

I have been very fortunate that my work has taken me all over the USA. One can meet highly skilled people everywhere one travels, but when I see the ETCP logo in a

Bob Culley on the job at *The Daily Show*.

venue, it brings an extra measure of security to my visiting company. Columbus, Tampa, St. Paul, Boston, Washington, Denver, Philly, New York, or Austin, it means so much to know that the people who will be working with you have met the high standards of ETCP Certification.

As an employer, it only makes sense to invest in those with an ETCP Certification. When a technician's skill sets are at the highest entertainment standard (which to me, is an ETCP Certification) wouldn't it make sense that their wage scale be equal to that high level of competence?

I have no doubt in the near future that many industry wage rates will have to recognize the true value of an entertainment technician after they have proven that they are in the top-third of their craft. Being ETCP Certified means they have knowledge, experience, and skills plus a commitment to further training.

My advice? Do yourself a favor and apply for an ETCP Certification exam; not only are you increasing your own worth, but raising the industry up to higher standards. I am sure you will find there is an entertainment industry that will acknowledge and value your skills. Your

co-workers will appreciate your effort, along with the highest standards of quality the ETCP Certification brings to the whole stage crew. In addition, support your fellow technicians when they apply for an ETCP exam because we all benefit when ETCP Certified technician(s) are on shows with us.

Yes, clearly the ETCP Certification Program is important to me. ∎

Robert J. Culley received a NYIT degree in 1979. He worked on the start of MTV, and several other cable start-ups. Bob was at Vega Associates from 1979 – 1988 and started LightStream Design, Inc. Bob has worked at *The Daily Show* from the beginning in 1996.

All three examinations will be given at USITT in Cincinnati, OH, on the morning of March 21, 2015. Please return all application materials by February 27, 2015.