

**National Association of Tower Erectors
Chairman's Message
Tower Times
May 2003**

This past month one guyed tower collapsed and another had an anchor let loose in my part of the country. Both problems came as a result of anchor shaft failure due to corrosion. It inspired me to send out what I referred to as a Tower Alert. I sent the Alert out by email to around 350 individuals in my contact list. The basic premise of the Alert was the idea of climber safety and the need to not only make sure your climbers are protected against falls, but also against the fall of the structure while they are on it!

It was about 13 years ago that I was eye witness to the fall of a tower with two climbers on it due to anchor corrosion. It didn't take me long to get an understanding of what caused this catastrophe and what could be done to prevent it. As it turns out, buried guy anchors are very susceptible to galvanic corrosion. Unless properly protected they can be slowly (or sometimes rapidly) corroding underground out of site and out of mind while the rest of the structure looks perfectly healthy. Through my studies and experiences, I have come up with some basic concepts that I want to pass along in this month's chairman's message that should be considered as safety measures before allowing climbers on guyed towers.

Do not climb guyed towers unless one or more of the following is in place or has occurred or is in place.

1. The anchor shafts are totally encased in concrete to above ground.
2. The anchors were previously inspected and have had cathodic protection in place and working since the inspection.
3. The anchors are dug up and inspected immediately before climbing and show no signs of structural damage due to corrosion.

Once your tower anchors are deemed safe, here is what owners should do next.

1. Install a cathodic protection system that can be monitored to ensure its proper function.
2. Regularly inspect the cathodic protection system and ensure it is properly working.

My hope is that none in our industry will needlessly suffer injuries because of anchor shaft failures due to corrosion.

Craig M. Snyder – Chairman of the Board



Mitchell, SD (installed 1989)



Notice no corrosion until 2' below grade



Mitchell anchor



Morton, IL failed tower - 2001



Failed dual anchor shaft – Morton, IL



Midwestern United States, March 2003. These pictures are a testimony to the toughness of a guyed tower. Even after the anchor failed holding the top two guy levels although damaged beyond repair the tower remained standing.