

Hop to It



Mark Scott's crew has found a humorous way to help face difficult tasks. The staff of Mark IV Builders in Bethesda, Md., have been passing around tapes by Brian Tracy, the motivational speaker. Tracy suggests that if you knew you had to eat a frog, you might want to eat it first thing in the morning, so you could enjoy the rest of your day having put the odious task behind you.

Scott says his estimator, Kirk Van Camp, and his production manager, Andrew Hannan, took Tracy's advice to heart. Van Camp purchased ceramic frogs for everyone, and Hannan put a stuffed toy frog on the dashboard of his car. For fun and inspiration, staff members mark their frogs with an "X" after they deal with a particularly sticky situation.

Hannan has 10 Xs on what he calls his "face your fear" dashboard frog. One of the Xs represents a day when he had to fire a high school friend who had worked at Mark IV with him for five years.

"Most of the time, the final outcome isn't as bad as you think — the procrastination is worse," Hannan says. —*N.P.*