

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

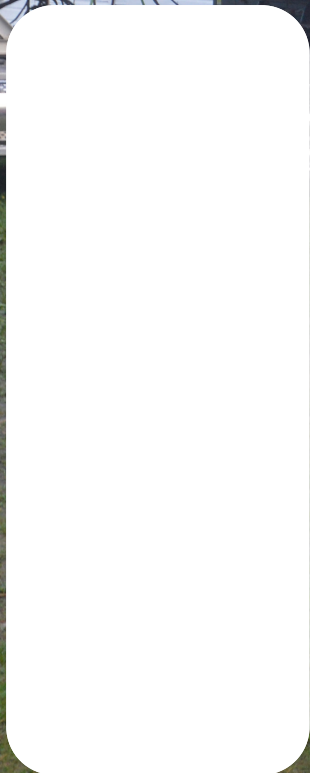
# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

VOLUME 77

**68th Annual North Star Expo**  
**Choice Insurance Pays Dividend**  
**Building a Partnership**  
**L&L Constructors**







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# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 77  
September/October 2022  
Duluth, Minnesota

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**ON THE COVER**

Best Load entries were shined up and ready to be judged at the 68th Annual North Star Expo. For more on the 2022 event, please see page 14.

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# President's Column



Corey Lovdahl

Once again it was great to see everyone at the 68th annual North Star Expo. Despite Friday's weather conditions, it turned out to be a great success. I'd like to put out a big thank you to the expo committee and vendors for their hard work. You helped make the Expo a great one.

We look forward to working with the new forestry director Patty Thielen. I've already had a chance to participate in meetings with her. It's important for the DNR to offer good wood for our loggers and industry, and we will be working closely with her to achieve that goal.

Take time to enjoy the Minnesota fall, with the changing of the leaves and brisk smell in the air it reminds me winter is right around the corner.

Whatever you are doing in life - BE SAFE!

Corey Lovdahl

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**PROUDLY SERVING THE TIMBER INDUSTRY SINCE 1980**



**O**ur 68th North Star Expo is in the books, and what a great event it was, both for our association and for Minnesota's forest products community as a whole. It's great to see loggers, foresters, vendors, and others who love the woods, all come

## Executive Vice President's Column



Ray Higgins

together in one spot at the beautiful Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids. One of the parts of the Expo that's really evolved over the past few years you may not realize is the meeting sponsored by the Forestry Affairs Committees from Grand Rapids and Bemidji. They bring together a wide variety of stakeholders from state, county, and federal government, as well as lawmakers, representatives from the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, and a host of others for a discussion on the latest topics in our industry. Conversations are started and seeds are planted on a variety of issues that continue once the Expo ends. Relationships are built and solidified over those two days that set the tone for everything we do all year. No other event brings more people in our industry together than the Expo, and TPA is proud to sponsor it.

We also had a ton of high school students on hand, nearly 200 from across the region, all learning about our industry through the Future Forest Stewards program. We all know how important workforce issues are these days, so exposing our industry to kids trying to figure out what to do with their lives once they graduate can only help. Our thanks go to TPA member Brad Horsmann for conducting the harvest adjacent to the fairgrounds, to Kory Cease and the rest of the Itasca County Land Department for setting it up, and to all those who volunteer for the Future Forest Stewards program. It's a tremendous opportunity to showcase our

industry.

Finally, a lot of folks deserve thank yous for their work during the event: to Expo Committee chair Chad Lovdahl, crew foreman Adam Sutherland, and the rest of our volunteers who were top-notch once again – I'm thankful for your commitment to the Expo and that you love the event as much as the rest of us. To Rich Anderson, Lee Hoopman, and the rest of the team at the Itasca County Fairgrounds: you guys are the best, always responsive to our needs, and the needs of the Expo attendees who use your beautiful facility. And to Ann Todd, who works tirelessly throughout the year to make sure the Expo is the great event we've become accustomed to. My thanks to you all for making this a great weekend for everyone in our timber community.

\*\*\*\*\*

Among the most asked questions at the Expo—and in general, for that matter—is about the status of the proposed Huber Engineered Woods mill. Rumors continue to fly regarding the company's intentions. It can be a little tricky to share the "latest" when there's a bit of a lag between the time I write this and when *The Timber Bulletin* finally lands in your mailbox, but as of mid-October (and frankly I don't expect anything to change before you read this):

In conversations I've had with a variety of folks at several different levels of government and with folks at Huber, I can tell you the company remains committed to Minnesota. That doesn't mean there aren't challenges before the project can move forward: The US Army Corps of Engineers has raised issues surrounding the wetlands permits Huber is seeking. Huber has responded to those inquiries but the Corps hasn't provided a timeline for a decision. That's frustrating.

There's also litigation underway surrounding the City of Cohasset's approval of the environmental assessment worksheet. The Leech Lake Band has appealed, and that issue continues to work its way through the court system, not as quickly as anyone would like.

As a result, the project is likely delayed 12-18 months from the original timeline. And, as you might imagine, both supporters of

the project as well as its opponents continue to work behind the scenes to support their causes. I don't expect the final word on this to come any time soon, despite rumors we might hear.

\*\*\*\*\*

I mentioned our Minnesota congressional representatives and their staffs in the previous item. Federal topics are something TPA has always prided itself on, working on issues surrounding our federal forests. We regularly meet with representatives from the Superior and Chippewa National Forests, and keep our congressional offices informed. TPA also partners with national groups like the Forest Resources Association and the Federal Forest Resource Coalition. FFRC's Bill Imbergamo is a veteran Washington lobbyist and has an outstanding handle on federal issues. FRA's representative in Minnesota is our old colleague Tim O'Hara, who has a firm grasp on everything going on here. The nice thing about both groups is they not only keep us posted on what happens in DC, but they also give us access to the expertise of associations like ours in other states across the country. TPA has partnered with both FRA and FFRC for years and we're in constant contact with them. And as you know from reading *The Timber Bulletin* over the years, TPA staff has made regular visits to Our Nation's Capital on your behalf and will continue to do so.

\*\*\*\*\*

The other hot topic in the woods in recent weeks and months is workforce development. Loggers are finding fewer candidates to work both in the woods, and especially to haul wood to the mill. In October, TPA past president Rod Enberg, board member Dale Erickson, and I attended a conference in Stevens Point, Wisconsin (organized by Tim O'Hara at FRA, by the way), and one of the presentations was on an \$8 million program in Wisconsin to find folks to work in the state's forestry sector, from skidder operators to foresters needing four-year degrees. We've had preliminary discussions with folks here in Minnesota on the potential of getting something similar going here. MFI's Rick Horton is also an ally on this.



As for trucking, I'm sure you know federal regs have made it more difficult to get CDLs for new drivers. We've had a lot of conversations surrounding that topic as well, including with Dave Nolle at MLEP. I'm hopeful we can make things a little less cumbersome than they've become.

\*\*\*\*\*

Finally, you can't have missed the fact that it's election season. We'll be going to the polls on November 8th to vote for governor, every legislative seat in the state, and some county board positions as well. It's an important time in our industry and in our state, and the decisions we make on November 8th are important. Remember, many of those on your ballot have proven track records, whether they've had a chance to serve in elected office or not. Please, don't pass up this critical role we play in setting our course for the next several years. Choose wisely.



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Kirk Lindberg and Nick Lagen of L&L Constructors

# Building a Partnership

**T**he year was 2001, and it seemed like a routine summer vacation. 9-year-old Nick Lagen's family traveled from their home near Dubuque, Iowa to the area around Lake Kabetogama for some fishing and other activities. While the family was there, Nick's parents bumped into something unexpected. Opportunity.

"They found a chunk of property about three miles west of International Falls on the Rainy

River," Nick recalls. "So they bought it, built a house, and we moved up here."

They knew it was going to be a life-changing decision. Now two decades later, Nick is 30 and in business with a kid he met on his first day of school in International Falls. Little did either know that Nick Lagen and Kirk Lindberg would become best friends, and ultimately, business partners.

It started on Nick's first day of

fourth grade at Falls Elementary. There, he met a bunch of new kids, including Kirk. All the boys were friends, but Kirk and Nick became close three years later.

"Seventh grade. That's when we got lockers," Lindberg says. "They went alphabetically, and our last names both start with 'L.' There was a girl in between us, but our lockers were basically right next to each other and I think most of our classes were together. That's when it started."

Lindberg's and Lagen's lockers stayed together all the way through high school graduation. The girl in the middle? She didn't last.

"She got smoked out by the smell of snowmobile fumes on our jackets," Lindberg said.

The boys had more in common than just nearby lockers and a love of snowmobiles. Both their fathers worked in the logging business:



Kirk's dad Steve was a long-time logger in the Ray area south of International Falls, while Nick's dad—also named Steve—worked for Wagner Construction, hauling wood in the winter months. Both were exposed to logging and the woods at an early age.

"I just went out with him on the weekends," Kirk recalls. "When something needed to be done, I guess I'd end up doing it. A little bit of skidder and dozer work, and snow plowing and helping with repairs. Shining the flashlight. Anything."

"I'd go out and ride with my dad and watch the woods crew," Nick says. "Once in a while I'd get to play on the loader and stuff like that."

The boys also shared something of an entrepreneurial spirit. Kirk had a small firewood business while in high school, buying species like birch and ash from his dad.

"I just had an old pickup that I filled up with wood," Kirk says. "I'd stack it in there and deliver it. A hundred dollars a load. At one point, I was about 16-years-old and I actually bought a little sale from Kooch County, a little ash sale. 300 cords. My dad ended up taking 200 of it, I think, and I took a hundred of it for my firewood business and I used it all up that fall."

Meanwhile, Nick was building and selling furniture with wood he also got from Kirk's dad.

"I made everything. Beds, tables, benches, all kinds of stuff," Nick says. "That's how we got all our money when we were kids. We didn't have allowances. We did our



Trucker Randy Grundmeier checks his load securement as he gets ready to leave with a load of timber for PCA's International Falls mill from a 1600 cord harvest site northeast of Orr.

own work."

Little did Lindberg and Lagen know, slowly but surely, they were building a partnership.

Still, when the friends graduated from Falls High School in 2010, they initially went off to work for other companies. Kirk worked with his dad at Lindberg Logging for a while, and also hauled hot mix for two and a half years, before taking a full-time job operating equipment with Ulland Brothers Construction. He also continued to help his dad in the winter. Nick, on the other hand, attended Lake Superior College in Duluth and became a master

electrician.

"It's hard to think about taking that leap and doing it all on your own at that age," Nick says.

By 2015, the pair realized they wanted to start their own business together. They formed L&L Constructors, using the common initial from Lindberg and Lagen for the company's name. They started out keeping their day jobs too, working nights and weekends on various projects like building docks on area lakes or building driveways so they could get L&L established before making the company their full-time jobs.



Nick Lagen builds roads and landings with a Komatsu dozer. L&L also has a Cat D5k2 dozer.



This Link-Belt 210LX delimeter with a 453 ProPac boom operated by Lloyd Stavish. L&L has a total of three delimeters—2 Link-Belts and a John Deere—two of which are utilized on most sites.



“That was our plan,” Kirk says. “We worked and got the business ready to go. We didn’t want to go into it and then have to support ourselves while trying to grow a business at the beginning.”

“We started out building docks out on Kabetogama,” Nick says. “We got the logs from Kirk’s dad. My dad has a sawmill, so we’d saw the timbers and started building docks. That’s how we got our start. And then we bought a skid steer.”

Soon they were excavating for driveways, and then pouring concrete. By 2017, L&L had enough work—and enough equipment—that the pair could transition away from their day jobs and focus on the new company full-time. Their clients ranged all the way from homeowners with relatively simple projects to more complicated jobs like commercial developments, including hotel projects.

“We already had a dump truck and two skid steers and a mini and a 30-ton excavator before we actually went full-time,” Nick says. “We were turnkey when time came to go full-time. We had all that equipment. We made sure we grew the business to the point where we didn’t have to worry about making enough to support ourselves.”

The logging end of the business had its genesis the following winter, drawing on their experience over the years with their fathers. L&L purchased its first stroke delimeter in 2017 and contracted out to Lindberg Logging. Nick ran the limber while Kirk did anything that needed to be done.

“I did all the lowboying and road building and a lot of mechanic

work,” Kirk says. “Pretty much everything that needed to be done.”

Over the next few years, L&L amassed more logging equipment. Steve Lindberg was ready to scale back his business and a couple of those guys came to work for Nick and Kirk. They also realized they simply enjoy working in the woods. As a result, construction represents only around fifteen percent of their work these days. The rest is logging.

“It’s peaceful,” Nick says. “You’re out in the woods. It’s a lot less stress, a lot less paperwork. We just enjoy it. It’s not a job. We enjoy coming here.”

“We actually want to get up in the morning,” Kirk adds.

“Being your own boss is great. I could never go work for anybody again, I don’t think,” Nick says.

On this day, they’re working on a DNR permit about a mile off of Highway 53 just east of Ray. It contains roughly 1500 cords, most of which is aspen, with the balance mainly pine. Most of the wood will go to the PCA mill in International Falls—they’ve also delivered to PotlatchDeltic’s Bemidji mill, Jake’s Sawmill in Baudette, and Savanna Pallets in McGregor. It might have been difficult to access the permit in the summer, but they caught a break when a contractor built a quarry adjacent to the highway, making it a simple task to build a road the rest of the short distance into the site.

During the summer, L&L Constructors has five full-time employees in addition to Lindberg and Lagen, running two crews, typically keeping everyone on the same site.

“We seem to work better when

we’re all together in the same place,” Kirk says.

Once temperatures dip in December, two more employees will be added to the woods crew so Nick and Kirk can handle the additional clearing work winter logging requires.

“We’ll be freezing roads down, tramping, and then dozing roads out and then extra lowboy work,” Kirk says. “Snow plowing, too. There’s just so much more going on in the winter.”

“I’d say last winter on average, we each spent one day a week just strictly working on roads,” Nick says.

They’ve amassed a lot of iron too, some of which came from Kirk’s father’s business, including two feller bunchers, three stroke delimeters, four skidders, so there’s always a spare in case of breakdowns. They also have two dozers and enough dirt equipment to do anything they need to do. They also have a slasher, and typically hire Steve Lindberg to custom slash.

“We didn’t go buy top-of-the-line equipment,” Nick says. “We started out with equipment that we could afford and wrenched on it. So then when we replaced that, you keep that as a spare or you sell it and then upgrade just so it’s not a big payment all at once.”

It’s been an especially wet summer in the area where L&L works most, but they’ve managed to avoid having soft ground conditions affect their logging operations.

“We actually haven’t had one single rain day all summer in logging, because we’ve been in



Kirk Lindberg harvests aspen with a John Deere 803M feller buncher. L&L also utilizes a Komatsu XT430.



Blake McBride operates a John Deere 2154D stroke delimeter with a 453 ProPac boom.





Two Cat 525C skidders—driven by Jason Nygaard and Nate Lynch—drag harvested timber to the landing for processing.

rocky ground,” Nick says. “The last three sales we’ve cut have been all exposed bedrock for the most part.”

“I guess we’ve bought the right sales,” Kirk says. “Sometimes some of the wood wasn’t exactly what we’d like it to be, but it was workable.”

“We did a lot of road work,” Nick says. “We hauled a lot of gravel to make it so that we have no down days for the trucks. The roads were all good. It could be a downpour and you could still haul on the roads.”

L&L has one full-time trucker—Randy Grundmeier—in the summer, plus Kirk’s dad Steve hauls too. In fact, while most of the crew is here at the site near Ray, Steve and Grundmeier are finishing up with the slashing, loading, and hauling at a 1600 cord DNR permit northeast of Orr. They also utilize independent owner-operator Jim Linder, who’s hauling from 3500 cords of stockpiled wood L&L still has from last winter. The road and bridge into that site was flooded out until mid-summer and the very wet springs and the high water levels the region experienced. Come winter-time, they’ll hire two more drivers to use

their own trucks, plus Kirk and Nick can drive as needed.

Steve Lindberg is a big part of the business. Along with the trucking, he also does slashing and loading for L&L with a loader he kept from Lindberg Logging. In fact, Steve learned the logging business from his dad, so Kirk represents the third generation of Lindbergs in the woods.

Being in business together hasn’t soured Kirk’s and Nick’s friendship. They split ownership in L&L 50/50, and say they get as long as well as they ever have.

“We were just on the phone for an hour, talking while we worked,” Nick says.

“We talk business, but talk about everything else, too,” Kirk says. “Whatever

comes into our heads.”

They like to discuss potential new ways of operating, trying to see if they can solve challenges with creative solutions. Most of all, Lindberg and Lagen keep in mind lessons learned, not only from their own business careers, but also from the lifetime of work each of their dads spent in the woods.

“We learned hard work from both our dads,” Nick says.

“And the importance of a good crew,” Kirk says. “That’s huge.”



Harvested red pine pulp on L&L’s Constructors’ job site.





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# Stauber Visits Harvest Site



During an October campaign swing in the Orr area, Congressman Pete Stauber (left) stopped by the harvest site of TPA board member Scott DeLack to get feedback on our industry and learn more about challenges facing small business owners in general, and loggers in particular. The two discussed rising expenses, including the cost of fuel for logging companies, and also talked about proper forest management, workforce shortages, and the importance of steady and consistent timber offerings from US Forest Service lands.

A promotional graphic for Wheeler Associates. The background features a pattern of wood grain. At the top center is the logo for Wheeler Associates, consisting of a green stylized 'WA' followed by the text 'WHEELER ASSOCIATES'. Below the logo is the text 'Employee Benefits | Wealth Management | Qualified Plans'. In the center, there are 12 circular portraits of employees arranged in three rows of four. At the bottom, there is contact information: '324 West Superior Street | Suite 1000 | Duluth MN 55802 | 218-722-8010 | www.wheeler-associates.com' and a note: 'Advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, a Registered Investment Adviser.'



# 68th North Star Expo is Big Success

**F**eaturing more vendors than 2021, the 68th edition of the North Star Expo—Minnesota’s largest logging equipment show—signaled the end of summer and the start of the run-up to the winter logging season. And the 2022 Expo didn’t disappoint. Despite a raindrop or two, several vendors reported record years in terms of revenue, as well as seeing existing and potential new customers at this year’s gathering at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids.

“It’s always great to see everyone at the Expo,” said Expo Committee Chair Chad Lovdahl. “From loggers, to vendors, to all of those who support our industry, it’s always a fun time. Everyone did a great job with their displays, and the committee and volunteers put on another terrific show.”

This year’s event was the place to be to see more than \$10 million worth of the latest and greatest in logging equipment—both conventional and cut-to-length—as well as the trucks, trailers, firewood processors, tires, and other products that go into making a logging company function.

Not only that, but the Expo is also a great opportunity for those inside the logging and forest products industry to meet, greet, and compare notes. Plus, other industry stakeholders, as well as folks from county, state, and federal government were on hand to learn about current issues affecting our industry and to talk directly with loggers to about how they can help those in our industry.

“It was gold to be able to be with so many legislators

and decision makers and talk through some issues with them,” said Minnesota Forest Resources Council chair Pete Aube.

As has become tradition, festivities at the end of the Expo’s first day moved to the TimberLake Lodge for an evening reception, featuring a cash bar and plenty of delicious “heavy” hors d’oeuvres for all of the more than 300 who attended. Best of all, the food was free! Plus, the evening featured dozens of door prizes, including a Stihl chainsaw donated by Forestry Equipment Sales, a Browning rifle donated by Lunemann Equipment, a pheasant hunting trip to Wilderness Wings in Effie donated by McCoy Construction and Forestry, as well as a Blackstone grill courtesy of Northern Timberline.

“Friday night was a highlight,” said TPA President Corey Lovdahl. “It’s great to see how many of our vendors and members appreciate the reception. The food was awesome and everyone had a great time.”

In addition, the Future Forest Stewards program was again held in conjunction with the Expo for the fifth time. Designed to teach high schoolers the importance of forest management in our state and the job opportunities in logging in our region, a record 265 students—almost double the size of last year’s group—took part in this year’s program, that included a live harvest demonstration, as well as two logging equipment simulators for students to try. Future Forest Stewards is sponsored by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the regional economic development organization APEX, Itasca Economic Development Corporation, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, and the Applied Learning Institute, which strives to enhance technical education in northeastern Minnesota.

Add it all up, you can see why we like to call the Expo—to borrow a phrase from our friends at the State Fair—The Great Minnesota Logging Get-together.”

**Here’s a rundown of the events of the 68th Annual North Star Expo:**

## Best Display—Large Equipment

In the **Best Display—Large Equipment** competition, TPA President Corey Lovdahl (right) presents the team at RDO Vermeer with the Blue Ribbon. Ponsse took second place, while Road Machinery finished third.





## Best Outdoor Display

In the competition for **Best Outdoor Display**, Laona Machine captured the Blue Ribbon. Metsa Machine was the runner-up, while Diamond Industrial display was third.



## Best Indoor Display

In the **Best Indoor Booth** competition, Waldo Solutions receives top honors from TPA President Corey Lovdahl. Wallingford's and American Pressure rounded out the top three.



## Loader Competition Winner

In this year's **Loader Contest**, Cameron Erickson of Birchdale topped of the leader board, earning the \$100 first prize. Ryan Sokoloski of Buyck finished second, while Kyle Lundberg was third. Dan Lundberg of Solway captured the **Masters Division**.







## Best Load Winner

Jacob Albrecht poses with the winning load in this year's **Best Load** competition, claiming the first prize of \$500. Packaging Corp of America sponsored the load, with Northland Logging and Trucking supplying the wood. The entry from Melander Trucking and Lovdahl and Sons was second.

## Celebrity Loader

2022 **Celebrity Loader** Contest: It was great to see another large group of elected officials and other dignitaries joining us at the Expo! (L-R): TPA Executive Committee member Brady Hasbaregen, WDSE-TV's Isaac Quick, Bemidji Mayor Jorge Prince, Bobby Benson from the congressional staff of Rep. Tom Emmer, Sen. Justin Eichorn (R-Grand Rapids), Ben Davis, candidate for MN House District 6A, Rep. Jen Schultz (DFL-Duluth), Rep. Rob Ecklund (DFL-International Falls), MN Forest Resources Council Chair Pete Aube, and Rep. David Lislegard (DFL-Aurora). Aube posted the quickest time in the loader, with Rep. Lislegard close behind as runner-up.



## Two Generations of Leadership

It was great to see former TPA President Jim Hall, who served the association from 1984 to 1986, along with his son, current TPA board member Peter Hall at this year's Expo.



# Hot Breakfast Here!



No matter how you like your pancakes, the “free” kind are the best kind, and no one knows that better than the folks at McCoy Equipment and Forestry, who once again served up free pancakes on Saturday morning of the Expo. Not only did they serve up all the flapjacks you could eat, but of course they also had plenty of sausages, OJ, and coffee. There’s no better way to start the day at the Expo than by stopping to see the great folks at McCoy!

The best thing about the North Star Expo? It’s hard to pick just one, but getting together with others from the industry to talk shop or talk business is at the top of anyone’s list!



Lots of folks wonder where our next loggers are going to come from. But from the looks of all the families at the Expo—and the smiles on the faces of so many kids—it looks like the future of our business is bright!



In the **Guess the Weight Competition**, Logan Krueth was only ten pounds off of the actual weight of the best load entry to win the \$50 prize, while Cory Kimball of Park Rapids won the **Wood ID** contest.

**Next Year** TPA’s Expo committee is already working on plans for next year. We look forward to seeing you September 15 and 16, 2023 at the Itasca County Fairgrounds for the 69th Annual North Star Expo!

**For more photos from the 2022 North Star Expo, visit our website at [www.timberproducers.com/expo/](http://www.timberproducers.com/expo/)!**





*Minnesota Timber Producers Association*

# The Minnesota Timber Producers would like to thank the following sponsors for their support in the 68th North Star Expo:

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Saturday morning Pancake Breakfast courtesy of McCoy Construction & Forestry • Loader courtesy of Northern Timberline Equipment • Forklifts courtesy of Lovdahl & Sons and McCoy Construction & Forestry • Gator courtesy of Northland Lawn, Sport & Equipment



# Friday Night Food and Friends



Chris Calder, with grandson Lukah and Chris' dad Pete and the door prize they won—a Blackstone Grill plus a ton of accessories--courtesy of Northern Timberline. That's three generations of Calders!



What a spread! Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, Friday Night Reception attendees had their choice from meatballs, wings, sliders, veggies, and plenty of other delicious options. Throw in great friends, outstanding door prizes, and the beverages of their choice, and you had the mixture of a fun Friday night at the Expo!



Erik Lunemann presents Rod Enberg with the Browning rifle donated by Lunemann Equipment at the Friday night Reception.

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 Savanna Pallets  
 Service Trucks International  
 Titan Machinery  
 UPM Blandin  
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 Ziegler Cat



# Coloring Contest Winners



In the 7-9 year old division, Catherine Frederickson of Duluth captured top honors. Second place went to Duluth's Lucy Frederickson, while Bryson Boreen finished third.



Bristol Binkley of Puposky (above left) took home the blue ribbon in the Ages 10-12 Division of the 2022 Expo Coloring Contest. Miriam Frederickson of Duluth finished second, while Paul Lundberg of Solway (above right) finished third. The top three in each category were awarded ribbons, while each winner received an art kit.



For the Ages 6 and Under age group, Crew Mayfield was the blue ribbon winner. Fulton Frederickson of Duluth was the runner-up, while Evert Erickson (above) claimed third place.



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# Future Forest Stewards at the Expo

**F**or the 5th time, Future Forest Stewards invited high school juniors and seniors to come to the North Star Expo to learn about careers in Minnesota's forestry industry. More than 185 area students and teachers joined us from Bigfork, Chisholm, Coleraine, Deer River, Hill City, Grand Rapids, Nashwauk, and Mesabi East.

Throughout the day, a total of 44 volunteers led the students through a variety of learning stations, including a cut-to-length harvest adjacent to the fairgrounds conducted by TPA member Brad Horsmann. Students could also try their hand at operating logging equipment thanks to two simulators provided by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49. Other topics covered included Forestry 101, the Forest Industry and Minnesota, and Jobs in the Industry.



Students from area high schools get a first-hand look at a live timber harvest at the Future Forest Stewards portion of the North Star Expo. Brad Horsmann is operating a John Deere cut-to-length processor.

At each session students were able to ask questions, explore career options, and learn about the forestry industry directly from professionals in the field providing a unique opportunity to network and build relationships that will strengthen their educational and career prospects.

"It was a tremendous effort that will have lasting impressions on area students," said Tamara Lowney of the Itasca Economic Development Corporation, one of the event's many sponsors. "This opportunity gave students a first-hand look at the importance of Minnesota's forestry industry and the wide variety of careers essential to keeping the state a strong producer of timber and timber products."



Students at the Future Forest Stewards event learned about a variety of topics, including forestry and forest management.

FFS was created through a partnership with the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce's Forestry Affairs Committee with a goal of shepherding the next generation into careers in forestry. Through organizing a job fair in conjunction with the North Star Expo, FFS aims to provide high school students opportunities to explore the wide range of good-paying jobs in the industry. Other event sponsors included, APEX, Huber Engineered Woods, L&M Fleet Supply, the Minnesota Forest Resource Partnership, Minnesota Power, PotlatchDeltic, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and UPM Blandin.

Among those supplying volunteers were Barko, Itasca County Land Department, Itasca Woodland Service, McCoy Equipment, the Minnesota DNR, MN North College—Itasca Campus, Murch's Forestry Services, Nelson Wood Shims, the Northeast Office of Job Training, Minnesota Forestry Association, the University of Minnesota, and the USFS—Chippewa National Forest.




Future Forest Stewards featured two logging equipment simulators supplied by Local 49 of the International Union of Operating Engineers. The simulators featured equipment from Ponsse and Ziegler CAT.



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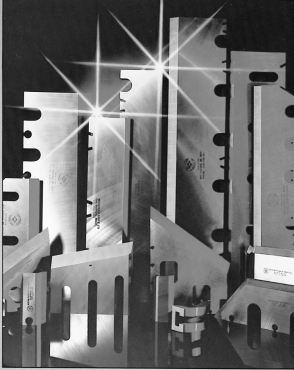
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# Safety Pays: Knowing How and When to Disconnect

By John Saccoman,  
Loss Control Consultant, Choice Insurance

**A**sk any logger about why he/she likes working alone in the woods, sometimes miles from any signs of other people, they'll probably tell you it's in their blood.

They've most likely grown up in a family business along with brothers, fathers, and grandfathers who have passed along a keen, common-sense knowledge and a tireless, get-it-done work ethic. These kings of the woods will tell you to expect the unexpected.

Working isolated and alone also has both challenges and dangers. Help may be several minutes away or even unlikely when a medical emergency arises, or a fire breaks out. You're it. A logger must depend on his crew and their training for any situation.

In the case of an equipment fire, knowing where and how to shut off power to a machine may spell the difference between a close call and a total loss.

Jay Eystad from Choice Insurance has been around logging equipment for nearly 30 years.

For 10 years Eystad sold logging equipment and now has been working with the logging owners

to insure the equipment for roughly the past 20.

"It's absolutely critical that the operators know where the disconnects are," Eystad said. "Typically our owners know where they are. But every operator needs to know too."

A disconnect takes all the electrical power away from the machine. There are multiple reasons why that's important.

First, disconnecting the equipment ensures that there are no electrical wires that could potentially heat up and cause a fire after loggers leave for the day. Many logging Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) call for the crew to hang around for 30-60 minutes after shutdown to ensure a fire does not combust.

Secondly, Eystad said vandals do not necessarily know where the disconnects are, making it more difficult for someone with ill intentions to cause damage to the machine. "A lot of people won't know where those disconnects are and think the battery might be dead," Eystad said.

But maybe the biggest reason of

all to have disconnects on a machine is when a fire starts, removing power gives an operator the chance to extinguish it without continued re-ignition. If safely possible, the operator should attempt to disconnect the machine from power.

"It can reignite if there is power going through and they (logging crew) run out of fire extinguishers and then the machine burns," Eystad said. "Look...first thing is his safety, but after that, hit the darn disconnect."

Replacing a machine that's a total loss can hamstring a logger for months.

"It is such a pain to replace equipment," Eystad said. "You just don't go find it. If you have to buy new, it isn't just typically sitting on the lots anymore. It may take weeks or months to get everything finalized."

Nick Lake, co-owner of Northland Logging & Trucking, Inc., out of Orr, MN, said he turns off all his machines via disconnect every night when exiting the woods for a couple reasons.

"I do it in case of electrical fire," Lake said. "And because sometimes some of the older machines may have a parasitic drain on them."

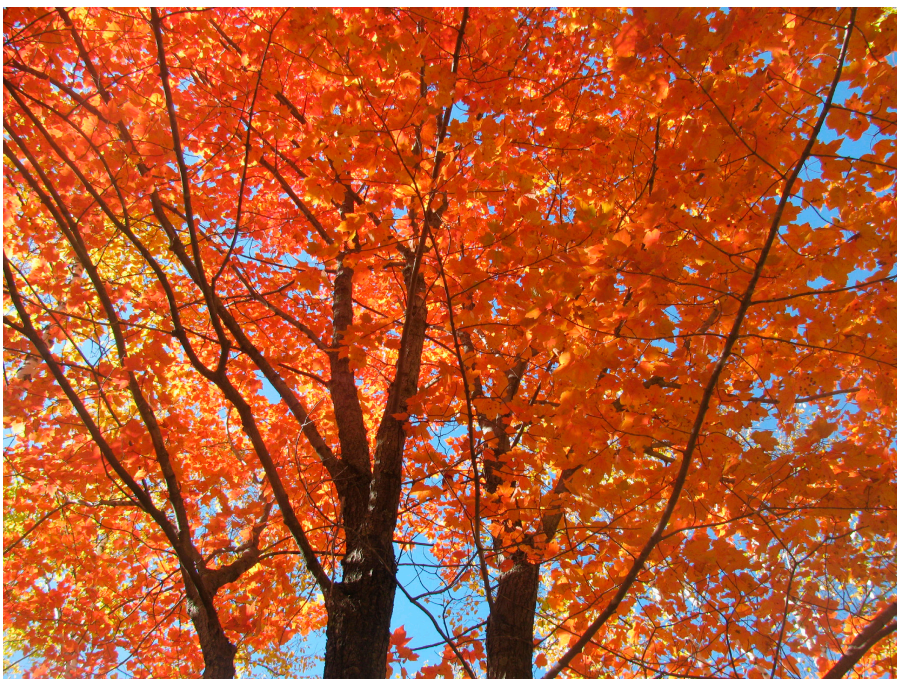
Nick also said if he's conducting maintenance on a machine in his shop for sure he disconnects battery power. "Otherwise you risk the chance of losing everything," he said. "Ever since I've been running equipment, I've always shut the disconnects off."

Nick credits his previous employer John Rolle of John Rolle Logging in Chisholm, MN, for his attention to this detail.

"He told me to always shut the disconnect off," Lake said. "And he was a diesel mechanic. He's really the reason I'm in that habit."

And by shutting off all power to the machine, Lake said you protect yourself from anything electrical related.

"If a fire started from fuel or say





sticks and heat and then begins melting the coating on your cables, it could turn into something electrical," he said.

According to the Carolina Loggers Association, if you see a smoke during machine operation, immediately turn off the equipment. Components will keep pumping if the power source is not interrupted. Then, try to identify the source of the smoke. Call for help.

Do not bail out of a running or moving machine. If safely possible, shut off the battery disconnect switch. Grab a fire extinguisher and approach the fire from a safe distance. Proceed to quickly use the extinguisher to extinguish the fire.

Even with proper training and years of experience, sometimes the fire does win. In this economy and with profit margins being razor thin, nobody really can afford to be down vital equipment.

Eystad said he's been witness to how traumatic it can be when a logger loses a piece of equipment to fire.

"It shakes them up," he said. "They'll say, 'I can't believe it happened'. Well...it does."

# Choice Insurance Declares Dividend

Choice Insurance has paid a dividend to members of its Forest Products Workers Compensation Self-Insurance Group that are also members of TPA.

Members of the Forest Products Workers Compensation Self-Insurance Group qualify for the dividend program each year, in which the group basically refunds a portion of the premium to each group member, based on claims settled throughout the year. This year's dividend is actually for the 2020 insurance year. According to state law, any dividends from a self-insurance group can't be paid for two years.


"The return of this premium to each Self-Insurance Group

member is a result of the hard work, positive attitude, and attention to providing a safe working environment by each logging company in the program," said Jay Eystad of Choice Insurance. "Loss ratios in the group have been excellent. The daily efforts will increase the opportunity to maintain this level of dividend in the future. The cost of everything has been rising for months. At a time when insurance premiums are rising due to medical costs, reinsurance costs, and past results, we are pleased to not only maintain very competitive rates over the past couple of years but also return this dividend."



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# On the Markets

**T**he *Timber Bulletin* publishes information regarding results of a sampling of recent timber sales and other market indicators, as well as other market-related news items.

## **DNR's 2022 Fiscal Year Complete, Timber Sales Stats Final**

With the completion of the state of Minnesota's 2022 fiscal year complete on June 30th, the DNR Division of Forestry released its final stats for the full fiscal, including comparisons to FY2021 and FY2020. Among the highlights:

- A total of 800,705 cords of DNR timber was purchased (at auction, over-the-counter, and other means, etc.) in FY2022, an increase from 734,161 in FY2021.
- A total of 744,893 cords of DNR timber were harvested and scaled in FY2022, up from 661,671 cords the previous year.
- The average purchase price for aspen sold through all methods during FY2022 was \$28.65 per cord, down from \$30.01 in FY2021. The average price paid for aspen during FY2020 was \$25.55 per cord.
- Black spruce stumpage showed a big price increase during FY2022, with an average price per cord of \$19.05, up from \$13.99 per cord in 2021.
- The DNR offered 874,767 cords of "new" timber during FY2022, with 85.9% of the offerings being purchased.

## **Recent Timber Sales**

**Average prices, as reported by each agency**

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>
---------------	----------------	---------------------

### **Beltrami County**

*August 9th — Sealed Bid*

Aspen Pulp	\$22.44	
Tamarack Pulp	\$10.00	
Red Pine Pulp	\$16.67	

4 of the 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **Aitkin County**

*August 10th — Sealed Bid*

Aspen P/B	\$43.05	
Mixed Hdwd P/B	\$12.01	
Oak P/B	\$20.25	
Maple P/B	\$15.78	

16 of the 19 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **Beltrami County**

*August 11th — Oral Auction*

Aspen Pulp	\$47.78	
Tamarack Pulp	\$ 2.90	
Red Pine P&B	\$24.96	
Red Pine Bolts	\$83.70	

All 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **St. Louis County**

*August 19th — Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$52.06	
Tamarack	\$ 2.65	
Red Maple	\$ 5.83	
Black Spruce	\$35.73	
Balsam	\$25.16	
Birch	\$14.45	

18 of the 23 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **DNR—Park Rapids Area**

*September 13th — Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (PB)	\$69.50	
Trembling Aspen (PB)	\$ 7.11	\$31.63
Mixed Hdwds (PB)	\$37.46	
Norway Pine (WST)	\$225.25	\$94.47
Tamarack (PB)	\$ 6.27	

16 of the 22 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **Crow Wing County**

*September 30th — Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$24.13	
Mixed Hdwd	\$12.73	
Oak	\$19.40	
Maple	\$12.00	

10 of the 13 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### **Products:**

PB = Pulp and Bolts

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## Thielen named DNR Director of Forestry

**P**atty Thielen was named Director of the Minnesota DNR's Division of Forestry in August, succeeding Forrest Boe, who retired in July.

Thielen has been with the DNR 27 years, starting as field forester in Baudette. She spent fifteen years in the field focusing on forest management, forest planning, and wildfire suppression. During

## Timber Talk

that time, she also worked with private landowners, managed forest development, road, and timber

contracts; and provided outreach and education.

Thielen then moved to the Grand Rapids regional office, where she served as Assistant Regional Forest Manager and Regional Forest Manager before spending four years as the Regional Director. As the Region 2 Director, Thielen played a lead role working across all divisions and was the primary contact for tribal and local governments, federal agency partners, and key constituent groups in the region.

In the fall of 2021, Thielen returned to the Forestry Division as the Deputy Director.

When she isn't working, Patty enjoys hunting, fishing, gardening, cooking the fruits of those activities, working with her husband on their 107-acre tree farm, and getting the dog (and herself) some exercise.

"Patty's deep knowledge of forestry topics and demonstrated leadership make her a terrific fit for the Forestry Division Director position," said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. We're thrilled to welcome her back as a member of DNR's Senior Management Team."

## Hall named Superior NF Supervisor

**T**om Hall has been named Superior National Forest Supervisor, succeeding Connie Cummins who retired at the end of July.

Prior to his selection as the Superior National Forests Supervisor, Hall served in Legislative Affairs in the Forest Service's DC Office, where he has been for the past two-and-a-half years. Before that, Hall was a District Ranger on the Shasta Trinity National Forest for 6 years. He has worked in planning, fuels, recreation, and range with over 20 dedicated years to sustainable land management principles. He has degrees in Forestry from Colorado State University and served in the Colorado Army National Guard as a helicopter mechanic.



"I am looking forward to helping the Forest, Tribes and Partners continue to manage the iconic landscapes in Northern Minnesota,"

Hall said. "I plan to continue to build on the relationships with the tribes, navigate and manage the complexities of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, ensure sustainable and science based natural resources management occurs at the landscape scale, and enable the public to sustainably enjoy their federal lands."

## Robert Latvala—1927-2022

**L**ongtime logger and TPA member Robert Latvala passed away in August. He was 95.

Latvala was born in Nashwauk. After graduating from Nashwauk High, he enlisted in the US Army, serving from 1945-47. After his discharge, we worked in his father's logging camps before going starting Latvala Brothers with his brother Richard, focusing on logging and sawmill operations. Robert was also part owner and builder of Stadium Lanes and A&W Root Beer in Nashwauk, as well as Nashwauk Wood Industries. He was also part owner of the Keewatin National Bank.

Robert was involved in many organizations, including Nashwauk Lutheran Church, American Legion, Habitat for Humanity, and played integral roles in establishing the Nashwauk Endowment Fund, Nashwauk Area Youth, and Nashwauk Community Volunteers. He was also named Itasca County Senior of the Year in 2001.

Robert was predeceased by his wife Mary Jane, and survived by his children Jane, Nancy, James, and David.



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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

# Before First Aid Kits Came to Camp

by J. C. Ryan

This story is reprinted from an earlier *Timber Bulletin*—one of the first of “Buzz” Ryan’s ever-popular contributions to these pages. The *Bulletin* will continue to reprint selected stories from the memories he recorded for us.—*Editor*



Today with all the logging companies and loggers setting rigid accident prevention and control programs, I can't help but look back to woods safety in the old days.

Accidents were rare then. I can recall clerking in a 175-man lumber camp where I didn't report an accident during an entire year. In the many years I was associated with my father's logging jobs, I only remember reporting two lost-time accidents.

One was when a group of men were trying to lift a sick horse to its feet and it struggled and fell back on one of the men's feet, breaking it at the ankle. And this was not really a lost-time accident, as the man was back in camp with a cast on his foot within 24 hours. He spent the rest of a winter as night fireman.

The other accident occurred when a top-loader slipped on the frost atop a load and fell on a man's shoulder, breaking his upper arm. It was nearly spring, and he was unable to return to work for several months.

Axe cuts as well as saw cuts were rare. And head injuries due to falling limbs or dry tops were very few. Most injuries came during loading or breaking down skidways of decked logs — occasionally a man would be caught by a fast rolling log as high-decked logs were broken down.

Prior to 1919, a first aid kit was never found in a lumber camp. It was only after workmen's insurance laws were passed that insurance companies insisted first aid kits be in every camp. If a man got a scratch or cut, he would apply balsam pitch or a chew of Peerless tobacco to it; and it would heal in a few days. The only medicines sold in the camp commissary were Hinkleys bone liniment, Davis Vegetable pain killer, castor oil, Prunia, Vaseline, Jamaica Ginger, Cascara pills, carbolic salve, and in later years, aspirin tablets. Most camps had more medicine on hand for the horses than they had for the men.

Why there were fewer accidents in the old days, I do not know. But it was probably because men were better trained. It was a bad mark against a man if he allowed himself to get hurt. No one wanted to hire a careless man, and no one wanted to work with a careless man. Men took great pride in being able to do a job without having or causing an accidents.



Wood workers performed many dangerous jobs, dressed for cold weather and recorded remarkably good “no-lost-time” records.







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