

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

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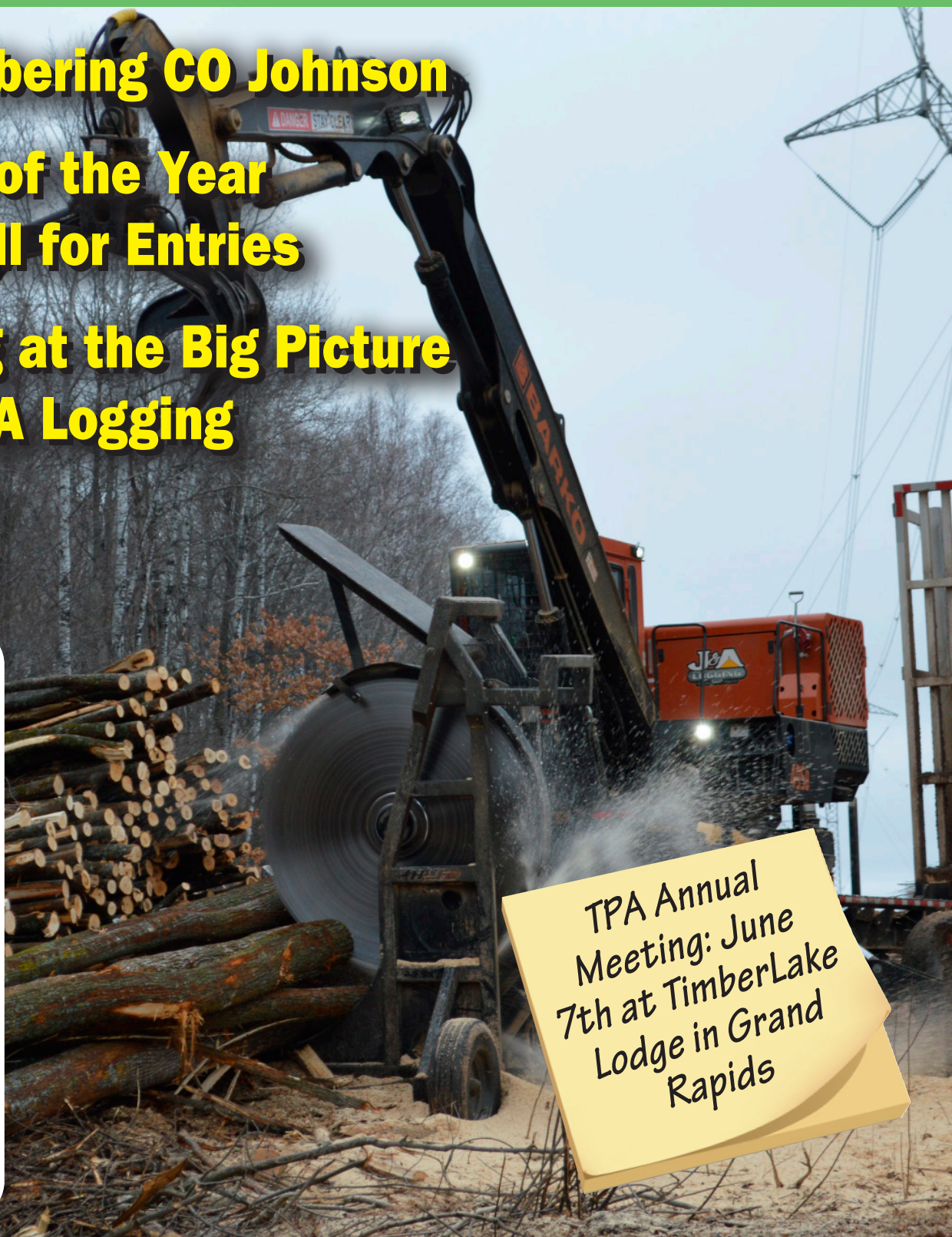
Remembering CO Johnson

Logger of the Year

- **Call for Entries**

Looking at the Big Picture

- **J&A Logging**



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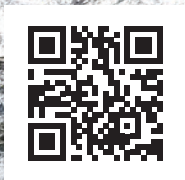
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Volume 79
January/February 2024
Duluth, Minnesota

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ON THE COVER

Jesse Anderson slashes timber at his job site south of Cromwell. For more on J&A Logging, please see page 8.

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President's Column



Corey Lovdahl

W_{ow!}

What an interesting winter this is turning out to be. Talking to some of our old logger friends, they claim this is nothing they have ever seen before.

We have had about every obstacle thrown at us we can imagine. It was freezing up very nicely and appeared like it was going to be a perfect winter, then our Christmas rain and warm temperatures put us back to ground zero. Then February brought more rain, which forced most of us to change our winter program: keeping close to road sides, cutting early freeze wood, and not being able to get deep into the swamp. Hopefully we can get in a few more weeks or month of logging this winter.

As resilient as us loggers are, we keep trudging along and making it work.

Ray and the TPA executive committee have been working closely with the DOT on seasonal road restrictions and DNR on sale extensions. We thank them for their efforts.

Ray has been spending time in St. Paul for the Minnesota legislative session to fight for our issues. He has also been asked to go to Washington, DC by Congressman Stauber's office to testify on a bill pertaining to the Endangered Species Act.

In January, I lost my father-in-law and long-time devoted TPA member and past president, Clarence Johnson of C.O. Johnson Logging Inc. He was a very positive influence for TPA and a very respected logger in our industry. I will miss our great logging conversations and know he will be missed by family and friends.

On an educational note- don't forget everyone needs to get signed up for log safe and MLEP.

Remember with the final push coming to work safely during the long work hours. Your family likes to see you come home.

Corey Lovdahl

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It's been a winter to remember in Minnesota, and if you're a logger it's for all the wrong reasons.

I know some Minnesotans like the above normal temperatures as a result of this year's El Niño, but without frost in the ground it's

Executive Vice President's Column



Ray Higgins

difficult to get anything productive done in the woods. I was in Bemidji at the end of January when the high was 51. Not good.

The warm weather is on top of high costs for fuel, equipment, and parts, high interest rates, and labor and trucking shortages. The hits just keep on coming.

The warm winter also meant the latest start to winter load increases in the twenty years since MnDOT has kept records. By the end of January when temperatures are hitting 50 throughout the state, it would have been easy for MnDOT to remove the increases and even implement spring load restrictions.

As you might imagine, I spent a lot of time talking to the folks at MnDOT about this topic, and fortunately, they understand the nature of our business, and the way winters work around here. They are rightly reluctant to "jump the gun" and make quick decisions about truck weights. MnDOT was

diligent about examining the data and the forecasts. They also trusted our members would be careful not to haul when the roads were vulnerable, particularly the rural gravel roads that could have been ruined with overuse. They knew we had a vested interest in keeping those roads in good shape so they'd be ready for us to utilize when the sub-freezing temps returned.

MnDOT made the correct decision to stay the course with winter load increases. Don't get me wrong, their first job is to protect the roads and make sure they're safe for us and our families. I appreciate that. I also appreciate their willingness to work with those in our state to keep business moving.

Sadly, we lost a friend and a giant in our Minnesota logging community in January.

Clarence Johnson was a long time TPA board member, serving on our executive committee, including a stint as TPA President from 2001-2004. A huge supporter of our organization, he loved spreading the word about TPA and urging loggers to join. Over the years, Clarence brought many Blackduck-area loggers to their first TPA meeting.

Clarence's years on the executive committee and as TPA president were important to all of us because the Association was dealing with the development of the forest management guidelines, as well as the passage of the 6th-axle hauling permit. Clarence's wise insight was critical in those discussions.

When I started with TPA, the first logging job I visited was Clarence's. As we walked around that harvest, he showed me the ins and outs of

logging, how his equipment worked, and also told me how important TPA was to him and to loggers throughout the state. I also visited Clarence's job when he had some kindergartners from Blackduck on site. It was a blast watching him show the kids around the woods.

Most of all, Clarence was a good, kind man. He was a mentor to me and dozens of loggers in our state. I'm honored to have known him and I look forward to seeing him further on up the road.

Minnesota's legislative session began in mid-February. It's a short session this year, focusing on bonding. I don't expect much in the way of significant legislation, but you never know. I've already been spending time in St. Paul and will continue to do so, making sure we're able to weigh-in on the issues that affect those in the woods.

I also was asked by Congressman Stauber to testify on a bill he introduced pertaining to the Endangered Species Act. We learned a lot over the past several years during the listing of the northern long-eared bat, and it looks like other bat species could be in the same situation. I testified before a subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee about our experiences in Minnesota, supporting Rep. Stauber's bill that would give the feds more flexibility in the regulations surrounding these listings. It's a good bill and a great idea. I thank Rep. Stauber for the opportunity to testify and I'm hopeful his colleagues in Washington see things his way.



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Speaking of Congressman Stauber, he has helped our industry in so many ways and has done so again by signing on to the “Jobs in the Woods Act” as a co-sponsor. The bill was crafted by our old friend Tim O’Hara and his colleagues at the Forest Resources Association, and would provide federal funding to help find folks to work in the forest products industry. It dovetails with what TPA is doing with MFI with the Forestry Works program that’s being rolled out this year.

Labor shortages are a problem in so many businesses, including logging. We’re doing what we can to mitigate that, and we thank Rep. Stauber for yet another way in which he helps us with our critical forest management work.

A couple of updates for you:

As many of you know, the former Verso Paper mill in Duluth has again changed hands. The transition from ST Paper to Sofidel America was completed on February 1st. With the change, several have asked if this means the mill will resume purchasing roundwood.

Unfortunately, the answer is no. I spoke with the mill manager who told me that while the mill will expand, increasing production and the number of folks who work there, they will continue to rely heavily on recycled fiber. The mill will also purchase some market pulp, but what they need isn’t available through nearby sources.

I’ve also been asked about the condition of Highway 2, either side of Floodwood. MnDOT did some patching over the summer after it took a beating last winter, but there’s still a ton of work to be done. Duane Hill at MnDOT tells me they’ve secured funding to perform a mill and overlay this summer from Highway 200 to the west to just east of the golf course. This work should add a few years to that pavement.

Finally, I’m asking your help in reminding the drivers who haul your wood to ramp up their attention to safety.

I received a text from a procurement manager at one of our mills asking if I could send a notice about drivers coming to complete

stops. At his facility, they’re seeing drivers “roll stop signs” both as they exit the woodyard, and also as they enter the closest highway. Most recently, a truck pulled onto the highway right in front of someone—who happened to be the wife of one of our loggers—who had to take action to avoid a crash.

You’ll recall over the years we’ve had requests from other mills about observing stop signs, railroad crossings, excessive speed, etc. in their woodyards. Our drivers are outstanding, but they need reminders from time to time. This is one of those times.

Please share with them the need to take an extra moment or two to come to a complete stop, observe signage when on the road and in the woodyard, and make sure everyone gets home safe and sound each night.

Thank you for your help with this. Let me know if you have any questions about this or anything else I can help you with.





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Member Feature...



Three generations of J&A Logging: Jacob Anderson, Jesse Anderson, and John Anderson.

Looking at the Big Picture

It's a late January morning just south of Cromwell, on what should be one of the coldest mornings of the year, which normally would mean good deep frost in the ground and near-ideal logging conditions.

Not this year. The temperature has already reached freezing this morning, on the way to a high of 48. The forecast for the next ten days

isn't much better.

"We haven't had much really cold weather," logger Jesse Anderson says. "We definitely lost time in December. We had a couple weeks off and then since the first of the year it's been going pretty well the last three weeks. But now it's going to get tough when we get done on this site. I'm not sure how well our

next sale will work out. It's on about a mile and a half of swamp that has frost in it, and we worked it, but whether it holds up is the next question. Usually if we have twenty inches of frost in the ground we don't need to worry about anything. Last Thursday there were thirteen inches, so the low boy made it across but we'll see if it will hold up. Once the road's established, it usually goes pretty well if you can keep things going in the woods, but it definitely is going to be a struggle."

Anderson has a few tricks up his sleeve to be able to operate in less-than-ideal conditions.

"We have timber mats and dual tires for the skidder," he says. "Our chipper is also a great asset to have for covering up some of these winter roads. They'll carry a truck pretty well."

There's also the option of working overnight to take advantage of colder temperatures, if necessary.

"On a normal day we start

loading about 5:00 a.m.," he says. "When need be, we'll quit at noon or whenever we have to, and get back at midnight or 1 o'clock."

Jesse Anderson is following in the footsteps of his father John who started in the logging business even before graduating from Cromwell High School in 1970.

"I had two older brothers that logged," John says. "When I was younger a lot of us started out peeling popple in the winter during high school. I always liked the woods. I did other jobs. I worked construction some and milked cows on my father's farm, but I always kept coming back to the woods."

After high school, John worked construction, did some roofing, continued helping on the farm, among other things. But winters were always for logging. He worked for other loggers, falling timber with a chainsaw. John finally bought his first skidder around 1985.

By this time, Jesse had been born in 1978. Before he knew it, he was joining his dad in the woods, helping out whenever he could.

"Anytime I wasn't at school," Jesse



Jacob Anderson leaves the landing with a load of timber, headed for the Sappi mill in Cloquet. Anderson earned his CDL utilizing TPA's CDL program.

says, "I was wherever my dad was. If he was logging, I was there with him."

By the time Jesse's senior year at Cromwell rolled around, he was ready for the next chapter, spending the year 100 miles away at the technical college in Staples, learning

to run heavy equipment. When he graduated from high school in 1996, he was already one year into the 18-month vo-tech program. When he finished up at Staples in 1997, Jesse got a job that first summer working for a construction company in Duluth.



Jesse Anderson utilizes a Barko 495B to load a truck for delivery to the mill.



Harvested timber rests in a crib trailer, waiting to be hauled to the mill.

At this point, John had just started logging year-round, full-time, using his initials to call his new business J&A Logging.

"I like the woods," John says. "That's where I wanted to be. I liked being my own boss and not having a lot of people around."

Jesse might have preferred to work with his father in the woods, but there wasn't a ton of market to support another employee. A lot of John's wood was marketed through other loggers. Gradually markets improved and the business began to grow. After a couple of years, John was ready to see if Jesse was ready to leave his construction job in Duluth and come back to the woods.

"I'd built a house on some land our family had," Jesse says. "Dad asked me if I wanted to log full-time. I told him what I needed to make each month for the house payment, and he said we should be able to do that."

The Andersons bought a truck to haul timber with. They had a Hydro-Ax wheeled feller buncher for a time, and also hired a local company to do some custom bunching. Still, it was just the two of them. As markets continued to improve, the Andersons added equipment, and over time wound up with a full conventional logging operation. These days, there are four on the woods crew, including Jesse, with two to three drivers hauling timber to the mill.

Currently the crew is split between two sites. The job south

of Cromwell is on Carlton County land, with mostly hardwoods like maple, basswood, ash, birch, and some aspen, totaling roughly 1400 cords. Plus, there's around 800 cords of wood from an adjacent state sale they're finishing up. On this day, wood is being skidded to the landing, where the slasher is processing it and loading onto waiting trucks. Today is also the first day of harvesting operations on another site just north of Wright. That's a DNR permit with 4000 cords of mostly aspen. The feller buncher and delimeter are working there.

"It's going to be a nice job," Jesse says, "if it'll stay frozen."

All the timber from both sites will be hauled to Sappi, a relatively short haul.

Unlike most conventional operations, the Andersons prefer having the delimeter follow the buncher through the harvest site, performing its work before trees are skidded to the landing rather than after.

"I just feel like you get more efficient skidding," Jesse says. "Get it limbed, get it cleaned up, organized, make a nice big drag, and then it comes to the landing. The delimeter's not waiting on the skidder. If you delimb on the landing, every time a skidder comes in, if they're working together, he's got to stop, or the skidder stops. This way, somebody gets out there in a skidder and they'll just bunch up 40 acres, pull four or five drags together."

"It's easier too when there's many different species," John says. "There's more room to sort through everything."

"The timber operator sorts it," Jesse adds. "The buncher throws the aspen separately, for example. He'll make an aspen drag, a maple drag, a birch drag, etc. It seems to work well for us."

While the Andersons log year-round, raising cattle has always been a part of their lives. John almost always had dairy cows throughout his life, and today, Jesse has over 100 head of cattle: including sixty cows, three bulls,



Mike Johnson maneuvers a CAT 538 throughout the harvest site to delimit harvested timber for J&A Logging.



Jacob Anderson drives a Weiler S550 skidder, equipped with dual tires on the rear to minimize its impact on soil conditions.

and calves that come in the spring that will be sold for beef when the time is right. Raising cattle is—like logging—in their blood, and has played a big part in who they are.

“Growing up on a dairy farm, you learn a work ethic,” Jesse says. “There were no days off. That’s just the way we grew up. A number of years back we would usually take Sundays off, but when it was just me and Dad, we worked pretty much every day.”

J&A’s crew is a huge asset. While John has fully retired, Cory Aho is the buncher operator, Mike Johnson runs the delimeter, Jesse’s son Jacob drives skidder, and Jesse handles the slashing, loading, and also builds roads. Jesse’s wife Jana takes care of the bookkeeping. On the trucking side, Trent Pfishner, Roger Manninen, and Mike Turnock handle the hauling, but nearly everyone on the crew has a CDL, giving them some needed flexibility.

“If we have a lot of wood on the ground,” Jesse says, “the limber guy will drive for a day or two. Or if we’re rained out, we can have as many as four guys hauling. It goes pretty fast then.”

For Anderson, the ability to

adapt is also critical. Challenges like fuel costs, labor issues, and the weather—particularly this year—are always going to pop up. It’s important to deal with them.

“You have to be able to look at the big picture,” he says. “If something’s not working, you can’t sit there and cry about it. Figure it out. Get

moving.”

It helps, of course, to love what you do. And Anderson does.

“We have a good crew,” Jesse says. “That’s huge. And seeing the progress we make is fun. When we get a tough job or a big job and we finally get it done, there’s that sense of accomplishment. I like that.”



Cory Aho harvests aspen with a CAT 521B feller buncher for J&A Logging.



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Clarence Johnson, 1943-2024

Clarence Oscar Johnson, 80, of Blackduck, MN passed away Tuesday January 9th, 2024 at Good Samaritan Center in Blackduck.

Clarence was born May 25th, 1943 to William and Irene Johnson. He was a lifelong resident of Blackduck where he attended school and graduated from Blackduck High School in 1961. Following graduation, Clarence moved to Colorado for a short amount of time working for the Dillon Dam in Frisco and after for the Climax Mine. After his time in Colorado, Clarence returned to Blackduck to pursue his logging passion. He enlisted in the National Guard in 1964 and served for 6 years. On September 2nd, 1967, Clarence married the love of his life Carol J. Michalek. He began logging with his brothers before starting C.O. Johnson Logging Inc. with the help of his wife. He was an active member of the Minnesota Timber Producers Association and was the President of the Association from 2001-2004.

Clarence's most treasured moments were with his family, traveling, canoeing, and riding motorcycle. Once Clarence became a grandfather, he enjoyed spending



Then-TPA President Clarence Johnson (left) with fellow TPA Executive Committee member Lowell Pittack and Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty in 2004.

quality time with his seven grandchildren. Throughout his life, Clarence enjoyed serving as a church elder, being on many different church boards, building communities, Deeper Life Bible Camp board, as well as numerous other boards and committees.



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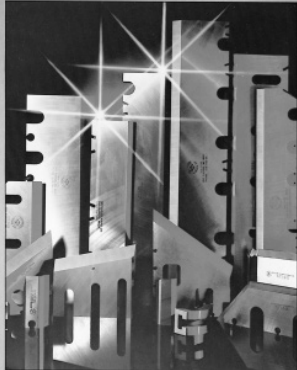
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Logger of the Year Nominations Being Accepted

The Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program Implementation Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2024 Logger of the Year Award.

The award is designed to recognize outstanding independent logging contractor performance, increase the visibility of competent professional independent logging contractors within the forestry community, encourage independent logging contractors to emulate the outstanding performance of award winners, and improve forester-logger-landowner relations by publicly recognizing outstanding logging performance as an essential element of every planned timber harvest.

Among the areas in which nominees will be evaluated are safety, forest management, timber harvesting practices, business management, as well as community involvement.

To nominate an outstanding logger, visit the TPA website at www.timberproducers.com and download the electronic nomination form. Complete the nomination form describing why you think your nominee should receive the Minnesota SFI Implementation Committee Logger of the Year Award. Your nomination should include Letters of Support from peers, private landowners, agency staff, etc.

Nominations are due Friday March 15, 2024.

Previous Minnesota winners include:

2023 – Central Pine Lumber
2022 – Enberg Logging
2021 – Kimball's Logging
2020 – Fjeran Forest Products
2019 – JATCO, Inc.
2018 – Shermer Logging*
2017 – Dobbs Logging
2016 – Hasbargen Logging*
2015 – Greg Cook Logging, Inc.
2014 – Scheff Logging
2013 – Rolle Logging
2012 – Erickson Timber
2011 – M&R Chips
2010 – Lovdahl & Sons LLC
2009 – Berthiaume Logging LLC*
2008 – Pittack Logging, Inc.
2007 – McCabe Forest Products
2006 – Rieger Logging, Inc.

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Safety Pays: Operator's Manuals

By John Saccoman, Loss Control Consultant, Choice Insurance

MOTLEY, MN

Confidence in one's ability is crucially important when operating a half-million dollar piece of logging equipment.

But certainly, along with that confidence must also be the knowledge and training on how to safely operate that equipment. Not only is it important, but the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has standards that outline it as a requirement.

Training on any piece of equipment that an employee is operating is required, according to the OSHA Code of Federal Regulations. Knowing the operator's manual for that equipment is required too.

And the old saying is that if that training and employee knowledge of the operator's manual isn't documented somewhere, it doesn't exist.

Rod Enberg of Enberg Logging, LLC, out of Motley, MN, has been around the logging game for years. He knows too well the importance of such training and knowledge.

"You really have to have documentation that the employee has read and understood the operator's manual" Enberg said. "And that comes back to the rest of your equipment too. What about the guy in the skidder and the guy in the log loader and the guy in the faller and so forth?"

Enberg said it's been his experience when dealing with a Minnesota OSHA audit that it will be the first question out of an investigator's mouth.

"Was your operator aware and informed and did he understand the operator's manual," he said. Enberg

said it doesn't matter if it is your equipment or rented equipment or borrowed equipment. An employee must understand the intricacies of any equipment he/she is operating.

"You may be used to running an excavator, but is it our excavator?" Enberg said. "Our logging community has to be very well aware of the fact that it is extremely important that your employees and operators understand the operator's manuals that come along with the equipment."

"If everything else seems to be okay," Enberg said of OSHA. "Chances are you may not be fined. But the first place they're going to look is knowing that operator's manual."

According to the Code of Federal Regulations CFR 1910.266(i) Logging Operations employee training standard, an employer must provide training for its employees "as soon as possible for each current and new employee."

That includes understanding and following "the manufacturer's operating and maintenance instructions, warning and precautions."

In addition, also according to the CFR 1920.266 logging standard, an employee is required to have training on the piece of equipment in use "whenever the employee is assigned new work tasks, tools, equipment machines or vehicles." So just because an operator is proficient on a skidder, it doesn't mean the same can be assumed for a log loader etc.

Finally, under the standard, If an operator is observed performing unsafely, training to correct unsafe actions must again be implemented. A new operator "shall work under the close supervision of a designated

person until the employee demonstrates to the employer the ability to safely perform their new duties independently."

Fortunately, most logging company owners will not turn a green employee loose on a \$500K piece of equipment until confident he/she knows how to operate the machine.

The good news, according to the logging standard, is that once the training is completed, all things being equal, and the operator is proficient on the equipment he/she is operating, retraining is not necessary.

As an employer, Enberg said you can't just assume that because an operator has experience at some other company before coming to you, he/she knows your equipment.

"A lot of folks take for granted when you hire somebody who has gone from logger to logger or contractor to contractor, that they know what they're doing," he said.

It's also important logging company employees only use equipment on which they've been trained. Requests from landowners to use their equipment, for example, should be denied. Such practices can lead to OSHA fines. Enberg said his advice is to only use equipment built for the job and that has been cleared from those in charge. It avoids using potential bad machines and ones on which employees haven't received safety training. Enberg said the end goal for crews in the woods is to count on each other and always to come home safely.

Enberg did credit the Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) and MN OSHA training the loggers receive annually in helping to keep them safe.



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“They’ll have a break-out session with someone from John Deere or Tigercat presents a class where they say this is our basic operator’s manual. This is the importance of reading it and trying to understand it to the best of your ability. At least then they can get an idea that it’s pretty important.”

Enberg recalled a time when he himself was in a Bobcat machine and the motor failed with the boom arms up in the air. The door to get out was blocked and prevented Enberg from exiting the equipment.

“I couldn’t get out of the goll-darn thing,” he said. “I thought, what the heck to I do now?”

Enberg said he pulled out the operator’s manual and it explained what to do in just such a situation he found himself.

“There’s a button on the floor that if you pull it, the arms come down. And they did,” Enberg said. “If I would have read that, I wouldn’t have had a problem.”

But in the event of an emergency, such as a fire, time is crucial. An operator might not have time to reach for an operator’s manual. In that instance, Enberg wondered out loud if an operator would have the knowledge and maybe just as important, the composure to get out.

“It could be a very, very serious situation,” he said.

At the end of the day, learning the ins and outs of the equipment and how to operate it in the best way possible does keep people safe. And Enberg would probably shout it from the highest hill if he thought it would help.

“How to you transfer that information to our logging community?” Enberg asked. “It’s really up to us.”



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On the Markets

The *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.

Recent Timber Sales

Average prices, as reported by each agency

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>
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Beltrami County

December 5th—Sealed Bid

Aspen Pulp		\$32.91
Basswood P&B		\$23.70
Tamarack Pulp		\$ 8.94
Red Pine Pulp		\$12.61

All 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Beltrami County

December 7th—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp		\$48.96
Red Pine P&B		\$47.43
Jack Pine P&B		\$25.37
Red Pine Bolts		\$67.14

All 11 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Aitkin County

December 11th—Oral Auction

Aspen P/B	\$34.88	
Maple P/B	\$10.08	
Oak P/B	\$15.12	
Basswood P/B	\$13.84	

27 of the 39 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Aitkin Area

December 11th—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$41.80	\$22.25
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$55.45	
Maple Species (PB)		\$12.00
Mixed Spruce (PB)		\$16.34

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

Carlton County

December 12th—Oral Auction

Aspen	\$44.73	
Birch	\$12.29	
Maple	\$15.28	

All 4 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Cloquet Area

December 12th—Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (PW)	\$30.94	\$19.95
Aspen Species (PB)	\$22.44	\$26.38
Ash (PB)	\$ 5.03	\$12.08
Norway Pine (WST)	\$55.89	

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

Lake County

December 12th—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp	\$46.08	
Ash P/B	\$ 4.49	
Maple P/B	\$ 5.56	

6 of the 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Deer River Area

December 14th—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$35.18	\$31.87
Aspen Species (PB)	\$34.82	\$36.42
Norway Pine (PB)	\$48.99	\$39.75
Ash (PB)	\$10.28	\$10.04
Norway Pine (WST)	\$92.75	\$60.95

18 of the 24 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Itasca County

December 14th—Oral Auction

Aspen	\$37.33	\$32.90
Red Pine	\$38.47	\$68.60
Spruce	\$12.58	\$17.70
Ash	\$12.51	\$ 9.42
Balsam	\$ 8.52	\$10.84

35 of the 47 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Clearwater County

December 20th—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp		\$35.82
Oak Pulp		\$12.26
Birch Pulp		\$11.18
Maple Pulp		\$11.17

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

DNR—Littlefork Area

December 13th—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$38.48	\$30.89
Aspen Species (PB)	\$18.93	\$27.40
Black Spruce (PW)	\$18.30	
Tamarack (PW)	\$ 7.33	\$ 7.38

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

DNR—Backus Area

January 3rd—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$38.10	\$20.23
Maple Species (PW)	\$ 9.99	\$ 8.82
Norway Pine (WST)	\$88.03	\$75.39
Oak Species (PB)	\$37.06	\$21.19

11 of the 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Two Harbors Area

January 4th—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (PW)	\$19.24	
Trembling Aspen (PW)		\$ 6.65
Mixed Spruce (PB)	\$15.57	

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

Hubbard County

January 8th—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp	\$40.05	
Birch Pulp	\$13.30	
Norway Pine Mixed	\$74.99	
Jack Pine Mixed	\$34.92	

13 of the 14 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Bemidji Area*January 9th—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (PW)	\$37.50	\$41.14
Norway Pine (WST)	\$85.35	
Basswood (PB)	\$20.83	\$15.59
Norway Pine (PB)	\$54.90	\$36.73

25 of the 31 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—NE Region*January 10th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (PW)	\$47.00	\$33.37
Mixed Spruce (PB)	\$35.19	\$24.54
White Spruce (PB)	\$37.12	\$23.67
Aspen Species (PB)	\$38.58	\$40.21
Norway Pine (WST)		\$93.14

23 of the 31 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Sandstone Area*January 11th—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (PW)	\$22.63	\$15.74
Maple Species (PB)		\$10.98
Mixed Spruce (PB)		\$13.40

5 of the 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—NW Region*January 9th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (PW)	\$33.13	\$38.53
Trembling Aspen (PB)	\$23.15	\$27.32
Mixed Spruce (PB)	\$31.13	
Norway Pine (PB)	\$26.51	\$50.35
Oak Species (PB)	\$19.02	\$22.34

24 of the 29 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

DNR—Central Region*January 17th—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (PW)	\$49.35	\$15.31
Norway Pine (PB)		\$46.14
Maple Species (PW)	\$29.48	\$ 8.64

6 of the 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Cass County*January 25th—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$34.08	\$27.38
Red Oak	\$46.39	\$20.37
Basswood	\$20.52	\$10.00
Maple	\$16.90	\$11.02

All 18 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Koochiching County*January 31st—Oral Auction*

Aspen P&B	\$32.75	\$34.32
Spruce P&B	\$23.92	\$25.00
Balsam P&B	\$11.42	\$10.76
Tamarack P&B	\$ 7.37	\$ 6.00

25 of the 26 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

Early Fire Control

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*



For the past 30 years, northern Minnesota has enjoyed a period of fairly wet weather, free from any large forest fires. Now, in the fall of 1976, we have had fire conditions following a very dry spring and summer with many fires throughout the northern half of the state. And, while the

condition is bad to say the least, it is not new.

From the time logging began in the state in the 1840s, the northern half of Minnesota has been confronted with many dry years and bad fire conditions. In the early years of logging, forest fires were not

much of a problem to the logger, mostly because the logging camps operated only during the winter months and settlers had not started to open up the land for farming. While there was some loss to the companies, it was mostly in fire-killed timber. In a few cases, fire may have been of some help in removing brush and debris, making logging easier.

However, following the Hinckley fire of Sept. 1, 1894, when logging camps and equipment and much standing timber were destroyed along with over 400 lives, the loggers, like the settlers, became aware of the terrible threat to life and property that uncontrolled forest fires could cause. When the town of Chisholm was wiped out by another fire on Sept. 4, 1908, with vast damage to property and timber, loggers became even more aware of forest fires. The Chisholm fire burned over 20,000 acres with two million dollars’ worth of standing timber.

In the fall of 1910, 16 years after the great Hinckley fire, another fire struck Minnesota along its northern boundary and wiped out the towns of Baudette and Spooner. The year 1910 was the hottest and driest on record so far, and on Oct. 9, the forest fire, driven by a southwest wind, rolled in on the two towns and reduced them to ashes with the loss of 42 lives. Following this fire, public sentiment demanded a better fire control system, and as a result the legislature of 1911 appropriated funds and passed laws setting up a system of rangers and ranger districts throughout the forested area of the state.

These laws required loggers and timbermen to burn slashings and reports their cuttings, putting loggers directly into fire control work by the reduction of what was considered a fire hazard. Rangers issued notices for disposal of whatever slash they considered hazardous. Railroads and logging companies were required to patrol their railroads and take steps to see that their locomotives did not set fires. Each camp foreman became responsible for carrying out the fire control and prevention within his camp operations area. Besides this, fire patrolmen were used to patrol all engines over the logging



Early fires in northern Minnesota – traveling through a cutover area (above) and threatening a small town (below).



spurs.

With the coming of railroad logging and the operation of steam jammers, the chance of fire became much greater. Fire fighting and control still remained the responsibility of the district rangers. However, ranger districts were large and greatly undermanned, and the rangers depended pretty much on the logging companies to cover their work areas.

In order to supplement the work of the scattered state rangers and patrolmen, some of the larger companies hired summer patrolmen for their operations and timber stands. With the help of the weather, fires were cut down in number considerably between 1911 and 1917. However, with the dry weather of 1917, followed by another dry year in 1918, fires again began to get out of control. Many small fires were burning throughout the area and with a hurricane wind developing on Oct. 12, fires rolled over the towns of Moose Lake, Cloquet, and the smaller villages of Kettle River, Lawler, Munger, Brookston, Adolph and all the area in between, even threatening the city of Duluth. Property damage was estimated to be \$28 million and 438 lives were lost.

In order to try to establish blame for the fire (or fires, as it was found that there were at least six distinct strips of burned-over area), many lawsuits were started to collect damage from the larger lumber companies and the railroads.

Since railroads were under government control at that time, the government finally paid most of the claims. While the lumber companies won all of their suits, it cost them many thousands of dollars. After the 1918 fire and the damage claims, all the logging companies operating in northeastern Minnesota greatly increased their efforts to control any fires that might start in their operations or logging areas and result in claims for damage. Several fire control organizations were formed to work with and under the direction of the district rangers.

The Oliver Iron Company woods operation in the Brimson and Burnside area had set up a system of fire patrolmen who worked throughout their operations during the summer months. This was composed of camp clerks, foremen, straw bosses, cruiser and other supervising personnel who worked in the camps during the winter months. In case of fire, they used the little fire equipment available in the camps.

In 1919, the first private fire control organization, known as the Wales Forest Protective Association, was established with Noah Bottineau in charge and Leo Fay as his assistant. Their headquarters was set up at Scott Junction on the Wales branch. This organization assumed responsibility for all fire control in the area lying east of the Duluth and Iron

Range Railroad in St. Louis County, consisting of about four townships, and about 10 townships in Lake County lying south of Township 59 and north of Township 54 as far east as Range 9. This relieved the state of a large portion of District 3 and gave the chance to spread help to other portions of District 3, which was greatly undermanned.

The Wales Forest Protection Association was financed by several companies that had timber operations and stands of timber in the area. Each company paid according to the number of acres in its holdings. Some of the main timber holders in this area were the Oliver Mining Co., Cloquet Tie and Post Co., North Star Timber Co., Consolidated Paper Co., Scott Graff Co. and the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad Co. They built and maintained lookout towers, telephone lines, and carried on all fire protection work with as many as 25 patrolmen working during the summer months. Most of their travel was done by foot or by railroad motor car.

West of the Iron Range, between the Range and Duluth, the timber was mostly owned by the Combined Weyerhaeuser Companies of Cloquet and many camps were in operation. The few patrolmen they had helped some in controlling fires, but the summer of 1922 proved to be a bad fire

season. In August a large fire started near White Face station on the Duluth Winnipeg and Pacific Railroad and burned through to Markham. Much of the standing pine timber in 55-15 and 54-15 was burned. The National Guard was called out to help fight this fire, which was brought under control with the help of some rain. All of the burned timber had to be cut in order to salvage some of it.

The Combined Weyerhaeuser Companies had been planning to expand their protection program for some time, and following this 1922 fire, action was taken. James Ryan, my father, had been directing the mapping of the 1918 fire and handling the field work in connection with the lawsuits filed against the companies. He was called into the office of William Kenety, general manager of the Cloquet companies, and given the job of setting up a fire control organization similar to the Wales Association. This was to cover the companies' work area west of the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad in St. Louis County south of the Iron Range.

The organization would differ from the Wales Association in being financed by the Cloquet companies only. More time and effort would be spent in collecting information on fires that might protect the companies from suits. However, the

Timber destroyed by one of Minnesota's early fires.





A crown fire in action-and one of the early wooden lookouts built by the Fire Patrol Association throughout the Cloquet Fire Patrol District. Some of these towers were replaced later by steel lookouts.



main objective would be the control and suppression of fires. This organization, as the Wales organization, was to be under the approval and direction of Percy Vibert, the ranger in District 3 at Cloquet. In 1923 Vibert's district consisted of most of St. Louis County south of the Range and extended across Lake County to the Cook County line. During the spring of 1923, plans were made to establish headquarters at the crossing of the NDE Railroad and Highway 4 known as the Vermilion Trail. The organization was known as the Cloquet Fire Patrol Association, and lasted from June 1, 1923, to Feb. 1, 1930. In setting up the boundaries of the area to be served by the association, we took over districts that had been manned part-time by state-paid men at Cotton, Markham, Central Lake and Biwabik, thus giving Vibert a chance to hire more men in the fringe areas to the south and west.

In May of 1923, buildings were set up at the headquarters site, consisting of a combination bunkhouse, kitchen and office, a two-stall garage, a speeder house, a warehouse and food storage building, and an ice house. A four-stall garage and two log cabins were built in 1924 as well as hose racks, etc. I had been working as a pulpwood scaler and log cutting inspector for the St. Louis Mercantile Co., one of the Weyerhaeuser companies. I was transferred to headquarters to work as supervisor of this organization under the supervision of my father, who had other duties with the company, such as checking contract loggers and timber estimating supervision. However, much of his time during the summer months in the first years of the organization was spent at headquarters.

We built lookout towers (several wood towers at first, later replaced by steel towers) and telephone lines. Much of our travel was by railroad motor car or "speeders," with men on hand speeders patrolling after the jammers and locomotives. We had charge of all the brushburning around logging camps and along railroad spurs that were to be used during the summer months. Patrolmen were assigned to fire control wherever there were company men working along the rivers during the drives. During the spring of 1926 we had 600 men burning brush during the month of April. We set up a system of patrol beats that were covered regularly throughout the district with register boxes where patrolmen would record the weather and conditions. Watchmen were stationed at timber landings along the railroad where fires might cause considerable damage.

Our fire protection area covered all land south from Township 59 to and including Township 53 and parts of Township 52 in Ranges 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, parts of Range 17 and also in the Hall Junction operations in Ranges 18 and 19. We also had a special

man in the Beaver Rivers operations in 51-15 during the summers of 1924 and 1925. During the peak years we had about 28 summer patrolmen. Most of these men were straw bosses, camp clerks and scalers who went back to work in the lumber camps during the winter months, with only two or three men working over winter checking slash. All railroad patrols were under our supervision and we ordered that the trains be patrolled whenever we thought the danger of them starting fires existed. Besides the regular patrolmen, we had men stationed in the camp work areas who would work checking jammers, locomotives and work areas. These men would work the duration of the particular job, lived in the camps under our direction and were paid by us.

Upon the organization of the Cloquet Fire Patrol Association, all camp foremen clerks were notified that they were to give us the greatest cooperation, that all work would stop and the crews turned over to us in case of fire and that they must enforce any rules on fire prevention that the association might prescribe. All of the association's regular patrolmen were commissioned by the state Forestry Department and had the full power of state rangers. We employed about 15 seven-month patrolmen during most of the time the association was in operation. During the later years some state funds were available and a few of our men were paid from those.

When the association was formed in 1923, the Combined Cloquet Companies had about 700 to 800 million board feet of pine still standing. All of this virgin timber had been harvested by 1929. Of this, about 500 million was in the Stroud area, the balance was in the 55-15 Comstock Lake area west of Mile Post 64 on the Iron Range Railroad in 57-13, in 55-12 around Stone Lake, in 51-15 on the Beaver and several lesser scattered blocks.

In the summer of 1924 some 100 million board feet of cut logs were hung up in Island Lake when the power company drew off the water. This created a bad fire hazard and some logs burned.

Some 20 large 200-man camps and 30 or more jobber camps were in operation during the life of the association. The fire-fighting equipment was cached throughout the district and was composed mostly of hand tools and pump tanks. At headquarters we had large amounts of hand tools and pumps, blankets, dishes and tents to handle fires and men who had to be fed and camped.

During most of the time, our first line of defense for fire suppression came from the camps, and when they were not in operation, lumberjacks would be picked up from the employment offices in Duluth. Settlers and local people were used in the fringe and settled parts of the district. Much of our transportation was by railroad speeder

and up to 12 motorcars were operated by the association. While we cannot take all the credit, as the weather did cooperate, the fire loss in our district from 1923 to 1929 was cut down considerably. We had several fires of around 200 acres, but all were brought under control without too much loss.

In the fall of 1929 we had what was known as the "Harvey fire" that burned along the west side of 55-15 and into 56-15. However, it was not until shortly before the association was dissolved that we had a really bad fire. While we were enjoying pretty good success in our district, the Wales Association to the east of us had several large fires in the spring of 1926 that burned over most of two townships (56-57-9).

My father had taken another position with the companies and in 1929 the supervision of fire control work came under Ed Marshall, an ex-supervisor of the Chippewa National Forest who had been hired by the companies to head their forestry program. Reggie Vibert, brother of the ranger Percy Vibert, was given some of my father's duties and was on the payroll of the association that last six months of 1929.

In late fall of 1929, the companies decided to dissolve the association and on Feb. 1, 1930, all equipment of the association, along with a sum of money, was turned over to the state so they could assume the job of taking care of any fire hazards that may have been left by the logging operations in the form of slash.

Thus, after about seven fire years, the Cloquet Fire Patrol became a thing of the past. During the time it was in operation the checks of the Cloquet Tie and Post Co., nonoperational at this time, were used to pay for all the men and supplies. Most of our fire fighting was done at the rate of 40 cents per hour and most of our patrolmen were paid \$100 per month plus room, board and expenses.

During the time that the Cloquet Fire Patrol was in existence, two other associations sprang up. One was known as the Kabetogama Fire Patrol Association and handled fire control in the operations of Virginia and Rainy Lake Counties. The other was known as the Galvin Fire Patrol Association and handled fires in the Galvin branch of the International Lumber Co. (M&O) in Koochiching County. Both of these were short-lived. The Oliver Mining Co. still maintained some patrolmen in their Burnside holdings but not to the extent of the association.

From the time the state Forestry Department was set up in 1911 until the closing of the logging camps in the early 1930s, the logging camps were the first source of organized fire crews and with private fire control organizations, loggers played a large part in early fire control.



These photos all show destruction of 1931 fires – including a settler's home (above) and cars abandoned and burned in a field in the Hay Creek fire.



The Holstein cow and the spike buck above suffocated but were unsinged in 1931 fires. The deer below suffocated and burned.



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To serve our readers better, the Timber Bulletin offers free classified ads of up to 85 words to all members and associate members of the Minnesota Timber Producers Association. All ads must be submitted in writing to the Association office. The MTPA assumes no responsibility for ad contents and accepts free ads on a first-come, first-served basis within space limitations.

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