

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

MAY/JUNE 2009

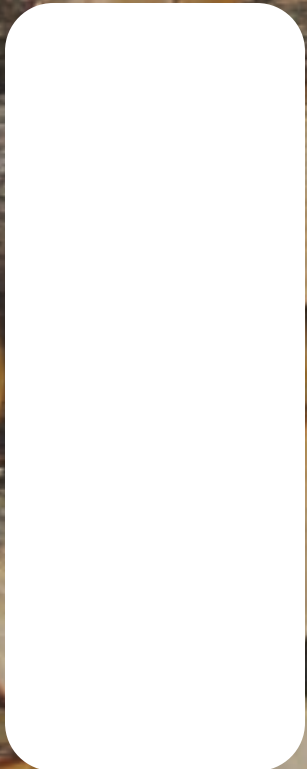
VOLUME 65



**Self-Made Men:  
Westerlund Sawmill**

**Legislative Session  
Review**

**Berthiaume Logging  
Honored**



# 2009 North Star Expo

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# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 65  
May/June 2009  
Duluth, Minnesota

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### ON THE COVER

Jeff Westerlund picks up Red Oak to be sawed at Westerlund Sawmill in Malmo Township, this issue's member feature.

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## Aanestad Named Tree Farmer of the Year

**W**ell summer is finally here and the spring timber auctions are winding down. Stumpage prices seem to have moderated. Now, hopefully, everyone can find markets for their wood. The economy doesn't seem to be improving very fast and with fuel prices on the rise again this summer looks to be a tough one

### President's Column



for our industry. TPA has been working hard this legislative session but with the budget deficits the state faces, it has been a difficult session. I think Wayne did a great job of keeping our agenda on track and it looks like the DNR budget came out pretty well, so we should not see a drop in available stumpage this year. The TPA has also sent a letter to Congressman Oberstar supporting the increase in truck weights on our interstate highways.

Fall will be here before we know it and with fall, comes the North Star Expo. Hopefully everyone can find time to come and have some fun.

Please always remember to be safe.

Mike Rieger

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**A**rden Aanestad (R), was presented with the Minnesota Tree Farmer of the Year Award at the Minnesota Forestry Association's Annual Meeting in May. Pictured here with DNR forester Gary Anderson, who made the nomination for the award, Aanestad has had a 200-acre tree farm in Crow Wing County since 1974. He manages the land for timber, wildlife habitat, and recreation. As a retired ornithologist at the University of Minnesota, Aanestad also used the woodlands to study songbirds. Also honored at MFA's Annual Meeting were regional winners Bob and Ingrid Sonnonberg of New York Mills; High Ridge Tree Farm, operated by the McHale family; and State Sen. Tom Bakk of Cook. In addition, Finn Ostman of Cook was named Tree Farm Inspector of the Year.



**A**nother state legislative session is in the books. While the official adjournment happened on the constitutional deadline of Monday, May 18, the big issues on taxes and spending ground to a halt on the previous Thursday. That was the day that Governor Pawlenty figuratively dropped a nuke on the political landscape by announcing that he would sign all of the spending bills on his desk, veto any tax increases and unallot the difference from the spending bills. Unallotment is the authority that

## Executive Vice President's Column



the governor has to unilaterally reduce spending if it is projected to exceed revenues. Unlike the federal government, our State Constitution requires that the budget be balanced.

This session was all about limiting damage to the economy – in our case the forest-based economy. This translated into maintaining the DNR timber program, preserving past gains and preventing bad legislation from being enacted. Look for session details in another story in this issue.



Some things just stick in your memory. The load of tree length jack pine that Ike Olson and his sons Tim and the late Greg brought to Duluth for a North Star Expo a number of years ago is one of them for me. It was one of the most impressive loads that I've ever seen in the contest. Sadly Ike passed away recently. He was a longtime TPA member, a rock solid leader and an all around good guy. I'll always remember Ike and the load of jack pine.



Appointments by the Obama Administration look pretty good so far. While the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources, who is the boss of the

U.S. Forest Service Chief, has not yet been named, the other appointments relating to the Forest Service look good. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources is Jay Jensen. Jay has worked for the National Association of State Foresters, and the Western Association of State Foresters, as well as in other postings. He is a solid person that I have been acquainted with through the years – solidly in favor of forest management. Robert Bonnie was named a special assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture. While I have only met and never worked with Robert, he has a good reputation for working with people to achieve solutions to problems.

Thus far the new administration is on a course to not re-fight all of the old controversies. My hope is that they will focus on making the agency work by supporting and rewarding the people who get their work done and implement their forest plans.



I had the opportunity recently to meet with the new Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Secretary Vilsack was formerly the governor of Iowa so he's from our neighborhood. The meeting included a number of forest industry folks from around the country. We made some presentations to him and his senior staff and then had a discussion. Secretary Vilsack, who is very interested in bio-energy, expressed no hesitation about harvesting trees. He is clearly committed to doing forest management the right way. While we didn't get into issues real deep in this introductory meeting I came away impressed by Secretary Vilsack.



I can watch out my window and see the new hockey addition at the DECC being built. It's quite an undertaking. Materials being staged, ground being prepared, pilings being driven, a parking ramp being built and soon they will start on the foundations. A job like this requires a lot of attention to safety with all of the things that are

going on during any given day. Like this project, there are a lot of things going on at a logging job or one of our mills on any given day. Felling, skidding, limbing, slashing, loading, grinding and chipping may all be happening. Big projects require attention to the safety details. Logging and mill operations are no different no matter their size. Let's continue our great record and make this a safe working summer.

Oh, and by the way, I really don't have a lot of time to look out the window.



It takes an optimist to go to the woods when it's 40 below and there are a couple of feet of new snow on the ground. It takes an even bigger optimist to go to the woods during this economy. Thank goodness we are a bunch of optimists in this industry. Will things get better? Yes. When will they get better? I'm not sure. I just know that we need to look forward and plan for the good times while we survive these times.

*Timber*

### Mark Your Calendar

**H**ere are some of the events in the coming months you'll want to make sure are on your calendar:

Sept. 10-12 – Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association 64th Annual Lake States Logging & Equipment Expo – Escanaba, MI (U.P. State Fairgrounds) \$10 admission for the 3-day event  
Visit: [www.timberpa.com](http://www.timberpa.com) or  
Call: 715-282-5828

Sept. 18 & 19 – North Star Expo at Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids. Parking \$2, admission is free. For more information, call the TPA office at 218-722-5013.



## Member Feature...



Jeff and Chad Westerlund at Westerlund Saw Mill.

# Self-Made Men

## Westerlund Sawmill was built from the ground up, from the buildings to the mill itself

by Ray Higgins

It's a list of assets that sounds more like a large multi-national company: a logging operation, a sawmill, trucking, and private lands managed for timber.

But instead of Potlatch or Blandin, it's Westerlund Sawmill, a small company with roughly 10 employees in Malmo Township in Aitkin County, just a few miles northeast of Lake Mille Lacs.

Brothers Chad and Jeff

Westerlund own and operate the business, taking over for their father Willard back in 1986. They're hardly the only ones in Minnesota to own a sawmill and a logging operation. It's the land management – nearly 1000 acres – that makes this company unique.

"We bought the land back in the late '80s," says Chad, age 42. "At that time it was cheaper for us to buy the land than it was to buy

the timber."

In fact, the next logging job for the Westerlund crew is on a portion of a 340-acre parcel that also features a gravel pit the brothers operate.

"There's getting to be a lot of old popple in there," Chad says, "and we want to get it cut."

Chad and Jeff are the fourth generation of Westerlunds in the timber business. Their great-

grandfather logged right here in Malmo Township, as did their grandfather. Willard and his brother Arden got their start in the 1950s, logging and operating a portable

sawmill out in the woods. The current business was started on this site in 1970, and when they were old enough, Jeff and Chad were there to help out.

"We were born into it," says Jeff, age 51, of the sawmill and logging business. "I always tell everybody I was born in a sawdust pile. I must have been 13 when I started helping out piling slabs, starting at the very bottom."

"I started working here during the summers when I was 12 or 13, too," Chad says. "Then when I graduated, I've been here steady since then."

Jeff did take a detour from the business after graduating from Aitkin High School. He went into the service for four years, then worked for a home construction contractor in the Twin Cities for a year. When it was time for Willard to retire, Chad and Jeff were ready to step in and take over.

Now, Chad runs the woods operation and its three employees while Jeff runs the mill and four workers. They share responsibilities for the land and each handles the maintenance of his own end of the business, skills learned from their dad and through years of experience.

"We didn't really have any choice," Chad says. "Once something broke down, you went to work on it. There was nobody else around here that did that kind of work and you couldn't afford to hire anybody to do it. I remember the first engine I overhauled was underneath the pine tree up here in Dad's yard.

We'd tear an engine down and rebuild it right there.

"I've never been afraid to grab a wrench," he says. "If you tear something apart, just put it back

"There was a guy named Bob Peterson that was good friends with our dad for many, many years," Chad says. "He's an old machinist and fabricator. He helped us design the sawmill, the skidway, the edger, and he helped us build. And we built all of it. There's nothing factory-made in there."

That has helped the Westerlunds maintain another tradition they've carried on from their dad: don't take on any unnecessary debt. In fact,

the same way you took it apart. You just have to reverse the procedure."

It's the same with the mill, only the Westerlunds have taken it one step further. Not only do they do their own maintenance there, they designed and built the mill themselves.

"It's all hand-made," Jeff says. "The edger and the sawmill, we made ourselves. We even put up the buildings."

the Westerlunds don't have any debt, making it easier to successfully navigate the difficult economy and industry downturn.

"That's always been our key," Chad says. "You don't buy anything unless you have the money to pay for it. So we don't have any payments. Never have."

Not that everything's rosy. The wood they saw gets made into paneling, flooring, cabinets, furniture and pallets, and most of



Eric Westerlund helps sort sawed lumber with hand signals that indicate what grade the product is.





Pallet stock that's waiting to be trucked to either Savannah Pallets in McGregor or Viking Pallet in Osseo.



At the gravel pit on Westerlund-owned land, oak and maple is stockpiled and will be sold as firewood.

those markets are down. Normally, the yard in front of the mill would be filled with logs. This year, it's relatively empty.

"Usually we'd run out of room here and then start piling back in the field," Chad says. "Lumber prices and log prices are down so much, loggers aren't interested in cutting any logs. What logging is going on is mostly pulpwood."

Plus, only about 20 percent of what Westerlund's crew cuts is sawtimber. The rest is fire wood or pulpwood that's marketed to Sappi. Still, the Westerlunds are managing to keep the business going for a variety of reasons.

"People are putting in wood

boilers," Chad says, "so firewood is getting to be a bigger market over the past couple of years. We're still selling lumber, but the prices are a lot lower. But if I can cut it myself, I can bring it in here a lot cheaper than if I buy it from other loggers, so we're staying above water. And the gravel pit helps. It allows us to pick up a few extra dollars here and there."

Westerlund's conventional logging equipment isn't the newest in the woods: the John Deere 643D feller buncher, John Deere 548E skidder, and the Hood loader/slasher have all been well-used and well-maintained over the years. Same goes for the sawmill,

where it's about time to replace the cab.

"We built a temporary cab about ten years ago, and it's still there" Jeff chuckles, "It's a dire need for a new one."

We have material there to make a new one," Chad says. "We just haven't gotten it done."

"We haven't had time," Jeff adds. "We've been too busy."

They plan to get the new one built soon, but the existing cab has served them well, sawing mostly hardwoods: maple, oak, aspen, birch, and basswood.

"We saw one-inch lumber off the log until you get down to the center," Chad says. "We make a 4-by-6 out of the center for pallet material. And all the one-inch lumber that comes off, that's sorted out. The lower grade goes into one pile and the stuff that looks like it will make furniture grade goes into another pile. And then one day a week we spend here just grading the lumber, going through and sorting it into different piles according to the grade, and it's divided up from there."

The higher grade lumber goes to Woodcraft Industries in St. Cloud for furniture material. The flooring and tongue and groove paneling stock gets set aside, as well. The pallet material is shipped to either Savannah Pallet in McGregor or Viking Pallet in Osseo. The leftover slabs are sold for firewood.

The flooring and paneling business has been a bright spot in spite of – and maybe because of – the housing downturn. The Westerlund's manufacture those products right here, air drying the lumber for about six months, and then kiln drying for two weeks until it's ready for sale.



“That’s actually not been too bad,” Chad says. “A lot of people right now are remodeling instead of building homes, so we have actually done pretty well with that.”

That’s encouraging for the Westerlunds, who intend to have the business around for a fifth generation. In fact, they couldn’t do it without family: Mom Loretta still does the books and handles the billing, Chad’s wife Joylene takes care of the payroll, Chad’s daughter Lacey is already driving skidder, and Jeff’s son Eric operates the edger in the mill. Plus, the mill is located adjacent to Willard and Loretta’s place, allowing Willard to keep an eye on things from time to time. Family’s important, so much so that Jeff and Chad have actually throttled back in recent years.

“Chad and I used to work six or seven days a week all year,” Jeff says. “But we realized our kids are growing up and we didn’t see them, so we slowed down a little bit. We just had to stop working seven days a week. Our lives were



**Once the wood is sawed, the lumber that will be made into flooring or paneling is air dried for six months, then kiln dried.**

going by in front of us.”

With all of those balls in the air – logging, the mill, the gravel pit, land management, plus family obligations – there’s plenty to do, and the Westerlund’s plan on staying right here in Malmo Township to do it, right where their

grandfather got started, right where Willard showed them how it’s done.

“Dad always worked us hard,” Jeff says, “and said, ‘do it right the first time.’”

“We’ll be here,” Chad says, “as long as we can keep working.”

# State Budget Deficit Dominates Legislative Session

by Wayne Brandt

**T**he Minnesota Legislature convened on Jan. 6, 2009, and adjourned on the constitutional deadline of May 18. While a balanced budget was not agreed to with the governor, the governor will use his line item veto and un-allotment powers to bring projected spending in line with projected revenue. The 2010 legislative session will convene at noon on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010.

The primary focus of this year's session was the state's budget deficit. TPA was pleased that the DNR timber sale budget was treated fairly this year. Following is a summary of issues of interest.

## **Timber Sale Funding:**

Funding from the Forest Management Investment Account, which comes from timber sales revenues, was reduced by \$5 million for FY 2010 and \$6.1 million for FY 2011 due to decreased revenue. These reductions were partially offset with \$2 million each year in new General Fund appropriations and \$0.95 million from the Heritage Enhancement Fund. Funding directed at private forest landowner assistance was also reduced by \$0.5 million each year. There could be additional budget impacts as the budgets for all state agencies were reduced an additional 2.25 percent as a result of the governor's unallotment.

## **State Timber Scaling and Land Leasing:**

Legislation was passed that directs the DNR to increase the amount of wood it offers as Sold As Appraised Volume timber sales. No amount of increase was specified. The DNR was further directed to study the advantages and disadvantages of this method and report back to the legislature in 2011. The same legislation also



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

gives the DNR the authority to lease up to 10,000 acres of forestland, not to exceed 2,000 acres to any entity. The DNR is directed to also study this pilot project and report back to the legislature.

## **Low Carbon Fuel Standard:**

A low carbon fuel standard was included in the recommendations of the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group as one way to reduce carbon emissions from transportation fuels. This legislation, which did not pass, would have required that refineries or blenders of transportation fuels begin reducing the carbon content of fuels in 2011 by one percent per year for a total of 10% reduction by 2020. Advocates said that petroleum fuels could be blended with ethanol (already required at 10%) and other biofuels to reduce carbon content. Oil refiners said

the standard could threaten the use of crude oil from the Canadian oils sands in Alberta. Minnesota receives 80% of its crude oil from Canada. The requirement could have increased the cost of transportation fuels and resulted in a loss of jobs.

## **OSB Plant Closures:**

This legislation would have required that owners or operators of OSB plants maintain them in a "saleable" condition for at least two years after any permanent closure. According to media reports the legislation was dropped when Ainsworth agreed to maintain its plants in a "saleable" condition and also provided \$150,000 to local economic development agencies to help market the plants.

## **Agency Mergers:**

As originally introduced this legislation would have abolished agencies and programs dealing with natural resources and the environment. It would have charged a commission with recommending a new structure for these programs. The legislation did not pass.

## **Elimination of State Nurseries and Fish Hatcheries:**

This was a bill to close the operations of state tree nurseries and fish hatcheries within five years and sell the facilities. The bill was offered as an amendment to the Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations bill. The amendment was soundly defeated.

## **Tree Planting:**

This bill, which passed, directs the MN Forest Resources Council to study and report back to the legislature on various issues surrounding planting trees to sequester carbon as recommended by the MN Climate Change Advisory Group (MCCAG).



**Forest Invasives Protection:**

Two million dollars was included as part of the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council funding legislation

**Overweight Truck Fines:**

Legislation to increase overweight truck fines was introduced but was not heard and did not pass.

**Tax Bills**

No changes to the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) or cuts in Payments in Lieu of Taxes to the counties were passed. The governor, through unallotment, did cap SFIA at \$100,000 for any individual property owner for Fiscal Year 2011 only.

**Penta-Treated Poles**

Legislation to ban penta-treated utility poles in Minneapolis received an informational hearing. The language was changed to a study and added to the Omnibus appropriation bill. The study language passed.

**Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council Funding/Legacy Amendment**

Language in the House version of this bill would have significantly hamstrung this and other DNR programs. Much of the language, including the most problematic provisions, was removed in conference. TPA was very active in this fight. Thirty-six million dollars in funding was provided for the Upper Mississippi Legacy Project, which is a conservation easement on Blandin lands.

**Publications Tax**

No changes were made to the current sales tax exemptions for various publications and other communications products.

**PCA Fees**

Significant water permit fee increases and a new fee for Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAW) that were included in the House appropriation bill did not pass.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting**

A new law directs the PCA to develop a rule requiring reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. A reporting threshold will be set at between 10,000 tons and 25,000 tons.

**Environmental Review Streamlining Report**

Language in the appropriation bill directed the PCA to report back by Feb. 15, 2010, on options that will reduce the time required to complete environmental review and the cost of the process to project proposers and responsible governmental units.

**State Forest Bio-Energy Strategy**

The Governor's Forestry Sub-Cabinet directed by resolution that a State Forest Bio-Energy Strategy be developed. Staff from the DNR and the MN Forest Resources Council (MFRC) were charged with developing this policy.

# Doug Trout

**D**oug Trout of Cohasset, passed away April 3, 2009, at his home.



Doug Trout

Doug started the Trout Post and Pole Company in 1969, later changing the name to Trout Enterprise in Deer River, Minn. Doug was also an active member of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Loyal Order of Moose in Grand Rapids, Chippewa Lodge No. 275 A.F. & A.M. of Bigfork (where he was Past Master), a member of the Duluth Lodge of Perfection, the Aad Temple Shrine of Duluth and the North Star Shrine Club and Cycle Patrol.

## Timber Talk

He loved hunting (especially his yearly trips to Montana for elk) and fishing but, his greatest enjoyment was his grandchildren and spending time with his family.

Doug is survived by wife Carol, son Wes, and six grandchildren.

## Kiln Drying Short Course Offered

**T**he 32nd Annual Kiln Drying Short Course will be held August 3-6, 2009, at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus. The University of Minnesota's Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering sponsors the course in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Forest Ecology and Management, and the Great Lakes Kiln Drying Association.

The course is designed to provide basic training for dry kiln operators and supervisors, but anyone desiring to learn more about kiln construction, kiln operation and wood-moisture relations is welcome and encouraged to attend. No previous drying experience or training is necessary.

Instruction will include lectures, demonstrations and "hands on" kiln drying experience. Conventional

kiln drying of hardwood lumber will be emphasized; however, dehumidification drying, solar drying and air-drying will also be covered. Ample time will be available for group interaction as well as individual consultation.

To register, contact Harlan Peterson at 612-624-3407 or Harlan@umn.edu.

## Lake County Approves Timber Contract Extensions

**C**iting tight markets and higher fuel prices, The Lake County Board approved 1-year market-related timber contract extensions at its May 12 meeting.

The extensions can be granted by land commissioner, Tom Martinson, without a 25 percent increase in the stumpage prices and allow timber sale extensions with County Board approval and without paying off the balance of the sale until economic conditions improve.

The measure follows a similar move in November, 2007. In a letter to county commissioners supporting extensions, Martinson pointed out that market conditions haven't improved since that time.

Lake County joins Itasca County and Koochiching County in recently granting extensions on expiring timber contracts.

## Forest Fires Contribute to Climate Change

**A** new report suggests that fire has more of an influence on global warming than previously believed.

A joint study by two University of California, Santa Barbara centers, the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, and the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, attributes "human-caused deforestation by burning" as contributing as much as one-fifth of the gases that cause the greenhouse effect. The scientists say it is clear that fire is a driver of global climate change, and that the fire cycle feeds more warming of the planet, which feeds more fires.

The study was funded by the

National Science Foundation.

Forest fires release sequestered carbon held in vegetation, and more fire means more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In addition, the soot is fine carbon, further contributing to the greenhouse effect. Fires are a major player in climate change and the report urges the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to include fire in their climate change models. The authors say the IPCC ignoring the role of fire is excluding an integral part of the carbon cycle on the earth. Full text of the article on the report available on the web at: <http://www.science.daily.com/releases/2009/04/090423142332.htm>.

## Reasonable Suspicion Training Offered at Expo

**M**LEP will be putting on a workshop at the North Star Expo on reasonable suspicion training. Especially for those that are new to the Drug and Alcohol program, but also for those that feel their "self" training just wasn't enough – this would be a good opportunity to make sure you are in compliance with this required training. Registration is required – go to [www.mlep.com](http://www.mlep.com), click on Training and then on Online Registration.

This training will address drug and alcohol use in the workplace. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations state each employer shall ensure that all persons designated to supervise drivers receive training on alcohol misuse and drug use. If you have drivers working for you – attend this training and stay in compliance with the FMCSA regulations.

The workshop will be Sept. 18 at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids. Participants will receive four hours of MLEP or LogSafe credit.



# Berthiaume Named Logger of the Year

**T**he Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee (SIC) named Cloquet's Berthiaume Logging, LLC, as its 2009 Logger of the Year on April 7, during the Minnesota Logger Education Program conference at Fortune Bay Resort & Casino in Tower, Minn.

Berthiaume Logging, which has operated in Minnesota for more than 60 years, is owned by Don, Dave and Duane Berthiaume, sons of founder Richard Berthiaume. The brothers' sons are now continuing the family logging tradition to a third generation.

"Over the years, Berthiaume Logging has developed a strong reputation for conducting harvesting in a manner that is sensitive to environmental quality and sensitive to landowner objectives," said Tim O'Hara, coordinator of the Minnesota SIC, which is based in Duluth. "Because the Berthiaumes realize that educating the public is crucial in developing a universal understanding that harvesting is needed for excellent forest management, they readily make their operation open to tours. This is just one of many examples of why the Berthiaume family is such an outstanding representative of the industry, and why they are receiving this award."

This is the fourth year SFI has named a Minnesota Logger of the Year. At the ceremony, the Berthiaumes received a plaque and a \$500 award. They will now represent Minnesota at a regional Logger of the Year competition.

Among those nominating



**Dave Berthiaume (L) of Cloquet's Berthiaume Logging accepts the Logger of the Year award from Minnesota SIC Chair Pat Galdonik.**

Berthiaume Logging for the award were private landowners and representatives from the University of Minn., Bell Timber, Potlatch Corporation and Sappi Fine Paper North America.

"Berthiaume Logging excels in the timber harvesting field by balancing environmental consciousness with a successful and efficient business," Craig Ferguson, procurement forester for Sappi Fine Paper North America, wrote on his nomination form.

"Berthiaume Logging follows all Minnesota Forest Guidelines and goes above and beyond requirements to ensure that their logging job is superb."

"They have continually upgraded their equipment mix to try and keep up with the changing needs in

harvesting and land management," added Lew Castle, senior resource supervisor, East Area Potlatch Forest Holdings, on his form nominating Berthiaume Logging.

Independent, non-profit SFI Inc. is one of the largest forest certification programs in the world. Its forest standard is based on principles and measures promoting sustainability, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk and forests with exceptional conservation value.

Its 37 SFI Implementation Committees, working at state, provincial or regional levels across the United States and Canada, extend the benefits of the SFI program beyond SFI-certified lands. Committee members support community outreach, promote best management practices and deliver training programs for loggers and forest professionals.

The Minnesota SIC includes representatives from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, forest companies, the University of Minnesota, family forest owners, the Minnesota Logger Education Program, Minnesota Timber Producers Association, Minnesota Tree Farm Program, the Ruffed Grouse Society and SFI-certified county land departments.

# Superior National Forest Celebrating Centennial Year in 2009



Superior National Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders (R) and Chippewa National Forest Supervisor Rob Harper with an axe commemorating the Superior's 100th Anniversary.

It's been a century since President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation creating the Superior National Forest, designating 644,114 acres within the original boundaries of the Forest on Feb. 13, 1909.

To celebrate the Superior National Forest centennial, several events throughout the year have been planned, including tree plantings, a kid's fishing day, interpretive programs, special hikes, a joint centennial commemorative cross-border ski/dog sled expedition with Quetico Provincial Park, art showings, and an international canoe expedition along the U.S. – Canada border in coordination with the Heart of the Continent Partnership. In addition, each Forest office is hosting a public open house.

The Superior's first Forest Supervisor, Joe Fitzwater, once wrote regarding his first impressions of the Forest, "it was a wonderful backwoods country with nobody back in there. Most of it had been logged and burned over. It was mostly jack pine with very little white pine, and a few shrubs here and there."

"As we celebrate the accomplishments from the last 100 years," said current Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders, "we can only imagine what the next century will bring to northeast Minnesota and the Superior National Forest

For dates of various centennial events, visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior)



# Fire Starts on Front-End Loader After Loading Bark (Wood Waste)

by Dave Amundson  
Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance

To help TPA members avoid accidents resulting in injury or damage to property, the *Timber Bulletin*, in association with Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance, publishes details of actual incidents and what can be done to avoid such occurrences in the future. By sharing this information, TPA and LUA hope to make our industry as safe as possible.

## Background:

In this situation, a front-end loader (wheel loader) was used primarily to load open top vans with bark (wood waste) from a sawmill. This machine was

equipped with one ten-pound multi-purpose fire extinguisher and had a manual electrical disconnect (master switch).

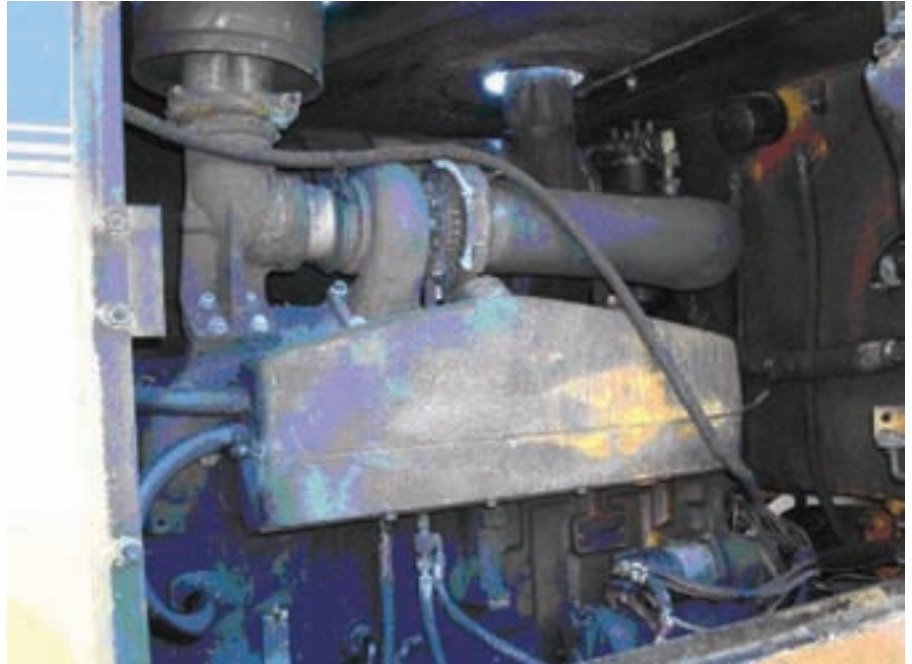
## Lessons from Losses

Maintenance/ housekeeping was noted as good for the past year, with some electrical wiring having been replaced. Oil leaks were repaired as needed, and regular power washing had occurred. This particular machine was power washed within the week prior to the loss. Most maintenance needs were completed in house, with the exception of the large scale maintenance.

On the day of this occurrence, the weather was mostly sunny and dry with temperatures in the low 70s during the mid-morning hours and a strong south wind. In general, the weather had been very dry with very low humidity over the previous few weeks.

## Operator:

The operator had worked for this operation for over 32 years and was considered trained in equipment operation and truck driving. This individual was noted to have a good work ethic and to be a loyal employee.



Damaged engine compartment of the wheel front-end loader.

## Accident and/or Injury:

On a Friday late morning, a fire started in the rear of the engine compartment, causing damage to the components in this area. In addition to loading bark, the machine was used for various other duties around a sawmill setting (plow snow, repair roadways, etc.) It is estimated that this machine was only used for one to two hours per day.

Just before the operator was to use this loader to load his truck with bark, another employee had used the machine for a different task, which brought the machine's engine and hydraulic oils up to operating temperatures. The operator loaded his truck in a normal time of approximately 20 minutes, parked the loader, boarded his truck and left the wood waste area. The loader was parked away from building values.

Other employees were in the middle of their lunch break and not near this area. Friday is a scheduled maintenance day with only some production occurring in the debarking and chip line areas, which would have been in sight of the bark pile and loader. As the maintenance crew was returning from lunch, they immediately saw

smoke coming from the rear of the sawmill. The crew assisted two other employees with portable fire extinguishers, which slowed the fire but did not extinguish it due to the fuel leakage. The on-site fire truck was used to completely extinguish the fire. Damage occurred to the electrical wiring, fuel lines, filters, hydraulic hoses, and possibly other internal engine and hydraulic components. The balance of the machine was not damaged (cab, tires, front and rear of machine). Repairs may be considered. No injuries occurred.

## Unsafe Act and/or Condition:

In this particular fire, it is uncertain to know exactly what failed. Here are some unsafe acts that may have contributed to this situation:

- Operator didn't recognize the hazard created by the strong south wind blowing fine wood dust back onto the loader while operating.
- Low humidity created a very dry environment.
- Operator may have left the loader too hastily and did not check for hot spots or problems.
- Timing of fire was during lunch break when other operators had

left the area.

The most logical cause of the fire relates to housekeeping issues. When working in this dirty environment, the machine must be checked thoroughly prior to leaving it unattended. The strong south wind may have blown dry wood dust back onto the machine, causing a fire when the wood dust came in contact with the hot turbo area. Subsequently, the radiator fan blew embers to the rear of the engine compartment. This area appeared to have been the hottest area and was where the most damage occurred. One other cause may have been a sudden fuel leak, as the fuel lines, filter, etc. were burned, but not the hydraulic lines in the same area.


**Preventative Measures:**

1. Housekeeping (use of air, water power wash, etc.) needs to be a priority with all mobile equipment. Always complete this task on a regular basis and include all hot areas in your daily check.
2. Enforce proper employee work procedures when working in hazardous fire situations. Recognize dry weather conditions and the dryness of the product being handled so that precautions can be taken. Examples include the changing of loading to the up-wind side, so that wood dust does not blow back onto machine, and always thoroughly checking the machine before leaving unattended, etc.
3. Complete refresher employee training for proper operation, service, emergency response etc. for all new and existing employees. Weekly tool box safety meetings work well in reviewing all equipment. Cross training all employees is very beneficial.
4. Always shut down the electrical disconnect (master switch) on your mobile equipment during shutdown, during maintenance, and in an emergency situation. Refresher training for all employees and temporary operators needs to be reviewed regularly.
5. Practice fire extinguisher use and discuss the dos and don'ts when using this fire protection. Discussing this topic "hands on" will help in your preparedness in an emergency situation.


## Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan


VOL. I




VOL. II



VOL. III



VOL. IV



First-hand recollections by storyteller "Burr" Ryan of the loggers, leaders, swampers, wood butchers and pull cones who ruled the woods in the hey day of the pioneer lumberjacks with dozens of historical photographs.

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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**

**N**ote: On state sales, the DNR does not calculate price per cord on individual auctions. Price per cord information on these sales is done by TPA staff. This average is for "trembling aspen" and "aspen species" combined, unless otherwise noted.

Average prices are for the combined regular and intermediate auctions.

### Koochiching County

May 6 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$25.96
Spruce	\$17.91
Balsam	\$14.47

### Hubbard County

May 12 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen Mixed	\$28.98
Jack Pine Mixed	\$33.71
Balsam Mixed	\$21.97
Birch Pulp	\$11.03

### DNR – Park Rapids Area

May 19 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$27.44

All 38 tracts offered on the regular and intermediate auctions sold.

### St. Louis County

May 21 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$26.18
Birch	\$10.15
Red Maple	\$ 5.73
Balsam	\$17.57
Ash	\$15.89

### DNR – Baudette Area

May 27 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$19.32

### DNR – Aitkin Area

June 1 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$22.32

### Aitkin County

June 1 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen P/B	\$22.88
Maple P/B	\$ 8.99
Paper Birch P/B	\$11.27
Oak P/B	\$20.96

### DNR – Deer River Area

June 2 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$18.90

### DNR – Hibbing Area

June 3 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$17.80

### DNR – Littlefork Area

June 4 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$24.18

## Home Sales Still Sluggish

**A**pril sales of new single-family houses in the US fell 34% from April 2008, according to information released by the US Census Bureau. April sales of new homes were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 352,000 units in the month, a slight increase – 0.3 – from March 2009.

Sales of pre-owned homes in April showed a small decrease from 2008. April's seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.68 million units was off 3.5% from a year ago, but up 2.9% from March 2008.

## Pending Home Sales Rise in April

**R**ecord low mortgage interest rates boosted pending home sales for the third consecutive month, with some benefit now from the first-time buyer tax credit, according to the National Association of Realtors.

The Pending Home Sales Index, a forward-looking indicator based on contracts signed in April, rose 6.7 percent to 90.3 from a reading of 84.6 in March, and is 3.2 percent above April 2008 when it was 87.5.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief

economist, said buyers are responding to very favorable market conditions. "Housing affordability conditions have been at historic highs, but now the \$8,000 first-time buyer tax credit is beginning to impact the market," he said. "Since first-time buyers must finalize their purchase by Nov. 30 to get the credit, we expect greater activity in the months ahead, and that should spark more sales by repeat buyers."

## Builder Confidence Rose Again in May

**B**uilder confidence in the market for newly built, single-family homes improved for a second consecutive month in May to the highest level since September 2008, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). The HMI rose two points to 16 in the month.

"Builders are responding to what they perceive to be some of the best home buying conditions of a lifetime," said NAHB Chairman Joe Robson, a home builder from Tulsa, Okla. "You're not likely to get a better deal in terms of mortgage rates than what's available right now. Combine that with the affordable prices, multitude of home choices and \$8,000 tax credit for first-time buyers that are now available, and you have a very appealing set of reasons to make a move."

"The fact that the May HMI continued to tick up from April's five-point increase provides confirming evidence that the improved confidence level was no fluke," added NAHB Chief Economist David Crowe. "This continued increase indicates that home builders feel we're at or near the bottom of the market and that positive signs lie ahead for builders and potential home buyers, provided that builder access to production credit significantly improves."

Crowe also noted that recent announcements by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that would enable home buyers to use the new \$8,000

(continued on the next page)

# Emerald Ash Borer Found in State

**M**innesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has placed an emergency quarantine on Ramsey County in the Twin Cities metro area and in Houston County in Minnesota's southeastern corner. The quarantine includes all of the following:

- The emerald ash borer, in any living stage of development.
- All ash species
- Ash limbs and branches.
- Ash logs or untreated ash lumber with bark attached.
- Uncomposted ash chips and uncomposted ash bark chips larger than one inch in diameter in two dimensions.
- Firewood of ANY hardwood (non-coniferous) species.
- Any product or means of conveyance when it is determined by the State Commissioner of Agriculture to present the risk of spread of the EAB.

The quarantine applies to movement of any of these materials by anyone for commercial, recreational or any other purpose out of Houston Co. It does not prohibit the cutting or use of ash within the

*(continued from previous page)*

tax credit at the closing table are especially encouraging. "We appreciate Secretary Donovan's efforts to make the tax credit more useful to buyers by addressing the biggest hurdle to first-time purchasers - having enough cash for a suitable down payment," he said.

## U.S. Construction Spending in April Falls from 2008

**C**onstruction spending during April 2009 fell 10.7 from the same month in 2008, according to figures released by the US Census Bureau. April's seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$968.7 billion was an increase of 0.8% from March. During the first four months of this year, construction spending amounted to \$286.3 billion, 11.3% below the \$322.8 billion for the same period in 2008.



An ash infested by the EAB, which tunnel under the bark, creating a series of winding, S-shaped tunnels that girdle the trunk and branches, interrupting the flow of water and nutrients.

Ramsey and Houston counties. Materials that have been handled in such a way as to ensure they are free of living EAB may be exported from Houston County by entering into a compliance agreement with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to allow for movement of most of these materials.

Penalties for violating the quarantine are dependent on the situation and range from a formal notice of violation up to monetary fines. The quarantine will be

enforced by working directly with affected businesses, conducting random inspections of businesses, responding to reports of violations, and public outreach.

The EAB has been discovered within one mile of Houston County just over the Minnesota-Wisconsin boundary, and also has been found within the St. Paul city limits.

Those with questions, should call the Department of Agriculture's Arrest the Pest hotline at 1-888-545-6684.

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

## "The Forgotten Cruiser"

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*



With modern transportation into the woods and the use of aerial photography today, it is difficult for foresters and others to realize the great hardships the old-time timber cruiser endured or the role he played in harvesting our vast virgin timber stands.

Before timber could be logged, men had to be sent into the woods to locate and appraise timber. In the very early days, this consisted of more or less exploring upstream or across lakes to locate the timber stands. All transportation away

from water was made on foot.

Most companies or outfits that bought and sold standing timber as well as those who logged had timber cruisers on their regular payrolls. Some timber cruisers also took on short jobs for many companies.

In the early days, Stillwater, Minn., was headquarters for many of the cruisers; but by the 1890s, Duluth became timber cruiser headquarters for all Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin and Michigan and Canada. The St. Louis Hotel—

current site of the Medical Arts Building—became the rendezvous for cruisers, and there were always 10 to 12 of them staying there between jobs or resting after a hard trip.

A few of the more successful cruisers had offices in the old Manhattan Building. The Manhattan was just east of the then Spalding Hotel at 5th Avenue West and Superior Street.

In the early days, a cruiser would go on short jobs alone. But it soon became an unwritten law that no man should be sent





out alone, so it was seldom they cruised by themselves. Timber cruising crews generally included an appraiser, compass man and cook. Sometimes a crew had two appraisers, two compass men and one cook. Some received their jobs through the State Surveyor General of Logs and Lumber, but most were in demand through their reputations. And in the early days, there always were jobs for good cruisers.

These men were paid from the day they left town until they returned. During winter months, they often stayed in trapper cabins, homesteader cabins or any shelter they could find near the land to be looked.

When no cabins were available, tents were used. Cruisers could rent sikaleen tents and all their other needs—compact and lightweight cooking utensils, tents and other equipment packed into a No. 2 packsack—from Poirer Tent & Awning Co., Duluth, which specialized in fitting crews. Properly set up, these double tents with the air space in between could keep men warm in the coldest weather.

In winter, crews would try to work a week or more without moving the tent; but in summer, tents were moved every day to cut the walking distance to the jobs. Cooks attended to the crew's general comforts. They set up the tents, made beds of birch poles and balsam boughs, split wood and cooked food.

Timber cruisers were not only rugged individuals; they were honorable, honest men that took great pride in their ability to determine how much timber there was on a given tract. For a three-week job that would earn a cruiser's crew less than \$200, a company would not hesitate to invest up to \$50,000 on the cruiser's report. Millions of dollars worth of timber was purchased, traded and sold by firms on nothing more than the cruiser's report. Surely no one group more held the destiny of the lumber companies as did the timber cruiser. Yet the history of the logging industry makes little mention of these rugged, noble men.

The cooks that worked with the cruisers were also a special breed of men, and they could really prepare some fine meals cooked over an open fire. Some of the best who were always in demand were Jack Dewar and Gulbert Peterson of Duluth, Jerry Dahlquist of Ely, Fred Seivert and Rolly Vibert of Cloquet, Chet Lawson of Bemidji and others.

By the end of World War I, the days of the job cruiser were numbered. More and more timber went into the hands of logging companies, and each had its own cruising department. More duties, such as running lines around company operations and checking trespass were added to the cruiser's appraisal work each winter. Most of the job cruisers in the Duluth area ended their careers mapping the big Cloquet-Moose Lake fire and

appraising for fire claims brought against the federal government—the fire was supposed to have been started by the wartime, government-operated railroad. A few of the younger men worked by the month for the lumber companies.

When logging was at its peak, on a Monday morning every train leaving Duluth had several timber cruisers heading for the woods. Cruisers were recognized by the little, black leather bags containing compass, maps, books, etc., they carried over their shoulders. In the winter, they also carried snowshoes.

Trains often stopped and dropped cruisers at mile posts nearest the timber they had to look. The men were picked up at other stopping spots along the railroad.

Many railroads had large blocks of timber they obtained through land grants and had cruisers check their holdings. Mining companies also had large blocks of timber and had cruisers on their payrolls too. And there were the government and state cruisers. But by 1925, the job

Dan Cameron, pioneer cruiser, arrived at the site of Duluth in 1864 to cruise timberland around the Oneota settlement. He was 99 in this 1944 photo.



timber cruiser had passed from the picture.

As a boy and young man, I held a warm spot in my heart for the timber cruiser; and my father, the late James Ryan, was engaged in this work much of his life. Among the old-time cruisers I considered great men were Mark Hesse of the E. W. Backus (International Lumber Co.), Henry Graham of the National Pole Co., Miles McQuire of the Bemidji Lumber Co., Andy Gordon of the Crookston Lbr. Co., Fred Murphy of the St. Croix Lbr. Co., John Foran of the J. Neals Lbr. Co., Tom Kilrow of the Twomey Williams Co., Jesse Dow of the Virginia Rainy Lake Lbr. Co., "Dick" Coolidge of the Alger Smith Lbr. Co., Harry Johnson of the Watab Paper Co., "Black Jack" Wilson of the M. & O. Paper Co., George Gowan and William Smith of the D.I.R.R. Co., Steve Krackenbergh of the Martin Timber Co., Mike Goggins of the St. Louis County Assessors Office and John Steinke of the Oliver Mining Co.

Most of the timber cruisers that covered what is today the Cloquet Valley State Forest worked for the combined Cloquet Companies of the Weyerhaeusers, whose cruising department was headed by the late Jim Underhill. Among others in the Cloquet Valley were Charles Hillie, Reggie Vibert, Ben Keller, Walt McDonald, Rorry McKinsey, Miles McAlpine, Dave Mullen, Andy Gleason, Ollie Proudlock and "Big Jack" McNally, who held the reputation of being the best pine appraiser in the state and looked after the interests of the Northern Lumber Co. There also was the veteran Weyerhaeuser timber cruiser, the great Dan Cameron with his white flowing beard, who cruised until he was well past 80 years old and put many a younger man to shame when it came to traveling through the woods on snowshoes.

There were many early State timber cruisers that were well known and respected by all for their ability to look after the State of Minnesota's interests. Most are dead today, but their names should be part of the "timber cruiser history" of this state. Among them were Sam Dolgaard, Alex McNeil, Sam Files, Denny Mahar, Clyde Johnson, John McDonald, Roy Hunt, William Getchell, Jim Angell and Jim Niles.

In the old days, there were not snowmobiles and helicopters to take men into the woods. The only way cruisers could find out the amount and kind of timber that grew on the land was to get there by foot. This meant many miles of "running the compass" and pacing along old trails, section lines, etc., on snowshoes in the winter and across mosquito-infested bogs in the summer. These early cruisers were all rugged, honorable men of which there is little history, but whose role was important to logging our vast virgin timber stands.



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