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## The Loggers Voice - Professional Logging Contractors of Maine - April 2015

Professional Logging Contractors of Maine

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# THE LOGGER'S VOICE

A Quarterly Publication of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine

## Training the Next Generation

On Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the PLC’s annual legislative breakfast in Augusta, Maine, Dana Doran, Executive Director of the PLC, announced the development of a new training program initiative with three of Maine’s Community Colleges.

As the economy has started to improve and the demand for forest products has increased, it has become clear to the membership of the PLC that there is a desperate need for trained equipment operators for mechanized forest harvesting. The PLC membership and other wood harvesting contractors in Maine are anxious to hire mechanized equipment operators who can harvest and process timber efficiently and safely to fulfill the increased demand. This need extends to small, medium and large contractors throughout the State of Maine as they increase productivity and continue to invest in highly technical equipment to meet the ever changing industry standards for forest harvesting.

In his remarks to members of the PLC, the Maine Legislature and other invited guests, Mr. Doran stated, “There is one issue that is consistent throughout the logging community in the state of Maine right now. There is a significant shortage of qualified operators who can assist logging contractors fulfill the State’s demand for wood.”

As a result of a unique collaborative effort between the PLC and Eastern Maine Community College, Northern Maine Community College and Washington County Community College, the four organizations have developed a first of its kind post-secondary Mechanical Forest Operator Training Program model that will be accessible throughout the state of Maine. The intent of this training is to leverage established infrastructure at these institutions in three of the most heavily harvested regions of the state. Each of these campuses has established trade and technical programs that will further support the development of this new program as well as vast experience in workforce training utilizing advanced technologies and best practices. It is also a natural enhancement to some of the community college’s existing programs in diesel hydraulics, heavy equipment and commercial driving.

The proposed non-credit certificate program, which will offered on a rotating basis at different locations throughout central, northern and eastern Maine, has been designed to produce professional equipment operators with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to fulfill industry vacancies in mechanical forest operations. In classroom and hands on settings, students will be taught machine operation and repair, maintenance, harvesting laws, best management practices and safety. Students that complete the program will also receive industry recognized safety certification.

Brian Souers, President, Treeline, Inc., a Lincoln, Maine based logging contractor, who is also President of the PLC stated, “There is a renewed enthusiasm by contractors for the future of wood harvesting in Maine. Many members would like to respond to strong demand for our products and services, but are limited by a lack of qualified technicians who can operate mechanized equipment. Our proposed partnership with the Community Colleges is a step in the right direction to develop a qualified workforce for our industry.”

The PLC, Maine’s Community College System, other industry partners and legislative leadership will work over the coming months to secure funding for this program.

The goal is to implement the program in the fall of 2015 with the first group of successful program graduates in December 2015.

For more information, please contact the PLC of Maine.



**PLC Spotlight on**  
Brantner,  
Thibodeau &  
Associates  
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**THE LOGGER'S VOICE**

**A Quarterly Publication of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine**

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**State of Our Union**

**Brian Souers, President**

If you are reading this newsletter, that means you survived this recent "Old Fashion Wintah"! Welcome to Spring!

Spring is a great time to get involved in all that the PLC has to offer. We have a Spring schedule planned that will knock your socks off! Don't miss any of it if you can help it.

On May 1, 2015 we are very excited to celebrate 20 years as an association at our Annual Meeting. This will be an important day long event, one that I believe will be a day of transformation. We will examine the past and look to the future as we interact with several of our consuming mills and several valuable PLC supporting members. We will hear a special report from our long time special partner, Acadia Insurance. I believe they are going to have some good news about our dividend program that you are not going want to miss hearing first hand.

We will also hear about how PLC is making a difference in Augusta and what we are working on to improve the business environment for loggers in Maine. And as always, we will have some great fun and raise money for the Children's Miracle Network in the afternoon. It will be a great opportunity to recognize many people and companies in our organization at our awards ceremony in the evening.

Please look over the agenda in this newsletter and I'm sure you will agree that if you are a PLC Member, Supporting Member or friend of the logging industry in Maine, Jeff's Catering in Brewer will be the place to be on May 1, 2015!

Throughout April and May, PLC will also be holding seven day long Safety Training Days. These are some of the best training opportunities available to people who make their living in the woods, the wood yards or on the highways, harvesting, processing or transporting forest products in Maine. If you have not participated in a training day designed and run by loggers for loggers, come check it out; you will not be disappointed.

As we wind down our busiest production season in the woods and approach our busiest activity season for PLC events, I want to thank all of the people who are making a positive difference in the logging industry through their work and support of PLC. I will not try to list all of them here, but we will recognize many of them at our Annual Meeting.

I am sure you all have realized that it is a new day in the logging industry and it is not business as usual out there. This is a never changing, bar raising industry. Professional Loggers supported by PLC are up for the challenge. Come and be part of the solution. See you at the upcoming PLC events!!

All the best,  
Brian Souers  
President, PLC of Maine

## PLC Legislative Agenda Will Help Profitability

Dana Doran, Executive Director

As of press time, the 127th Maine Legislature has been meeting for just over three months. However, as a result of significant snow fall in February and a multitude of weather postponements, only about 40% of the more than 1,500 bills have received a public hearing at this point. By statute, the legislature is currently scheduled to finish its work by mid-June, but I am going to predict at this point that it will probably be close to August before the final gavel signifies the end of the session.

The PLC is playing a very active role in the 1st session of the 127th Legislature. Our legislative breakfast was the most well attended in our history and there is a renewed respect and appreciation by the legislature for this industry. In addition, our new location on Sewall St. in Augusta has provided us with an unprecedented opportunity to pay significant attention to issues that may impact logging and make relationships with those who have an interest.

As you can probably imagine, there has been no shortage of bills which could impact the future of the logging industry in Maine. From the Governor's budget (tax increases), to bonded labor, to trucking configurations, endangered species, forest rangers, spruce budworm and all things in between, there is much to watch for I can assure you. If you are not on our weekly legislative update email list, please contact me and I will gladly add you to the list as this is the best way to keep up to speed on what is happening at the legislature.

In addition to the bills that the PLC is watching each week, we have also put forth a very aggressive agenda in the 127th Legislature to assist logging contractors with profitability and advancement. The bills/issues that we have put forth for consideration include changes to the off road diesel sales tax, motor vehicle insurance liability, and workforce development. In terms of our bills, here are the highlights with progress to date:

1) LD 290—An Act to Refund the Sales Tax Paid on Fuel Used in Commercial Agriculture and Commercial Wood Harvesting. This is the first of two bills that the PLC asked Senator Andre Cushing (R-Hampden) to sponsor on our behalf during this session. This bill also has the support of the Maine Farm Bureau because of its impact upon Agriculture. As written, it will exempt off road diesel used in commercial wood harvesting operations from sales tax. On Monday, March 9, the PLC, including President Brian Souers, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Scott Madden, Board Member Duane Jordan and Executive Director Dana Doran testified in support of LD 290. A work session was scheduled for April 7th and it is expected that LD 290 will need to be

considered by the Appropriations Committee regarding its fiscal impact. It may also become part of the overall state budget negotiation as the Governor has proposed increasing the sales tax from 5.5% to 6.5%.

2) LD 434 – An Act to Promote Equity in the Joint and Several Liability Law in Maine. This is the second of two bills that Senator Andre Cushing submitted on behalf of the PLC. Under current Maine law, if two or more defendants are found to be liable to a plaintiff for the same injury, the defendants are jointly and severally liable for the full amount of the plaintiff's damages. This bill provides that, if a defendant is less than 50% at fault for the plaintiff's injury, that defendant's liability for damages is equal to the percentage attributable to that defendant. If passed, this bill will help reduce reserves that are carried by insurance underwriters (i.e. Acadia) and should help to reduce overall premiums for PLC members. On Tuesday, March 10, the PLC, including Immediate Past President Bob Linkletter, Comstock Woodlands, GCA Logging and Executive Director Dana Doran testified in support of LD 434. A work session for this bill is scheduled for April 7th and the PLC will request an amendment to limit this bill to automobile liability only so that it will have a better chance of success.

3) Workforce Development—The PLC is working on two funding strategies to assist logging contractors with operator training. The first is our proposed community college training program and the second is a wage subsidy bill, LD 979. With respect to the community college program, we are working with legislative leadership in the Maine House of Representatives, Speaker of the House, Mark Eves, Majority Leader Jeff McCabe and Assistant Majority Leader Sara Gideon to provide operational funding to get the program off the ground. There is a lot of support for our approach and we are hopeful that the full legislature will embrace this endeavor. Secondly, Representative Ellie Espling, Assistant Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and a friend of the PLC has submitted a bill, LD 979, which will provide wage subsidies for employers that hire 18-20 year olds in our industry. This would help alleviate the risk of taking a chance on an inexperienced operator. Representative Espling has always been supportive of our industry and she recognizes the need we have to hire new operators.

As you can see, the PLC is very active at the legislature this session. As I said before, there is a tremendous amount of interest and support for what you do and we are hopeful that this will be one of our most successful sessions yet.

Stay safe out there!!!



## SAFETY FIRST

### Shop Safety and Lockout/Tagout



By Paul Cook, Cross Insurance

Well it is finally spring and the end to a long brutal winter. It also means mud season and a shut-down for most contractors. This has become the time when you bring your equipment in for much needed maintenance and repair.

A lot of emphasis is focused on workplace safety while in the woods, but many severe and preventable injuries happen in the relative safety of the garage.

This would be a good time to remind everyone about safety in the shop and garage area. Too many preventable injuries happen while servicing equipment. It is very important to establish and follow proper safety procedures while servicing equipment, trailers and vehicles.

#### Lockout/Tagout

“Lockout/Tagout has become a bit of an industry buzz word but what does it really mean? To “lockout” means to place that equipment into a state of zero energy which basically means that there is no way possible: it can be started, hydraulics can be operated, or anyone can be exposed to electricity. To “Tagout” means to place a tag in a visible area where anyone can see it stating “This machine is being worked on by.....”.

It is very important that the proper Lockout/Tagout procedures are followed. Each machine should have a specific LOTO procedure that can usually be found in the owner’s manual or they can be obtained directly from the manufacturer. Simply removing the key is not a safe option. For instance, Cat keys and John Deere keys are pretty much the same and are plentifully.

Proper LOTO procedures help safeguard workers from hazardous energy, be it electrical, hydraulic, mechanical or thermal. Possible injuries that could result are crushing, cutting, lacerations and fractures. These injuries can be life altering or even life ending.

#### Recent Incidents

A mechanic is working on a machine in the shop. All the work he is doing is in the engine compartment where he will be out of sight so, to be safe, he pulls the key out and puts it in his pocket. Almost complete with the work, the mechanic decides to work through lunch to complete it.

Another employee, needing to move the equipment (to make a little space), hops into the machine because he assumes the mechanic has gone to lunch. Seeing no key he mutters a couple of choice words about the mechanic leaving without putting the key back in. The employee pulls out his own key and starts the machine while the mechanic’s hands are pulled into the part he is working on causing a severe injury.

In another incident: While doing some work on a

dump truck the mechanic must raise the dump body and work under it. He assumed it was safe because the hydraulics is rated for significantly more than the weight of the body. While under it, one of the lines holding pressure in the hydraulic cylinder failed and the bed dropped, catching him under it causing critical and disabling injuries.

Just a few weeks ago, a worker was seriously injured while servicing a truck in a work bay. After the repair work was completed the worker was lowering the truck down from a large floor jack. While it was almost to the floor, the truck shifted kicking the jack out and launching it into the air. It struck the worker with such force that it broke his leg in two places requiring an ambulance ride to the hospital and then surgery and pins. He will lose considerable work time and incur medical bills not to mention the pain he endured.

The above scenarios are all too common in this industry and the results can be catastrophic. The good news is, they are easy to prevent!

#### Eye Protection

It only takes a few seconds to stop and put on the proper protective gear when working in the shop. Way too often this simple step is forgotten or overlooked and usually when in a hurry, and the results can be severe.

While using a hand held grinder, a shop worker failed to put on his safety glasses. He only had to grind a small part and would only take a second or two so he didn’t bother to put them on. During his repair job, a metal shard shot into his eye. At first, he and his supervisor thought it was simply a foreign object that could easily be removed. After a visit to the ER, it was discovered that the metal fragment had imbedded into his eye and it eventually required surgery. That worker today has recovered enough to return to work, but has permanently limited vision in that eye.

It is imperative that eye protection be mandatory while servicing any equipment or vehicles. Injuries to the eyes are way too common and most are preventable. A tiny fragment the size of a grain of sand can cause permanent injury to one’s eyesight. Safety glasses are very inexpensive (and eyesight is irreplaceable) and dollar for dollar will save thousands of dollars in medical expenses and lost work time not to mention the pain and suffering of the injured employee.

Cutting, welding and grinding without proper safeguards can be very hazardous and happen way too often. A seemingly simple step of proper eye/face gear and welding blankets get forgotten or overlooked.

At the end of the day, everyone wants to go home to their families with all fingers and toes and in one piece. Help make this happen every day by using common sense and caution, not only in the woods, but in the shop as well.

# BMP'S

## Waterbars

By Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service

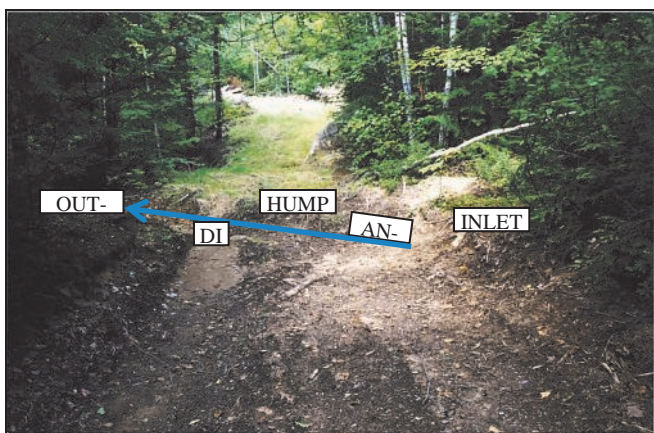
Waterbars are one of the most commonly used BMPs. Inexpensive and quick to install, a few properly placed waterbars before a big rain or at closeout can mean the difference between a trouble free harvest and the headache of mud in the brook. Though they seem simple, installing an effective water bar takes some thought and practice. It is better to take the time to get a few good waterbars in the right places than waste diesel plowing up a lot of “mounds of dirt”.

The first question to ask is do I need waterbars? A trail that has been well brushed or one that has used the natural terrain to break up long continuous slopes may not need waterbars at all. Trails that have long continuous slopes, steep sections or approaches to stream crossings with exposed soil are all good candidates for waterbars. Once you have determined waterbars are needed, take some time to figure out the best locations. Waterbars need to be located frequently enough to prevent large volumes of water from accumulating in the trail. Even more important than strictly following the spacing chart is getting waterbars located so they will get water off the trail and it will stay off the trail. On stream crossing approaches, the last water bar should be located just outside the waterbody filter area. Inside the filter area soil stabilization techniques, such as brush or seed and mulch should be used instead of waterbars.

Waterbar Spacing Guidelines	
Slope (%)	Spacing (ft)
1-2	250-400
3-5	135-250
6-10	80-135
11-15	60-80
16-20	45-60
21+	<45

A properly constructed water bar has five parts, an inlet, an outlet, a hump, a dip and proper angle.

**Inlet** – The inlet of a water bar must extend far enough off the trail to be sure all runoff on the trail is captured.



**Outlet** – The location of the outlet is the most important part of a waterbar, it must extend far enough off the trail in a location where water will not reenter the trail. It should direct the water into an area of undisturbed forest floor so it can disperse before sediment reaches a waterbody.

**Hump** – The hump of a waterbar forms a barrier so water cannot continue down the trail, it does not need to be huge, depending on conditions often 6-12” high is sufficient.

**Dip** – The dip channels water off the trail and out the outlet. Ideally the dip has a slight slope of 2-3% so water will drain but not gather enough speed to erode the bottom of the dip.

**Angle** – Waterbars should be located at about a 30 degree angle to the trail. A “mound of dirt” oriented perpendicular to the trail will not drain properly and will form a dam that water will run around or over.

Installing a good waterbar with a skidder presents some special challenges, for a helpful video check out: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4j\\_vhC3I6M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4j_vhC3I6M)

## Welcome New Members

### PLC Members

**Karl Kelly Logging**, Madawaska, ME is owned and operated by Karl Kelly. Karl has two employees and operates a cut to length mechanical harvesting operation. Karl Kelly logging is also a Master Logger and CLP certified. Karl works predominately north of Moosehead Lake. Karl has attended PLC safety training events in the past and hopes to take advantage of all that PLC has to offer.

### Supporting Members

**Fleetmatics** is a leading global provider of mobile workforce solutions for service-based businesses of all sizes delivered as software-as-a-service (SaaS). Their solutions enable businesses to meet the challenges associated with managing local fleets, and improve the productivity of their mobile workforces, by extracting actionable business intelligence from real-time and historical vehicle and driver behavioral data. Fleetmatics Group's intuitive, cost-effective Web-based solutions provide fleet operators with visibility into vehicle location, fuel usage, speed and mileage, and other insights into their mobile workforce, enabling them to reduce operating and capital costs, as well as increase revenue. An integrated, full-featured mobile workforce management product provides additional efficiencies related to job management by empowering the field worker and speeding the job completion process quote through payment. Fleetmatics serves over 23,000 customers, with over 500,000 subscribed vehicles worldwide. For more information on Fleetmatics, please visit [www.fleetmatics.com](http://www.fleetmatics.com) or contact Joe Chute, Regional Fleet Management Consultant, [joseph.chute@fleetmatics.com](mailto:joseph.chute@fleetmatics.com) or 704-716-7646.

**Sappi North America** is a subsidiary of Sappi Limited (JSE), a global company focused on providing dissolving wood pulp, paper pulp and paper-based solutions to its direct and indirect customer base across more than 100 countries. In Maine, Sappi operates two mills (Westbrook and Skowhegan), an R&D facility (Westbrook), and a Customer Service Center (South Portland). Sappi employs over 1,200 employees in Maine. For more information on SAPPi, please visit [www.sappi.com](http://www.sappi.com) or contact Charlie Hall, Wood Buyer- SAPPi Stumpage Program, [Charles.Hall@sappi.com](mailto:Charles.Hall@sappi.com) or 1-207-238-3058.

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**PLC MEMBER SHOWCASE:****Mechanical Harvesting -- The Future is Here**

You could tell where George Merrill was working by the muted growl of the machinery. We picked our way down the slope on a packed double-track carpeted with hemlock boughs stripped from the trees he was cutting.

At the end of the trail, Merrill finished limbing and cutting up a hemlock. Then he drove forward and reached out to clasp another tall tree, sawed it off and picked it straight up. He turned 180 degrees and gently laid it down, sheared the branches off and cut it into 20-foot lengths. All within a couple of minutes. And all without leaving the heated cab of his machine. Merrill had started thinning this 27-acre woodlot off Route 2 in East Wilton just this morning. But he was making good headway, despite deep snow, thanks to his 2010 model Cat 501 processor. "It's working smarter, not harder," Merrill said of his machine.



*George Merrill cutting hemlock with his CAT processor. (Photo: Joe Rankin)*

The sophisticated processor is one of several types of mechanical harvesting equipment first introduced in the state on the vast timberlands of northern Maine in the 1970s and 80s. Over the past two decades they have become common on smaller woodlots in the southern part of the state. Processors, forwarders, feller bunchers and grapple skidders have elbowed aside the chainsaw-cable skidder operators just as those once supplanted the ax-crosscut saw-horse team operations. It is all part of the evolution of an industry.

The first whole tree mechanical harvesters were introduced in the 1980s, most of European design or based on it, said Dana Doran, the executive director of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine, whose 100 members are primarily mechanical logging contractors.

In the 1990s the equipment and designs proliferated, Doran said, driven by demand for wood and the rocketing cost of workers compensation insurance for

chainsaw cutters doing a dangerous job. Today 80 percent of the 600 or so logging contractors in Maine are using mechanical harvesting, he said.

"They're getting more sophisticated all the time," said Doran of the machines. "They're very technologically advanced. Most of the machines coming out have GPS technology, computer screens and interfacing between the processor and forester's prescription for the cut."

Technically, of course, a cable skidder is mechanical. Those big articulated tractors are meant to pull tree stems out of the woods after a chainsaw operator has felled and delimbed them. True mechanical harvesters do it all -- or at least do pieces of it. Here's a primer on the various machines:

A feller-buncher cuts individual trees at stump height, bunches them, then sets the bunched stems down in a pile to be moved and processed later.

-- A grapple skidder is a big articulated tractor with an extendable claw-like appendage that can pick up the bunches of trees, lift them part way off the ground and take them to a processing site, where . . .

-- A whole tree processor/delimiter uses a crane or log loader to pull the tree through a delimeter. Then the operator measures and cuts it into logs of various lengths using a slasher saw. There are also stroke delimiters which can delimb and process a single stem or multiple stems at the same time.

-- An in-woods processor like Merrill's CAT cut-to-length machine, has an arm topped by a cutter head and rollers and does the entire operation in the woods: felling, delimiting, measuring, cutting and piling the logs for.

--A forwarder, a tracked or wheeled vehicle that picks up the logs with a loading boom and a bucket claw and sets them into its bed to ferry out to a landing.

-- A chipper, which is used to chew up the tops or entire trees and blow them into a box van.

Contractors use various combinations of equipment, depending on what the job calls for, what the landowner wants or what they can afford. But it's likely that operators will have at least two, sometimes several of them.

In Manchester, Dana Poulin and his father Larry, of Gerard Poulin & Sons, were logging a 17-acre parcel that consisted of mostly young trees that would end up as pulpwood. Their feller buncher had already been through and laid down bunches of trees. Dana Poulin was using the dangle-head processor to delimb them and cut them to length. A forwarder would be used to take the trees out to the log yard and a chipper would be used to chip the tops and small trees.

**Future is Here** Continued on Page 8



### Future is Here Continued from Page 7

Even though the father-son team had some duplication in his Tigercat dangle-head processor and feller buncher, Dana Poulin said he still likes the combination. It gave him versatility. A dangle-head processor is useful, he said, but the operator still needs to guide the tree in the direction he wants it to fall, almost as though he was felling it with a chainsaw.

The feller buncher, particularly, proves useful on dense stands of young trees that needed thinning, something that would be tedious to handle with a processor. “And it comes in handy when you’re clearing land. We did a field for a farmer that wanted it restored,” he said.



*Dana Poulin runs wood through his dangle head cut to length system (Photo: Joe Rankin)*

In New Gloucester Tom Cushman of Maine Custom Woodlands had a crew working on 110 acres. In the yard an operator at the controls of a crane pulled logs through a stationary processor/delimiter, where knives sheared off the limbs. He then cut the stems into logs with a circular saw, piled the branches to be chipped later, and stacked the logs. Periodically a huge grapple skidder would lumber up the woods road trailing a huge load of trees, drop them at the processor and head back for more.

Cushman’s is a much larger operation. He’s got 21 employees, including himself. He has two foresters on staff who work with landowners. He’s got \$5 million worth of equipment, including eight trucks. Maine Custom Woodlands does some 50 harvests a year, he said. Workers prep log yards and build roads for future harvests while others are ongoing.

Cushman, a forester himself, said he got into the logging business in 1993 and by 1998 was all mechanical. He’s never looked back. “With mechanical equipment I believe you can do better forestry and better silviculture,” he said.

Merrill started out with a chainsaw-cable skidder logging operation. He bought his first processor in 2002. It was \$226,000. He had never used one and had to learn on the job. It took over a year to get good at it, he said. Merrill replaced that machine in 2010 with the \$360,000 fixed-head CAT processor he’s using today. He also has a forwarder, a feller buncher, and a logging truck -- \$1.2 million worth of machines.

“I think cut-to-length is the only way to go,” Merrill said. “It does a much better job for the residual stand.” The residual stand is what’s left after harvesting.

One of the big challenges for anyone wanting to make the leap from cable skidder-chainsaw operations to mechanical today is cost. The price of the machines has risen dramatically over the past decade, said Doran. These days a new grapple skidder can cost \$325,000, a feller buncher up to \$475,000, a dangle or fixed head processor \$550,000 to \$650,000, a forwarder around \$400,000, a delimeter-slasher \$325,000 to \$400,000 and chippers go from \$150,000 to \$500,000.

Of course, many contractors who move into mechanical do so with used equipment. “You can’t work down here (in southern Maine) and buy new equipment,” said Dana Poulin. “To buy that right there” -- he pointed to his Tigercat processor -- “a new Tigercat with a dangle head on it, would be over half a million dollars.”

Merrill, on the other hand, won’t buy used. “With used all you do is tinker,” he said.

There are other issues for mechanical operators in southern Maine. “Access is a huge challenge,” said Poulin. “A lot of people have nice woodlots, but sometimes you can’t get to them. Sometimes you can cross the abutters but, sometimes you can’t get permission.”

Acceptance is another. Tom Doak, the executive director of the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, said many landowners are taken aback when a processor rolls off the truck, worrying what it will do to their land. “I think people are often shocked” by the size of the machine, he said.

But many woodlot owners find them fascinating, Doak said. He knows of one landowner who would take a cup of coffee and sit on a stump and watch the work. It became his entertainment. Landowners also discover that mechanical harvesting can be very low impact.

SWOAM owns 4,000 acres of forested land. It contracts with both chainsaw-cable skidder operators and mechanical contractors, depending on the parcel and the job. Many of the organization’s woodlots get lots of public use and in those cases mechanical har-

vesting with chipping of the slash is the best option, said Doak. Because dragging of trees is eliminated, cut-to-length systems have a very low impact, he said. “With mechanical harvesting you can remove some of that low quality wood, which is harder with a more conventional job.”

Merrill notes that his CAT fixed head process has a width on the tracks of eight feet, six inches and its boom can reach out over 20 feet to cut a tree. The cab, boom and head can pivot 360 degrees to place a tree exactly where he wants it. It can fit in narrow trails and because the fixed head allows for controlling felling there’s little chance of a cut tree getting snagged in other trees.

Andy Shultz, the landowner outreach forester for the Maine Forest Service, said it’s easier to avoid rutting up the ground with a forwarder and because a forwarder doesn’t drag trees it “should be easier to not damage standing trees because you don’t have to manage those



*A crane pulls a tree through a delimeter at a Maine Custom Woodlands harvest site in New Gloucester. (Photo: Joe Rankin)*

five or six or 12 trees that you’re dragging behind you.”

That doesn’t mean that a chainsaw-cable skidder operator can’t do a good job, or that a mechanical operator can’t do a poor job, he emphasized. “These are all tools. And it’s best to have the best possible tool for the job. But it’s the person running the tool that’s more important than the machine.”

The secret, everyone agrees, lies not in the equipment, but who is operating it. Poulin said, “It’s just paying attention to what you’re doing. Be aware of the residual stand, of not marking up trees that are future crop trees. Just being aware and caring about what you’re doing.”

Good operators are hard to find, however. Most contractors working cut-to-length processors in the woods learn on the job. But it’s not something you can learn overnight. Merrill said it took him a year and a half to get

proficient with his first processor.

“It’s just paying attention,” he said. But it’s paying attention to many things at once. The trail, the stranding trees, working the joysticks, making sure the computer that cuts the logs to length is doing so accurately.

Doran said an experienced operator can make from \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year. “They’re very good wages and job for folks that get into the industry.” But it’s not a job for everybody. Contractors work long hours during the 36 to 40 week harvesting season -- generally the winter and the dry times of the year.

And not everybody can do the work. “Some people just don’t have the knack for it,” said Dana Poulin. “It’s nothing to do with strength. It’s more hand-eye coordination. Some people just don’t have it and you can tell rather quickly.”

“One of our biggest concerns as an industry is finding skilled operators of today’s mechanical logging equipment,” said Doran.

The Professional Logging Contractors of Maine is working with three of Maine’s Community Colleges to set up a post-secondary training program. “Today’s operators are technicians and should be treated that way and have the same education,” Doran said. They should be trained in how to run and maintain the equipment, be familiar with best management practices and know basic silviculture, he added.

SWOAM’s Doak said he thinks that “in the next 20 years you’ll see mechanical harvesting will be the norm in southern Maine and the equipment will continue to evolve to be smaller and more nimble.”

Merrill is glad he took the leap to mechanical harvesters, and all these years later he still gets a thrill out of operating his machine. “It doesn’t get old, I’ll say that. It’s different every day,” he said. “I like the outcome when it’s all done” and he sees a healthy woodlot with nicely spaced trees.

*Article originally appeared in Fresh From the Woods. Reprinted with permission from the author, Joe Rankin*

2015 PLC Safety Training  
Changing Your Culture - The Business of Safety

Free Training for PLC Members—FREE Breakfast & Lunch!  
First Come First Served—Limited Spaces Available  
This training qualifies for CLP recertification credit.

PLC’s Safety Committee is committed to offering tools to help keep our members safe!  
The goal of this free training is to provide practical, hands-on instruction to improve individual and company safety.

2015 Training Topics: **Maine DOT Log Truck Inspections | Distracted Driving  
Slips, Trips & Falls | Wellness | Leadership - Beyond Zero**

Please select a training location:

- Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> — **Denmark** — John Khiel & Sons Logging (8 AM—4 PM)
- Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> — **Franklin** — Dean Young Forestry (8 AM—4 PM)
- ~~Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> — **So. China** — Comprehensive Land Technologies (8 AM—4 PM)~~
- Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> — **Passadumkeag** — Madden Timberlands (8 AM—4 PM) - FULL
- Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> — **Stratton** — J.L. Brochu (8 AM—4 PM)
- Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> — **Lincoln** — Treeline, Inc. (8 AM—4 PM) - FULL
- Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> — **Fort Kent** — TNT Road Company. (8 AM—4 PM)
- Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> — **Millinocket** — Gerald Pelletier. (8 AM—4 PM)

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL / FAX / EMAIL completed registration to:  
PLC of Maine | PO Box 1036 | Augusta, ME 04332  
fax 620-7517 | Jessica@maineloggers.com



Do you have **Great Safety Ideas**? MEMIC and Cross Insurance will be providing 3 prizes at each location for top safety ideas. Cross Ins. will be awarding an authentic Rob Gronkowski **autographed football** for the “**Best Safety Idea**” presented at the 2015 trainings.







## SUPPORTING MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - Brantner, Thibodeau & Associates

Brantner, Thibodeau & Associates (BTA) have been in the tax, accounting and auditing business since 1980. Their office is in Bangor but they provide services to the entire state of Maine. Their client base is diverse and they are willing to travel all over the state to meet their client's needs.

Many of BTA's clients have operations that span several states. Regardless of the complexity, BTA has the expertise to provide the level of service that is required. They service large businesses, small businesses as well as individuals and they have the ability to tailor their tax planning strategies and preparation services specifically to the client. They can also capitalize on opportunities for logging professionals.

At BTA they have their roots in the logging industry. One partner in particular comes from three generations of loggers. Christopher Madden, who is starting his 22nd year in the profession, has been associated with logging his entire life and has a unique perspective on the amazing work ethic that loggers have. He also strives to use that same effort to provide quality service for his clients. He has been able to focus on logging and forestry and to develop a high quality service, give reliable year round advice and guidance that meets the individual needs unique to the logging industry.

BTA is a local Maine firm that believes in taking the time to meet with clients, develop a thorough understanding of the industry, knowledge of particular tax issues, and implications that could affect forestry professionals.

Word-of-mouth is as important in the accounting business as in any other. BTA knows that if they can save you money and prepare a plan that fits your needs you are much more likely to refer them to another contractor or a family member.

This is also how they became part of the PLC. Chris Madden was told about the PLC, that they are "loggers serving loggers", and that meant something to him. Several of his family members are part of the organization: S.F. Madden, Inc., Madden Timberlands, Randall Madden Trucking,

Madden Sustainable Forestry, A.W. Madden, Inc., A.S. Madden Logging, Inc., and Corey Madden Logging Inc.— that many Madden's can't be wrong! In the fall of 2014 BTA joined the PLC to develop their network of logging professionals and to share their support and knowledge with the entire membership.

Now that April 15th has passed, it's a great time to look ahead to the next year to determine what Brantner, Thibodeau & Associates can do for you. Call Chris Madden, CPA at (207) 947-3325 or email him at [cmadden@btacpa.com](mailto:cmadden@btacpa.com) today.

**CPA Professionals with Industry Expertise**

With over 20 years of experience working with the logging industry, we address your tax and accounting needs attentively. We're dedicated to providing you quality service with an understanding of the complex environment affecting your business.

*Call today and ask what we can do for your company!*

**Brantner, Thibodeau & ASSOCIATES**

Christopher Madden, CPA  
[cmadden@btacpa.com](mailto:cmadden@btacpa.com)  
 1.800.564.2727 | [www.btacpa.com](http://www.btacpa.com)



# PLC's 20th Annual Meeting & Fundraiser

Annual Meeting—May 1st, 2015, Brewer, ME — DINNER & LOG A LOAD for KIDS Fundraiser



**Celebrating  
20 Years!  
A History of  
Collaboration**

**Lunch Guests** — Join us for a buffet lunch and the honor of meeting this year’s Children’s Miracle Network (CMN) “Champion Child.” Last year we met Noah and learned about his fund raising efforts with “Nickels for Noah” - he has raised over \$8,000 in the last year! What a great story! Without local CMN Hospitals and donations many Maine children and their families would need to travel nearly eight hours round trip for each appointment. This is just one of the reasons we support such a great program. Meet the people that our fundraising is impacting and feel the difference that we are making.



Please join us for our Annual Meeting to learn and network with other professional loggers as we celebrate our past twenty years of **collaboration!**

The **Morning Session is only for PLC members.** During this time, we will: conduct a general membership meeting, review our legislative agenda, learn from the University of Maine regarding a logging economic impact study and Acadia Insurance will let us know how the dividend program performed in 2014.

Paper Mill Company Representatives from Catalyst, Expera, SAPPI, Verso and Woodland Pulp and Tissue will also attend our morning meeting and discuss ways that they can collaborate with PLC contractors to work toward mutual benefits.

During our **Luncheon, which is open to all PLC Members and Supporting Members,** we will meet the Children’s Miracle Network, Champion Child, and hear about the Maine Healthy Forest Program and Harvest Satisfaction Survey from Andy Schultz and Jan Santerre of the Maine Forest Service.

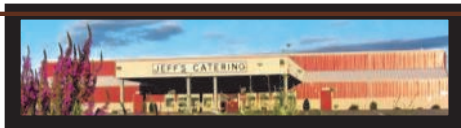
After lunch we have arranged for Farm Credit East to provide an overview of their new counseling services.

To help the Children’s Miracle Network raise money, our **Log-A-Load Auction Social** is next on the agenda. If you are unable to attend, you can still encourage your vendors, employees, family members and friends to donate to help raise money for the kids! The auction will also be online this year! Following the **Dinner** we wrap up the evening with awards and a presentation of “In the Blood” a film with live music

**Luncheon Speakers: Andy Schultz and Jan Santerre - Maine Forest Service**  
The Maine Healthy Forest Program & the Harvest Satisfaction Survey

## "In The Blood"

*Our day will end with an illustration of the turn-of-the-century Maine lumbermen & river drivers—Join us in an experience that will make you feel as though you are sitting in an old Maine logging camp. You will forget, at least fleetingly, that you are watching a film and not sitting in a camp. Celebrate our logging history with this return to our roots.*



To be held at Jeff’s Catering, Brewer

# How can YOU get involved in the Annual Meeting?

## Attend:

Join us for a great chance to network, learn and support the Logging Industry in Maine!

## Sponsor:

There are many levels of sponsorship for the event. Make sure your company is recognized by PLC contractors.

## Donate to the Log-A-Load for kids Auction:

We are looking for donations for the auction – gift certificates, products, gift baskets, accommodations, trips and services all are great options. This is a great way to give and to advertise your business! Who can you ask for a donation? Many businesses are willing to give and we have a letter you can give them. Thank YOU!

## Bid in the Auction:

What is more fun than an auction? An auction that raises money for Maine kids! The auction will be LIVE at the event—but you can also bid online before the meeting during the end of April. Please spread the word about the auction and the link to the online auction site when it is available!



## Contact Us:

For a registration form, sponsorship form, donation form or if you have any questions about how you can be involved in our 20th Annual Meeting, please don't hesitate to give us a call at **207-688-8195** or email **Jessica@maineloggers.com**. You can also access all of these forms on our web site - under the events tab at: **www.maineloggers.com**. Please **mail** forms to:

PLC of Maine -PO Box 1036 -Augusta, ME 04332  
or fax to **207-620-7517**

*Thank you for your continued support of the PLC!*

## Why We Support:

**Creating Real Miracles  
by Raising Funds for our Local Hospitals**

Since 1983, Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals have raised more than \$4.7 billion for 170 children's hospitals across the United States and Canada. These donations have gone to support research and training, purchase equipment, and pay for uncompensated care, all in support of the mission to save and improve the lives of as many children as possible.

Eastern Maine Medical Center, a CMN Hospital, is working to save the lives of kids in our communities. Some are battling cancer, some are suffering from a traumatic injury, and others require constant care because they were born too early, or with a genetic disease. Regardless of why the kids are there, CMN Hospitals always have their doors open.

**Last year the PLC of Maine raised over \$25,000 to support local Maine children. Let's do it again!!**



## Peterbilt Rebate program for PLC Members



Up to a \$1,000 CASH rebate is currently being offered to PLC members!

### Program Details:

Peterbilt offers the American Loggers Council (ALC) and PLC an opportunity to bring Peterbilt quality and performance to its members. Members are invited to come into any Peterbilt dealership and make their best deal on a new Day Cab including Models 567, 367, 365, or on a new Model 348 or Model 337 from an authorized Peterbilt dealer to take advantage of these great incentives:

Members receive a \$1,000 **CASH** rebate on all eligible Class 8 units including Models 567, 367, and 365 (limited to Day Cab configurations only for all eligible models).

Members receive a \$500 **CASH** rebate on a Model 348

Members receive a \$250 **CASH** rebate on a Model 337

Limited to three (3) rebates per member for calendar year 2015.

To be eligible, ALC members must be in good standing for at least 90 days prior to taking retail delivery.

ALC members must take retail delivery between **January 1, 2015** and **December 31, 2015**. Retail delivery is defined as the time the ownership of the truck is transferred from the Peterbilt dealer to the customer.

This offer comes directly from Peterbilt Motors Company and is not a dealer rebate. So, make your best deal and get up to \$1,000 cash back!

### Other Requirements:

**Allow 6 to 8 weeks from receipt of form for check to process.**

This program is limited to **three (3) new trucks** per ALC member for calendar year 2015.

This program may not be combined with any other rebate offers from Peterbilt.

Glider Kits are not included in this program.

Limited to Day Cab configurations only for all eligible Class 8 models.

Request for customer rebate incentives must be received by Peterbilt within 30 days of taking retail delivery.



## ALC Washington Report

### March 30, 2015

#### **Fly-In Recap**

Over 60 individuals and supporters, including ALC Board members, sponsors and logging association executives attended this year's Spring fly-in to Washington, DC on March 18-21. Over 100 visits were made on ALC's priority issues which included the Youth Careers in Logging Act, the Right to Haul Act, the Flame Act Amendment to eliminate "fire-borrowing" and the comprehensive reform needed to manage our federal timberlands. While Congress is now on a two week recess for Easter and work back on the districts, the ALC will continue to press for more support on these issues.

#### **Youth Careers in Logging**

Congressman Raul Labrador (R-ID) and Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) reintroduced the Youth Careers in Logging Act (H.R. 1215 and S. 694) in early March, just prior to the ALC Fly-In. The bill would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act by allowing the 16 and 17 year-old children of logging business owners the ability to work on the job under direct parental supervision. There are exclusions in the bill that would not allow the youth to operate chain-saws or set chokers in a cable skidding operation. Members of the ALC requested support for the bill during the fly-in and the number of cosponsors is increasing in the House and Senate.

#### **Right to Haul Act**

Members of the American Loggers Council approached several of their representatives on March 18-19, 2015 in both the House and Senate requesting that the Right to Haul Act be reintroduced in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Act allows State legal weight tolerances for agricultural and forest commodities the ability to legally haul those weights on the Federal Interstate Highway System within that State. There were three Congressmen and one Senator that appeared to be willing to reintroduce the bill.

#### **Wildfire Funding**

Members of the American Loggers Council met with Senator John McCain (R-AZ) during their March fly-in to discuss his recently introduced Flame Act Amendment, S.508. The ALC is supporting S. 508 as a preferred method of eliminating the practice of "fire-borrowing." Recent language in the Senate Budget Resolution which came out on March 25<sup>th</sup> included language in Section 319 entitled "Spending-Neutral Reserve Fund To Improve Forest Health" which contained the framework of the FLAME Act Amendment which is a non-binding and does not become law, but do signal symbolically where Senators are on these kinds of concepts.

#### **Comprehensive Public Forest Management Reform**

Members of the American Loggers Council continued to press members of Congress to consider comprehensive legislative changes to the way in which current policies are impacting not only the timber harvesting industry, but the communities that the timber industry supports. Thoughts that were presented to lawmakers included stopping redirecting funds intended for forest management to fire suppression, increasing the pace and scale of the timber sale program, and overhauling NEPA guidelines for both green and fire salvage timber programs. The ALC, working with the Washington-based Federal Forest Resource Coalition will continue to push for reform.





## As We See It—February 2015 Better Business Practices By Myles Anderson, President



Being in the logging business has always meant long hours away from home, hard work and a special fulfillment associated with accomplishing things most couldn't dream of. As a business owner regardless of the industry, there are specific items that demand attention; cost of operations, a safe work environment, well maintained equipment, productive employees, just to mention a few. At times regardless of the amount of attention paid, problems can occur and a business owner must be prepared to deal with them. Unfortunately there are also cases where less than honest business practices can prevent an honest business owner from being able to compete on a level playing field.

Operating in one of the most dangerous industries in the country forces any good business managers to closely watch all business practice that adds to their overall liability. Any business in the Timber Harvesting industry should be a Corporation, LLC or some other structure that would limit an owner's personal liability. If your business is not classified in this manner, it would be well worth your while to look into making a change. If you use subcontractors for falling timber, hauling logs or other activities then a well thought out and legally binding Subcontractor Agreement must be in place. If your Insurance companies have not already talked to you about this then I would contact them or your State Association for more information on the subject.

Understanding the legalities of a subcontractor's role in your business is very important information, and at the end of the day, knowledge and the associated response are the things that separate a successful business from the others. A subcontractor is not privileged to the benefits that your company may give to employees such as health care, retirement, your workman's compensation coverage or coverage under your liability insurance policy. A subcontractor is told where to do the work but not how to do it, and must possess the necessary tools required for the job. Ignoring the legality of this responsibility may in the short term provide an advantage in securing work, in the long run when the lawyers, insurance companies and injured third parties have their day in court, I for one would not want to hide behind ignorance of the law as my defense.

A fair bid process is one that would put cost control and production as the primary factors that dictate the outcome; however that is not always the case. Understanding the law and the liability associated with having

subcontractors working for you is critical. As a business owner you cannot provide tools to a subcontractor to perform a service and at the same time enjoy the benefits of a subcontractor relationship, the same is true for the entity you may work for.

As the need for fiber increases, and we all hope it does, the path to get our products to consumers will be an interesting one. Laws have been put in place and continue to govern us as a country however some businesses tend to operate with comfort in the grey area. As an industry it seems the timber harvesting community has always put their heads down and worked harder and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, assuming they are compensated appropriately. Fiber supply and consuming businesses are operated for a profit, just as we the producers do, some do it legally and some operate in the grey area.

Business practices are merely decisions that are made by individuals and if your business is run in the most ethical way you know, then you can look yourself in the mirror every day and be proud of what you've accomplished. I like to believe that in most cases, the CEOs of the companies that operate in the grey area are not completely aware of what is going on under them. One can only hope that these people that cannot look in the mirror with pride will be replaced with managers that can. Unethical business practices are not a sustainable business model. If we are to succeed as an industry it will be due to our character, the trust we have established and positive working relationships.

*Myles Anderson is the current President of the American Loggers Council and he and his father Mike own and operate Anderson Logging, Inc. based out of Fort Bragg, CA.*



**As We See It—March 2015**  
**“Inspiration”**  
**By Mike Albrecht,**  
**2014 American Loggers Council Activist of the Year**



It is a distinct privilege to address all of you great loggers through the American Loggers Council Newsletter. I'd like to start my comments with an abbreviated version of a speech I've written for President Obama, or Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, or anyone in a high ranking office that can muster an audience. It goes something like this:

“America is truly a country of great achievement. Nothing underscores this more than a quick review of some facts. America leads the world in food production. Today, U.S. farmers export 45% of their wheat, 34% of their soybeans and 71% of their almonds. In 2011, U.S. farmers produced \$388 billion of goods, with approximately one third of that being exported. America truly helps feed the world.

In the 1970's, America decided it was time to shed its reliance on foreign oil. The American people said, “Enough is enough,” and Washington was listening. Today America is undergoing a revolution in energy production, a revolution so dynamic that the International Energy Agency predicts that the U.S. will surpass Russia and Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil producer by the end of this year. America's pride of achievement is showcased in so many other fields, including space exploration, medicine, and athletic prowess.

Today I'd like to issue a challenge to an industry that helped build this country, an industry that produced the railroad ties that linked our country together, and provides the raw material that builds our homes, our schools, and our offices. Today, this great industry, the timber industry, is languishing. America leads in exporting so many goods and services to the world, and yet is now the second leading importer of lumber in the world (we were number one up until 2012, when China became the leading importer). California, the Golden State, blessed with over 33 million acres of forestland imports over 75% of its wood products.

How can this be? One third of our nation is covered in forestland. We have arguably the best growing climate for timber production in the world. Our timber industry is second to none when it comes to technological know-how and work ethic.. When the American people put their heart and soul into something, they achieve it. It's time to bring homegrown timber products back to our hardware stores and lumberyards. If we all work together, America can become a leading exporter of timber-related goods and services. We should not accept anything less.”

If that speech was given, could we rise to the challenge of retooling and expanding our industry? Does the United States have access to enough homegrown timber to

feed our annual lumber appetite of 40 – 65 billion board feet a year? The answer is, “Yes we do – in spades.”

According to data from the Western Wood Products Association and the Forest Service Inventory and Analysis Group, the standing net volume in America's forests is approaching 2.25 trillion board feet. Annual growth on this inventory is approximately 150 billion board feet. This easily meets our nation's lumber demand. The truth is, the United States has 750 million acres of forestland growing enough timber to meet our own lumber needs, export billions of board feet to other countries, while continually adding inventory to our forests.

In addition to prodigious timber growth, two-thirds of our nation's drinking water comes from our forests. On average, once acre of trees annually consumes the amount of carbon dioxide equivalent to that produced by driving an average car for 26,000 miles. That same acre of trees also produces enough oxygen for 18 people to breathe for a year. Economically, there is no better investment than forestry. Every \$1 million invested in forestry creates approximately 40 jobs. That is almost double the next highest investment sector of mass transit and freight rail construction where \$1 million invested creates approximately 22 jobs.

Unfortunately, these facts are not what I hear talked about at the landing, at coffee shops, or at conventions and meetings. Instead, it's usually acres burned, mills closed, government regulations, environmental lawsuits, and jobs lost. The Associated California Loggers just finished our annual meeting. At an evening banquet, my wife, Vicki, looked around the room of 250 plus folks and said, “Wow, there are a lot of young people here.” There were indeed young loggers and their wives, many sitting with their moms and dads.

These young people are hungry for inspiration, and our association, the American Loggers Council, must remain the prime source of that inspiration. We need to talk more about acres harvested, mills reopened, new laws to support our industry, and environmental groups that support our goal of healthy forests.

For the older generation, our charge is to inspire this new generation of loggers to continue not only to work hard and smart, but to understand and promote the proud and positive facts about our forests and our industry. Let's face it, if we are going to rejuvenate America's timber industry, it will be on their watch. With their help, America can trade the stigma of being a leading lumber importer with her overgrown forests burning to the ground, for the pride of supplying lumber to the world.

*Mike Albrecht is co-owner of Sierra Resource Management, Inc.*



## As We See It—April 2015 “Reality” By Myles Anderson, President



Have you ever thought what it would be like to wake up one morning to the reality of having lost your job, lost all the infrastructure that once supported your job and wonder how your community and your family would survive? Fast forward to the reality of today, the living wage jobs are long gone and your community is dependent on government aid rather than the vibrant economy that once flourished there. Rural families throughout the United States living adjacent to nationally owned forests, where once a thriving industry harvested and manufactured renewable resources have been forced into living this reality for the last 15 years. The Forest that was once managed to minimize fuel loading, create jobs and provide revenue for the local communities is now an overstocked and tinder dry fuel source or worse, a sea of blackened snags.

This government aid that communities have come to rely is known as the secure rural school act (SRS). The SRS act monetarily supports communities and is meant to substitute for all the jobs that were lost as a result of our government’s decision to stop managing the lands surrounding these communities. Historically these rural communities received a portion of the receipts from Forest service timber sales and more importantly the jobs and lifestyle that went along with living in a vibrant community. The SRS is critical for many rural communities. This act funds over 775 rural Counties and 4,400 schools. The secure rural schools act was first passed in 2000 and since then every year these counties have come to rely on this funding for their very existence. The sad truth is there is no certainty from year to year associated with the funding.

Each year families in these communities wait on Congress to decide whether or not their basic needs will be funded through a bill or resolution. Usually these funds are held hostage by one party or another because of unrelated issues. A commonsense approach to this issue would be to put this effort into restoring the economic viability of these communities through increased forest management. Perhaps this is too simplistic an approach to solving this problem; however, I believe that a majority of people in this Country are beginning to realize our federally owned forests are in a state of declining health. Most are very supportive of green fire breaks, removing the dead and dying trees and managing the fuel load. Our federal forests could and should be managed in a sustainable way creating jobs and strong communities rather

than waiting for the inevitable fire. The best measure of the cost of these catastrophic fires is in air quality impacts, the destruction of critical habitat, the deterioration of water quality and the numerous animal welfare (habitat) issues.

According to the USDA in regards to the forest service “Our mission, as set forth by law, is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people”. I propose this question, do you feel the national forests and in turn our rural communities are in a better position environmentally and socially now then we were 20 years ago when the Forest Service was actually managing our forests? There is a difference between conservation and preservation, and the fact that managed timberland has many benefits both environmentally and socially should not be overlooked when describing the difference.

Many ideas are floating around Washington DC on how best to facilitate a new direction within the United States Forest Service. Perhaps it will require legislation that charts a new course, or a change in leadership to get the agency back on track or even a return to common sense that places management back into the hands of the professionals who are trained to manage the forests, not the liberal courtrooms with their own agendas who opt to side with radical environmental organizations who continue to thrive off of the settlements and awards offered through the Equal Access to Justice Act.

What is important is that Washington DC hears from constituents on how important it is to utilize our natural resources for both the environmental benefits and the social benefits. I for one would like to go to work each day and support my family in an industry that relies on a renewable resource, rather than reliving the nightmare of congressional consent every year. When deciding as to what should benefit from federal forests I would ask that human beings be a prime consideration as we deliberate.

*Myles Anderson is the current President of the American Loggers Council and he and his father Mike own and operate Anderson Logging, Inc. based out of Fort Bragg, CA.*





## As We See It—May 2015 “The Backbone of the Industry” By Mark Turner, President Associated Oregon Loggers



I have some breaking news! The much anticipated logger shortage is here! ...at least during times of peak production. It is hitting our industry in a couple of different ways.

Across the country, the “surge capacity” in our industry has all but disappeared. That part of our industry used to be made up of many small operators who often only logged part of the year but could always be called upon to help out during times of peak production. Since the “Great Recession,” most of these companies have gone out of business, moved on to more profitable ventures, or become full-time loggers. With that surge capacity gone, we are all feeling tremendous pressure to meet our customers’ demands.

As employers, we are in the midst of a crisis trying to attract and retain qualified employees. This fact was driven home recently by a logger friend whose son had been working for his company. Last year, his son took a job with a construction company, making considerably more money than he had been making working as a logger. His son felt badly about leaving but, as my logger friend told me, “he’s now making the kind of money that he could never make in logging.” When you think about it, what a sad statement about logging. If we can’t even afford to pay our own children enough to stay in logging, how can we expect to keep any qualified employees? When I was young, someone could buy a house and raise a family on a logger’s wage. Now, even with a working spouse, most employees struggle just to get by. It is not at all unusual for the spouse of a logger to be the bigger breadwinner with better benefits and retirement package. It is demoralizing, considering the high level of skill required to perform most logging jobs.

**We have a serious problem: fewer loggers in the business and fewer individuals becoming loggers.**

In order to stay in business, loggers have had to become better, more professional businessmen. We have learned how to succeed in an increasingly regulated and volatile industry. During the same time, virtually every cost has skyrocketed (equipment and financing, commercial and health insurance, workman’s comp, fuel, regulatory fees and taxes) and we have had to absorb those astronomical cost increases. The only items that haven’t risen at the same pace are the prices we are paid by our customers, what we logging operators earn in profit at the end of the year, and what our employees take home on their paychecks. Yes, we have managed to stay in busi-

ness but it has been at great cost to our people. Ultimately, if we cannot increase our profits, we cannot increase pay to a level that more realistically reflects the value and skills of our people to our logging operations, a level that is competitive with other industries that require workers with similar skills.

A retired forester recently told me that “loggers would soon be in the driver’s seat” with regards to setting logging prices. The question is, just how accurate will that statement turn out to be? I do know that this is definitely not a place loggers are accustomed to being. Typically when there is a shortage of something (loggers), its price will go up. Unfortunately, the pressure to increase logging that we’ve felt from our customers hasn’t resulted in increased prices for our services. While we would love to be able to charge whatever prices we want, the reality is that wood products are commodities. Producers of wood products are not only competing against one another; they compete against other materials. If wood products become too expensive, they will be replaced by other materials and will ultimately lose market share. So where does this leave us?

If we don’t quickly improve logger compensation, the logger shortage will certainly continue getting worse. As the shortage gets worse, even fewer operators will be available to meet the increasing demands of the market. Less product availability translates into higher market prices. Higher market prices will result in lower market share. This death spiral has a simple solution- pay loggers more money for the work that they do. Without strong and more-profitable loggers, the future of the entire wood products industry is in serious trouble.

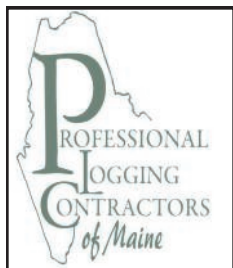
We loggers are the backbone of this industry. We owe it to ourselves, our employees and the entire timber industry to make reasonable profits. To do anything less will jeopardize us all and result in what timber owners probably fear the most- out of control logging costs.

*Mark Turner is the current President of the Associated Oregon Loggers and serves as an officer for the American Loggers Council. He and his brother Greg operate Turner Logging located in Buxton, Oregon. For more information, please contact the American Loggers Council at 409-625-0206.*





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