

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

MARCH/APRIL 2004

VOLUME 60



Hedstrom Lumber
Company Celebrates
Its 90th Anniversary

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DULUTH, MINNESOTA

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ON THE COVER

Winter Logging, circa 1920-1930

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With the winter logging season done and spring road restrictions in effect many of us find ourselves with a much different lifestyle than we are used to. While making our living with machinery, this is a good time to make sure it is ready for another year, maybe time for some vacationing, and lets not forget our safety meetings – log safe, MLEP

President's Column



and the truck driving workshops. While all of these activities are taking place TPA has been very

busy working on various legislative issues. With stumpage supply the basis for our work, it is no surprise it ranks as our number one priority. Many meetings have been held with the USFS as well as the Minn. DNR and counties to ensure a good supply of wood for the future.

Laws concerning the transporting of forest products to the mills are being worked on during this legislative session with hopefully some major changes that will help our trucking industry.

I am looking forward to seeing you on April 29 at the directors meeting and on April 30 for the Minnesota TPA Annual Membership Meeting.

Remember, please keep safety a top priority in whatever you are doing this spring.

TPA Annual Meeting April 30th

The Minnesota Timber Producers Association Annual Meeting will take place Friday, April 30. The meeting will take place at Spirit Mountain this year and promises to be a full day of educational and informative events.

Besides the annual report of association activities, committee reports, and election of directors, guest speakers include Superior National Forest Deputy Supervisor Paul Momper and Chippewa National Forest Supervisor Norm Wagoner. The Department of Natural Resources Assistant Commissioner Brad Moore and Division of Forestry Programs Director Mike Carroll will also be present. The Minnesota Logger Education Program Executive Director Dave Chura will provide an update on MLEP activities. And the luncheon speaker will be Rep. Tom Hackbarth, the Chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

The afternoon program consists of a panel presentation on forest inventory, harvest acres and the GEIS. There will also be a review of forest management guidelines by Mike Phillips of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, and Lieutenant Ron Silcox of the Minnesota State Patrol will have an overview of the changes affecting tie-down regulations.

Social hour following the

afternoon program will begin at 5:30, with the banquet starting at 6:30. We are honored that Mark Rey, the United States Department of Agriculture assistant secretary, will be our keynote speaker for the evening.

Be sure to RSVP the TPA office before Wednesday, the 21st, if you plan to attend this year's annual meeting.

Minnesota Pursues Dual Certification for Its Forestlands

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources plans to gain dual certification for 4.47 million acres of state-administered forestlands under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) forest certification systems. The lands to be certified are state forests, administered by the DNR Division of Forestry, and wildlife management areas, administered by the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. According to the agency, "Certification will increase the social, economic, and environmental value and marketability of the state's forest resources." The agency plans to complete the certification process by December 2005. For more information on both certification plans, visit this link: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/certification/index.html>

Mark your calendars now for the

Minnesota Timber Producers Association Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, April 30, 2004
Spirit Mountain, Duluth Minn.

I hope that everyone has the TPA Annual Meeting on their calendars for April 30 at Spirit Mountain in Duluth. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be U.S.

Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Mark Rey. If you want to cut through the haze of titles, Mr. Rey is the chief of the Forest Service's boss. He has had a long career in the private sector as

Executive Vice President's Column



well as being a top staff person in the U.S. Senate and is now the primary architect of the Bush administration's forest policies.

DNR Forestry Division Director Mike Carroll will

be on hand in the morning for his usual lively presentation on the state of DNR forests. Dr. Mike Phillips will share the most recent data on the use of forest management guidelines in Minnesota and Lt. Ron Silcox of the State Patrol will do a little show and tell on what's OK and what's not OK to comply with the tie-down regulations that went into effect on January 1 of this year. We also have the new supervisor on the Chippewa National Forest, Norm Wagoner, on tap to tell us about his plans for that forest.

There will be a variety of other speakers and topics covered along with the annual business meeting.



We've been making good progress at the State Capitol this year. The TPA Board of Directors established our priorities at last fall's meeting. Many of the top issues we are working on were part of Governor Pawlenty's Advisory Task Force on the Competitiveness of the Primary Forest Products Industry.

The toughest issue has been our effort to make Minnesota's weight laws for hauling wood more like Wisconsin's. While we're making good progress on this issue, the railroad interests are fighting hard

against us. This seems especially odd since the railroads don't move wood out of the forests anymore and haven't in decades. I guess they just hate trucks.

The best way to describe the railroads on this issue is a picture that used to hang on the wall of the office of the longtime port director in Duluth. It was a picture of Jesse James. The caption said he was the last person who knew how to effectively deal with the railroads.

We will continue to move forward on our issues through the end of the session. Hard work, sound information and a just cause usually do well in the end.



As we've moved through the legislative session, both President Clarence Johnson and Past President Dick Walsh have been in St. Paul to testify on various issues. This is one of the thankless jobs that falls to the leaders of our organization. I want to thank both Clarence and Dick for taking the time to do this important work. We've also had help in testifying from the Wood Fiber Employees Joint Legislative Council, a group of labor and management folks at the mills.



One of the biggest stirs we've seen recently was the February St. Louis County timber sale. This auction saw aspen stumpage bid up beyond \$90 per cord on several sales. FMS, the cooperative, was in the thick of all of these bids with others going with them.

A lot of loose talk has followed these sales. Most of it is speculation of the variety of who was doing what and why. Some of it has centered on the methods used by agencies to sell wood.

St. Louis County has alternated between oral auctions and sealed bids for several years. This was an oral auction.

It has always seemed to me that there is no perfect system for public agencies to sell wood. Some people like oral auctions. Some people like sealed bids. Some think auctions should be wide open and others like small business set asides.

Given this, it seems that having a mix of oral auctions and sealed bids with intermediate auctions and small business set asides thrown in provides opportunity for all.

However, until there is more wood on the market, we are likely to continue to see stumpage markets out of whack. This is essentially a problem of how much supply that landowners, especially public land managers, are willing to put on the market.



Most of our members will have completed MLEP and LogSafe training by the time you read this column. We all know that logging is a profession made up of highly skilled people who are dedicated to their work. MLEP membership is another way of demonstrating to the agencies, mills and public that we are on top of our game.

Safety, on the other hand, is the lifeblood of our business. It's what keeps our employees working safely on the job, keeps our insurance rates down and helps us all sleep better at night.

By all accounts, the participants in the TPA/LUA workers' compensation program had a safe winter season. This is a testament to training, vigilance and close attention to details on the job and with the equipment.

Congratulations for a safe winter!

TPA Teams Up with MLEP to Host Truck Driver Workshops

Truck drivers from across the state gained valuable information from workshops at three different locations throughout April.

On April 1, truck drivers met at Digger's in Kasson; on April 13, the meeting in Bemidji at the Northern Inn packed in a full house, as did the workshop in Orr. This is the first time MLEP credit has been given at a TPA truck driver workshop and the response was very positive, considering everyone's busy schedules.

The workshops began with a video on driver attitudes and professionalism. Then members of the Minnesota State Patrol educated the crowds on the recent changes in the federal load securement laws. Group members then toured logging trucks to physically see how to comply with the new tie-down regulations. The State Patrol then continued with a discussion of changes in hours of service and how to properly fill out log books. After lunch, drivers viewed another video, then heard from representatives from CATCO on hydraulic safety and proper use of equipment.

Evaluations of the workshops



Jeff Merkling, CATCO, talked about hydraulic maintenance, proper use and safety. Drivers examined worn and damaged parts and discussed what caused the parts to fail.



During a truck and trailer walk around in Kasson, the State Patrol reviewed the elements of a pre-trip and road-side inspection as well as correct load securement.

were very positive, but there is always room for improvement. If you would like to make

suggestions on how to make next year's workshops even better, please contact the TPA office.



The use and placement of restraints on equipment, like the cable skidder pictured here, were examined.

Hedstrom Lumber Company-90 Years



1917 Hedstrom Lumber Company

by Elizabeth Hillstrom

Driving the six miles from downtown Grand Marais to Hedstrom Lumber Company takes less than 10 minutes today. The Gunflint Trail, well maintained and highly traveled, allows trucks piled with neatly arranged layers of Hedstrom lumber, mountains of woodchips, and bags of shavings to make deliveries in a few days, if not a few hours.

When Hedstrom Lumber Company opened in 1914 near the Devil's Track River on Maple Hill, the trip to town wasn't so easy or fast. Instead of trucks, wagons pulled by draft horses carried the lumber, usually 2,500 board feet of it, down the trail. Two or three hours after leaving the mill, the lumber arrived at the harbor, downtown, where the wood was loaded onto a waiting ship. The men made the trip back to the mill - this time uphill - loaded the wagon again, and made a second roundtrip in the same day, totaling about 12 hours of work.

In 1914, Andrew Hedstrom, who was 44 years old, had a single fire-damaged mill, a group of enduring workers, and the fervent conviction to build a lasting business. Ninety years later, state-of-the-art equipment has replaced the original mill, and annual

production has reached 20 million board feet. The Gunflint Trail has a 50-mile per hour speed limit now, and the only horses remaining are those in old photographs.

Some things haven't changed, however, and Hedstrom's employees are still the company's most valued resources. In both the administrative offices and in the lumberyard, Andrew's grandchildren preserve the business principles held by their grandfather.

The company celebrates 90 years of operation this summer, but the story of Hedstrom Lumber is much older, and the decisions Andrew made as a young man before opening the mill were central in creating the business and the businessman behind it.

• • • • •

As a teenager growing up in Sweden, Andrew learned from his father the values of business. Sifferbo, the town where he was born in 1870, was simple and small, isolated by forests and swelling hills that were cut by swift rivers. Andrew's father, who made spinning wheels and fireplaces, traveled from village to village to sell them and regularly brought his son along.

When he was 21, Andrew immigrated to the United States, seeking a more promising future than the one in Sweden where a depressed economy promised the young man little. Joining an aunt in Kansas, Andrew briefly worked in coal mines but soon moved to Duluth where his sister was living.

He met his future father-in-law there, Olaf Berglund, who was a carpenter, and Andrew's skills proved useful in Berglund's construction projects. As a carpenter, Andrew traveled around Minnesota's Iron Range, but returned regularly to Duluth,



Andrew Hedstrom and four of his sons: Roy, Herb, Wes, and Andy.



Andy and Herb Hedstrom in 1932.

working for Olaf and becoming better acquainted with his daughter, Alma.

Settling on Maple Hill – a community of scattered homesteads north of Grand Marais – resulted from deliberate but uncertain choices, and the first time Andrew visited his claim of 160 acres in 1893, he didn't think he'd be back. Rocks and trees covered the land and were seemingly immovable.

Within a year, however, Duluth's economy crashed, and Andrew boarded the steamboat *Dixon* for Grand Marais and his claim on Maple Hill.

Homesteading, however, involved long hours at transitory and strenuous jobs. Farming provided food for settlers but not

money, and Andrew's skill as a craftsman again proved valuable. After all, Andrew lived on Maple Hill for 20 years before starting Hedstrom Lumber Company, and during that time he carved out careers in carpentry, mining, and construction.

Working again with Olaf Berglund, who had also settled on Maple Hill, Andrew used many of his own hand-sewn logs to build homes, early schools, and businesses. Some of these structures, such as the original Lighthouse-keeper's residence (now used as the Museum for the Cook County Historical Society) and the original jail, are still standing.

Andrew's most important edifice, however, was his own home. He proposed to Alma Berglund in 1897, and in the autumn of that year, he began erecting the four-room, two-story house. By the Aug. 6, 1898, wedding, the home was complete.

• • • • •

In 1913, Andrew had seven kids, a small farm, and plans for his own business. He purchased his first lumber mill – a single machine with a circular saw and powered by a steam boiler – from Ed Toftey. Using a team of four horses, Ole J. Allen spent three days hauling the mill 25 miles from Tofte to the Devil's Track River on Maple Hill.

Workers, using only saws and the muscles in their arms, logged on Maple Hill in the winter of 1914. That spring, the single mill cut



Second Cat International (1943).

10,000 board feet of lumber on its first day of operation. With World War I as a backdrop, there was the immediate need for shipbuilding materials and an unceasing demand for lumber. By 1917, there was a market for cedar shingles, railroad ties, and fish boxes as well, and a second mill was added for these products.

The men slept together in the bunkhouse and ate together in the cookhouse, both constructed by Andrew in 1914. Working 10-hour days, Andrew and his employees were tireless in their craft and found their profession to be more of a lifestyle than a job. This was true for the Andrew's family, as well.

Growing up, the Hedstrom children – all 12 of them – were as versatile and skilled as their parents, and they knew they were important to the smooth operation of the home and the company. Most of the Hedstrom kids knew how to milk a cow in the barn or cut wood at the mill as well as they could write a composition in school.

When the company opened in 1914, Alma worked full time preparing the meals for not only her growing family, but for the men who worked for her husband. At times, Alma was feeding 20-30 people a day, and her innovation was indispensable when long winters stretched into spring and delayed shipping traffic. Alma



Hungry Jack, near bunk houses, Paul Stoltz is on the truck (1942).



Carl Hedstrom at Stoney Creek (1955).

stored large staples of sugar, flour, vegetables, and dried fruits for the winter, garnishing the moose meat, venison, and caribou procured from local farmers.

Alma and Andrew had seven children when the mill opened, and her three oldest daughters, Frances (Fenstad), Mildred (Anderson), and Lucille (Walker), helped their mother in the kitchen and supervised their younger brothers and sisters.

The Hedstrom boys – Lawrence, Roy, Carl, Andy, Herb, Phil, Art and Wes – frequently joined their father in his work. Lawrence, the oldest boy, began driving horses to the mill in 1915, when he was 13. Five year later, Roy joined the crew at the same age, later to become president when his father retired.

• • • • •

Logging increasingly happened further from the mill and, in 1919, the workers lived in even closer proximity to each other at Hedstrom’s first logging camp. The men would stay at the camp all week until Saturday afternoon (Andrew usually returned home every evening, however), and spend Sunday in town or with their families.

Camps became more remote and self-sustaining in the '30s and '40s, when creativity and skill became hallmarks of Hedstrom workers. In 1939, workers who had been at a site on East Bearskin Lake built a barge to transport lumber to be

used in construction of their next camp near Little Alder Lake. The men erected more of a village than a camp and furnished it with a bunkhouse, a cookhouse, a barn, a root house, and a blacksmith shop. Other camps in Colvill, West Maple Hill, Sucker Lake and the surrounding areas were home to Hedstrom loggers as well.

While the isolation and subzero temperatures proved taxing on the men, the physical tests of hauling logs across frozen lakes posed dangers while

demonstrating the resilience of the Hedstrom employees. During the 30 years of logging camp history, there were only two recorded events that could have been disastrous – the separate sinking of a pickup truck and a tractor on Sucker Lake. In both incidents, the men were able to fish the valuable equipment out of the lake without sustaining any injuries. Verne Linnell, a Hedstrom employee who was on the tractor when it sunk, was said to have been “dunked up to his ears” in the freezing water

when it went through.

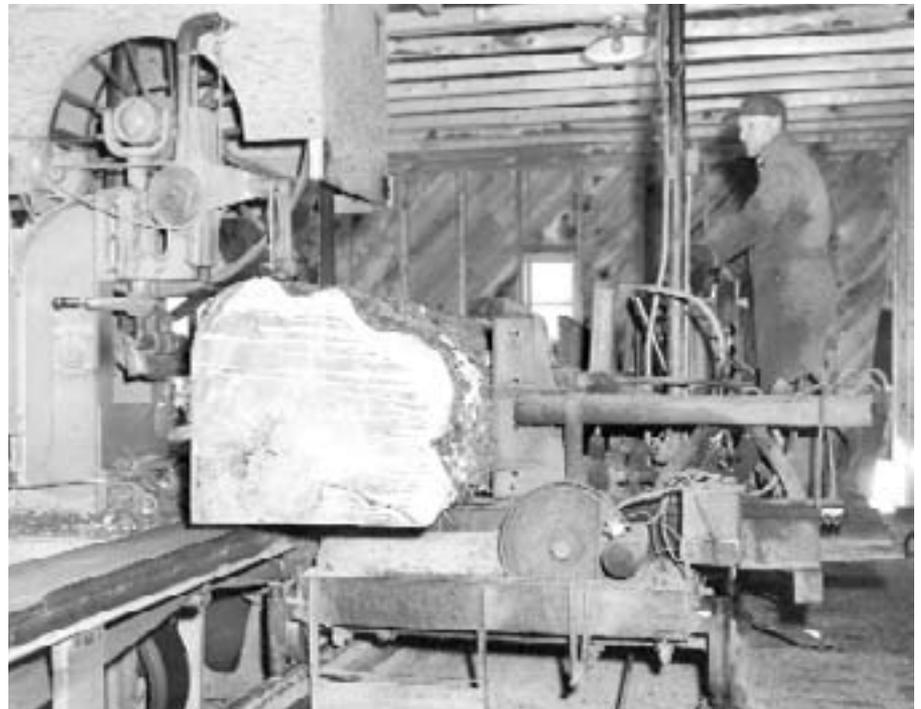
While logging camps flourished, operations at the original Maple Hill mill faced both steady expansion and unexpected obstacles, testing the stamina of Andrew and his family.

By 1929, Andrew had added a planing mill and a boxmill to the original sawmill, but a fire in March of that year destroyed everything. Rebuilding was instinctive for Andrew, but the depression years that followed did little to relieve the stress of reconstruction.

In the summer of 1936, the mills were nearly abandoned as fires raced through the region, calling for all able men to fight them. At one point, only Andrew and his son Roy remained at the mill while everyone else fought fires near Hovland, east of Grand Marais. Two years after that summer, in 1938, Andrew retired, and Roy accepted the position held by his father.

In 1948, all operations were brought back to where they began in 1914 on Devil’s Track River. Trucks and trailers had replaced horses and wagons and made travel widespread and rapid, eliminating the need for the camps

Although trucks allowed more mobility, the introduction of more
(continued on page 14)



Carl Hedstrom (1960).



Sawmill (1970).

(continued from page 12)

efficient equipment entirely altered the methods used in milling. Environmental awareness became paramount in the 1960s, and Hedstrom Lumber Company adopted several wise lumbering practices in promoting both conservation and full utilization of its own resources. The sale of shavings to poultry farmers began in 1963, followed by the installation of a debarker and wood chipper. Wood chips were sold for use in paper production, and the bark provided a fuel source. The burning of oil in the boiler was basically eliminated when the company installed a boiler fueled almost entirely by sawdust and bark.

In 1961, Hedstrom Lumber Company brought part of its operation to Grand Marais after purchasing a lumberyard from the

Gibson Company. This became the retail center for lumber, hardware, and paint, and had a full-time staff that, at various times, included Herb, Stan and Alan Hedstrom. The store was destroyed by fire in 1996, however, and sold a year later.

Changes in the type and amount of equipment required changes in mill buildings, and in 1976 the company bought two steel buildings from the veneer plant in Grand Marais. The smaller of the two became a machine shop, and the larger one was divided to become a heated plant for sorting lumber and a plant for surfacing and resawing aspen and birch.

In the 1970s production was increased by 30-40% when newer technologies such as a line-bar resaw, merry-go-round, and short log mill were installed. In 1979 the dry kiln burned, but was quickly



1979 dry kiln fire.

rebuilt, with the capacity to dry 200,000 board feet.

The '70s also brought changes in the types of wood processed by the mill. Old growth white pine had dominated the market until the early years of that decade, but as specialty markets evolved, aspen and birch became increasingly processed.

There was a near repeat in Hedstrom history in 1981 when the entire sawmill operation burned down. The fire, which resulted in a total loss of equipment, occurred at the same time as a severe market decrease in the lumber industry. The effects of this fire were similar to those felt after the 1929 fire that destroyed operations at the start of the great depression. But, as in 1929, reconstruction began almost immediately, and on May 10, 1983, the first log was sawed in the new mill.

By 1987, production reached 16 million board feet annually. A computerized sorter-stacker was added in 1988, and a new dry kiln was erected in 1989, increasing capacity from 200,000 board feet to 300,000 board feet.

New administrative offices opened in 1994, and improvements in technology resulted in the construction of a new planing mill in 1996. That same year, Hedstrom acquired a sawmill in Two Harbors but closed operations there four years later.

Today, Hedstrom employs 43 people and delivers 750 truckloads of aspen, balsam, birch, jack pine, red pine, white pine, and spruce lumber to retail yards and centers throughout the region. Within a 350-mile radius from its central headquarters - still on Maple Hill - Hedstrom contracts with 250 regional loggers to procure the finest lumber for paneling, furniture, and other wood products. Remote yards near Virginia, Minn., Superior, Wis., and Thunder Bay, Ontario, operate under Hedstrom direction.

Although competition and regulatory practices have posed new obstacles for Hedstrom Lumber, the company proudly preserves its custom of both efficiency and environmental responsibility. Hedstrom wood is

(continued on page 16)



This mill burned in 1981.

(continued from page 14)
not chemically treated, and no contaminants are released into the region's surrounding water resources as a result of production. This year, Hedstrom continues its practice of replenishing lumber resources with its annual giveaway of over 10,000 seedlings to local residents and businesses.

Although concentration is focused on mill operations, Hedstrom Lumber Company continues to acknowledge and support the North Shore community that has grown up around it.

In recent years, Hedstrom Lumber Company has supported the Sawtooth Mountain International Ski Races, The Fisherman's Picnic Fun Run and various other community events in Grand Marais. Support of Cook County athletic and academic programs is steady, and a scholarship in honor of Wes Hedstrom, who died this year, has been established for students in the area.

Philanthropy and community involvement are nothing new to the Hedstrom family. Andrew represented Cook County at the People's Party Convention in 1894, served as a Justice of the Peace for Maple Hill Township, and wrote several articles for the *Cook County News-Herald*. In the 1940s, Andrew donated a large section of land for expansion of the Maple Hill

cemetery, as well.

What began as a family business continues to be a family business. Today, brothers Jack and Howard, and cousin Ed Hedstrom, Andrew's grandsons, run the business, and although many of Andrew's children have passed on, several left an indelible mark on the business. Half of Andrew's children – Roy, Andy, Carl, Herb, Phil, and Wes – served as president, and worked closely with the staff in making decisions.

Hedstrom Lumber Company is inviting members of the Cook County community, as well as the timber industry, to tour the mill this summer and several events are planned to acknowledge the staff, who have truly made Hedstrom an enduring member of the North Shore community.

Get Ready for 2004 North Star Expo

It's hard to believe time has flown by so quickly, but it's already time to mark the dates on your calendars for the 2004 North Star Expo. This year's Expo will take place at the South St. Louis County Fairgrounds in Duluth, on August 6 and 7. Showtimes are Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

On Friday evening, there will be a social hour and barbecue commencing at 5 p.m. on the Expo grounds. Door Prizes will be given away as well.

Many of your favorite contests to watch or win will be back this year, along with a few new ones. So, make sure you register for the Best Load Contest, the Master Loader Contest (50+), the Loader Contest, and this year, two new additions: the Kids Loader Contest and the Kids Coloring Contest.

Any child attending the show on Friday can color a picture at the show, and the winning entry will be announced on Saturday. We will also be bringing back the Guess the Weight Contest, as well as the Wood Identification Contest.

So make sure to write down August 6 and 7 as "booked" on your calendars and we'll see you at the Expo. Watch for future updates on registration and other information in upcoming *Timber Bulletins* and in your mail!

The North Star Expo

will be held on

Friday & Saturday,
August 6 & 7, 2004

South St. Louis County Fairgrounds
Duluth, Minn.

Nortrax Equipment Company Meets Demands of Today's Forest Products Industry

by Maureen Talarico

It's a busy spring for the men and women who work for Nortrax's Midwest Region. The equipment company continues to meet the demands of the logging industry by supplying John Deere, Timberjack, Fabtek and Waratah cut-to-length equipment as well as conventional logging equipment to businesses in northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan.

"Right now, business is steady in the Midwest," says Dale Gessell, general manager of Nortrax's Minnesota operations. "Compared to the rest of the country, when the economy sours, our markets are generally the last to feel any impact, but also the last ones to recover," adds Gessell. "The forestry markets started recovering in other parts of the country in the second half of last year, and we're starting to see that recovery hit our area now."

According to Tim Murphy, vice president and general manager of Nortrax's Midwest operations, the company was incorporated in September of 1999, after purchasing Ison Equipment Company. In October of that year, Nortrax also bought North Country Equipment and merged the two organizations together, forming the Midwest Region. The region is one of eight Nortrax operations representing John Deere construction and forestry products from California to Maine. The Midwest Region, headquartered in Eau Claire, Wis., employs 150 people in eight locations: Duluth, Grand Rapids, Virginia and Bemidji, Minn.; Ashland, Eau Claire and Monico, Wis.; and Escanaba, Mich. "We've got great products and great support, and we've got the backing of one of the world's greatest companies - John Deere," stated Murphy. "But without question,



Dale Gessell, general manager of Nortrax's Minnesota operations.

the success of our Minnesota operations are directly attributed to our employees in Minnesota. Dale Gessell and his team are part of the fabric of our Minnesota forestry market. We may have changed the name on the door, but the folks coming to work every day for the most part are the same ones who have been supporting our customers for many, many years. These guys will do anything to support our customers...and they are glad to do it."

Dale Gessell came to Nortrax from North Country Equipment,

where he started working in 1987. Gessell says Nortrax's newest parts support store, in Virginia, Minn., will soon be equipped to serve area loggers better. The company acquired the store from AIS and has been mainly a parts and consulting business for the mining industry. "We are right now in the process of stocking Deere, Timberjack, and Fabtek parts at our Virginia store," said Gessell. "This will serve the logging communities in the northern part of Minnesota very well."

Meeting customers' demands is a big part of Nortrax's success, especially when it comes to cut-to-length systems. "That's unique to the Lake States," said Gessell. "Our Wisconsin operations had a tremendous amount of experience with cut-to-length. In Minnesota, we've drawn off the expertise of Michigan and Wisconsin, and now it's bled over to Minnesota. It's changing what we're seeing in the markets; the mills are supporting it. It's a good system in the public eye." But providing options to customers who want conventional methods also plays a major role in Nortrax operations. "It seems that the farther north in Minnesota you



Nortrax's Duluth facility



The Timberjack 1490D Energy Wood Harvester.

go, the preferred method of harvesting is conventional, so we embrace that and we'll certainly continue to support that as well."

Nortrax not only sells the equipment, but also provides the necessary training for operators to handle the high-tech machinery safely and efficiently. In-the-woods training is given at the time of

delivery and usually lasts three to four days. Follow-up sessions are also provided at three- or six-month intervals. And in a world of voice mail, a live person is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to take inquiries on emergency parts requirements.

One way Nortrax stays ahead in a tough economic climate is by

anticipating the needs of their customers. A new product that will soon be demoed in Grand Rapids could very well handle much of the slash left over from timber harvests. "We are working right now with Timberjack, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, and UPM on a new technology that's based out of Finland which is a bundler," says Gessell. The Timberjack 1490D Energy Wood Harvester picks up slash left on the ground, runs it through a feeder, and compacts the material into bundles that can be used as biomass fuel. These bundles are about 10 feet long and weigh more than a thousand pounds. The slash logs provide 1 MWh of energy, equal to the energy of about 21-28 gallons of oil. Nortrax will demo the bundler in Grand Rapids at the School of Forestry on May 12.

By embracing new technology and meeting the needs of its customers, Nortrax provides quality service and logging equipment here in northern Minnesota and throughout the country.

Lessons from the Field

Don't Let Hot Work Burn Your Business

The following is a recounting of a loss sustained by an LUA customer. Had the proper hot work safety procedures been followed, this terrible fire might have been prevented.

Plans were set for the installation of a digital lumber counter during a two-week maintenance shutdown period. A mechanic/welder was called to do the first phase of the installation which was to weld the reader onto an appropriate bracket. After bringing the welding equipment to the job site, he then proceeded with the necessary installation. No formal Hot Work precautions were followed which would have included someone to act as a spark watcher both during and after the work.

All employees left the mill by 8 p.m. that evening, at 4:15 a.m. a neighbour happened to notice smoke coming from the mill and called the owner. The fire was brought under control, but not before the fire had caused extensive damage to the mill.

3 Simple Steps to Avoid a Similar Loss at your Company

- ✓ Ensure your employees involved in Hot Work are aware that it is one of the leading causes of

major fire losses. (Just because it has not happened to you yet, does not mean it cannot happen).

- ✓ Implement and enforce Hot



- Work procedures to reduce the risk of fire to your property.
- ✓ Adopt a "Hot Work permit system" which if used well will ensure that safe and secure procedures are always being followed.

For the company mentioned in the loss story above, they actually had a Hot Work permit system. Unfortunately, it was customary to have the permits filled out by the supervisor only after the job was completed, and not by the welder prior to the start of the operation. Later conversations with the welder revealed that he was not even aware of the existence of the permits. Since they were not properly used, the necessary precautions were not followed which would have included a spark watcher on site after everyone else had left for the day.

A Hot Work permit is not a magical shield against fire; it is a tool to be utilized as part of a larger Hot Work program. An effective program requires the full support of management; the establishment and implementation of proper procedures and precautions; the training and accountability of all involved personnel; and a strict and consistent follow-through. Such a program should be in place for all spark/flame-generating operations, such as cutting and welding, grinding, torch-applied roofing, soldering, pipe sweating and any other spark producing operations.

Take the time now to review your current program. Ask for a free supply of the recently revised LUA Hot Work permits by contacting your local LUA office or Loss Prevention Representative who will be pleased to share with you even more information on initiating and maintaining an effective Hot Work program.

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Intervenors in Lawsuit Happy with Ruling

The United States District Court of Western Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh, Penn., ruled Tuesday, March 23, in favor of the U.S. Forest Service on nine of 10 counts in a complaint filed by preservation organizations, led by the Allegheny Defense Project, to stop the ecosystem restoration East Side Project and implementation of a Forest Plan Amendment on the Allegheny National Forest (NF). U.S. District Judge William L. Standish ruled in favor of the Forest Service almost three years after the complaint was filed in May 2001.

"I am extremely happy that the judge found that we on the Allegheny NF capably serve as stewards of public lands. Our resource specialists bring professionalism, sound judgment, and commitment to their work. Our employees can be proud that their excellent work, which uses the best science available, has been affirmed in court. It has been a

long time, but I am proud of the employees of the Allegheny NF," said Kevin B. Elliott, forest supervisor.

In September 2001, the U.S. Forest Service was joined in the court case by three intervenors: 1) the Allegheny Forest Alliance, a grass-roots, community based organization supporting multiple-use management of public forests; 2) the Ruffed Grouse Society, a conservation organization dedicated to supporting wildlife habitats; and 3) the American Forest and Paper Association, a national organization supporting the sustainable use of wood products. "To say we're excited that the wildlife and reforestation work can finally move forward is an understatement," said Mark Banker, regional biologist with the Ruffed Grouse Society. Jack Hedlund, Allegheny Forest Alliance, stated he is jubilant over the judge's decision, but is also concerned over the loss of wood value after a lengthy court battle.

The East Side Project includes wood harvest, regeneration and

wildlife activities on approximately 8,000 acres scattered within a 140,000-acre area of the Allegheny NF, primarily on the east side of the forest. Forest Service specialists determined that these 8,000 acres were most urgently in need of ecosystem restoration work and salvage harvests after severe and repeated damage by drought, insects and disease. The decision on the East Side Project was signed by then Acting Forest Supervisor Michael L. Hampton in December 2000.

The Forest Plan Amendment was approved in July 2000 and incorporated new standards and guidelines for federal threatened and endangered species.

The Allegheny Defense Project and five other preservation organizations disagreed with portions of the Forest Service's analysis of the East Side Project's environmental effects and with the July 2000 amendment to the Forest Plan that covered federal threatened and endangered species. Both the East Side Project and the amendment were challenged in a complaint filed by the Allegheny Defense Project and its supporters. Judge Standish disagreed with all but one of the plaintiffs' 10 counts in their complaint, and found the agency had complied with applicable environmental laws in developing these important decisions.

In December 2003, Magistrate Judge Ila Jeanne Sensenich issued a recommendation to Judge Standish finding in favor of the Forest Service on all counts of the complaint except for one concerning sensitive wet soils and riparian areas. In February 2004, Forest Supervisor Kevin B. Elliott removed wood harvest from the wet soils and riparian areas in the East Side Project.

Forest Supervisor Elliott summarized by saying, "The judge's ruling not only underscores the merits of this project but also the rigorous, objective analysis the Forest Service uses to ensure high-quality projects. The affirmation of both our Forest Plan Amendment protecting federal threatened and endangered species and ecosystem restoration work in the East Side Project can assure the public we are managing their resources wisely and within the laws of the United States."

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

"The Job of the Road Monkey"

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*



The "road monkey," or "chuckaw" as the old teamsters referred to him, may not have had the best job in a sleigh haul lumber camp, but he nevertheless had a very important one. Many a young man in his first winter in the woods started out as a road monkey, and many an older man spending his last winter ended his career the same way. This was a job that took both inexperienced and experienced men.

Road monkeys were usually the first men out on the roads in the morning, and if the wind had blown down a tree across the road, they had to have it removed by the time the first sleigh arrived. The general idea in all the camps was "keep the logs arriving."

When an ice road had up to 16 loads a day passing over it, that meant at least 32 four-horse teams a day used the road on their trips to and from the landing, as well as skidding teams using part of it each day on their trips to the work area.

The first half mile of the road from the lumber was usually assigned to the younger road monkey because it was this part of the road that contained the horse manure, and he would usually have a shoveling job each morning. All manure had to be removed because the sun hitting it would break up the road in a hurry. Besides

removing the horse manure, he would repair parts of the ice that had been ripped by the sharp calks of the horse, or any spot in the rut that was damaged. The usual tools carried by a road monkey were a broom, shovel and axe. Sometimes the axe would have a pick on one end.

If there was a hay hill on the road where the loaded sleighs went down, an older, more experienced man would be assigned to taking care of the hill. He would have to be on the hill first thing in the morning to shake up the hay and get the frost and snow out of it and then pile just the right amount in the ruts to slow the sleigh down, but not stop it. If a loaded sleigh was stopped on a hill because of too much hay, there would be trouble getting it started.

There have been cases where a sleigh was running too fast and the road monkey threw hay into the ruts but stopped the sleigh so fast that the logs slid ahead onto the driver and horses. So the "hay hill road monkey" had to be a man who knew his job.

Many camps had a "spotting out" area where sleighs that were loaded late in the afternoon were spotted out and made ready to start their trip to the landing early the next morning. These spotting

out areas were near the camp or the skidding area. Big enough for several loaded sleighs, they consisted of an ice area with several posts set in the ice for connecting a block and line to help the team get the sleigh started.

Usually an older, more experienced man was assigned the road monkey job where loads were spotted out, as this place had to be kept in good shape so the runners did not set into the ice. When the teamsters were bringing their loads up to a spotting out site, they stopped the sleigh several times to let the runners cool before coming to the final stop. Runners did not get hot, hot they did warm up some because of the friction, and if not cooled they would set pretty tight overnight.

Some sleigh shoes would generate more heat than others. On ice roads cast iron shoes were supposed to be better than steel shoes.

Before starting a sleigh, a man with a large wooden mallet would give each runner a couple of hits to loosen it. Then, with the lead team turned at right angles to "track" the sleigh, and with extreme effort by all men and horses, the sleigh would get moving. The first few hundred feet would be the hardest, but as the frost wore off the runners they slipped along the ice more easily. On a cold morning you could hear them "squawking" for up to half a mile.

Spotting out was avoided as much as possible, but on many roads it was necessary in order to space the loads coming in to a landing. This way there would not be several loads arriving for unloading at the same time. Loads were usually kept about 30 minutes apart on the roads. Most teams returned empty over the same road, so this meant that there had to be turnouts. Every little ways along the road the empty sleighs could get off so the loads could go by.

These turnouts were real danger points as far as maintaining runs was concerned. They had to be chopped free of ice, similar to a switch on a railroad track, so the empties could pull off and get back on the road without damaging the rut that loaded sleighs used.

In some places a "comeback" road was

The covered "St. Croix Brown Box" type camp of the St. Croix Lumber Co. brings a load of stacked hay to camp in the Winton area. Hay was feed for the horses and a brake on the "hay hills."





The problems of the road monkey included manure on the roads (above) and chips at the landing (below).



built clear through the woods, but this was only in rare cases.

In 1907 my dad was landing logs on Turtle River Lake near Bemidji, and the last quarter mile of the road to the lake was down a very steep grade. The hill was "hayed" loosely all the way down so it let the sleighs down as slowly as possible without stopping them. Right alongside the hayed road was the comeback road coming up the hill. A little Frenchman by the name of Joe Valley, making his first trip to the landing, did not watch his team too closely, and before he knew it he was headed down the comeback road with a full load of logs.

Fortunately, he had a nimble lead team and when he shook the lines and let out a load they took off, and the load went down the hill 60 miles an hour. After hitting the drifted snow on the lake they came to a stop, with the lead team standing on top of a partly covered pile of logs and with just a few scratches on their legs.

Some of the men said that Joe, who was a black Frenchman, was as white as snow, and my dad says he never drove a four-horse team afterwards. This is just to point out what could happen.

Often a road monkey was assigned just to the landing area where the sleighs were unloaded. Here his job would be keeping the cuts free from bark that fell from the logs. He often had to throw a few shovels full of clean snow into the ruts after each sleigh was unloaded.

Not all logs were hauled on ice roads. Some smaller loggers used snow roads. On these, the road monkey's job was keeping the road level by lying down short pieces of wood and covering them with snow. Some of the smaller loggers used a sleigh that was 54 inches wide, which meant the horses walked in, and the manure fell in the sleigh track—so more work had to be done in keeping the rut in good shape.

Some roads used ice without a rut but had an iced outside shoulder. These were known as "shoulder roads" and were quite popular in hauling cedar and pulpwood products. On these shoulder roads, the shoulder and outside were kept well iced, but the center of the road was not as heavily iced and was kept about four inches lower than the shoulder.

Sometimes these shoulder roads were called "tough roads," and special blades were used on the rut rollers to cut out the inside of the rut. This made a flat surface for the horse to walk on and the outside shoulder kept the sleigh in place. This was on the narrow roads. Pulling wider sleighs, the horses walked well inside of the rut.

Whether it was on an ice road with a foot of ice or on a snow road, the road monkey was a very important man in the logging industry. Good road monkeys were always in demand and played a large part in the logging of our vast pine stands.



It took an experienced road monkey to maintain a hay hill (above), spreading hay in the ruts to slow a sleigh going down. For hauling ties (below), smaller sleighs were used on "tough roads." All photos are from the St. Louis County Historical Society.



Annual Timber Harvest Plan Available for Review

The public is invited to review the annual timber harvest plan for state-administered forest land that has been prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The annual timber harvest plan is for fiscal year 2005, which starts July 1, 2004, and ends June 30, 2005, said Tom Baumann, DNR forest resource management section manager. Comments on the

planned harvest sites will be accepted through April 26, 2004.

The public has two options for reviewing harvest plans. Proposed harvest locations, management prescriptions and forest inventory information can be viewed on the DNR Web site at www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/harvesting/plans. Comments regarding a proposed harvest can be submitted to the DNR using this web site.

For those who don't have convenient Internet access or who prefer to review and discuss annual harvest information directly with a forester, a second option is available. They may contact or visit their local DNR area forestry office to discuss the harvest plan or to obtain a copy of the annual harvest plan report for that administrative area.

To view forest inventory maps or aerial photos of state forest lands, which show where harvesting is planned, it is recommended that individuals contact the local area forestry office to ensure that the appropriate forestry staff will be available. Comment forms are available.

For statewide information, contact Gaylord Paulson, DNR-Division of Forestry, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minn., 55155-4044; phone 651-205-4571.

Annual harvest plans are derived from multi-year forest management plans, which are based on long-term forest resource management goals. Forestry staff evaluates forest sites from their annual harvest plan for possible timber sales. If the site meets the criteria for a timber sale, the appraised timber will be offered for sale in the upcoming fiscal year. More than 90 percent of the timber volume will be offered for sale through public auction sales.

Classifieds

As a service, the Timber Bulletin offers free classified ads of up to 85 words to all MTPA members and associate members.

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1986 648D JD, dual function...27,000
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 1976 544 JD 20" shear.....21,000

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