

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

JULY/AUGUST 2008

VOLUME 64



**TPA Holds
Golf/Fishing Outing
and Annual Meeting**

2008 North Star Expo

September 12th and 13th
Beltrami Co. Fairgrounds

Bemidji, MN

Free Admission!

More than 150 exhibitors and vendors!
Industry Workshops!

Draft Horse Demonstration!
Mini-loader for the kids!

Master Loader Contest!
Win a Chainsaw Carving!

Friday Night BBQ!

Saturday Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Nortrax!

For more information: MN Timber Producers Association
218-722-5013



TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 64
July/August 2008
Duluth, Minnesota

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ON THE COVER

Wayne and Misty Johnson and Corey and Lynette Lovdahl were part of the biggest field ever at the TPA golf outing. For more coverage of the golf and fishing outing, as well as TPA's annual meeting and banquet, please see pages 8-14.

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Minnesota
Timber Producers
Association



Another summer has flown past. This one seems to have gone by really fast, with Mother Nature showing us who is really in control. She sure made up for the last few dry years we've had, with plenty of rain. This has

President's Column



made working more difficult, not to mention the high cost of fuel; which in turn means a higher cost of doing business. With that said, the TPA has been hard at

work trying to make sure there is plenty of wood on the market for everyone. Also, we have been successful in getting higher weights on our roads; which should help us all.

Fall is coming, which brings us to – the EXPO! Please make time to attend. The Expo committee has worked very hard to make sure it is a good time for all. Have a safe and successful rest of the summer.

Please, don't hesitate to call with anything we can help with, or if you have any issues or concerns.

Michael Rieger

Mark Your Calendar

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

Sept. 4-6

63rd Annual Lake States Logging Congress
Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association
Shopko Hall and Lambeau Field
Green Bay, Wisconsin
www.timberpa.com

Sept. 12-13

2008 North Star Expo in Bemidji

Oct. 9

Workshop: "How to Prepare for DOT Audit"
Wendigo in Grand Rapids, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Visit www.mlep.org to register

Nov. 18

MnDOT Driver Qualification Training
MnDOT office in Virginia, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Call 651-215-6330, option #2 for training info.
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/training/schedule_days.pdf

Nov. 18

MnDOT Hours of Service Training
MnDOT office in Virginia, 1 - 4 p.m.

Call 651-215-6330, option #2 for training info.
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/training/schedule_days.pdf

Nov. 19

MnDOT Drug & Alcohol Testing Training
MnDOT office in Virginia, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Call 651-215-6330, option #2 for training info.
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/training/schedule_days.pdf

Nov. 19

MnDOT How to Prepare for a DOT Audit
MnDOT office in Virginia, 1 - 4 p.m.

Call 651-215-6330, option #2 for training info.
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/training/schedule_days.pdf

For more information on any of these events, call the TPA office at 218-722-5013.

We are looking forward to a great North Star Expo September 12 and 13 in Bemidji. Even in a tough economy the exhibitor sign up is as strong as the past several years. We received very strong support from the whole Bemidji community for last year's show which made the event even more fun and worthwhile than usual. The TPA Expo Committee has been working hard for the past year to

Executive Vice President's Column



make the show a success. Make sure that you get there to renew old acquaintances, make new contacts and see the new equipment.

The forestry community lost a great friend when Doug Ford passed away after a lengthy illness. Doug managed the contracts and other aspects of the DNR timber sale program from St. Paul and had served in a number of other capacities. Doug and his wife Linda were fixtures at the TPA Annual Meeting. He truly enjoyed being with us and I know that our members appreciated him being there, answering questions, trading barbs and seeing old friends. Doug played a leading role in continuing to update the laws, regulations and policies that govern DNR timber sales. He was always striving to make things better. I personally valued his friendship, enjoyed working with him and miss him.

Misery may love company but nobody likes a grouch. I was recently at a meeting with a number of other folks from our industry. We talked about our problems, which are similar throughout the country. Even with the challenges we all face there was a lot of optimism in the room. I guess it's our nature. While recognizing the problems that exist, everyone's focus was on how to make things better in the future.

As part of the meeting we took a tour one afternoon. Our first stop

was with a local logger. He was struggling with markets, high diesel prices, health insurance costs etc. But, he had a plan and ideas for how he was going to survive and improve going forward. He was a remarkable guy – not unlike our TPA members.

The dog days of summer are here. It's hot, it's humid, minds are drifting off and everyone would sooner be fishing or sitting in the shade with a cold beverage. It is very easy to lose focus. This is exactly the kind of scenario that can lead to accidents and injuries. Think about this yourself and share it with your crews. Focus on safety, you won't regret it.

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) completed its issue prioritization and planning activities at a July meeting in Wabasha. The MFRC selected four issues to focus on for the next several years. These issues include: Forest Health and Timber Quality; Forest Biomass; Maintaining the Productive Forest Land Base; and Forests Role in Carbon Sequestration Policy Development.

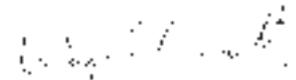
Former TPA President Dale Erickson led the discussion in advocating for timber quality as a key issue. As usual he was very persuasive, with the help of DNR Forestry Director Dave Epperly, as

the MFRC adopted this as an issue.

"You can't get this anywhere else." This is a quote from one of the attendees at this year's TPA Annual Meeting. We received very positive feedback about the information provided by speakers at the event. From perspectives on markets, industry trends, key influencing factors and realistic assessments of wood energy to a lot of fun on the golf course and the lake it was a valuable event. Look for full coverage elsewhere in this issue of the *Timber Bulletin*.

Most of us keep a list in our heads of things we'd like to do and places we'd like to go. I recently checked one off of my personal list by going to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. I'm a bit of a baseball nut having played high school, American Legion and town team ball as well as coaching my daughter's softball teams and umpiring at various levels when I was younger.

If you love, or even like baseball, the Hall of Fame is worth the trip. Babe Ruth's locker, the plaques for all of the members, Ty Cobb's shoes, the Honus Wagner baseball card etc. etc. etc. It was a thrill for me.



Annual Membership Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting

by Ray Higgins

TPA welcomed a new president, with Tom McCabe (McCabe Forest Products) completing his two-year term and handing off the president's gavel to Mike Rieger (Rieger Logging and Trucking). McCabe remains on the executive committee as past president.

In addition, Scott Pittack (Pittack Logging) was elected to the TPA executive committee, replacing Dale Erickson (Erickson Timber), whose term expired. Pittack becomes committee secretary / treasurer. Also, Mike Warren (M and R Chips) was named first vice president, and Kit Hasbargen (Hasbargen Logging) becomes second vice president.

Three new members were elected to join TPA's board of directors: Rod Enberg (Enberg Logging) Mike Hill (Hill Logging), and Brad Rootkie (Central Pine Lumber Company).

Annual Report of Association Activities

TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt delivered his annual report to the members and highlighted the issues TPA worked on at the legislature this year. Among the issues addressed

during the 2008 session were:

- Biodiesel Exemption for Logging Equipment
- Increased Truck Weights for Finished Products
- 80,000 pounds now allowed on 9 ton roads
- \$7 million in bonding for forestry-related issues
- DNR Appropriations
- Information Sharing

Brandt also outlined some of the other TPA activities of the past year, including:

- Participation in Governor's Task Forces on the Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry, which issued its long-term recommendations in the last year
- Participation in creation of new Biomass Harvesting Guidelines
- Ongoing communication with county, state, and federal agencies
- The North Star Expo

This year's membership meeting also included several invited guests who shared information of interest to TPA members. DNR Director of Forestry Dave Epperly discussed the recently completed study in the implementation of the harvesting

guidelines for 2004-2006.

According to Epperly, implementation of the guidelines was strong, similar to what the study for the years 2000-2002 found. Implementation was strongest in the areas of visual quality, cultural resources, filter strips, and snags. Following the guidelines for landings, rutting, coarse woody debris, and roads and ski trails was termed "fair to good." Improvement is needed according to the study in infrastructure, RMZs, erosion control practices, wetland crossings, and leave tree retention.

Annual meeting attendees were treated to a panel discussion on the future of biomass markets in Minnesota. Panelists included Todd Smrekar of the proposed Renewafuel Project on the East Range, Chuck Hartley of LHB Incorporated in Duluth, and Steve Betzler from Minnesota Power.

Renewafuel is a subsidiary of Cleveland Cliffs that plans to manufacture coal-sized renewable energy cubes made in part from wood and sawdust for use in industrial and institutional furnaces, including in facilities owned and operated by Cliffs. In



DNR Division of Forestry's Dave Epperly takes questions from TPA during Thursday's Annual Meeting.



Chuck Hartley of LHB Incorporated gives his presentation on the future of biomass.

his presentation, Smrekar's talked about the background of the company and explained how the cubes are made, saying he's bullish on biomass as a viable market for Minnesota's loggers.

Betzler gave Minnesota Power's perspective, which is that use of wood for biomass will grow, but that it will take a few years for it to be a major destination for loggers. Betzler also said loggers should expect changes in how forest product manufacturers procure their wood, and also discussed how the future of biomass will effect decisions on the purchasing of logging equipment.

Betzler also noted the Laskin 25 MW biomass generation project was shelved, but plans continue to expand MP's existing biomass generation at Grand Rapids and Duluth.

Hartley works as director of Energy Management Services for LHB, a 170 person full-service engineering and architectural firm with a dedicated industrial group and offices in Duluth and Minneapolis. Hartley creates and studies various energy generation models, including biomass. He thinks bio-refineries won't be successful without substantial subsidies and that a major market for biomass pellets could be pellet stoves in homes, schools, and small businesses, a segment that is currently very small in our part of the country.

In another panel discussion, northern Minnesota mill managers gave their take on the past year in each segment of the industry and shared their thoughts on the coming 12 months. Pat Moore of NewPage in Duluth represented the paper segment, Norbord manager Jack Wallingford represented OSB, and Howard Hedstrom of Hedstrom Lumber shared his thoughts on the lumber segment.

Moore said some of the main factors affecting the paper segment have been the end of growth in the European paper industry which has led to divestiture of assets and the closings of some mills. Also, the weakened U.S. dollar has caused imports to drop, plus the Canadian Forest Products Industry has collapsed due to the rise in the

loonie, drop in demand for newsprint, and the bust in the U.S. housing market. Another key factor in the U.S. paper markets is the rapid growth of private equity stakes.

Over the next 10 years, Moore thinks higher logistical costs will decrease global shipments of heavy-weight commodities like

paper. He forecasts that the internet will continue to attract advertising away from print, but will reach a saturation point, and that Russia will see paper industry growth and challenge Western European paper industry. China will be challenged to sustain the growth they have experienced. Overall, geographic regions that



TPA Members filled the banquet room at Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge for the TPA Annual Membership Meeting.

have both the resources and the markets will fare the best.

In Wallingford's presentation, he talked about the well-documented collapse in the U.S. housing market, saying it has to level off before it can climb back, which hasn't happened yet. The general 2008 and 2009 outlook is for one million starts, the backlog of homes for sale is 10+ months and growing – the worst in 26 years, and the foreclosure rate probably has not peaked.

But Wallingford also sees some positives, including that the affordability index is improving; the backlog of new homes is fairly

low, offset by very high existing homes; the rate of falloff in housing starts is slowing; and interest rates have fallen, helping keep existing mortgages from taking dramatic increases, and new mortgages more affordable.

Hedstrom also talked about the state of the current housing market, terming it the "worst in his memory," which has been made worse by the credit crisis and by high fuel costs. He said Hedstrom Lumber has had to reduce staffing and capital spending as a result, as well as necessitated a move into specialty products.

But, he said, Hedstrom Lumber

plans to be around for years to come and urged TPA members to work safely, bid carefully, make the correct product sorts in the woods, and to "do your part" in adding to the health of the timber industry.

Finally, members heard from Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) on the recently completed legislative session, which included several pieces of legislation favorable to our industry. Bakk is chair of the Senate Tax Committee and also talked about the future – what he sees as developments in our industry, but also about a possible run for the governor's office in 2010.



Transportation committee chair Jerry Demenge reports to TPA members on the activities of the committee over the past year and on key issues of interest at the Annual Meeting.



Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) addresses TPA members about current issues facing the industry.

Annual Meeting Banquet



DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten was the evening's special guest and gave the keynote speech at the Banquet.

The 2008 TPA Annual Meeting Banquet provided an opportunity for attendees to not only socialize with fellow members and industry supports, but also to hear from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Mark Holsten. A graduate of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, commissioner Holsten has been a supporter of our industry and of increasing timber harvests on state lands.

In his keynote speech, Holsten talked about how the agency has evolved over the years, and about the varied responsibilities he has as head of the DNR, from hunting

and fishing regulations – where he has most of his contact with the general public – to dealing with water quality, mining, state parks, and of course, forestry.

In addition, Holsten stressed the importance of logging and proper forest management, stating the timber industry in Minnesota is crucial not only to the state's economy but also to the health of the forest.

"Commissioner Holsten's remarks were excellent," said TPA director Rod Bergstrom. "Our industry hasn't always had such strong support from the DNR commissioner, so it was encouraging to hear his thoughts on logging and forest management."

Also, winners of the TPA Safety Contest were recognized for having no lost-time accidents from April of 2007 through March of this year.

Logging Division

- C. O. Johnson Logging, Inc., Blackduck
- Dean & Bob Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- Dick Walsh Forest Products, LLP, Park Rapids
- Dukek Logging Inc., Bagley
- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Geerdes Logging, Northome
- Gerald K. Smith, Bagley
- Great Northern Logging – Tom Kruschek, Pierz

- Greg Cook Logging, Inc., – Clint Cook, Bigfork
- Hughes Timber, Kelliher
- Killmer Bros. Inc., Big Falls
- Kimball's Sawmill & Logging Inc., Park Rapids
- Lundberg Forest Products, Inc., Solway
- M & R Chips, Inc., Grand Rapids
- McCabe Forest Products, Inc., Duluth
- Northwoods Chipping Inc., Int'l Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls
- Palmer Logging, Barnum
- Pittack Logging, Inc., Bovey
- Rajala Mill Company, Bigfork
- Rieger Logging & Trucking, Inc., Northome
- Ron Beckman Timber Harvesting, Inc., Grand Rapids
- Jerry Shuster (Shuster Logging), Gheen
- Simcoe & Habisch Logging, McGrath
- Third Generation Logging – Clint Cook, Bigfork
- Weijo Logging, Ely Trucking Division

Trucking Division

- C. O. Johnson Logging, Inc., Blackduck
- Dean & Bob Walsh Logging, Inc., Park Rapids
- DeMenge Trucking & Forest Products, McGregor
- Dick Walsh Forest Products, LLP, Park Rapids



Incoming TPA President Mike Rieger (L) presents his predecessor Tom McCabe with an award of appreciation for his tenure as president.



L-R: Rich Miska of Agstar Financial and Doug, Wes, and Carol Trout of Trout Enterprises in Deer River took full advantage of the social hour before the TPA banquet.



Dan Lundberg with Safety Award

- Dukek Logging Inc., Bagley
- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Gerald K. Smith, Bagley
- Greg Cook Logging, Inc. – Clint Cook, Bigfork
- James Kennedy Trucking Inc., Littlefork
- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
- Kimball's Sawmill & Logging Inc., Park Rapids
- Lake Nebagamon Trucking Corp., Lake Nebagamon, Wis.
- Lundberg Forest Products, Inc., Solway
- McCabe Forest Products, Inc., Duluth
- Northwoods Chipping Inc., Int'l Falls
- Palmer Logging, Barnum
- Pittack Logging, Inc., Bovey
- Root River Hardwoods, Inc., Preston
- Thomas Long & Son Trucking, Orr
- Two Inlets Mill, Park Rapids

Sawmill Division

- Bass Lake Mill, LLP, Sandstone
- Cass Forest Products, Cass Lake
- Erickson Timber Products, Inc., Baudette
- Johnson Logging Inc., Cannon Falls
- Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls
- Rajala Mill Company, Bigfork
- Root River Hardwoods, Inc., Preston
- Wagner Sawmill, LLC, Ada

Special recognition went to Dukek Logging of Bagley as repeat

winner in the logging division since 1987. Lundberg Forest Products of Solway was also recognized as a repeat winner in trucking division since 1988.

In the drawing for cash awards from among those recognized in the safety contest, \$500 awards

went to Greg Cook Logging, Inc. (Bigfork), Third Generation Logging Company (Bigfork), and Ron Beckman Timber Harvesting LLC (Grand Rapids). \$250 awards went to C. O. Johnson Logging, Inc. (Blackduck) and Great Northern Logging, Inc. (Pierz).

TPA Thanks Our Sponsors!

Annual Meeting Sponsors

- AgStar Financial Services
- Ainsworth Engineered (USA) LLC
- Boise
- Border State Bank
- Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A.
- Hedstrom Lumber Company
- Louisiana Pacific
- Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance
- Minnesota Forest Industries
- MN SFI® Implementation Committee
- NewPage Corporation
- Norbord Minnesota
- Potlatch Corporation
- Sappi Fine Paper
- UPM – Blandin Paper
- Verso Paper

Door Prize Sponsors

- Cass Forest Products
- Aitkin Hardwoods
- UPM Blandin
- Ultima Bank
- AgStar Financial Services
- Ainsworth Engineered
- LUA
- Road Machinery
- Minnesota Forest Industries
- Ray's Sport & Machine – for fishing contest
- Bell Timber, Inc. – for fishing contest

The chainsaw was donated by Minnesota Forest Industries.

Sun Shines on TPA – Golf/Fishing Event



At the golf outing, John Cloutier of Verso Paper (right) reacts after missing a putt as teammate Keith Hegg and TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt look on. Cloutier's team of Hegg, Kristen Bergstrand, and Craig Turnboom rebounded nicely however, posting the lowest score of the day.



Lowell Pittack is well stocked with shiners before heading out on to Sugar Lake for the fishing event.

Storms pushed through the Grand Rapids area the night before, but by the time the sun came up Thursday morning, the sun was shining brightly, perfect for an afternoon on the water or on

the golf course. And with more golfers and anglers in the TPA events than ever before, the great weather couldn't have come at a better time.

The fishing event was held on

Sugar Lake, and anglers were impressed with the size of the walleyes they caught, as well as the variety of species. Awards went to the angler with the longest fish and
(continued on page 17)



The "next generation" of loggers was well represented on the golf course at the TPA outing. L-R Wayne and Misty Johnson of C.O. Johnson Logging, and Lynette and Corey Lovdahl of Lovdahl and Sons.

Expo Heads Back to Bemidji

For the second consecutive year, the North Star Expo, Minnesota's largest logging equipment show is coming to the Beltrami County Fairgrounds in Bemidji. This will be our 55th Annual Expo, and as always, there will be lots to see and do, including the latest in logging equipment from all of the region's top vendors.

This year, attendees will again have the chance to win a beautiful chainsaw carving! A professional chainsaw carver will be on hand to not only show off his skills, but also award one lucky person a carving. Here's how to win: When you show up at the Expo you need to get a vendor card at the entry gate. On the back of the card will be vendor names and locations. Just visit those locations and have the vendor initial your card. Once all the vendor names have been initialed, return the card to the registration area. At the end of the Expo, one lucky name will be drawn to win the carving!

Friday night's dinner will be bigger and better than ever, catered by the folks at Bemidji State University with rotisserie chicken breast, garden salad with two dressings, cole slaw, green bean almondine, baked potato, and black forest cake

Tickets for the dinner are \$15 each and can be purchased at the door. Then Saturday morning, Nortrax continues its tradition of a free pancake breakfast at the Expo in the headquarters building.

Like at any Expo, there will be plenty of competitions:

The Best Load contest is taking place again this year. Wood only will be judged, not the truck it is hauled on. Points will be scored on the timber quality, product quality, product manufacturing, load appearance, and load securement. Monetary prizes are awarded to the top finishers.

The Loader Contest will also be held again this year, as well as the Master Loader contest. For the kids, back by popular demand, we'll have the Kid's Mini-Loader.

The Coloring Contest will take place this year as well. In this issue of the Bulletin, you'll find a pull-out poster for the little ones to enter. Just have them color the poster and either bring it to the Expo or mail it to the office. Entries will be posted at the Expo for all to enjoy.

Don't forget to bring in your wood cookies for the Big Cookie

Contest. Remember to attach a list indicating species, where taken, company name and *register at the Registration Desk first!*

Test your visual skills and Guess the Weight! Entry forms will be available near one of the Best Load trucks.

We'll have fun for the whole family. See you September 12 and 13 in Bemidji!



These folks at the 2007 Expo barbecue take the opportunity to get reacquainted. The Expo is always a great place to see old friends from the industry.



Three generations of Lovdahls with the winning Best Load entry from Lovdahl and Sons. The Expo is always a great place for families to get together.



The 2008 Expo will again feature the latest logging equipment from the top manufacturers. Last year, Nortrax received the award for Best Outdoor Lot at the Expo.

(continued from page 14)

the angler with the shortest fish. For the first time, Bell Timber donated rod-and-reel combos for the winner in each category. Since it was a catch-and-release event, fish were measured in the boat and anglers reported their lengths at the end of the day.

The Conservation Award (smallest fish of the day) Jim Parma (Bell Timber, Inc.) who landed a 6 ¼ inch Perch.

The Big Walter Award (Largest fish) went to Joe Brown (DeMenge Trucking & Forest Products) for a walleye measuring 25 ¼ inches.

In golf, the Caddyshacker Award – for the team that had the most fun and the highest score – went to “Team Nortrax:” the foursome of Chip Cramer, TPA board member Kelly Kimball, Shelly Kimball, and Erik Lunemann

The Foot Wedge Award – for the team with the best score – went to the team of John Cloutier, Keith Hegg, Kristen Bergstrand, and Craig Turnboom.

Finally, the golf event wouldn’t have been nearly as successful without the generosity of Nortrax for driving the beer cart (with Dale Gessell at the wheel and Bob Cook riding shotgun) and for donating beverages.

TPA Again Sponsors Mini-Bat Night



Young fans celebrated TPA Mini-Bat Night with Duluth Huskies mascot Harley D. Huskie and outfielder Collin Kuhn on the field at historic Wade Stadium before the Huskies game with the Brainerd Blue Thunder. For the third straight year, TPA sponsored the event, giving away bats to the first 500 fans aged 14 and under. The Huskies play in the Northwoods League, a summer league for college players that allows the players to get experience swinging wood bats, rather than the aluminum bats used during the college season. TPA members were able to attend the game thanks to free tickets provided by the Huskies.

NORTH STAR EXPO

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, September 12

8:00 am	Equipment Displays Open
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Kid's Mini-Loader (sign up at site)
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Celebrity/Media Loader Contest
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
5:00 pm	Equipment displays close
5:00 pm	Cash Bar Social Hour begins
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Dinner and Door Prizes - on site

Saturday, September 13

7:00 am - 9:00 am	Free Pancake Breakfast (sponsored by Nortrax)
8:00 am	Equipment displays open
9:00 am - 11:00 am	Loader Contest (sign up at site)
9:00 am - 1:00 pm	Kid's Mini-Loader (sign up at site)
11:00 am	Coloring contest winners announced
1:00 pm	Winners announced for Loader, Master Loader, and Best Load contests
2:00 pm	Equipment displays close

Horse-pulled Wagon Rides

All day, each day

CONTESTS

Vendor Drawing – Visit the vendors identified on the back of your entry card and become eligible to win a chainsaw carving!

Guess the Weight – Guess the weight of a fully loaded truck.

Wood Identification – See how many tree species you can identify.

Loader – Test your skills against the clock.

Masters Division Loader – Loader contest for those 50 and over – sign up at site.

Best Load – Come and see the Best Loads of Wood on Display.

Big Cookie – Enter to see if your wood cookie is the biggest of its species.

Coloring Contest – Ongoing each day in the Indoor Booth Bldg. Winner announced at 11 a.m. on Saturday.

For additional information, contact:

Minnesota Timber Producers Association
324 W. Superior St. #903 • Duluth, MN 55802
218-722-5013

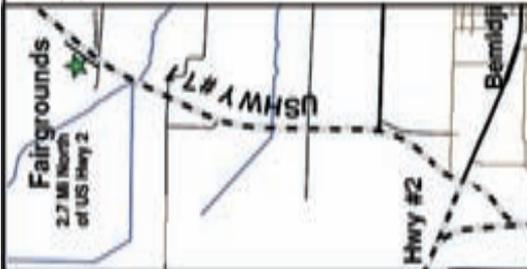


Minnesota Timber Producers Association

NORTH STAR EXPO 2008

September 12 & 13

Bemidji MN Beltrami Co. Fairgrounds



Camping Info
Call 218-243-2779

Fire Tower

INDOOR LOTS
F&I Night Dinner & Beer Garden

Grandstand
Sheep barn
Dairy barn
Steer barn

Registration
Fair Office
Municipal Office

Dog Arena

Public Parking

Public Parking

Main Entrance
Fairgrounds Rd

Public & Vendor Parking (No Trailers)

Loader Contest
Kids Loader

W MILL ALLEY

Truck, Trailer & Vendor Parking & Camping

Legend
backstop (low and wood framed)
Electricity available
Lots 59,60,61,62,63,64,73,74
extension cords required

Notes: Lots are 40x50 (2000 sq ft)
Lot 73 is 6500 sq ft (4 lots)
Lot 74 is 1400 sq ft (3/4 lot)



Member Feature...



Rick and Melvin Moe

“It’s a Picnic Every Day”

That’s the way Rick Moe of Moe Logging looks at his job, because he spends his days in the woods. Not that it’s without challenges.

by Ray Higgins

The job site is unique for most loggers: Most jobs are in the middle of nowhere, several miles down dirt logging roads, barely wide enough for a semi-trailer to navigate. But not this one.

It’s along the side of Highway 64 between Akeley and Laporte. Cars and trucks whiz by just a few feet away, with folks able to admire the handiwork of Melvin and Rick Moe of Moe Logging.

“Everyone’s happy to see a thinning,” says 44-year-old Rick Moe while operating the John Deere 1270D harvester. “They can see what’s going on and they’re more accepting of it. They see that

you’re making an improvement. An aspen clear-cut is also an improvement, but it’s not obvious to those that aren’t educated.”

Not far away, Rick’s 68-year-old father Melvin is in the Fabtek 546C, forwarding the red pine his son just cut. This thinning may be unique for most loggers, but not for the Moes. They seek out wood like this, “special conditions” jobs like this one, in which they’re working with MnDOT to thin the red pine in the right-of-way.

“The DOT planted it years ago to make it an attractive place along the highway,” Rick says, “and we’re coming in to maintain it a little bit. We’re getting this to about 100 basal feet. The original stand is about 158 average, so we’ll

take about a third of it.”

The red pine will be made into lumber at Potlatch’s Bemidji mill. But there’s more to this job than simply cutting the wood. For example, the non-merchantable material will be collected and hauled away. And what’s left of that, Rick maneuvers the harvester’s head to pick up the small limbs and branches – the stuff that ends up turning red after a while – and moves them back beyond the tree line, out of sight for passersby. And then there’s the issue of safety.

“In the winter time, this road ices because of the shading,” Rick says. “So the DOT was anxious for us to do some thinning along here and get a little bit more sunlight down on the pavement.”

It’s the sort of job the Moes aren’t afraid to take on. In fact, Rick says about half of the wood they cut comes with “special conditions” like these. It’s part of their desire to be innovative and unique.

“We’ve always been doing things a little bit different,” Melvin says. “You’ve got to change with the times, to keep your market up and your reputation. Keep moving forward.”

That’s part of the reason the Moes made the switch from a conventional operation to cut-to-length equipment around 10 years ago. They could reduce their manpower and their debt by going to two woods machines while generating the same income for the company. They also further downsized by contracting their hauling, mostly with Mystic Trucking in Bemidji.

“When we first started with cut-to-length,” Rick says, “we were one of the first in our area. I remember when we bought our first 640 grapple skidder, there were a lot of chuckles. ‘What are you going to do with that big thing,’ they said. And now it’s the standard, the 648. And I remember when we bought our first de-limber, everybody laughed. They thought that was so funny, de-limbering those little trees with a big machine like that. Now everybody has one. When we went cut-to-length 10 years ago there were a lot of murmurs when we did that, and it’s been the right thing for us to do. Cut-to-length is extremely efficient and versatile. We can do any kind of logging, from thinnings to piling slash.”

It also allows them to take jobs like this one. This job along the highway would be difficult with conventional equipment because of the hills that rise out of the ditches. Cut-to-length equipment can handle that terrain.

Doing things a little bit differently, like being among the first to try new technology and taking jobs no one else wants, is all part of the Moe's' business plan.

"Dad and I decided about a dozen years ago that for us to be successful in the future, we couldn't look like everyone else," Rick says. "We had to look different than everyone else. And I credit a lot of our success to that theory. If you do the same thing that everybody else does, there's nothing unique about you and nobody should be more interested in you than everyone else. So you've got to look different.

"Anyone can buy 'special conditions' jobs," he says. "This sale was put up on auction about eight years ago and nobody was interested. It was too hilly. Well, they came and asked us. Since then we've found a niche in this thinning they have been coming to us with a few jobs asking if we're interested. Nobody else will do it."

All of this innovation sprouted from something that is as old as logging itself: De-limbing trees with an axe.

That's how Melvin got started more than 50 years ago.

As a boy growing up in Bemidji, Melvin was in a household – and really a community – immersed in logging. His grandfather, after coming over to the U.S. from Norway, had a logging camp near Pine Island, with his grandmother serving as camp cook. Melvin's dad was a logger too, and also farmed.

"I guess," Melvin says, "it's always been in my blood a little bit."

But it was a childhood illness that put Melvin on a collision course with a lifetime of logging. When he was in the fourth grade, he contracted rheumatic fever, a disease that generally starts as strep throat and develops into pain and swelling in the joints, rash, fever, and general fatigue. Kids who get it these days are usually hospitalized and treated with antibiotics. But 58 years ago when Melvin got it, the treatments



Moe Logging's forwarder and harvester work on either side of Highway 64 between LaPorte and Akeley in full view of passing traffic.



Melvin Moe in the Fabtek 546C forwarder. This wood will go mostly to the Potlatch mill in Bemidji. Moe Logging also supplies Ainsworth and Norbord in Bemidji, and Verso's paper mill in Sartell, as well as smaller mills like Land O Lakes in Tenstrike.

weren't as effective and rheumatic fever could linger for a long time.

It did with Melvin. He says he spent about a year in bed before he got over it, but eventually relapsed and ended up bedridden again. By the time he had shaken it for good, he'd missed roughly three years of school, and as a result, struggled to keep up with the other kids his age. By the time he was 16, he dropped out and went to work.

With a family in logging, he knew where to find a job. He'd started helping out where he could at age 14, limbing pine with an axe and skidding wood by hand.

"We lifted everything by hand," he says.

"There weren't a lot of guys that actually ran chainsaws when I started," Melvin says. "It was mainly a Swede saw. And they had the old Maul, and that was one of

the first chainsaws. You had to turn the saw to keep the carburetor straight. After that he ran a gear drive McCullough.

"They notched the tree with an axe and then sawed it down with the chainsaw. I started notching the trees with the chainsaw too. And they said you can't do that. And then when I started sawing limbs off with the chainsaw and they said you'll just wear that saw out."

He liked what he was doing, and he was good at it. He liked the fact that at the end of the day he could take a look at the job site and see that he'd accomplished something.

"I always liked to cut wood, even when I was just a kid," Melvin says.

Over the years Melvin married, had three kids, and continued logging. As Rick grew older, he wanted to join his dad in the woods and did so, starting at age 15.



Moe Logging's John Deere 1270D harvester. Most of the time the harvester has tracks and chains, but for this job the Moes are operating with tires so they can move back and forth across the pavement.

"What kid wouldn't want to spend every day out in the woods with his dad?" Rick says. "I got a '10' when it came to dads.

"At that time we were hand felling trees together," he says. "Dad taught me how. He's very knowledgeable about felling timber, that's what he did for at least 20 years before I started. He had a reputation. He did a lot of that for power companies because he was so good at directionally felling timber. He taught me. For two years, I stood along side of him and I had a chainsaw in my hand, and he taught me what he knew."

When Rick graduated from Bemidji High School in 1982, he joined the business full time, sharing his father's love for being in the woods.

"When I was in high school I had a part-time job as a cook," Rick says, "and I looked at the same wall every day. Here in the woods, I never look at the same place two days in a row. I'm always in a different spot. Always in the outdoors. It's a picnic every day!"

Not that the business is without challenges. But the Moes are "glass-is-half-full" types.

"It's really challenging," Rick says, "but in my opinion, there's a ton of opportunity right now. The main thing is you have to change, and nobody seems to want to. When things change, you have to change.

"Take diesel prices, for example," he says. "We do things a bit differently. We make sure we have good filters, we make sure our equipment is running as efficiently

as it can. We have a big tank that we use for off-road diesel, and right now our suppliers are higher on their quotes to us than we can buy jumping around to different truck stops. Just with some phone calls on the way home in the evenings, we can save a lot of money. The other night we saved almost 30 cents a gallon by shopping. Buying it on the way home, filling our off-road tank in the back of our pick-up, out of a gas station. That's a lot of money."

It's that fearlessness when it comes to change that has allowed their business to thrive over the years. It's also what has put them on the side of the road this day, thinning red pine.

"Nearly half of what we do is special conditions timber sales,"



Rick Moe's view inside the harvester. The head is fully automatic, so he can input the species and the head will automatically de-limb the tree, meaning Rick doesn't have to run it back and forth and open and close the knives.

Rick says. "We just bought one in the Lake Bemidji State Park. We have to wash all the soils and wood debris off our machinery, work around a ski trail, lots of just odd circumstances on that timber sale, and nobody was interested in it, so we bought it at appraised price. We've been doing that a lot."

Even the decision-making process as to which trees to cut has changed over the years.

"We used to take all of the suppressed trees and leave the bigger ones," Rick says, "and now we're starting to take some of those over-story trees and it actually lets the suppressed trees catch up. They grow at a higher rate because they were released. You look at any plantation, and they were all planted at exactly the same time.

"Take this job. What I'm doing is releasing the crowns. You can see where the limbs are all touching each other. I'll just separate the crown so they each have a place to grow.

"That tree," he says, pointing out the left side of the harvester, "is the same age as that one up there. The only reason that one's bigger is it's growing out in the sunlight. And now this one is going to catch up to the rest of them."

Yet another way of doing things a little bit differently: the Moes often post a sign at their jobs that says, "Moe Logging, specializing in thinning and select cutting," and has their 800 number at the bottom.

"Every job we put it on," Rick says, "we get phone calls."

Rick's wife, Carrie, often fields phone calls. She helps promote the logging business, what Rick calls the company's "public relations." Melvin's wife, Shirley, is also heavily involved, answering phone calls and keeping the books for the company which is a very important part of the business.

The Moes plan on being there to take those calls for years to come. Melvin isn't slowing down any. Despite the fact that many rheumatic fever patients develop heart problems in later years, he's as healthy as ever.

"I've thought about retirement," Melvin says. "But even during break-up, if we take a month off, I just can't wait to go back. You've got to be doing something. I'd be lost if I couldn't come out here."

Lessons from Losses

Vandalism Strikes a Cut-To-Length Harvester

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

by Dave Amundson
Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance

Background: The mobile equipment involved in this fire situation was a harvester with 9000 operating hours. Maintenance and housekeeping were rated as good. Large scale maintenance is normally handled by the appropriate equipment dealer. No immediate maintenance problems were present prior to this fire emergency. This equipment was last power-washed in the fall before freeze-up. The night before this incident this piece of equipment was cleaned by hand in the engine, hydraulic and boom area.

The day before this occurrence the weather was beginning to change with a fast approaching snow storm that produced approximately two inches of snow at this location. The temperatures were mild but freezing overnight and the wind was from the NE. In arriving in the early morning hour's, snow was still falling.

This fire situation occurred in the woods approximately 26 miles from the nearest town. The equipment was parked next to a dead-end forest road approximately two miles from the main road.

The owner/operator of this equipment is considered fully trained in operation. This individual has operated logging mobile equipment for roughly 23 years.

Incident: At first light this equipment was found completely burned in the engine, hydraulic, boom and cab areas. The snow



Cut-to-length harvester destroyed by vandalism

was still falling from a small snow storm that dropped approximately two inches of snow over night.

Leading up to this incident, the owner had worked this particular timber sale most of the winter and was preparing to move to another timber sale this spring. The next sale had been opened and the up front payments made. At the current timber sale site there had been some traffic with the roads being snow plowed, but no problems were noted. It had been a practice to lock all mobile

equipment and park off the roadways over night and on weekends. In pre-planning his move he had snow plowed a turn around, allowing room for safe loading of equipment. In this particular situation the involved equipment was moved to the roadway the night before, cleaned, and prepared for the move the next morning. Workers did not leave this site until some time between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. In arriving the next morning when the loss was discovered, the sheriff was

immediately called due to physical evidence that the machine had been tampered with and debris was thrown out in the immediate area. Evidence was collected by the local sheriff's department and the investigation is currently active. This rear access door to the engine compartment was left open and evidence of starting a fire was present. The engine, hydraulic, boom, and cab areas were completely destroyed, however, there was salvage value in the track system and processing head.

This truly is an act of vandalism! Always follow safe vandalism practices every time, all the time in high hazard areas known to be problems. The following suggestions can help prevent problems if work is required in these areas and others.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

1. Restrict vehicle access to job sites during off-hours to protect equipment. Use a gate, boulders, dirt berm, or a drag of trees to stop traffic.
2. Use private access to timber sales when possible.
3. Use terrain or standing trees as a barrier or visual screen to prevent random roadside shooting or equipment tampering when harvest site is adjacent to traffic areas or ATV trails.
4. Remove keys, lock doors, and turn off master switches when leaving the job overnight. Additional master switches for electrical and fuel systems can be added for backup and security.
5. Lock fuel, oil, and engine compartments to prevent tampering. Add locks if they have not been installed from the factory.
6. Park equipment away from ignition sources. Stay back from slash piles that could be ignited. Space equipment at least 50 feet apart to reduce chance of fire spreading from one machine to another.
7. Don't leave equipment unattended in an unsecured location for long periods of

time. Check on the status of equipment during off days when feasible. In high-risk situations consider having someone stay at the harvest site.

8. Service trucks and log trucks should be taken home or to another secure location over night and weekends when possible.
9. Consider using hidden motion activated cameras to record movement in and out of the job site. Using signage on

equipment indicating video surveillance discourages vandals.

10. Install an on-board fixed self-suppression system on all mobile equipment. Additional protection is always very beneficial in a fire emergency situation. Always follow the owner's maintenance manual for service and inspection of these systems. This is a very important factor in the performance of this protection.

TPA Members Help Complete Habitat for Humanity House



Dozens of volunteers, including TPA members, grabbed hammers to complete a new 1,100-square-foot home for Kellie Ritz and her daughter to move into. The six-month collaborative project was designed to ensure the Habitat for Humanity home was built using products from well-managed forests. Among those participating were TPA board member Cliff Shermer, who harvested the timber from the tree farm of Minnesota State Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook). Ainsworth Engineered made some of the wood into OSB, and TPA member East Dhu River Sawmill in Mountain Iron donated its processing facilities to saw lumber and trim for the home. Also donating building materials were Lake States Lumber, Louisiana Pacific, Marvin Windows and other Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative program participants. Those making cash donations to the project were Boise, Inc.; Forest Capital Partners, LLC; NewPage Corporation; Sappi Fine Paper North America; UPM, Blandin Paper Mill; and Verso Paper, Sartell Mill.

The project was spearheaded by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Minnesota Implementation Committee.

"This new home started with the harvesting of northern Minnesota trees, which were then made locally into forest products, which provided materials for constructing the home," said SFI Implementation Committee chair Terry Worthman. "Then we started the cycle all over again by replanting the harvested areas."

Three Become Master Loggers; Now 50 in All

Three more logging businesses have earned the distinction "Minnesota Certified Master Loggers," bringing the statewide total to 50.

Among those honored are TPA members Dave Johnson of Johnson Timber Harvesting in Alborn, and

William and Roy Gross of Big H Logging in Blackduck.

Timber Talk

Loggers who become certified are able to provide certified wood to the market place. This allows loggers and mills in Minnesota to provide certified wood from family forestlands to customers that demand it.

"This certification provides customers and the general public assurances that the person or

company performing the job has the education, training, and experience to do the job correctly and that appropriate practices are being implemented," said Dave Chura, administrator of the Master Logger Program.

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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

"The Logging Dams"

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*



In these days of engineering, automation and computers, it is hard for one to realize some of the great achievements of the lumbermen in logging off our great virgin timber stands without our modern machinery. When the present generation is shown pictures of some of the large loads of logs that were hauled by four horses, they say, "Did horses really haul a load that big?" This was but one of the many things these early loggers accomplished.

To me, the harnessing and control of the water of our rivers and streams to bring the logs out of the woods and into the mills

was their greatest accomplishment. When the great demand developed for lumber for the homes of America, it was the logger's task to find a way to get that lumber in the fastest and cheapest way possible. He found this means in the rivers and streams, and it was his job to make these waters do the work for him.

Today, if a dam were to be constructed on a stream, teams of engineers and surveyors would spend months in taking the levels and drawing up the plans and specifications. Not so in the old days. Then, the walking boss or camp foreman or company cruiser would walk up the

stream where logs were to be driven and when he found where the water ran through a valley between two hills with a large flat area upstream that would hold considerable water that would be the site of a dam.

The size and kind of dam to be built would be determined on the site, depending on the amount of logs to be taken out on that stream or the need for water to carry logs that might come from other branches of the main stream below this point. Some scouting would be done to see if there were any places where water might escape around the proposed dam, and if so whether any small dikes would be needed to confine the water.

Locating dam sites was usually done a year ahead of any logging operations, and the work of making the fills was done during the summer months. All timber to construct the spillways and gates would be cut in the woods adjoining the dam and only the iron, such as pulleys and gears to operate the gates, was brought in by tote trains during winter months. There were many designs of dams and many sizes, but all had one thing in common—they were designed to use as little iron as possible because of the transportation problem.

Some of these dams were located at the outlets of lakes and were designed to raise the lake several feet to act as a reservoir of the needed water. As a rule, dams at outlets of lakes were larger and of better construction than those along rivers and creeks. Transportation of construction material for lake dams was much less a problem, and iron work for these dams probably could be brought in by boat. Some of these driving dams at the outlets of lakes were later taken over by the federal government and by the State in their water control programs, and some of the logging dams were taken over by the power and paper companies and major dams built on the sites. However, it is the smaller logging dam we'll consider here.

Most of the logging companies that were using our rivers for log transportation had dam crews working the year around, cutting and getting out the timber for the dams in the winter and constructing the dams during the summer months. Wherever horses could be used, they

This large log driving dam is constructed of timber from the nearby woods. The brush layered into the dam helps hold the fill from washing out. One man could open the gates with winches atop the dam.





These river drivers poled logs toward dam gates and the "log shoots" leading downstream



Logs landed on riverbank; wash water from upstream dams.



made the fills and wings of the dams by digging dirt from the adjoining hills with a "slusher" or dirt scraper. Where horses were not available, sometimes dirt was hauled by wheelbarrows. Rock was used to make a good footing, and the fill was constructed with alternate layers of dirt and brush to hold the dirt from being washed away.

Spillways and "log shoots" were all made of hand-hewed timber, as were the sides of the gates. Most of these dams had but one gate and one log shoot or spillway. Many, however, had two gates—one for just letting out water with only a short apron spillway and the other a heavy-timbered spillway for shooting the logs through. I have seen some with two log spillways and two water gates.

The gates themselves were of a number of designs, the most common made of heavy timbers that fitted into a groove and were lifted by cables attached to a winch above. The winch would be geared down so one man could crank up the gate, and it could be lowered by releasing the cable and tapping the timbers down into the groove with a sledge hammer. The hinge type of gate that moved up and down from a center point also was quite common, and there were several other designs—all to be operated by one man. On some of the very small streams, the dams were only temporary and involved nothing more than blocking the stream with timbers and pulling them out when the need was past.

Practically every stream in northern Minnesota had from one to a dozen of these dams—starting with the headwaters of the St. Croix, the Rum, the Snake, the Kettle and other rivers to the south to the upper waters and branches of the Mississippi and the Red River in northwestern Minnesota to the waters of the Rainy and the Pigeon along our northern border and the Lake Superior watershed, which includes the waters of the St. Louis River. Just how many dams were used by the logging industry will never be known, as some of them were used but one season and dismantled, burned out by forest fires or in some cases moved to a better site. However, there is evidence of a great many of them still to be found today.

As a boy, I was familiar with a number of the dams on the Turtle River and watched many a log go through the ones between Three Island Lake and Turtle River Lake—and speared many a fish going up over the dams in the spring. Other dams on the Battle, Cormorant, Clearwater and Red Lake Rivers were visited by me as a boy, and as I grew up I became very familiar with all the dams on the Cloquet and Whiteface and upper St. Louis Rivers.

These rivers were still being driven until 1924. My district, the Cloquet Valley District, had about 25 of these logging

dams. To name a few on the Cloquet, there was the Island Lake Dam, Alden Lake Dam, Spring Lake Dam, Mud Lake Dam, Smith Dam, Pequaywan Lake Dam, Brown's Dam, Murphy Dam, Langley Dam, West Branch Dam, Wolf Dam, Berry Creek Dam. These were all on the waters of the upper Cloquet River above Island Lake. (The original driving dam at Island Lake was later replaced by a large concrete dam on the site to create a large reservoir for Minnesota Power & Light Co.)

The Whiteface River had about the same number of dams along it, as did the upper St. Louis and its branches. Dams were more plentiful in the eastern part of the state than in the western part because of more rapid water and faster runoff. I have seen dams in drainage ditches in the area near Pine Island with trees and pulpwood being driven down the ditches to the Sturgeon River. Wherever logs could be moved by water, there were dams.

While many of these dams cost but little to build, others were quite costly. The dams on the main streams that were used for a number of years needed considerable maintenance to keep them in working condition, and the Cloquet Lumber Company had a crew working year around at this. Ed McLaughlin was their dam maintenance man. Some of the dams had a year around attendant or watchman—usually an older lumberjack who would live in a house or small shack nearby. His job would be to keep the dam free from any driftwood or stray logs that might come down the stream after a heavy rain and block the dam or endanger it in any way, such as washing out fill. He would protect the dam from fires that might burn out the timber work, and help any boat or canoe that might be passing up or down stream. In places where there was no dam watchman, a man would be assigned during the driving season to travel from dam to dam and let water out as the drive foreman needed it. Where a watchman was stationed at the dam this was his job.

As one travels our streams today, he will find that most all the wood work of these dams has rotted away, with probably the beaver taking over and building a dam in the opening between the fills. There is but little evidence left to show the work and effort that went into the driving of the logs down our streams.

It was not just a matter of going out and cutting a log and throwing it into the river and letting it float down to the mill. It took great effort by all involved in selecting, planning, constructing, as well as timing, to make these dams do the job of furnishing the water to carry our great virgin pine stands from the woods to the mills. And these logging dams surely did their part.



Above: An old driving dam on the Westisippi. Below: The "Bull of the Woods," named Ben—an alligator used in moving logs on border lakes.



It will take more than water from several logging dams to move this log jam on the St. Croix River below Taylor's Falls about 1900.



On the Markets

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

Recent Timber Sales

Average prices, as reported by each agency

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

Average prices are for the combined regular and intermediate auctions.

DNR – Warroad Area

June 10 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$22.59

DNR – Orr/Tower Area

June 10 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$21.73

DNR – Littlefork Area

June 11 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$27.86

DNR – Cloquet Area

June 13 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$29.38

DNR – Brainerd Area

June 18 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$29.22

DNR – Two Harbors Area

June 19 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$25.36

DNR – Aitkin Area

June 26 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$26.23

Cass County

June 26 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$27.13
Birch	\$16.80

Red Oak	\$21.00
Maple	\$13.53

Koochiching County

July 30 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen pulp/bolts	\$29.42
Balsam pulp/bolts	\$17.39
Spruce pulp/blots	\$29.51
Balm pulp/bolts	\$21.24

Cass County

July 31 – Oral Auction

Species	Avg. Price
Aspen	\$30.06
Birch	\$18.73
Red Oak	\$23.97
Maple	\$14.88

Rise in June Housing Starts is Largest in Two Years

A new set of construction codes in New York City fueled the month-to-month increase in U.S. housing starts in two years. June's seasonally adjusted rate of 1.066 million units was 9.1% higher than May's estimate, according to figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau. When excluding the data for the Northeast U.S., permit authorizations increased 0.7% nationwide, and housing starts decreased 4.0%.

Congress Passes Housing Bill; Bush Signs it into Law

President Bush signed a massive housing bill that provides mortgage relief for 400,000 struggling homeowners – many of whom owe more than their houses are worth – and intends to stabilize financial markets. The measure allows homeowners who can't afford their payments to refinance into more affordable government-backed loans rather than losing their homes.

Housing Market Index Hits New Low

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes fell for a third consecutive month in July,

according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). The HMI fell below its previous record low of 18 in June to a new record low of 16 in July, with each of its three component indexes also hitting record lows.

In addition, June sales of new one-family houses dropped 0.6% from May and 33.2% from June 2007 according to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders hoped the new federal housing bill passed by Congress and signed by President will give a boost to the housing market.

"Builders are reporting that traffic of prospective buyers has fallen off substantially in recent months," Seiders said. "Given the systematic deterioration of job markets, rising energy costs and sinking home values aggravated by the rising tide of foreclosures, many prospective buyers have simply returned to the sidelines until conditions improve," he said. "An \$8,000 tax credit, made available for a limited time, could be just the incentive needed to draw them into the game, and a policy-induced pickup in home sales could gain momentum further down the line."

Derived from a monthly survey that NAHB has been conducting for more than 20 years, the NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI gauges builder perceptions of current single-family home sales and sales expectations for the next six months as "good," "fair" or "poor." The survey also asks builders to rate traffic of prospective buyers as "high to very high," "average" or "low to very low." Scores for each component are then used to calculate a seasonally adjusted index where any number over 50 indicates that more builders view sales conditions as good than poor.

U.S. Consumer Confidence Gains in July

Two measures of U.S. consumer confidence rose in July, both from historic lows in the

respective indices.

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index rose slightly to 51.9, up from 51.0 in June. In a similar index compiled by Reuters and the University of Michigan, consumer confidence rose 8.5% to 61.2. But one analyst says the increases aren't necessarily indicators of better times in the immediate future.

According to Richard Curtin, the director of the Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, the gains could signal that consumers simply overestimated the extent of the economic damage or even that they now sense that the end of the economy's decline is on the distant horizon.

Lynn Franco of the Conference Board Consumer Research Center was more optimistic.

"Looking ahead, while consumers remain extremely grim about short-term prospects, the modest improvement in expectations, often a harbinger of economic times to come, bears careful watching over the next few months," Franco said.

Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan

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VOL. III



VOL. IV



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