

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

VOLUME 74



## **Perfect Timing Nistler Kowitz Logging State Funding Improves County Forest Roads**





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# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 74  
January/February 2019  
Duluth, Minnesota

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## ON THE COVER

Tony Kowitz loads his bunk trailer at a harvest site.  
For more on Nistler Kowitz Logging, please see page 8.

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**A**s February is quickly going by, the snow keeps getting deeper and deeper! This seems to be what most are calling an "old fashioned winter," if it is not snowing and blowing, it is cold. What started out with above average temperatures, has changed. I hope that everyone is having a safe and productive season. Along with deeper snow, comes added fuel costs and time spent keeping roads open, a very bad drawback to all this "pretty" white stuff. With

## President's Column



the negatives, there is also a silver lining: businesses that depend on winter tourism (snowmobiling, skiing, hockey, hotels, restaurants, to name a few), I am sure are grateful.

With the legislative session in full swing, Wayne is spending much of his time at the Capitol in St. Paul. A major item he's working on is reinstituting the 5% tolerance on log trucks that are weighed roadside. Among the other items he's working on is a bill that would in part

compensate former Benson biomass producers for their respective losses.

With spring just around the corner, I know that the mills have been exceptionally busy with traffic. Some of the plants have extended the hours they are open for deliveries. For that, we must say thanks. It can be very hard to keep patience as a virtue as we wait in line for some time to get unloaded, and turn around times are critical to everyone's bottom line. Seems this year, with weather patterns going from one extreme to the next, it has been more of an issue.

With spring getting closer, it is a good time to set your dates for safety training, MLEP and Logsafe. As the days get longer and weather gets a bit nicer, everyone will be working longer hours to get that extra volume in, or put up for summer deliveries. As always, Be Safe!

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# Russ Allen, Former TPA Executive 1926-2019

**R**uss Allen, long time TPA executive vice president, passed away in Duluth in January. He was 92.

Allen joined TPA in 1964, and served as executive vice president until his retirement in 1990.

"Russ Allen was one of the finest people I've ever known," said TPA Executive Vice President Wayne Brandt. "His lasting contributions provide benefits to our members and industry even today."

Allen earned a degree in forestry from Iowa State University and began his career with the JC Campbell Company at its camp #18, near the end of the Wales Branch in northeastern Minnesota. This was followed by eleven years with Halvorson Christmas Trees as a supervisor of contract operations.

When Allen took over at TPA, the forest products industry was Minnesota's third largest. During this time, Allen guided the association and its members through several contentious issues.

Just four months into the job, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law, and TPA began the continuing battle to keep preservationists from designating all of northern Minnesota as wilderness.

Given the media attention to the environmental battles of the 1960s and 1970s, Allen did a masterful job of educating the public. Through the *Timber Bulletin* and countless news releases, he helped popularize the industry's philosophy of multiple use, thus blunting the attacks on timber harvest by urban neo-environmentalists. Colleagues remember the tireless lobbying efforts on behalf of the industry. Whether in Washington, DC or in St. Paul, Allen went whenever and wherever he was needed to counsel legislators and to testify before committees.

TPA's Worker's Compensation program began under Allen's leadership, and continues to this day through Northern Capital. Allen also helped establish a group health insurance program for TPA members. He used his influence in the successful introduction of a forest harvesting course at the Duluth Area Vocational Technical Institute (DAVTI), and help found the Wood Fiber Legislative Council, a consortium of industry and organized labor representatives that lobbies on issues of common interest. Truck regulations, taxes, and appropriations for the Minnesota DNR and the US Forest Service were topics Allen lobbied tirelessly at both the state and federal levels on behalf of Minnesota's loggers.

Before earning his forestry degree at Iowa State, Allen enlisted in the Navy in 1943 and attended



Russ Allen



Allen in 1972, keeping in touch with the woods.

officers' training at Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio as well as Columbia University in NY. During World War II, he served as an officer on the USS Nevada in Okinawa followed by the USS Vicksburg at San Diego. After receiving his forestry degree at Iowa State, Allen was recalled from 1950-1953 for the Korean conflict serving as a lieutenant at US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He continued to serve in the Naval Reserve at the Duluth station, retiring as a full Commander in 1966.

Russ was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying many fishing trips over the years with his wife of nearly 70 years Gen, and never missing a Minnesota deer season. His annual trip to deer camp for the Minnesota opener was just profiled in the Duluth News Tribune in November, 2018. A link to the article can be found at TPA's website, [www.mntimberproducers.com](http://www.mntimberproducers.com).

Allen is survived by his wife Gen; his children, Tim (Kay) Allen, Steve (Cuc) Allen, Deb (Gregg) Severinson, Linda (Paul) Marshall, 9 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren; his sister, June Pringnitz; sisters-in-law, Jeanne Allen and Kelly Qualls.



Allen displays contest trophies for the 1986 North Star Expo.

**R**uss Allen was one of the finest people I've known in my life. Russ served as TPA's Executive Vice President for twenty-five years and passed away last month at the age of 92. When I started this job as his successor he could not have been more helpful to me in explaining issues, the organization, the people we deal with in government and many facets of association management. He was kind and

## Executive Vice President's Column



waterfront in Duluth. He also, with the help of our members, took a timber harvesting show on the road

generous with his time and I needed more help than a young guy could realize.

One of Russ's babies was the North Star Expo. He took the show from an event in an open field at the Cloquet Forestry Center to filling the

to the Minnesota State Fair to show people from throughout the state our equipment and how "modern" timber harvesting looked.

Among the lasting innovations that Russ led were the establishment of our TPA Workers Compensation Safety group. The foundation that he built with this program has made it one of the most successful in our industry anywhere in the country. This program has produced lower costs and safer operations for our members for decades.

Russ also led the establishment of the TPA Group Health Plan which served our members well for many years.

Russ's legacy lives on in our organization and we are grateful for his service and contributions. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

With each new Governor comes new ideas and leadership at state agencies. Governor Tim Walz has appointed former DNR Assistant Commissioner Sarah Strommen as DNR Commissioner. She brings extensive experience in state

government and also worked for the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness early in her career.

I have met with Commissioner Strommen and had several additional conversations with her since her appointment. As with all Commissioners we are looking for a balanced approach at the DNR and the Commissioner is aware that her early career work with the environmentalists is a cause for concern.

Based on my conversations with Commissioner Strommen I believe that we can have a productive relationship and a balanced approach at the DNR.



The Legislature convened on January 8 and is now in full swing after a slow start. The slow start is not unusual, especially given that the House of Representatives majority changed parties. It takes time for a new majority to hire staff, organize committees and get going. A change in majorities also means many new legislators who take time to get into the swing of things.

One set of issues that will get a

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lot of attention is energy. There are already lots of bills dealing with the electrical system. Most of them are not positive for energy consumers. With energy comprising twenty-five percent of the cost of making a ton of paper and a significant portion of the costs of producing lumber, OSB and siding this is an important issue for our entire industry. We must have competitive, affordable electrical rates to be competitive as an industry.

It's always good to be back at the Capitol working on issues to make our members' lives and businesses better. This year will also, no doubt, include working against initiatives that would make things more difficult for our industry.



It's good to have another "real" winter though this season has presented its own unique set of challenges. Fighting snow on the job can be mind-numbing as can any activity that seems not to end. It's easy to lose focus and that can lead to accidents and injuries. We have had a great safety record the past few years even with the challenges that we face every day. Take the time to focus on safety for your crew and yourself every day. You won't regret the time it takes for a quick reminder on safe operations.



We owe a big thank you to the U.S. Forest Service for allowing operations on timber sales to continue during the Federal Government shut down. The Forest Service took a different approach during this shut down than they had during previous shut downs by allowing us to continue to work on their sales. I have not heard of our members having any problems continuing to work those sales. Again, thank you to the Forest Service and their leadership at the local and national levels for this positive change in difficult circumstances.

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## Member Feature...



Steven Nistler, Tony Kowitz, and Alex Kowitz of Nistler-Kowitz Logging

## Perfect Timing

**O**n the landing of a harvest site just west of Tamarack, Tony Kowitz was at the controls of his slasher/loader, sorting harvested timber into three categories: some of the wood would be fed into a chipper, some would be slashed into 100-inch lengths and loaded onto an adjacent crib trailer, and the rest would be set aside tree-length.

"A lot of it," Kowitz says of the sorting process, "depends on how small it is, how limby the tree is."

The slashed 100-inch wood will be hauled to the Sappi mill in Cloquet, about 45-miles away. The material fed into the chipper will result in "clean" chips, also to be hauled to Sappi. The tree-length timber will

be chipped or slashed during spring breakup.

Kowitz has only been producing clean chips for Sappi for about 18 months. It's the result of an idea that came at just the right time.

"We used to chip material for biomass," Kowitz says, "but it seemed like I was getting a lot of these sales that I was struggling to delimb with the delimber. I approached Sappi about clean chipping, not knowing at that time that they were actually looking for clean chip producers. We did a sample run for them and basically got the contract. Now I can utilize a lot more of these sales that have the smaller wood, where you can't

really make the production with a stroke delimber."

"It was perfect timing for me," he says.

It's not the only time Kowitz has been in the right place at the right time.

Tony grew up in Moose Lake, where his father was an over-the-road trucker, but also logged a little in the winter time, enough to expose his son to the business.

"He had his own logging business, just a small little deal," Tony says. "They got out a load a day on the truck and pup."

After graduating from Moose Lake High in 1988, Tony drove truck for local logger Steve





Eric Nistler harvests aspen with a John Deere 853M feller buncher at a harvest site north of Palisade.

Newgren, hauling wood to Duluth's Superwood plant. One weekend the following winter, he and a friend jumped on a couple of snowmobiles.

"My buddy wanted to go to McGregor to see a girl," Kowitz says. "Then the next day we were invited to a party at LeRoy Nistler's house."

At the gathering, Tony met LeRoy's daughter Andreliis. Talk about being in the right place at the right time.

"Like they say," Kowitz grins, "the rest is history."

Tony and Andreliis hit it off. At the same time, LeRoy was getting into logging.

"He'd been hauling for other loggers for a while," Tony says. "When I met them, he'd just bought a cable skidder and a little Bobcat 1080 feller buncher. He had a little Barko 40 loader on just a truck, and he would load his trailers with it.

He'd limb everything by hand and pull it up with the cable skidder. He started marketing his wood through Harry Fisher, first at Potlatch, and then things started getting a little bit bigger. When Trus Joist (in Deerwood) came in the door, that's



Tony Kowitz inserts harvested timber into the flail of a Peterson 5900 chipper. The flail removes barks and limbs, allowing for the production of clean chips.

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Harvested Timber from the Nistler-Kowitz job site waits to be skidded to the landing for processing.

when things really took off.”

LeRoy needed a hand with the business, and Tony wanted to be closer to McGregor and Andreilis, so he went to work for LeRoy Nistler Logging.

Ultimately, Tony and Andreilis were married in 1991. Around that time, Tony had an itch to again try over-the-road trucking, and started his own business, but being away from home so much didn't suit him, and he went back to work with his father-in-law. By 2004, LeRoy was ready to retire, so Tony purchased the business, establishing Nistler-Kowitz Logging.

By then, the business had grown into a full conventional harvesting crew, sending timber to both Sappi in Cloquet and the Weyerhaeuser Trus Joist plant in Deerwood. Business was good. But it didn't last. The US home building market crashed, forcing the closure of the Weyerhaeuser mill.

“We were pretty big into Weyerhaeuser,” Kowitz says, “and then they shut the doors. That was a huge challenge. Our production went to twenty percent of what

we'd been doing.”

With greatly reduced markets, logging wasn't doable for Kowitz. He transitioned back to over-the-road trucking, but the tug of the woods was too strong, and he wanted to go back to logging. However, he needed a market. That's where Sappi's Ross Korpela comes in, as well as again being in

the right place at the right time.

“I happened to bump into Ross in McGregor and told him I was thinking about getting back into logging,” Kowitz says. “We'd had a relationship with them going back to the Potlatch days. I have to give Ross a lot of credit. He is a lot of the reason why I'm where I am today. I wanted to come back to the woods and be productive, and Ross made it happen.”

“We're always looking for good loggers,” Korpela recalls. “Tony was a known entity.”

Today, the vast majority of Nistler-Kowitz Logging's wood goes to Sappi's Cloquet mill.

“One hundred percent of our aspen goes to Sappi,” Kowitz says. “We'll haul basswood, oak, and ash—some of the off species—to Savanna Pallets.”

The company's current harvest site is a state forest, adjacent to a private sale Kowitz owns. Combined, there's roughly 1000 cords of wood, 95% of which is aspen, with birch making up the rest. Much of the wood is smaller, making the site perfect for chipping.

When Kowitz was chipping previously, he'd send biomass to Sappi for fuel wood, and whatever they didn't take was sent to whoever'd take it, including the



Jim Nistler leaves the landing with a load of clean chips, that will be delivered to the Sappi Mill in Cloquet, 45 miles away. Tim Nistler, Steve Nistler, and James Copeland also drive for Nistler-Kowitz Logging.



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Georgia Pacific plant in Duluth before it closed. Otherwise they had a stroke delimber to process wood, and they produced 100-inch sticks, just like most other Sappi producers do.

Now that he's producing clean chips, Kowitz sold his delimber and purchased a Peterson 5900 chipper about a year ago. Unlike his previous chipper, the current unit has a flail on the front, which first removes bark and small branches.

"The flail is basically my delimber / debarker," Kowitz says. "So the tree goes through and the flail knocks most of the bark off and the branches and everything, so when it goes into the chipper you basically just have white wood, raw product that gets chipped. And with the separator on the side, you get a nice product that is blown into the trailer that will essentially get dumped into the pile at Sappi."

As the one-inch clean chip is blown into a trailer to be hauled to the mill, the bark and other residue is discharged by the bark pusher, to be utilized later.

"There's a science to doing this,"



Alex Kowitz drives a John Deere 748H skidder. The company also utilizes a John Deere 748G-III skidder, operated by Nathan Lindgren.

## It's a Small World

As someone who followed his father as he cut timber around their hometown of Moose Lake, and hauled it to what used to be the Potlatch mill in Cloquet, Tony Kowitz knows Minnesota's logging community is a small one. He loves to tell the story of when he was riding shotgun with his dad as he was making a delivery to Cloquet:

"Back in the 80s," Tony recalls, "my dad was logging a little and he was delivering to Potlatch in Cloquet and he had a breakdown. And there happened to be this other logger with a truck and pup that came by on his way back from the mill, so he stopped and asked if he could help. He offered to unload my dad's trailer and deliver it to the mill for my dad. And he did. And he never charged my dad for it or anything. And it happened to be Jerry Demenge, who I'm now related to through marriage. My mother-in-law is Jerry's cousin. And Jerry lives right down the road from me. But this was back in the 80s before I even knew any Nistlers or Demenges or anyone. "It's a small world."

The advertisement for Duluth Sign features a black background with red brushstrokes. At the top, a logo shows a bridge over water with the text "DULUTH SIGN" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. Below this is a photograph of a white truck with a large tiger graphic on its side. The truck has "tigrissa" and "JOHNSON CARPET ONE FLOOR &amp; SHINE" written on it, along with the phone number "218-628-2269". At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "Truck Graphics of any kind. 'We have you covered!'" in white. Below the banner, the address "116 W. Superior St, Duluth, MN 55802" and the phone number "218-722-2569 • duluthsign.com" are listed in white.

he says. "It took me a while last winter. There were a lot of days we were just trying to figure things out, trying to make sure that the spec was right. By looking in the trailer you can tell if something's wrong. Not knowing what knives to run at certain temperatures, speeds, things with the flail, making sure that the chains are set right and everything. It's not like just doing biomass where you're just shoving into the back and whatever comes out comes out."

Since the move to producing clean chips, Kowitz looks for different sales to buy than when he was delivering round wood.

"I can utilize a lot more of the stuff that's more crooked, smaller," he says. "Some of these sales that have this smaller under story that the state, or even private people, want cleaned up and taken, where before it was biomass, we can run it through the flail, into the chipper and make a really good product out of it for Sappi"

Dipping his toe into the clean chip business, carving out that niche for his company, has been important to the continued success of Nistler-Kowitz Logging.

"As competitive as things are nowadays, you always want to stay a step ahead," Kowitz says. "There are a lot of loggers in the Aitkin

county area, and that's what I was looking for. I was looking for that niche to do some of those state sales or to have a market that these other guys wouldn't have."

As for the tree-length timber that's being stockpiled, that'll be sent through the flail and chipper during the spring breakup time, when his crew would otherwise be idle.

"Sappi's going to want chips in the springtime from me," Kowitz says. "They want that all through the spring if we can deliver it. It'll open up the door for my employees to have a little bit more of a steady paycheck through spring."

Included on the Nistler-Kowitz crew are two of Tony's brothers-in-law, two nephews, and Tony's son Alex. A 2017 graduate of McGregor High, Alex runs skidder and just might make a career out of the logging business.

"I thought about going to college and pursuing a career," Alex says, "but there's just something about the woods. You just can't get away from it. I've been around it my entire life. Any chance I'd get on the weekends from school when I was little and all through high school, any chance I'd get I'd be out in the woods. All my life I've been fascinated about equipment in general, but especially logging equipment. I love it."

For Tony, business is good. Weather conditions this winter have presented challenges, like it does for everyone in the logging business, but on the whole, he's happy where Nistler-Kowitz Logging is.

"Nothing's ever perfect," he says. "But considering what everything's doing nowadays, yeah. I mean I have family working with me, I have my youngest son working beside me, a wonderful wife of 27 years, I mean, why would I complain?"



Tony Kowitz loads a crib trailer with 100-inch sticks of aspen. What isn't chipped, is either slashed into 100-inch lengths, or stockpiled tree-length.

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# Strommen Named New DNR Commissioner

**S**arah Strommen has been named Minnesota DNR Commissioner by Governor Tim Walz. Strommen succeeds Tom Landwehr, who held the job for all eight years of former Gov. Mark Dayton's administration.

Formerly a DNR assistant commissioner, Strommen joined the DNR in 2015. Prior to that, she served as assistant director at the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and previously served as policy director for Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness and as associate director of the Minnesota Land Trust.

Strommen holds a bachelor's degree from Grinnell College, where



**Sarah Strommen**

she majored in biology and Latin American studies. After graduating from college, she used a Fulbright research scholarship to do field work in Costa Rica, and subsequently earned her master's degree in environmental management from Duke University.

She served several terms on the Ramsey city council and was elected mayor in 2012, a position she stepped down from in May 2018. She is an avid outdoors person, spending family weekends fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, camping, and hiking.

After her appointment, Strommen made several staff announcements, including that Forrest Boe will

remain Director of the DNR's Division of Forestry.

## Speed Limits Increase on Rural Roads

**T**he Minnesota Department of Transportation is increasing speeds on 5,240 miles of state highways based on the recommendations of a five-year study released in January. The speeds will increase from 55 to 60 miles per hour.

Of the 7,000 miles studied, speed limits ultimately will be increased on 77 percent of rural, two-lane state highways, according to the final report. New speed limits go into effect once new speed limit signs are posted. Most of the signs posting the new speed limits are in place, with the rest expected to be up by spring 2019.



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The Minnesota Legislature in 2014 mandated that MnDOT study all Minnesota two-lane roadways with a speed of 55 miles per hour. It is the most comprehensive study the agency has made in terms of miles studied and level of detail, according to Nathan Drews, engineering specialist in the Office of Traffic Engineering.

The recommendation for a speed increase along each of these roadways considered the speed that 85 percent of motorists drive at or below along with an evaluation of other factors, such as access points, shoulder width, vertical grades and crash history.

MnDOT has conducted before and after studies on many roadways that recently increased to 60 mph. There was no change in the overall 85th percentile speed from before the speed limit change to after. The mean speed, which is the average speed of all drivers, increased by one mile per hour and the standard deviation, which is the measure of how spread out the drivers' speeds were, reduced slightly.

"This means that after speed limits increased, travel speeds at

the locations sampled were slightly more consistent between each vehicle," said Drews. "In other words, more drivers traveled at a similar speed after speed limits increased. This is a desirable outcome, but this change is very slight and may not affect the frequency or severity of crashes."

This most recent study echoes results from the previous studies. From 2006 to 2013, MnDOT increased speeds to 60 mph on 1,550 miles of two-lane rural highways. Studies conducted to determine the impact of raising speed limits on those roadways found that the

overall 85th percentile speed before and after the changes were the same, the average speed increased slightly and the variation of the speeds decreased.

Drews said a properly selected speed limit can potentially increase the safety of the roadway by creating uniform travel speeds for all vehicles.

For more details about the study, visit <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/govrel/reports/2019/2018%20TH%20Speed%20Limit%20Report-final%20year%20report.pdf>, which lists the highways studied statewide and their speed recommendation.



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# Marathoner Dick Beardsley Highlights TPA Annual Meeting

**M**innesota-native Dick Beardsley, one of the greatest marathon runners in US history, will be the featured speaker at TPA's Annual Meeting Banquet.

The banquet will be Thursday June 6th at Sugar Lake Lodge south of Grand Rapids, and will cap a full day of events, including TPA's membership meeting and golf and fishing outings. Be sure to mark your calendar!

Now retired from competitive running, Beardsley runs a fishing guide service in Bemidji, and along with wife Jill, owns and operates the beautiful Lake Bemidji Bed and Breakfast.



Beardsley winning Grandma's Marathon in 1981.

Dick is referred to as a running legend in the United States. He's a two-time winner of Grandma's Marathon, but is best known for his incredible race in the 1982 Boston Marathon. That race was immortalized in the book "Duel in the Sun," as he battled world record holder Alberto Salazar down to the finish line on an incredibly hot day. Both men broke the American record: Salazar won in a record time of 2:08:51, Beardsley's time was 2:08:53, finishing 1.6 seconds later, placing second. He was at the height of his professional running career.

In November of 1989, tragedy struck Dick's life. While using an auger to lift corn into a bin on his Minnesota farm, Dick became entangled in the machine; it began to literally tear him apart. Not expected to live or walk—much less ever run again—he managed to survive.

But that was just the first of a series of events that would forever change his life. During the next few years, Dick was involved in a severe car accident, later he was hit by a truck while running, later still, he rolled his vehicle in a snowstorm, and finally while hiking one day, the ground gave out and he fell off a cliff! Each time he ended up in the hospital and had multiple surgeries to try and put him back together. Due to all the large amount of pain medication he was taking, he



Dick Beardsley

became addicted—and that's when his life really started to spiral out of control. It has been a long and difficult road back, but Dick has been celebrating every day of his sobriety since February 12, 1997.

Beardsley is a compelling motivational/inspirational keynote speaker at Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations, conferences, conventions, corporate events, fundraisers, galas, sporting events, prisons, schools and drug treatment centers.

The TPA Office will send more information on the Annual Meeting events in the coming weeks and months.



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# State Funding Improves County Forest Roads

In 2017, TPA lobbied the legislature for funding to improve and maintain county forest roads throughout the state. That year, a bill passed both the House and the Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Dayton, that appropriated \$1 million over the biennium, with another \$1 million included in the base budget for 2020-21.

Two years later, loggers are seeing the results of this funding, with county road projects funded across

the forested regions of the state.

Securing this funding has been a key priority as part of TPA's strategy to gain access to more wood, particularly summer wood. Total funding quadrupled from the previous biennial budget, including an expansion to include county forest road maintenance. Counties never before received state funding for forest road maintenance.

In all, roughly 75 projects have been completed, with more in the

planning stages. In some cases, loggers did the work, receiving payment from the county for their efforts.

Counties receiving funding for the work include Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.

The accompanying pictures show a small portion of the results from the funding secured through TPA's lobbying efforts.

## Before



## After



The results of a culvert and graveling project, valued at \$10,000, which allowed summer access to an Itasca County timber sale.

## Before



## After



Gravel lift and grading for approximately 2.25 miles of road in Koochiching County, providing summer access to county forest land.



## Before



## After



This project provides summer access to approximately 215 acres of tax forfeited county land and 125 acres of state land, primarily aspen and red pine for both agencies.

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# Good Neighbor Authority Timber Volumes Are Increasing

**S**ince the U.S. Forest Service signed a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) master agreement with the Minnesota DNR in 2016, timber volumes have steadily increased, with more wood projected to be offered in coming fiscal years.

The agreement allows clusters of tracts across differing ownerships to be combined and sold more efficiently.

“GNA is allowing the Forest Service and DNR to partner more closely which is resulting in more acres treated,” says James McFarland, Superior’s Natural Resources Staff Officer. “With the expansion of the authority, this continues the effort of the forest and other land managers to work in an all lands approach on the landscape, improving forested conditions and increasing opportunities within the forest economy.”

In the first two years of the agreement, the Forest Service and DNR began a pilot project of roughly one million board feet of timber each year that wouldn’t have been offered otherwise. From there, GNA outputs have grown, with a target this fiscal year of 6 million board feet on the Superior National Forest. That GNA target is projected to rise to 15 million board feet by 2022.

GNA volume is supposed to be “over and above” the Superior’s annual program volume, which is projected to be 60 million board feet this year—an increase of nearly 50% over the SNF’s program volume in 2010.

Good Neighbor Authority was created by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. It allows collaboration in a variety of areas, including stand regeneration, watershed restoration and protection services, and timber sales. Last year, an updated Farm Bill allowed the feds to also enter into Good Neighbor agreements with counties and tribes.

GNA is allowing federal forests



to offer more volume without an increase of congressional funding, with state staff able to do much of the work on the ground to design the sale. For example, the Superior National Forest’s Trapper Creek sale includes 638 acres of federal timber that was previously inaccessible. Through GNA, the SNF and DNR were able to collaborate to combine 313 acres of state land with some adjacent private wood to create one sale with more than 24,000 cords of timber. The permit was sold last year, and harvesting operations began in September. Without GNA, none of these acres were likely to be treated.

Timber sale proceeds, called program income, are accumulated and held within DNR. These funds are utilized to reimburse the DNR for its costs and reinvested into growing the GNA program. The big benefit for all is that as more Minnesota acres are treated, overall health of Minnesota’s forests improves, as well as the health of local communities that depend on

the forest economy.

“GNA is working,” says Craig Schmid, the DNR’s deputy forestry director. “The program is strengthening the relationship between the state and the Forest Service, and we’re producing more wood annually. The trajectory is going up.”

At a meeting with leaders of Minnesota’s forest products community in November, U.S. Department of Agriculture Jim Hubbard—who has oversight of the Forest Service—said he was pleased with the progress made under Good Neighbor Authority in the state, and encouraged the state and federal forests to continue working together.

“We have a few new authorities that have been provided by the Congress, including Good Neighbor,” Hubbard told the group, “and the expectation is that we need to deliver on those authorities. We need to show what we can do. We need to start producing more forest management activity.”





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# On the Markets

**T**he *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**

Agency                      Regular    Intermediate

### Lake County

*December 19—Sealed Bid*

Aspen P&B                      \$26.21              NA

Black Spruce

P&B                      \$29.00              NA

Balsam P&B                      \$ 7.74              NA

Birch P&B                      \$13.44              NA

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

### DNR—Two Harbors Area

*January 3—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species  
(PB)                      NA                      \$21.60

Trembling  
Aspen (PW)                      \$22.69              \$ 8.40

Black Spruce  
(PW)                      NA                      \$16.13

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

### DNR—Backus Area

*January 4—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species  
(PW)                      \$32.05              \$24.00

Trembling  
Aspen (PW)                      \$17.34              \$29.16

Oak Species  
(WMP)                      NA                      \$19.00

Oak Species  
(PB)                      \$30.15              NA

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

### Hubbard County

*January 7—Oral Auction*

Aspen Mixed                      NA                      \$33.01

Aspen Pulp                      NA                      \$34.08

Birch Mixed                      NA                      \$11.17

Jack Pine Mixed                      NA                      \$33.45

14 of the 15 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—NE Region

*January 9—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species  
(PW)                      \$30.75              \$39.43

Aspen Species  
(PB)                      NA                      \$32.73

Trembling  
Aspen (PW)                      \$39.48              \$37.81

Mixed Spruce  
(PB)                      \$43.92              \$36.41

Pine Species  
(WMP)                      \$47.25              NA

22 of the 30 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—Sandstone Area

*January 10—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species  
(PW)                      \$13.65              NA

Paper Birch  
(PB)                      NA                      \$18.24

Norway Pine  
(WMP)                      \$30.53              NA

3 of the 33 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

### DNR—NW Region

*January 10—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species  
(PW)                      \$34.15              \$23.89

Trembling  
Aspen (WC)                      \$39.08              NA

Trembling  
Aspen (PB)                      \$36.16              \$36.25

Mixed Spruce  
(PW)                      \$22.22              NA

Black Spruce  
(PB)                      \$32.66              \$23.33

20 of the 28 tracts offered during the

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sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Central Region

January 15—Sealed Bid

Aspen Species  
(PW) \$16.28 NA

Trembling  
Aspen (PB) \$42.59 NA

3 of the 16 tracts offered during the sale were purchased. None of the 10 tracts offered on the intermediate auction were purchased.

#### Cass County

January 31—Oral Auction

Aspen \$30.64 \$21.16

Birch \$14.97 \$18.31

Red Oak \$22.13 \$25.64

All 8 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.



#### Koochiching County

February 6—Oral Auction

Aspen P/B \$29.30 \$28.27

Spruce P/B \$18.97 \$28.61

Ash P/B \$ 5.90 \$ 5.96

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

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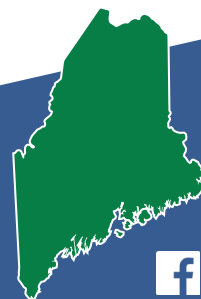
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LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

# Camp Clerks Had the Answers

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*



Even with modern business machines and computers, it takes about one person in the office for every five or six working men to look after such things as Social Security, unemployment, state and federal tax withholding, credit union, hospitalization, union dues and other withholding funds.

I recall when this was but a very minor job in the lumber camps.

In the very early days of logging, the foreman kept the time of the men by marking it on a calendar or just keeping it in his mind, and when a man went down in the spring the foreman gave him a slip to take to the company office for his pay. Very few men quit until spring, and often the whole crew went down and was paid off at one time.

Tobacco and snuff were free, and all a time slip had to show was the time the man started and the time the camp broke.

However, about the early 1890s the companies started to charge for tobacco and mitts and socks and other clothing that the men would get from the foreman. As many of the old time foremen could not write, a company would hire a younger man to be

known as the camp clerk. The clerk’s job consisted of keeping all time records, ordering supplies for the cook, parts and equipment for the blacksmith and handy men to repair tools, and all clothing, tobacco, snuff and medicines that were sold in the camp “wanigan.”

The wanigan was usually a corner of the office where the clerk had his desk, with a counter running about one-fourth of the way across the office and then back to the wall — often with a screen or slats around the shelves and a door that was kept locked whenever the clerk was out of the office — as he was responsible for all the articles in the wanigan. There was a window above the counter where the clerk passed out the articles that the men would purchase.

There were usually three or four men working in the office, including the foreman, checker, scaler and any cruiser or inspector who visited the camp. However, it was the clerk alone who had the key to the “bullpen,” as the wanigan part of the office was often called.

The camp clerk was usually a younger man spending a year or so in the camp preparing for an education, but there were

also men who followed this type of work all their lives. In larger camps the clerk spent most of his time in the office, but in smaller camps his time was varied. He might have to check piece makers or station men, go to the local post office (if there was one) for the camp mail, or pick up some piece of equipment or parts for the repair man.

In the larger camps, the clerk spent most of the day on his bookwork, ordering supplies and answering the telephone. However, when the crew came in at night he spent from 6:30 to 9:00 passing out tobacco, snuff and mail to the men as they visited the office to stock up on their needs. Some of the camps sold candy bars and apples in their offices, but this was only in the later years. Sometimes one of the lumber jacks would purchase a box of snuff and pay for it in cash, but more often it was charged in the ledger and added to his account.

For monthly workers, the time was recorded each day in the time book, and on piece cutters, the amount of products cut would be recorded when the checker turned it in to the clerk. A ledger was kept with each man’s credits and debits, and when the man quit, a time check — which was more or less a statement of his earnings and debits — was given to him. Whenever employment charges or transportation to camp charges were advanced, the clerk had to record these against the man’s account, as he also recorded all items purchased from the wanigan.

About 1915, most of the lumber companies became cost conscious and wanted to know just which part of the logging operation was costing them the most so they could take steps to correct it. As a result, the daily distribution of labor forms were made up with all the different classes of camp labor listed, and it became the daily duty of the clerk to contact all the men — or through the foreman or straw bosses find out just what type of work each man was doing. This greatly increased the work of the clerk, as he sometimes had to visit the jobs to check on the men — and then there was the question of what type of work the man’s time should be charged to.



Snuff, boots, mitts, caps, laxatives, first aid and all the camp records.



Where a foreman was once concerned only with the overall logging costs, he now became cost conscious on each type of job. If he found a certain job was running too high, he would shift men back and forth from one job to another. Many of the old time foremen were not much at bookkeeping, and gave the clerks a hard time when they found out what certain jobs were costing.

In small camps and smaller logging companies, the clerk was under the direct supervision of the foreman. However, in camps for the larger logging companies, the clerk received his orders on bookkeeping and timekeeping procedures from the main office or from the traveling camp clerk auditor, who made each camp about once a month to check on how the clerk was doing. Because most foremen did not understand the bookkeeping system, the relation between the clerk and the foreman sometimes became somewhat strained if certain job costs were running high. This was only on rare occasions, however, and complete harmony existed between them in most cases.

When the camps began to put in first aid kits, the clerk became the official first aid man because he had to make out the reports of injury for the industrial commission and insurance companies under the workman's compensation law. Much more medicine and bandages were available, and every night when the men came in from work the clerk administered first aid to small cuts, bruises and sprains. Some of the clerks got pretty good at it. In the old days, the men took care of their own small cuts by putting balsam pitch on them, covering them with a chew of Peerless, or the like. However, I know of several lives that were saved because a clerk gave first aid to parties who drank wood alcohol they had obtained in a nearby town. While clerking in a camp near Mispah in the winter of 1918, I pulled several teeth with a common pair of pliers, and even took out one tooth with a file after the man had it partly out by himself.

A good clerk was quite an asset to a camp and played a big part in the logging of our virgin pine stands. Some of the better clerks I recall, who made a career in the lumber camps, were Jim McLaughlin and Tommy Lightfoot of the Cloquet Lumber Co., Joe McFee and Otto Ottoson of the Backus and Brooks Co., Robert Graton and Johnnie McGuire of the Northern Lumber Co., Ed Bodey of the Oliver Timber Co., Al Johnson and Casper Campagiane of the Virginia-Rainy Lake Co. – and there were many more.

They, like the old camp foremen, are part of the past of the great logging industry that covered the whole north half of Minnesota from 1880 to 1930.

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

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