

"Logging smart" the difference between profit/loss

Working in the woods seems to come easy for some people, others must take time to learn how best to manage their jobs. In the highly competitive business of logging contractors, the same thing applies. With each generation of loggers and timber-related businesses, comes new technology to aid in the harvest of timber in a safe, profitable manner, while leaving the least amount of impact on the environment. Simply put, success in the timber industry today means "logging smart".

Through the years, this special publication about the Friendship Jamboree & Logging Show has focused on some facet of the logging industry, generally covering the contractors and their employees or the timber companies. Last year we started to take a look at the people

whose work supports the efforts of the contractors. Though they are seldom recognized as part of the logging industry, they are vital to its success. This year we will introduce you to additional support people—the road builders, mechanics and service people.

Without roads, little logging would be done. Without service people and mechanics, the smooth execution of a logging contract can be destroyed. Keeping equipment maintained and operating properly allows the contractor to finish his contract within a time frame that allows a profit; if the equipment doesn't work, neither do the loggers. In this business, as in many others, down time means loss of income. These support people are part of what it takes to keep "logging smart".

Donald Normand was choker setter first, skillful mechanic later

Donald Normand began working for Holce Logging of Vernonia nine years ago. His first job was as a rigging slinger and his duties were to work in the hole under the yarder, setting chokers. While performing this job, he was often called to the landing to fix some piece of equipment that had broken down.

This went on for some time until it became apparent that Normand was spending a lot of time climbing up and down the hills, so they moved him to the position of chaser on the landing, which enabled him to readily attend to mechanical problems. Normand is now a full time mechanic for Holce Logging, traveling from location to location, repairing equipment and doing all necessary maintenance on the machinery.

Normand, can often be found—at any time of day or night—close by his second home, a mobile repair truck that holds nearly everything he may need to repair and service the company equipment. Items such as compressors, generators, arc welders, acetylene torches and a vast assortment of tools, now make it possible for equipment that has failed, to remain on the job site for repairs. Without that capability, it would be necessary to transport the equipment back and forth, sometimes hundreds of miles, to a shop, creating extra expenses for hauling as well as leaving large crews with unwanted days off.

Normand's responsibilities as the mechanic for Holce Logging include the maintenance and repair of three log loaders, three skidders, three cats, a roto-saw, 12 crummies and a recently purchased TSY-255 Thunderbird yarder.

Because he didn't go to a school with an official title to become the experienced mechanic that he is now, Normand credits it to experience on the job and having had an interest in

mechanics from a very young age. He also gives credit to a former employer, Tom McKedy, who taught him a great deal when Normand worked at McKedy's service station on the outskirts of Vernonia.

On a recent, typical morning Normand headed out to welcome the new Thunderbird yarder. It was the day the yarder would bring in its first turn of logs and Normand wanted to be there as it did so.

While on the site, Normand was approached by Holce crew member Chris

Cota, who wanted Normand to take a look at the grapple cat he was operating because it didn't feel quite right. On went the coveralls, and Normand got to work. As he worked his way through the rear of the vehicle looking for leaks, Cota asked if Normand was going to make it over to another site to change the cooling fan on a skidder that Cota usually operated. The temperature that day was a good 85 degrees and the fan was in position to blow heat directly back on the operator.



Chris Cota looks on as company mechanic Donald Normand repairs a grapple cat.



A brand new yarder brings in its first turn.

Bryan Roberts was in the hot seat and wasn't enjoying the situation. Fortunately, this was to be the next stop.

After watching the yarder bring in its first turn, Normand was content. Now he was ready to go reduce the temperature of one skidder operator.

Before he could leave though, another employee, Dennis Weller, gave him some information on a possible problem with the log loader Weller operates and suggested that Normand see if he could find anything wrong while changing the loader's oil. Fortunately the loader was located at the same site as the skidder.

Getting to the next location took only a short time,

an unusual occurrence, Normand said, recalling many times when much of a day was spent driving back and forth between job sites.

The oil change for the loader had been planned for this day, as maintenance on the skidder task had been. With an air compressor, Normand blew the dust and bugs from the skidder's radiator. Then the trouble shooting began as Normand and Weller tried to find where the oil on the loader tracks might be coming from.

In a short time, with observation and discussions with Weller, Normand determined that there wasn't a serious problem. Next, down the road came a very

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