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“Addressing the Logging Dilemma”

David (DK) Knight, Co-Publisher, Executive Editor and business partner with Hatton-Brown Publishers, Inc. is an outspoken advocate of the logging sector. His presentation at the National Conference and Expo, “**Paul Bunyan is Dead and some of his Descendants are down with the Flu,**” discussed the logging dilemma and much more. Here is a synopsis of his comments.

“Perhaps no one in the supply chain has more personal risk, more skin in the game, than the **logger**, who typically finds himself wedged between landowners and consuming markets, and with little room to maneuver. As a group they are juggling lots of debt; competing for less available timber, and struggling with soaring operating costs like:

- **Equipment** – a mid-sized grapple skidder sells for no less than \$250,000.
- **Parts** – a popular size skidder tire costs \$4,000 + mounting.
- **Labor** – the logging force is aging and few young people are attracted to the dangerous and harsh working conditions. Greater experience, higher wages.
- **Insurance** – premiums for vehicle coverage, general liability, physical damage and workers’ comp continue to rise.
- **Regulations** – federal, state, local...requirements on weight limits, emissions, etc. = soaring costs.

In my 47-year association with the industry, I’ve found that most loggers are not greedy and not out to get rich. They simply want to work steady, avoid injury, provide for their families, take care of their employees, pay their bills, and maintain a modest contingency fund. For them to do this requires compensation in keeping with the ups and downs and trials and tribulations that accompany the task. And it helps when consumers openly demonstrate appreciation for their professionalism, consistency and quality of work.”

What can stakeholders do “to help stabilize, stimulate and build a harvesting corps that is sustainable?

—Cultivate a partnership culture.

—Encourage loggers to set higher standards in terms of professionalism and performance; measure this performance; then reward those who excel.

—Provide for steady year-round production by increasing log storage capacity. Quotas may be unavoidable at times, but they inflict economic hardship, hurt morale and make it difficult for a logger to hold a crew together.

—Turn trucks around with dispatch.

—Consider accepting logs in longer lengths and cutting them on your yard. Loggers will be able to produce more logs with less effort, and you will be able to merchandise them better.”