



Making a Difference in the Lives of Loggers



By Mark Turner

I was born the son of a logger.

When my Dad started logging, back in the fifties, things were a lot different then they are now. Logging was an easy business to get into and there was a lot of money to be made. As my Dad used to say, “all you needed was an old wore out cat and a chainsaw and you were a logger”. Back then, loggers were also some of the best paid and most respected workers around.

My experience with logging started as a young boy watching my Dad operate his logging business. I remember my Brothers and I riding up to the job, during the summers and on Saturdays. As our Dad worked, we would explore the area and build forts. It was a great experience for a young boy. Unfortunately, it’s not something that many young people experience any more.

As my brothers and I grew older, we started becoming integrated into the operation. I can still remember how proud I felt when my Dad told me that I “would make someone a great worker someday”.

I remember how hard my Dad worked, to keep the business going. Spending a lot of late nights either in the office or out in the shop.

I think I would have been perfectly happy to have gone straight into logging, after high school. However, after a lot of encouragement from some teachers and my Mom, I decided to go to college.

After graduating, I started a promising career as an engineer in the aerospace industry. It was fulfilling work; however, thoughts of the woods were always on my mind.

I have heard that you can take the logger out of the woods but you can’t take the woods out of the logger. I have found this to be very true. In fact, I missed the woods. I missed working with my Dad and my Brother.

So, I came back. I worked hard and learned the business. I found that with hard work, I could make a comfortable living.

That doesn't mean that it has always been easy. As many of you know, running a logging business can be very challenging. Even in the best of times. But, in tough times, it can be brutal. And we've had our fair share of tough times.

As loggers, we have always been very self-reliant. When times get tough, instead of complaining, we just work harder and find a way to make it through. In my opinion, loggers are some of the most innovative people this country has.

One of the things we have never been very good at, however, is blowing our own horns. Most of us figure that actions speak louder than words. That if we do a professional job, we will get the credit we are do. Unfortunately, in today's world, that's not always the case.

That's where the American Loggers Council comes in. This coming year, I will do all I can, to ensure that the voice of the American Logger will be heard. It doesn't matter if that logger has a multi-million-dollar company and employs a hundred people or is just a one-man operation. We will work to ensure that loggers are better appreciated by the public at large as well as the people we work for and sell to.

We will continue to work to advance the professionalism of the American Logger. Particularly through master logger certification. We will continue to work to open more of our public lands for more active forest management. We will work to find new markets for our products. The American Loggers Council will continue to be the go to organization on national issues that affect the logging industry.

When I first got involved with The American Loggers Council, I was struck by how much I had in common with other loggers, across the country. We all go about our business in a different way. But, in the end, we are all loggers. Honesty, dedication to family and a pension for hard work, are some of the traits we have in common.

Whether we realize it or not, us loggers are the heart and soul of the timber industry. We produce the raw materials that every single person in this country uses every single day of the year. Without us, quite frankly, I don't think the timber industry can survive.

So, as loggers, where do we go from here? We face a number of challenges and opportunities. In fact, I think our industry is at a critical juncture. Technology continues to advance at an even greater pace. How are we going to incorporate these new technologies into our businesses to make ourselves more efficient? Whether we like it or not, we are part of a global economy and that often means increased competition. At the same time, the average age of a logger keeps getting older. And, we struggle to find enough young people to work in our industry.

How we address these issues now, will have lasting effects on the future viability of our industry.

I believe that The American Loggers Council can be a guiding force. An organization by loggers, for loggers. Helping to bring loggers together from all across this great country. We can do so much more together than apart.

So, it is with great humility, that I accept the Presidency of the American Loggers Council. And I hope that you will join me, this coming year, to help make a difference in the lives of loggers.

Mark Turner is the President of the American Loggers Council. Mark and his brother Greg operates Turner Logging out of Banks, Ore. Mark is an active leader with the Associated Oregon Loggers.

The American Loggers Council is a 501 (c)(6) not for profit trade association representing professional timber harvesters and log truckers in 32 states across the United States with headquarters near Hemphill, Texas.