

# Lessons from Losses

**T**o 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.

**Incident:** A fire destroyed a 1999 feller buncher. Smoke was first noted coming from the rear floor area of the cab. The operator immediately shut down this equipment and the fire appeared to be in the engine compartment (manifold side) next to the operator cab. Smoke entered the cab through the electrical wire pathway. Addressing the fire with the on-board 10 lb. extinguisher and by using the fire port hole in the side panel next to the cab appeared to make little headway in controlling this fire. The fire was

quickly getting stronger and the operator used the second extinguisher from the opposite side over the engine, but could not control the fire. The operator rushed to get help from the other worker on site and by the time they could respond again with a skidder, extra extinguishers, etc., it was too late. The only thing they could do is stop the spread of fire to the surrounding forest. No injuries occurred.

The day of this occurrence the weather was abnormally warm for the winter months; temperatures reached 35 degrees with low humidity, and it was sunny and no wind.

The logging job site was located in a remote area approximately 20 miles from the nearest town. The timber at this job site included jack pine, spruce, balsam and mixed hardwood.

Maintenance and housekeeping

would be rated as good. Most maintenance needs are completed in-house by the operator with the exception of large scale maintenance which is handled by the appropriate equipment dealer. Safety features including the electrical disconnect, fire extinguishers, engine compartment shielding, fire portholes, enclosed cab, escape windows, employee training, etc., were all were available and functional. In addition, this operation does install CB radio communication systems in select equipment (including feller bunchers) and most operators have cell phones.

No immediate maintenance problems were needed or completed prior to this fire emergency. This equipment was last power-washed in the fall before freeze-up. The front screen and the engine side panel next to the cab was opened, inspected and cleaned two to three days prior.

The operator for this machine is considered fully trained in operation and maintenance. The owner's manual is available. He has operated logging mobile equipment for over eight years with this operation and this particular piece of equipment for four years.

Due to the suddenness of this fire it is uncertain what failed. The majority of hydraulic hoses are covered with Kevlar hose wrap and no maintenance problems appeared to exist (electrical, etc.). As far as problems, these machines are known to have some housekeeping issues, do operate on the warm side, and the raceway between the engine compartment and cab is nearly impossible to inspect and clean. Side shields need quick opening latches and the hood top needs shields to prevent debris from entering the engine area near the hydraulic reservoir. Here are some other factors that may help reduce the seriousness of a mobile equipment loss with this type of equipment:

- Frequency of cleaning of the front screen especially in dirty timber conditions.
- Frequency of inspection of engine area between cab and engine compartment. (Housekeeping, hydraulic hose and electrical wiring damage, etc.)
- Use the electrical disconnect in emergency situations.
- Protection of the hot turbo with a Kevlar wrap.
- Deflector shield to prevent debris from the engine fan from contacting the hot turbo.
- Use of a reversing fan on the engine.

**LUA Suggested Preventative Measures Include:**

1. Frequent operator self-inspections for housekeeping and maintenance, especially in dirty timber.
2. Always shut down the electrical disconnect (master switch) on your mobile equipment in an emergency situation. Refresher training for all employees needs to be reviewed regularly.
3. Maintain all side panels on mobile equipment with quick opening fasteners. Fast access is very important in an emergency.

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## Early Loggers in Minnesota

by J. C. Ryan



First-hand recollections by storyteller "Buzz" Ryan of the loggers, loaders, swamps, wood bulchers and bull cooks who ruled the woods in the heyday of the pioneer lumberjacks with dozens of historical photographs.

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Shermer Logging's John Deere 653E feller buncher kicks up snow as it harvests aspen for the Habitat for Humanity Project.

Humanity is a great believer in the importance of promoting sustainability."

The project attracted media from throughout the region, including two TV news crews and five newspapers. The story was also picked up by national news websites like forbes.com, Yahoo Business, and pr-inside.com.



Sen. Bakk and his dad, Mel, watch the harvest of his trees. Senator Bakk originally purchased three 40-acre tracts near Cook for \$400. The timber for the project came from one of those tracts.

participants.

Other Minnesota forest products companies are also contributing, in the form of cash donations to help fund the Habitat for Humanity project. Those companies are Boise, Inc.; Forest Capital Partners, LLC; NewPage Corporation; Sappi Fine Paper North America; UPM, Blandin Paper Mill; and Verso Paper, Sartell Mill.

"SFI is proud to be a partner in this project and support the work of the Minnesota SFI Implementation committee on this incredibly important project," said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow. "This is another example of how our 37 implementation committees across North America are making real, positive differences, not just at the forest management level but also at the community level."

Nathan Thompson, executive director of the North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity, said his organization is proud and grateful to be the first Habitat organization in the country to team up with a state SFI committee.

"We're appreciative of all volunteers who put so much time and effort into building affordable homes with deserving families, but it's especially gratifying to have the people who supply home building materials taking on a project for us," said Thompson. "Like SFI, Habitat for

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4. Review the hood tops to prevent debris from entering the engine compartment. This should include blocking of all openings or problem areas (rear hood, canopy openings, etc.).
5. Train employees on proper use of fire extinguishers in an emergency situation. Utilize the extinguisher hose to direct the flow to the base of the fire and not waste the extinguisher in a panic situation.
6. Complete refresher employee training for proper operation, service, emergency response etc.

for new and existing employees. Weekly tool box safety meetings work well in reviewing all equipment. Cross training all employees is very beneficial.

7. 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 manual maintenance required for regular maintenance and self inspection is crucial to the performance of this protection.