

The Morisse Logging Family

Teamwork and communication make this firm a success

by Wesley Peterson

A word liberally used when fellow harvesting contractors discuss Steve Morisse is, "professional." According to those who know him well, Morisse, owner of Morisse Logging, Inc., a harvesting firm operating in the northwestern forests of Oregon, has, since he first began to operate, worked towards improving his industry for the next generation of loggers. Morisse Logging is widely acknowledged as being a firm using the most modern technology to harvest to the highest standards of the industry and for paying attention not only to production, but to crew safety and the condition of the forest it leaves behind after a harvest as well.

Morisse is more modest in describing his firm than are his fellow harvesters, who admire what he stands for. "Our reputation as responsible loggers is important to myself, as well as to every one of my employees," Morisse comments. "Logging is an exhausting and dangerous profession, and it becomes harder and harder to find the caliber of person who wants to take on the rigors of the job. It's a constant challenge in changing times of environmental advances to help loggers retain the respect they deserve. We are constantly striving to help build the reputation of the logging and timber industry in order to see it stay alive and well in the future."

Continued on page 26



Tower logging has become a dominant technology in steep site logging, especially in the Pacific Northwest. Trees are lifted off the ground rather than skidded, so environmental benefits are realized.

The Morisse Logging Family

Continued from page 25

Morisse came to the logging industry to stay when he was just 19 years old. He was lucky then, he remembers, to have hooked up with a forward-looking company, with an owner who realized the industry had to progress to survive. "Pete McCoy Logging was where I first got started," he says of his early days in the trade. "At 19 years old, I started learning from some very seasoned pros. Looking back, as a young man, I was fortunate to have worked with some of the best loggers in the area at the time."

After a few years of working for others, Morisse and a friend decided to go into business for themselves. In 1979, Morisse recounts, "Myself and fellow logger Jay Browning, both of us in our twenties, and me with a wife, three young daughters and getting nowhere fast, literally scraped the money up to start a very small logging company we called North Coast Logging. We had a well-used 1450 Case tractor and 518 Cat skidder that we bought from



Long, straight stems make stroke boom delimiting the option of choice in many of the Northwest's second and third growth forests like those in the background.

another gypo logger. Along with the equipment, came a contract to log for Crown Zellerbach. Jay and I did it all by ourselves for a few months, then slowly started hiring crew as we needed them. As the timber industry slowed in the early '80s, with a lot of long hours, hard work

and innovative ideas, we managed to keep growing. We won a contract from Plum Creek Timber Co. to log near Mt. St. Helens in Washington for the summer of 1984, moving crews and families into cabins with no electricity. In 1985, my partner and I decided the opportunity was perfect



for us to split up and each have our own business. That's when Morisse Logging, Inc. was formed. Today, we employ 36 workers and run as many as 15 contract log trucks, as well as three logging sides, two towers and one shovel.

Perhaps more than anywhere else in North America, tower logging has come to be a dominant technology in the Pacific Northwest forests like those Morisse Logging harvests near the Oregon coast. Steep terrain that must be harvested without excessive ground impact makes high-lead logging the superior choice in much of the area. As a result, Morisse points out, "High-lead logging has evolved into a

high-tech operation."

TTY 70 Thunderbird yarders anchor both of Morisse's tower sides. Boman carriages fitted with electronic chokers transport tree stems from stump to landing.

At the landing, a 2002 Link Belt 240LXTL platform with a Denharco delimeter mounted aboard delims on one landing, while a Cat with a Pierce delimeter is utilized on the second side. Loading is accomplished on the first side utilizing a 2002 Link Belt 290LXTL loader. A 2000 vintage 325BF Cat loader rounds out the major equipment inventory on the second side.

On the shovel side, Morisse Logging utilizes a 2002 290LXTL

Continued on page 28

On a tower site, postage stamp-sized landings, compared to past times, are tremendously busy places. Here, in the foreground, logs are merchandised and loaded onto waiting trucks, even as a new load of stems comes in on the tower for delimiting by the stroke boom delimeter working in the background.

The Morisse Logging Family

Continued from page 27

Link Belt for loading log trucks. That machine loads logs processed through a 2002 Link Belt 240LXTL platform with a Denharco delimeter mounted on it. Extraction and other necessary operations are accomplished by means of a 2002 370LXTL Link Belt loader, a 2000 325B Cat loader and a 527GR Cat track skidder.

Felling on the three sides, depending on terrain and other factors, is accomplished using the two 445D Timbco feller bunchers Morisse owns, backed up by three timber fallers.

Hauling is accomplished using a combination of the four '98 Kenworth log trucks with Whitlog trailers Morisse operates and the services of 12 to 15 contract log trucks.

"About two years ago, I had a Link Belt delimeter and a Link Belt loader from Triad Machinery to demo. I liked the reputation that Link Belt equipment had established among local loggers, and my operators liked what they demoed. So, I decided to give the Link Belts a try.

"All equipment is only as good as the dealer that backs it up, and the manufacturer's warranty that covers it. Equipment companies must respond immediately to breakdowns. When a machine breaks down, I need to have a mechanic on the job immediately and parts available for repairs. It's extremely important to keep wood flowing at an even pace, day in and out, and minimize any downtime to be competitive in today's market.

"We've always promoted safety as a top priority in our company and comply with any new safety rules and regulations. We are a member of Clatsop Safety Council and are designated Oregon Professional Loggers. We stay well informed about all environmentally sensitive harvest rules and work closely with the state foresters and landowners.

"We may not do anything unique in our operation, but we do go the extra mile with a few things, such as maximizing the product from every tree and sending it down the road with great efficiency, and taking extreme care in protecting the ground we work on, leaving it unscarred by our presence. Above all else, we take care of our employees, providing them with

family wages, pensions, health and life insurance and safe, dependable equipment to run.

"Our employees are our most valuable commodity. We are successful because of them. Logging is an exhausting and dangerous profession, and it becomes harder every day to find the right caliber of man to fill a lot of positions. We have some of the most dedicated and respected hardworking men in the industry. Some are lifelong loggers, whose talents we've had for many years, and others are young and eager to climb those hills everyday, despite the weather. They are all friends to each other and work together as a family. In the end, it's the teamwork and communication within our entire outfit that demonstrates our ability to be very productive and successful.

"As the industry changes, we must be able to stay competitive. We've never been afraid to try new, innovative equipment and ideas. Electronic chokers on our high-lead sides have proven to save time and keep the landing chaser farther out of the danger zone. Also, gathering key personnel to preplan every logging site, before a tree is even fell, has benefited every aspect of our logging efficiency."

FPE