

Rising Costs Plague Log Truckers

Timber Hauling Made Complex By Rules, Fees

Driving a log truck is hard work. Also, it is expensive.

The log truck driver's work is seasonal. His operation is strictly a gamble, particularly as it concerns weather. Much of his expense — a large expense — must be met regardless of whether he has work.

His work, at the same time, often can be erratic. He must spend a great deal of time trying to plan his operation so he will be busy during the summer months. If he doesn't keep busy, he's apt to find himself in serious financial trouble.

A few mill operators have some logging trucks of their own. Company owned trucks are less than 10 per cent of the total.

About 50 trucks are owned by a half-dozen companies — fleet owners. The fleet operation is the most profitable because the companies usually have contracts enabling them to keep their equipment in steady use. Too, fleet owners are able to buy tires, fuel, parts, etc., in quantity.

But by far the bulk of Douglas County's log trucking is done by independent operators.

Trucker Pays Fee
Equipment needed by the independent operator costs from \$25,000 to \$27,000, on the average. The log trucker pays \$95 per month to the Public Utilities Commission if he works on a flat fee, or, if he desires, he can use the highway hauler per mile basis for figuring his PUC charges. Most drivers use the flat fee.

Then he must put out \$700 per year for a truck license. It costs about \$2,500 to equip a truck with tires. A rough estimate is that the cost of keeping a truck in new tires and retreads amounts to around 50 cents for each 1,000 board feet of logs hauled to the mill.

Another "horseback" estimate is that the operation of a log truck figures out at about 40 to 50 cents per mile for every mile traveled. Still another "average" is that a truck, working at capacity, will haul around two million board feet of logs in a season's operation.

The cost of operation is going up steadily. The reason for this is that mills have used up most of the nearby "timber." Each year they must go farther into the mountains to get their raw supply.

Paid On Gross
Truck owners are paid on a gross basis for logs they deliver. That means that no deductions are made for unusable portions of a log, such as those with disease, splits, etc.

Logs are scaled by the Southern Oregon Log Scaling and Grading Bureau in most cases. This is an independent organization which figures both gross and net scale on logs.

The job of hauling logs is surrounded with laws and regulations. The legislation, however, is not entirely satisfactory and each session of the State Legislature has its bills and proposals.

Another rough estimate concerned with the woods industry is that approximately one-third of the cost incurred in getting a tree from the woods to the mill is involved in hauling. This figure is exclusive of the amount paid for stumpage.

But operators calculate that that about one-third of the cost is involved in logging, one-third in road construction and one-third in transportation.

LARGE FOREST AREA

Douglas County contains 897,880 acres of National Forest lands. Of this, the Umpqua National Forest comprises 731,027 acres; the Willamette, 50,628 acres; Siuslaw, 62,213 acres, and the Rogue River, 54,012 acres.



LOGGING TRUCK hurrying with its load of raw timber product to mill or storage pond is familiar sight on Douglas County's roads and highways. The county has approximately 750 log truckers. They make an important contribution to the county economy by providing the raw

materials needed to keep the wood manufacturing plants operating. Photo above was taken on Little River Road at an Emile Creek bridge crossing east of Roseburg. (News-Review-Photo).

Truckers Map Legislative Goals

Around 4,500 sawmill workers in Douglas County are dependent upon approximately 750 log truckers, reports Jim Faught, president of Douglas County Log Truckers Association, Inc., Roseburg.

The association is composed of 90 members representing 125 trucks, valued at more than \$1-million, Faught says. In addition, there are 22 associate members. Sen. Al Flegel has been named an honorary member of the association.

The organization, Faught states, has public relations and legislation as primary objectives. During 1963 it is hoped to work out an improved insurance plan, retain a flat fee option, change regulations pertaining to height of a load, change the schedule of fines on overloads and improve fees paid for hauling.

Option Provided
Haulers presently have an option of a flat monthly fee, or paying on a basis of miles traveled. The flat fee is cheaper in summer, when trucks are active, but the mileage fee is cheaper in winter months. It is feared the state legislature will be asked to force abandonment of the flat fee and put all trucks on the mileage basis, Faught says. The association will endeavor to retain the privilege of option.

Existing law regulates the height of loads to 12 feet six inches. This is a sufficient height on small loads, or if the load consists of small logs, it is reported. But bigger loads, containing logs of large diameter, should be permitted a height of 13 feet six inches, says Faught, and the Legislature will be asked to ease the regulation.

Log truckers presently are required to show need for their services and secure a "certificate of necessity," Faught says. The legislature is expected to receive applications to do away with this requirement. On the other hand, the association will seek to have the requirement continued, and perhaps amended to make it more operative and effective.

Seeks Safety Laws
The association, the president states, has worked to provide numerous safety laws and devices, particularly as binder chains are concerned. It hopes to continue to work for more safety at the coming session of the legislature. The schedule of fines for overloads on log trucks is higher than on other types of freight trucks, Faught reports. The association

Slash Is Burned To Curb Hazard

A total 5,200 acres of slash resulting from logging operations was burned on Umpqua National Forest land during 1962.

Larry Thorpe, fire control officer, said of this amount 4,600 acres were in clearcut units and 600 acres were in partial cut areas. In partial cut areas, slash is normally piled by hand or by tractors before burning.

Purpose of burning slash is to reduce the hazardous fuels which result from timber harvesting or land clearing operations. Such burning is performed under controlled conditions, usually in the fall.

contends that log haulers should not be forced to pay more in the form of penalties than other forms of freight transportation trucks. In this connection it is planned to suggest to the legislature that overloads be lowered for small violations and increased on large overloads.

Another request to be pressed by the organization, it is stated, is that a rate per hour for log hauling be substituted for the present rate in which haulers are paid on a basis of board feet per load. The trucker hauling from a nearby show has a great advantage over one who must travel long distances, Faught points out. Through a specified rate per hour, all would be on an equal basis.

Officers Listed
Associations similar to that in Douglas County have been organized in Coos, Lane, Josephine and Jackson counties, Faught reports. Other officers of the Douglas County group include Pat Moran, vice president; J. E. Mellor, treasurer; Barbara Faught, secretary; Stanley Stephens, Roseburg; Bill Updegrave, Glide; Jack Tinsley, Roseburg; Kermit Knudsen, Myrtle Creek; Leonard Clifton, Canyonville; Wayne Brown, Glendale; William Harpole, Elkton and Archie Mustoe, Reedsport, board members.

In its public relations activities, Faught reports, the association is working with school safety committees, State Police and sheriff's office. He has attended PUC hearings relating to new permit applications in Douglas County; maintained telephone answering service for operators needing trucks and truckers needing jobs, furnished

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TRUCKS TAKE OVER

River Logging Run Was Colorful Era

By CHARLES V. STANTON

One of the most colorful eras of the lumber industry was the days when logs were moved almost exclusively by water.

Logs were dragged over skid roads, usually by teams of oxen, and were piled beside rivers during periods of low water. Then, when freshets came, logs were rolled into the swollen rivers. Agile, reckless drivers skillfully rode logs in the swirling currents, clearing log jams and herding logs past natural obstructions until they were delivered to mills located at sites on tidewater.

Stumpage adjacent to water became harder and harder to find. This caused some of the larger companies to build logging railroads. But railroads could be used for log transportation in only comparatively level areas. Rugged terrain couldn't be logged successfully or economically by railroad.

Until a comparatively few years ago for example logs in Southern Oregon were floated down the Coquille River to coastal mills. Because the stream had a limited flow, splash dams were used. Logs would be collected in the backwater of a dam. Water then would be released to carry logs to the next reservoir. This practice scoured out the banks of the stream, causing much damage to its fishery.

Water transportation is still to be found in the Lower Umpqua area, where logs are floated from Smith River, a coastal tributary of the Umpqua, and in the tidewater section of the main river. But transportation of logs through use of our waterways is a rare practice today.

Water still furnishes means for transporting logs in some parts of the far north, however.

Too, logging is done in the dead of winter, at a time when logging and log transportation are at a near standstill in this area.

But in some parts of the far north it is impossible to reach or transport logs over soft tundra. But, with the coming of cold weather, the ground becomes frozen and hard. Trees are felled and bucked into logs. Logs are trucked to a nearby river and are piled on the ice. Then, when the ice melts, logs are carried downstream as was once the general practice.

Here in Douglas County the lumber industry for many years was confined almost exclusively to the coastal region.

Logging Moves Inland
But the invention of the motor truck, and its use in handling heavy cargoes, particularly logs, made it possible for the lumber industry to enter Douglas County.

We are often amazed as we travel the North Umpqua highway be-

tween Roseburg and Glide to count loaded log trucks at about 30-second intervals. Sometimes, particularly as we read of accidents caused when binder chains fail and logs are thrown off trucks, we actually become a little frightened.

But we should realize that it is the logging truck and drivers of logging trucks who provide the economy of this county.

Prior to the coming of the timber industry, Douglas County ranked 19th in Oregon in covered payrolls. Today it is in third place, led only by Multnomah and Lane counties. Such is the change wrought by the logging truck.

Beginning Traced
The freight truck owes its beginning to the First World War period.

Prior to that time, few commercial vehicles were in use. Some heavier vehicles substituted for local transfer. But the long distance freight truck and specialized vehicles, such as the logging truck, were in the future.

During the war trucks, many of them still with hard tires, were put into use as troop and cargo carriers. After the war private industry began using trucks to handle freight between cities. As use of cars and trucks became more prevalent, there was a strong demand for better roads. Better roads, in turn, resulted in vast improvement in motor trucks.

Trucks Developed
Logging trucks were developed to reach into areas of rough terrain, areas which couldn't be reached through use of waterways or by railroad.

Douglas County is one of those areas. The logging industry was unable to enter the county in earlier years.

Even then it wasn't until the time of World War II, which brought about a demand for timber and boards as a critical war material, that the industry established a foothold in Douglas County.

Today hundreds of trucks on many miles of logging roads and intermediate roads and highways bring close to a billion board feet of logs to Douglas County mills annually. Without those trucks Douglas County still would be one of the poorest counties of Oregon instead of one of the most active.

CITY WATER SOURCE

A total 895,472 acres of watershed on the Umpqua National Forest provide municipal water supplies for Cottage Grove and numerous Douglas County towns and communities. This represents 87.6 per cent of the total acreage within the Umpqua National Forest boundaries.

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