

btb

BETWEEN
THE
BRANCHES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TIGERCAT INDUSTRIES INC.

Thomas Logging Drive for Success

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NEW 480B AND TIGERCAT 4061 MULCHING HEAD



The robust 480B mulcher equipped with the new Tigercat 4061 mulching head.

Tigercat has introduced the powerful, 480B mulcher and the brand new Tigercat 4061 mulching head.

The Tigercat 480B tackles the toughest terrain with ease and offers superior durability and high uptime for large-scale, time-sensitive right-of-way and site preparation projects.

With a power rating of 411 kW (550 hp) at 1,800 rpm, the Tigercat FPT C13 Tier 4f engine offers quick load response, low operating costs and high power density, combined with excellent fuel economy. Best of all, Tigercat FPT engines are backed by Tigercat warranty and support.

The efficient, responsive closed loop track drive system delivers powerful tractive effort and performance with greater hydraulic efficiency in challenging terrain. The high-lift boom geometry means high productivity in slopes and gullies.

The cab interior is quiet and instrumentation has been placed to optimize productivity. The electronic control system interface uses a high-resolution, 180 mm (7 in) touch screen. The 480B is equipped with a comfortable, heated and cooled seat with air-ride suspension. Excellent cab insulation translates to reduced noise levels so operators can take full advantage of the Bluetooth® sound system with hands-free calling.

4061 mulching head

The new mulching head offers excellent durability and reliability in a package ideally suited to the capabilities of the Tigercat 480 and M726 series mulchers.

The 4061 is manufactured to Tigercat's exacting high standards for robustness and quality. The housing features reinforced side covers and abrasion resistant skis. The housing is optimized with debris door cylinders mounted internally for protection and contains position references to aid in ski alignment.

Timing belts eliminate belt slip and provide efficient power transfer to the rotor, lowering maintenance time and costs associated with conventional v-belts.

Service and maintenance are a snap, maximizing uptime. The Tigercat designed tooth and holder system uses a taper lock interface that requires no torque wrenches, greatly reducing changeover time. The teeth are extremely durable with carbide tips and carbide inserts for increased life.



Enhanced cab featuring comfortable, heated and cooled seat with air-ride suspension.

Unlike competing mulching heads, the 4061 wear liner requires no welding and the rotor does not need to be removed when servicing. There are also reversible and interchangeable shear bars for quick servicing. In addition, a tapered housing shields debris from potential build-up and easily accessible grease points make daily servicing even more convenient. ■

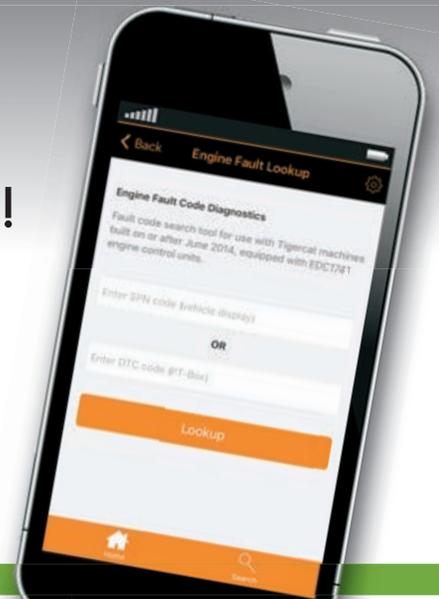
New Engine Diagnostics Tool

Now available in the Tigercat App!

Engine fault code lookup for Tigercat machines

- Built on or after June, 2014
- Tigercat FPT N45, N67 and C87 Tier 4f and Tier 2f engines

Search for 'Tigercat' in the App Store or Google Play.



TIGERCATPOWER.
TIGERCATSUPPORT.™

1055C ENHANCEMENTS

The Tigercat 1055C forwarder represents a major update to the heavy-duty, 14-tonne 1055 model series.

The 1055C now offers Tigercat's innovative low-wide bunk system found on the larger 1075C and 1085C models. Low-wide provides superior line-of-sight to the load and reduces operator strain. The 1055C is also available with a choice of three wagon frame lengths and fixed bunks.

The new Tigercat F135T85 hooked crane means more lift for the 1055C and less chance of the crane contacting the gate. Increased operator confidence and more lifting power translates to decreased loading and unloading times and increased productivity. The maximum reach of the new crane is 8,5 m (335 in) and it has a gross lifting moment of 135 kNm (99,571 lbf).

The 1055C is powered by the Tigercat FPT N67 in Tier 2 and Tier 4 configurations. Tigercat FPT engines offer quick load response, low operating costs and high power density, combined with excellent fuel economy. The engines are backed by Tigercat warranty and support.

The Tier 4 configuration is rated at 159 kW (213 hp) at 2,100 rpm and delivers a peak of 165 kW (221 hp) at 1,900 rpm. The Tier 2 configuration is rated at 159 kW (213 hp) at 2,100 rpm and produces a peak of 165 kW (221 hp) at 1,900 rpm.

Tigercat forwarders have unsurpassed service access to all electrical, mechanical and hydraulic systems. All parts in the forwarder can be lifted out as opposed to dropped from underneath the machine. Thoughtful component arrangement and access makes servicing Tigercat forwarders easier than competing machines. The engine hood flips forward for great access to both sides of the engine and the entire engine compartment. The strong steel engine house cover forms a comfortable, spacious work platform in the open position.

As with the rest of the Tigercat forwarder line-up, the operating environment is expansive and comfortable with optimized sight lines and ergonomics. Sound levels are very low. Lighting, operator controls and interface and the climate control systems are well engineered, contributing to high productivity and reduced operator fatigue during long shifts. ■



Tigercat's nimble and capable 1055C forwarder.

X870D AND LX870D TRACK FELLER BUNCHERS ROLL OUT

Tigercat has begun production of the latest version of the flagship 870 series feller bunchers, X870D and LX870D. The 870 series is the largest, most powerful and productive track feller buncher Tigercat builds. It excels in tough and rocky terrain, high-cycle felling, oversized timber and extreme temperature applications.

The X870D and LX870D both use the Tigercat FPT C87 Tier 4f engine. The C87 engine delivers high power output and low fuel consumption, delivering 245 kW (330 hp) at 1,900 rpm.

The X870D series track feller buncher shares a redesigned and enhanced cab with the 822D and LX830D feller bunchers. Narrower front posts and larger side windows expand sight lines to both the right and left sides. The skylight has been replaced by a camera system providing the operator with a much wider field of view and eliminating visibility inhibiting elements like snow and debris for year round capability. In addition, a new rugged, high-resolution rear-facing camera comes standard. The cab interior is quiet and instrumentation has been thoughtfully placed to optimize ergonomics. The electronic control system interface uses a high-resolution, 180 mm (7 in) touch screen colour monitor and the cab now has multiple mounting points for additional electronic devices.

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Powered, retracting roof enclosure and powered side platform make for extraordinary service access on the X870D series.



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Maintenance access is outstanding with a clamshell style retracting roof enclosure providing clear and easy access to the engine, valves and cooling system components with a side platform for daily service access. The D-series introduces an engine-side powered platform for maximum efficiency during servicing.

The LX870D uses Tigercat's patented super-duty leveling base featuring large pins and cylinders,

tapered roller bearings and thick steel plate. The track frames are 330 mm (13 in) longer for increased stability on steep slopes, and a redesigned undercarriage structure improves durability.

The closed loop track drive system enhances multi-functioning and improves steering efficiency when operating on slopes. ■

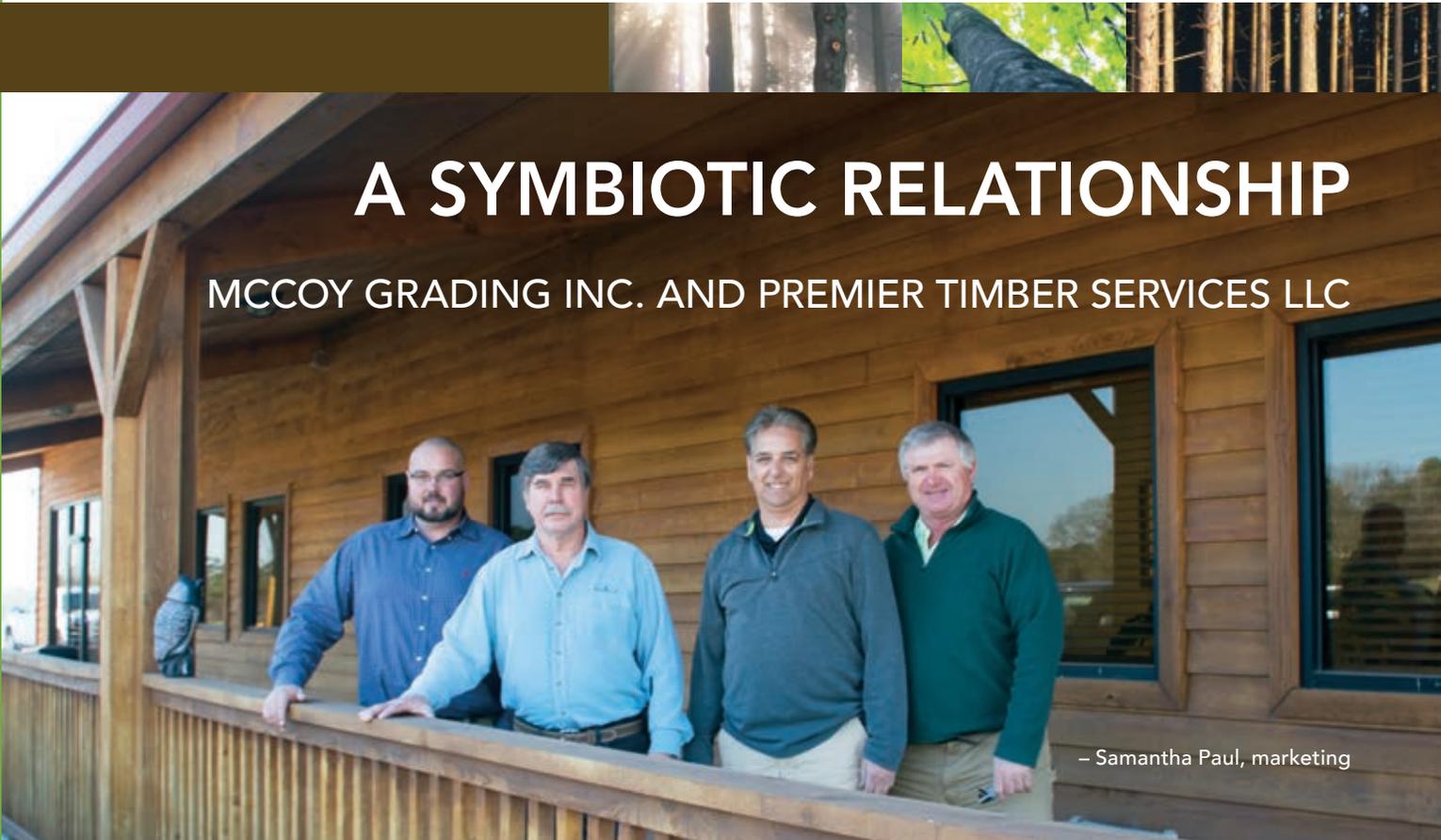


Tigercat engineering and production staff in Paris, Ontario come together to celebrate the new LX870D.

NOW THAT'S A SNOW PLOW!

The team at Barco LLC, operating in Utah's beautiful Dixie National Forest, uses a 620E skidder all summer long until the snow gets over three feet deep. Once the snow reaches that point they typically have plenty of wood already decked to haul out. This year instead of having the skidder parked for the winter months, they decided to utilize it as a snow plow, clearing snow for the log trucks, pushing snow up to six feet deep. The plow attachment only takes five minutes to install, making it a very quick transition from skidder to snow plow. ■





A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

MCCOY GRADING INC. AND PREMIER TIMBER SERVICES LLC

– Samantha Paul, marketing

Outside the McCoy Grading headquarters in Greenville, Georgia. (L-R) Daniel McCoy, VP operations, McCoy Grading Inc.; Ricky McConnell, president, Forestry 21; Lewis Grier, sales specialist, Forestry 21; Johnny Boyd, district manager, Tigercat.

BTB visited with McCoy Grading Inc. and Premier Timber Services LLC in Greenville, Georgia to learn more about the recent purchase of a Tigercat LX830D feller buncher for the companies multi-million dollar grading business.

Established in 1986 by brothers Darrell and Jeff McCoy, McCoy Grading Inc. has grown from a small residential grading company into a full service contractor working on residential, commercial and industrial sites, roadway construction and landfill projects across Georgia and Alabama.

History and growth

Pond construction and septic tank installation made for a healthy business in the beginning, but when the residential market slowed in 1992, the company had to expand to survive. Commercial site preparation work kept the company going, but then that business was hit by a downturn in 2000. McCoy then expanded into the state and municipal sector including railway and Department of Transport (DOT) roadwork. Since then, the state and

municipal work has proven to be a vital contributor to the company's continued success.

Founding brother Darrell and wife Jean McCoy acquired full ownership of the company in 2007. Since then, their son Daniel and daughter Crystal have joined them in the everyday operation of the company. Daniel is the vice president of operations, overseeing the day-to-day field schedule, while Crystal is the vice president of finance, managing the financial and compliance aspects of the company.

"The road to success is always under construction."

– Arnold Palmer

Premier Timber Services LLC represents the land clearing side of the business and is in its third year. It consists of a clearing crew, a logging crew and a mulching crew. Premier Timber fulfills the clearing needs of the business while keeping the grading business on schedule. It is owned by brother-sister-mother team, Daniel McCoy, Crystal Jones and Jean McCoy.

Today McCoy Grading and Premier Timber Services employ over 120 people and run 145 machines. The company now has broad experience with a variety of work including storm drainage, sanitary sewer,

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An aerial view of a 30-acre (12-hectare) industrial site being graded for a trailer dealership along I75 in Forest Park, Georgia.

waterline, earthwork, erosion control, asphalt milling, manufacturing facilities, solar power sites and distribution hubs. The roadway construction business is also growing with road widening, relocation and new construction projects. They also recently added a new bridge construction division to the company portfolio and hit record revenues last year.

Premier Timber Services

Premier Timber supports McCoy Grading by helping move grading projects forward more quickly. Although Premier Timber primarily supports the operations of McCoy Grading, the company also subcontracts to other contractors.

The first step on any new job site is clearing the land, so logging plays an important part in the operations. McCoy Grading was finding it harder and harder to hire contract loggers to clear the land for them.

“We log tracts that are three acres [1,2 ha], we log tracts that are thirty acres [12 ha],” explains Daniel. “So it just doesn’t work out financially to have logging

contractors take on these smaller sites. No logging contractor can sustain themselves on the scale of our projects. We have three trucks out today, but we may only pull two loads a day for two weeks. But the wood is ours, we aren’t dealing with landowners, buying timber.”

For Premier Timber, the best option was to purchase a harvesting system for itself. Daniel reached out to a friend in the logging business to learn more about Tigercat.

“With Tigercat, if they think the machine needs a one inch bolt, it gets an inch and a half. If the machine requires an extra half-inch of steel, it will get three quarters. They overbuild them and that is what will last,” says

Daniel as he relates the conversation with his friend.

The LX830D

In October, 2014 Premier Timber purchased a 724G drive-to-tree feller buncher and four months later a 620E skidder. Two years later Premiere Timber realized it needed a machine that had the same high

“You can’t build a tractor that won’t have any problems. It is how you say you’re going to deal with those problems is what separates you from the pack and that is what Tigercat is all about.”

– Daniel McCoy, VP operations, McCoy Grading Inc.



The TigerCat LX830D felling three feet away from the bank of an existing railway track. They are clearing the trees prior to grading for a second railway track along side it.

build quality, but could tackle steep road and railway banks.

Daniel spoke with Forestry 21 sales specialist, Lewis Greer, to arrange for a demonstration of the LX830D. Daniel immediately knew it was what they needed. The leveling base is essential for the sloped road and railway banks it often works on. The 340-degree wrist means added control and the limited-tail swing allows the machine to reach tight spots. “You might be on a slope between a power line and a road. It can hold

a tree and you can set it behind you, you can turn it, rack it on another tree and overall have much better control in tight spaces,” Daniel explains.

When BTB visited the LX830D it had just been moved to a four-mile (6,4 km) long railway expansion project. The work is being done for a civil and utility contractor, Strack Inc. The site has an existing railway track and a second track is being laid beside it, requiring extreme precision and control in the felling operation. For added safety, the cutting crew is given a warning before a train passes through, so the LX830D can stop working.



A view of the sloped banks the LX830D is working on. Trains pass through at approximately 70 mph (113 km/h).

The company looked for an experienced operator to run the LX830D, but no one could be found who wanted to work on roadside cutting. Most conventional forestry operators are not used to the complex safety rules and certifications required when working so close to live traffic and construction. To fill the spot, they took one of their capable employees off an excavator. The fundamental motion is the opposite, but overall the control set up is very similar. “It is a learning curve for him, but we have no doubts that the machine will do what we need it to do. It is just a matter of getting those training hours in at the beginning,” says Daniel.

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The boys having a laugh along the skid trail after watching the LX830D work alongside the railway bank. (L-R) Lewis Grier, sales specialist, Forestry 21; Ricky McConnell, president, Forestry 21; Brandon Pijnenberg, site foreman, Premier Timber Services LLC; Donnie Tutton, LX830D operator, Premier Timber Services LLC.

Forestry 21

Daniel and Forestry 21 have a great relationship. Daniel appreciates having the lead technician's cell phone number to call if any problems arise. "Scotty [Thompson] knows how to diagnosis everything. He is young, but really understands the cost of downtime and won't quit until it's done. Forestry 21 is great in that sense," Daniel explains.

From Ricky's experience of being a logger himself, he understands the urgency of downtime. He will take a part off a machine in his yard right away to help a customer that is down.

Factory tour experience

In October, 2015, one year before purchasing the LX830D, Forestry 21 took Daniel and his uncle, Jeff McCoy to visit the Tigercat factories.

Daniel was impressed with how many components were actually engineered and manufactured in-house. "It wasn't all just an assembly plant. You could see the raw steel coming in and then the final product going out the door," he states.

Daniel also commented on the very clean work environment and positive vibe he felt from the staff while touring. "You could tell the floor employees were very proud of what they were building."

Overall, having the LX830D in the fleet of machines mutually benefits both McCoy Grading and Premiere Timber. The machine is fulfilling the clearing needs of the logging side of the business, while keeping the grading business on schedule. Having the LX830D also allows Premiere Timber to feel confident with the companies capabilities, as they take on more and more projects with tricky terrain. ■



Founding brothers Darrell and Jeff McCoy in 1996.

DIESEL TESTING NOW PART OF TFA



The latest generation high-pressure, common rail (HPCR) fuel injection systems used with Tigercat FPT engines operate at much higher temperatures and pressures than previous engines. This means even slight fuel contamination can cause serious engine damage – especially to expensive fuel injectors. On top of regular fuel filter changes, using the recommended filters and filtering fuel from the storage tank, regular testing is an important tactic in the fight against contaminated diesel. The Tigercat Fluid Analysis (TFA) program now makes this easier than ever and ensures that what is going into the machine's tank meets Tigercat's standards.

In partnership with industry leader Fluid Life (www.fluidlife.com), Tigercat's TFA fuel testing program provides an easy way to take samples and get results quickly. The tests will verify sulfur content, water contamination and the amount of particulates to precisely identify the condition of the fuel. Ensuring top quality fuel improves engine reliability and optimizes fuel economy. TFA fuel testing can also track seasonal variations in fuel to match the right fuel to the right season (especially important in cold weather climates) and give a heads-up on possible engine problems that might develop.

Submitting fuel samples to TFA is simple. The fuel test kit includes secure, metal sample containers that

are approved for fuel transport and shipping. With the machine at operating temperature, clean all debris from around the fuel cap then remove the cap, remove the fuel neck strainer and use a clean fuel syphon pump (reserved for diesel fuel only) to fill the sample bottle. If problems are identified, further samples may be required from the on-site bulk storage tank or directly from the supplier to track down the sources of contamination. Testing can also be performed for bacteria, fungi or mold by special request. ■

TFA fuel test kits are available through your Tigercat dealer.

Further reading from the archives:

Dealing with Diesel (BTB 41, Nov. 2015)

Tigercat Fuel Filters (BTB 44, Nov. 2016)



FORESTRY TIRE SERVICE TIPS

– Chris Armour, marketing technical writer



Extra wide flotation tires are a big investment for logging contractors.

Forestry-duty rubber tires are a big investment for logging operators. A set of tires for a four-wheeled skidder can cost upwards of \$12,000 USD and flotation or dual tires can be even more expensive. Skidders, forwarders and drive-to-tree feller bunchers all operate in the most extreme off road conditions of heat, cold, mud, rocks and abrasive soil. Rubber tires can wear prematurely (or fail catastrophically) if not properly looked after. Fortunately, by taking some simple, common-sense precautions, operators can protect their investment and get the most service life and maximum safety out of their tires.

First and foremost, operators need to be checking their tire pressure regularly – preferably on a daily or at least weekly basis. Under inflation can cause excessive heat buildup leading to damage to the sidewall, beads or lining. On the other hand, an over inflated tire is more vulnerable to impact damage. Always check the tire pressure against the Tigercat and tire manufacturers' service recommendations.

When using band tracks (on bogie axle machines) tire pressure should be set to the maximum recommended pressure. This prevents the tires from squatting too much under heavy loads which can

strain and damage the tire sidewalls against the side members of the band tracks. This also helps prevent the tires from spinning on the wheels and damaging their sealing beads. (Note – traction aids should only be used on Tigercat skidders with pre-approval from Tigercat Customer Service to ensure warranty coverage.)

Operator training and behavior are also both critical to extending tire life. Two particular areas that operators need to be aware of are the use of differential locks and planning for the best driving path.

Differential locks provide extra traction by forcing both wheels on a vehicle to spin at the same speed rather than allowing each wheel to spin at different speeds depending on traction. Pre-emptive use of differential locks in difficult terrain (muddy, steep or dusty) helps to minimize the amount of wheel spin. Many operators wait until they notice wheel spin before using the differential locks. This can lead to severe tire damage as large pieces of rubber can be sheared off if the tire makes contact with a sharp rock or stump when spinning. Differential locks should be engaged in anticipation of difficult terrain



Band tracks on skidders mean extra care needs to be taken with tire pressure.

as much as possible to minimize this risk, but should be left off for driving on less challenging terrain.

Finally, operators need to select the best driving path whenever possible. Operators need to be aware of the geography in the working area and carefully plan the route to be driven. How steep are the slopes? Are

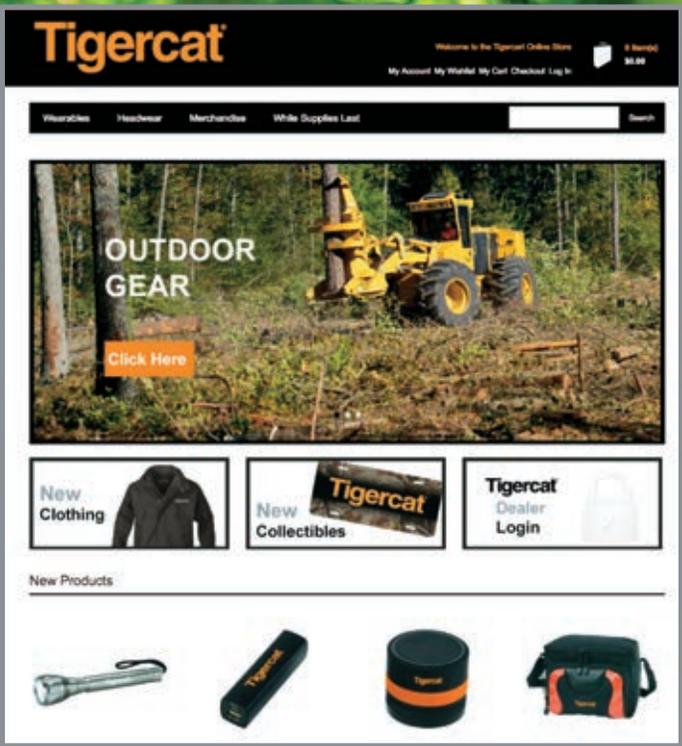
there areas or deep mud or hard-to-spot hollows? Going around an obstacle or mound or steep incline may take a little longer, but the savings in fuel and tire damage may well make it worthwhile. Always keep both eyes and your mind open when driving off road. ■



Check out the new Tigercat® online store for exclusive branded merchandise.

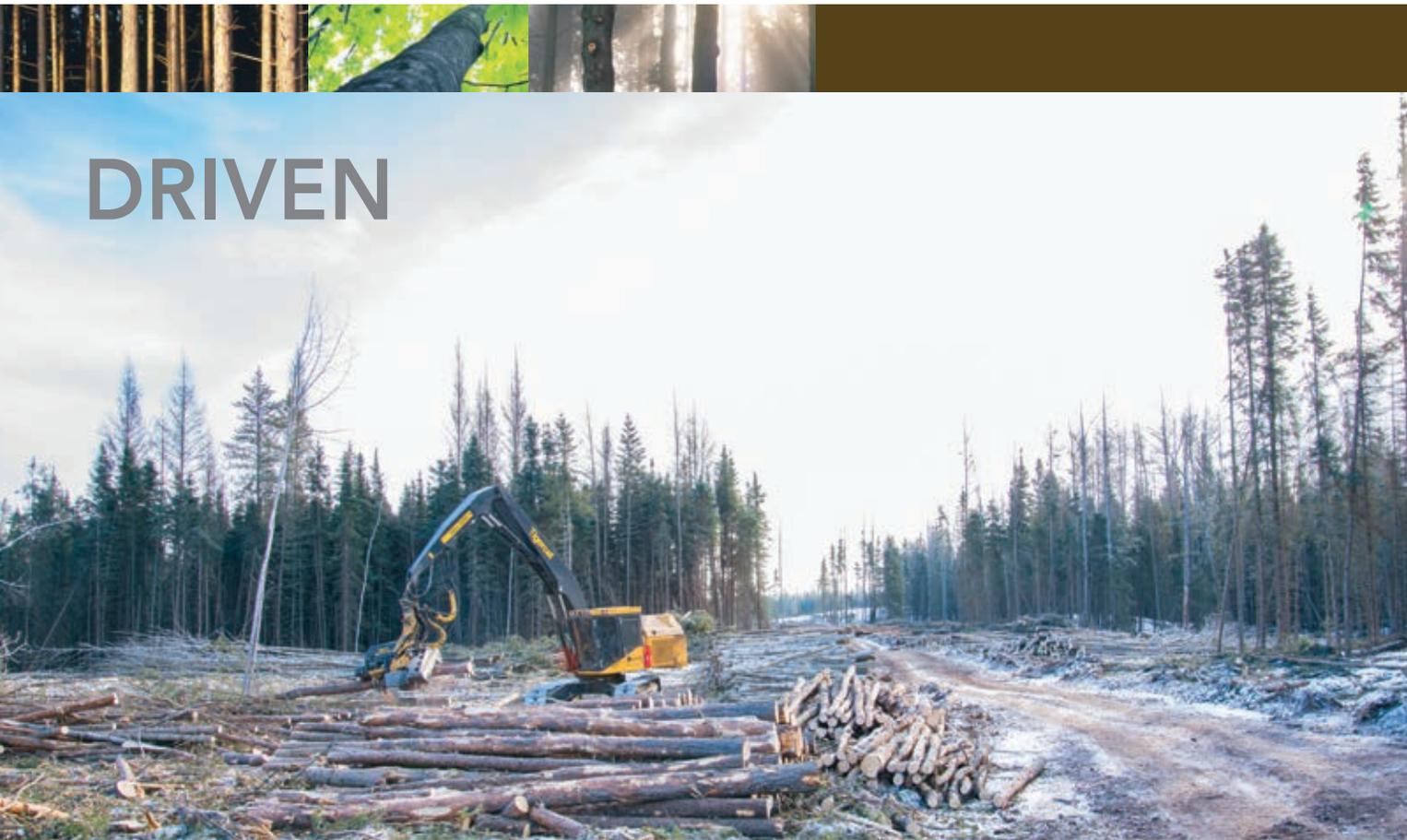
www.tigercatshop.com

Be sure to bookmark our new address!



The screenshot shows the Tigercat online store interface. At the top is the Tigercat logo and navigation links: Home, My Wishlist, My Cart, Checkout, Log In. Below the navigation is a search bar and a main banner for 'OUTDOOR GEAR' with a 'Click Here' button. Underneath are three featured sections: 'New Clothing' with a jacket image, 'New Collectibles' with a Tigercat logo image, and 'Tigercat Dealer Login' with a login button. At the bottom, there is a 'New Products' section displaying four items: a flashlight, a tool, a container, and a bag.

DRIVEN



One of Thomas Logging's TigerCAT H855D harvesters paired with a TigerCAT 575 harvesting head.

Two brothers with a lifetime of experience and a penchant for hard work have a drive to succeed and are proving it just two years in.

– Paul Iarocci

Gary and Darren Thomas are third generation loggers who have worked in the bush for practically their entire lives. Hailing from Pelican Lake First Nation near Leoville, Saskatchewan, the brothers grew up hunting and fishing around Chitek Lake and started working in the bush when they were still kids. Both father and grandfather made a living in the bush and the boys were line skidding full time by the time they were in their early teens. “Logging was something that we always liked,” says Gary. “We started full time in the bush at thirteen.”

However, it is a long way from chainsaws and cable skidders to a modern, high production stump to dump operation. In between is a story of hard work, perseverance and a continual striving for excellence in the profession.

Gary explains that he purchased his own cable skidder at age 16, modeling after his father, Calvin who had

the same line skidding business model. Father and son worked this way for several years until local regulations began to change in Saskatchewan and cable skidders were phased out. Gary and his father sold each of their cable machines and pooled their resources to purchase a grapple skidder.

Agency Chiefs Tribal Council is a legally incorporated body comprised of three Indian Bands, Big River, Pelican Lake and Witchekan Lake. Its mandate is to contribute to the human, economic and social well-being of its members. One of the Council's departments is AC Forestry.

AC Forestry is in turn one of eight shareholders that owns Sakâw Askiy Management Inc. This entity was formed to jointly assume the Forest Management Agreement (FMA) and its management responsibilities. The FMA was previously held in large part by Weyerhaeuser which owned and operated the Prince Albert pulp and paper mill – shuttered in early 2006 due to poor market conditions. The Sakâw shareholders include First Nations and forest companies own processing facilities in Saskatchewan. They bring to the table a proven track record in business and sustainable forest management, along with the traditional knowledge of the First Nations.



Planning, harvesting, hauling and renewal operations are carried out by each of the shareholders within specific operating zones in the FMA. The business leaves local decisions to those with the local knowledge while providing coordinated oversight at the FMA level (Sakâw).

The Thomas family became a skidder subcontractor under AC Forestry in the nineties and continued until the Weyerhaeuser closure that left AC Forestry with virtually no harvest contract. Always the entrepreneurs, the family got into the food concession business, travelling to local Pow Wows. This period marks a rare departure from logging for Gary and Darren. “We always tip waitresses well. It is hard work being on your feet or in the kitchen all day,” says Gary speaking from experience.

In November 2010 Sakâw Askiy Management Inc. acquired the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement from Weyerhaeuser Canada on behalf of its eight member companies. AC Forestry ended up with an annual cut of around 700 000 cubic metres.

“Logging was something that we always liked. We started full time in the bush at thirteen.”

– Gary Thomas, Thomas Logging Ltd.

The brothers returned to AC Forestry, this time as employees. They did a five-year stint – with Gary operating feller buncher and Darren on a processor. The brothers always believed in their own abilities, work ethic and high production output, so, in the back of Gary’s mind, he knew that he wanted a contract of his own.

“They were always asking for contractors, so I just went in and asked for it,” Gary recounts. “A lot of guys said they won’t let us leave and have our own contract because they wouldn’t

want to lose two of their best workers.” But now two years into the contract, Thomas Logging is producing well for AC Forestry and the new arrangement is turning out to be the proverbial win-win. The enterprise is owned by Gary, Darren and Calvin with strong support from cousin, Daniel Thomas. “Daniel stayed with us through it all, he is like a brother to us,” says Gary.

Thomas Logging started with a used Tigercat 860 feller buncher and bought back the same grapple skidder that they owned when they subcontracted to

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(L-R) Chuck Miles, Darren Thomas, Greg Bill, Bob Head, Daniel Thomas, Gary Thomas, Melvin Gladue and James Farquhar.



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AC Forestry fifteen years ago. Chuck Miles, forestry equipment sales specialist for Redhead Equipment stepped in and made them a deal on a new Tigercat H855C harvester paired with a Tigercat 575 head to complete the system. Two months into the first season, Thomas Logging purchased a second identical harvester unit from Redhead.

Now having just finished up their second winter season, the brothers have already relegated the used buncher and skidder to spare machine status. Through Chuck and Redhead, they acquired a new Tigercat 870C feller buncher and a new 630E skidder.

BTB visited in late February with just a couple weeks left before spring break-up. The ground was characterized by steep draws and not a lot of flat ground for decking. The timber, a mix of varying diameter aspen and spruce. The contract is a stump to dump contract, however loading and hauling is subcontracted out. The 4,8 m (16 ft) aspen goes to Tolko Industries Ltd in Green Lake and the soft wood goes to Norsask Forest Products in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, another Indigenous-owned enterprise. “This is hard ground, very hilly. It is tough on the processors and decking. With the processors we were really impressed. It is a good, tough machine. They really stand up,” says Gary.



Brothers Darren and Gary Thomas of Thomas Logging Ltd.

When asked what it was like to make the adjustment from employee to high production contractor, Gary shrugs. “Nothing too much different. I have always tried to look after things and run the show like a supervisor.” Gary feels that he has naturally progressed into a role of managing people because even as an employee he found himself taking responsibility and really caring about the job and the equipment.

He admits managing people can be a challenge. “It is hard to find good guys but a whole bunch of my family are involved in logging. Everyone but Bob Head





Who says there are no hills in Saskatchewan? The 630E pulling out of a steep gully.

and Melvin Gladue are family. So now we have a really good crew, eight guys with low turnover.” When they are camp based, Gary’s girlfriend, Rolanda, runs the kitchen, hauls water and moves fuel tanks for the machines. “Dad runs for parts and does anything else needed to keep the operation going. He is very proud of us. We have a real good team here – everyone works together.”

“Dad lets me run the show,” says Gary. “I do most of the repair work and sometimes we will get Redhead in.” Darren bounces between the skidder and a processor. All the operators do their own daily maintenance. “We want to have guys that care about the equipment like we do. We cut loose an operator that doesn’t look after the machines or doesn’t produce. They don’t work here.”

Chuck Miles from Redhead has spent a lot of time with the Thomas brothers, seeing how they work and watching their rapid progress. “Since they have been in the bush all their lives, they know they need to keep the machines running. So right from the start they set up a fully stocked mobile shop with a hose crimper, fittings, a compressor and an inventory of

wear parts. When guys start out, sometimes this stuff gets overlooked. They made it a priority when they first started so that they would have the machine availability. They are down for one hour instead of running to town and having a machine being down for half a day. That can kill a new contractor.”

Gary is happy with the relationship with Redhead Equipment as well. “The machines are solid and Redhead has been good.” Tigercat harvesting head customer support specialist, Blain MacDonald has also been integral to the successful start up of the operations working with Thomas Logging and Redhead to ensure the processors were optimally set-up and that the operators had the right knowledge out of the gate.

“It is a big investment but it is worth it,” Gary says as he sums it all up. “You can’t really think about how much in debt you are because these machines are going to pay for themselves ten times over. We plan to really look after them and keep them as long as we can.” ■

TWO SIDES OF A DEVALUED COIN



A 20,000 hour forwarder is a relative 'baby' in South Africa.

South African harvesting contractors run high quality purpose-built machines and have developed the expertise to run them to extremely high hours.

– Gary Olsen, international factory sales representative

Tigercat shipped its very first machines – 720D wheeled feller buncher and a 630C grapple skidder – to South African dealer, AfrEquip in July 2005. In the ensuing eighteen months, the Tigercat machine population in the South African forest industry exploded reaching over 50 units by middle of 2007.

In July 2005 the South African Rand to USD exchange rate sat at exactly ZAR 6.68 and by the end of 2006, the rate had moved marginally to ZAR 7. Hay was certainly made while the sun shone and suffice to say had more hay been made the industry could have found its ability to control harvesting costs much easier than it does in today's environment.

In USD terms, these exact same machines save for safety, technology, efficiency and ergonomic improvements have risen by an average of 1.5% per annum over the past 12 years or 21% but because of the Rand devaluing against the USD, (13 in February, 2017) the real increase is actually 5% annum or 60% in total.

One can immediately appreciate that planning a traditional machine replacement strategy under such a dramatically changed financial scenario has become prohibitive. So what has the Plan B been over the past 10 years?

Recently, Tigercat embarked on a countrywide visit involving a range of customers from large forestry companies all the way to small, single machine contractors. The goal was to determine how they have coped all this time, how they feel about having purchased their purpose-built Tigercats and whether the initial investment was worth it in the long run.

All of these customers agreed that having forked out this amount of capital to get going, they absolutely needed to run their high quality purpose-built Tigercat machines for a long time to bring capital costs down. When running and relying on high hour machines, most customers stressed the need to have good workshop facilities, mechanical expertise and service self-sufficiency to make the numbers work.

Even with the current exchange rate there have been some recent purchases of new Tigercat cable and grapple skidders, but the reality is that there are a vast number of machines that continue to operate that are fast approaching the 40,000 machine hour mark. These machines are integral to the operations that they belong to, as opposed to being merely spare machines. Engines and in some cases hydraulic pumps, motors, transmissions and final drives might have been replaced, but for the most part, everything else on the machines seemed to still be on their “first life”. Some customers, having seen the longevity value in a Tigercat purpose-built machine, have imported relatively low hour used machines from other parts of the world, feeling they almost have invested in a new Tigercat for half the price. This is a common practice we see happening with loggers in other African countries as well.

The feedback on the life of tracked undercarriage running components was varied and it seemed to boil down to the practice of when you track a machine to the next compartment and when you call for the flatbed truck. Tracked undercarriage running components that were not allowed to track excessively lasted into very high hours up to 30,000 hours while numbers as low as 3,000 hours were the norm for machines that were constantly tracked to the next compartment sometimes as far as 20 km (12 miles)!

Every single customer visited realized in the early stages of running mechanized harvesting operations that a certain amount of inventory of spare parts had to be carried on site and to this end AfrEquip maintained flexibility with the location of its spare parts, not insisting on keeping spares at the company’s nearest branch, but rather at the customer’s premises.

Regular stock control and replenishment of the parts consumed proved a bit of a learning curve initially, but in the end, the will to make the system work prevailed. In addition, many customers in the initial stages of the learning curve would loath to replace entire assemblies like cylinders, pumps, motors or transmissions and rather attempt to open up the assembly and try repairing just the internal components that had failed. This process proved to be more costly especially when considering the downtime. These days, customers are accustomed to a quick swap out of the faulty component with a new one, and then have the failed



Track undercarriages are reportedly lasting up to 30,000 hours.

component repaired and returned to their spare parts inventory as an eventual back up.

Having a high degree of mechanical availability is another critical measure that has been monitored and managed over time. Most customers having come from a history of using converted agriculture or construction equipment to run a logging job were rapidly convinced when they saw their purpose-built machines achieving as much as 25% more mechanical availability than what they were accustomed to. They have been further amazed at how most of their purpose-built machines have been able to maintain 90% mechanical availability even with hours as high

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as 30,000. In general, it is accepted that harvesting heads (especially when debarking Eucalyptus) have a tough job and so often purpose built carriers are at the mercy of the harvesting head for their mechanical availability performance numbers. Separate the two entities and the carrier number looks even better.

The experience over the years with machine operators has been mixed given that there was not a large pool

of proficient operators of mechanized equipment when the first wave of Tigercat machines entered the country from 2005 to 2007. The larger forest companies were generally hardest hit when it came to operator turn over and the proverbial “musical chairs” was the order of the day as trained, proficient operators moved around the landscape in seek of a few more Rand. Over time, the pool of operators became sufficiently large enough and things have certainly settled down. Most operators are paid a basic wage and then an incentive scheme linked to productivity, work quality and machine uptime. All of the operations involved two or three shifts per day so machines are continuing to acquire 16-18 machine hours per day.

Overall, from our visit, we determined that Tigercat customers have been extremely happy with their decision and loyalty towards purpose-built



machinery over conversions or adapted equipment meant for either the construction or agricultural industries. Great machine performance in high duty cycles, tough terrain conditions and high ambient temperature together with superior safety standards, as well as high mechanical availability and ultimately superior productivity are what sets purpose built machinery apart from the rest.

South African currency devaluation has been a major challenge for all harvesting companies as they have not had the opportunity to implement a desirable and proper machine fleet replacement strategy. However, there is a collective belief that something has to give in the future and purchasing more Tigercats is inevitable to address the need for mechanized harvesting in South Africa. ■

HEATING HOMES IN SWITZERLAND

The first Tigercat has arrived in Switzerland. A DW610E skidder fitted with a Palfinger crane was delivered to Sebastien Oppliger of Oppliger Bois Energie in Swiss Jura, December, 2016.

The skidder is part of an operation to feed district heating plants with wood to heat homes in the local village. It is common in rural Switzerland to have one central heating plant running on wood to heat all the homes in the village. Each household then pays a part of the operating costs to run the central heating plant.

Piers Eyre-Walker of Tigercat Dealer Clohse Group LUX asked Sebastien how things were going with his recent machine purchase, “I have no regrets about buying the first Tigercat in Switzerland, we made the right decision,” responds Sebastien. ■



Left to right bottom row: Christian Jenzer, service mechanic, Keller Forstmaschinen AG; Sebastien Oppliger, owner, Oppliger Bois Energie; Piers-Eyre Walker, Tigercat manager, Clohse Group LUX; Martial Oppliger, Tigercat operator, Oppliger Bois Energie; Billy Drouel, truck driver. Left to right top row: Carly Monnat, feller, Oppliger Bois Energie; Loïc Schneider, team leader and forwarder operator, Oppliger Bois Energie.

letters

BULLDOG FOREST, NOT BULLFROG



I was reading an article in BTB that just arrived, specifically about the Mid South Forestry Equipment show. Mississippi State University, show host, has always been near and dear to my heart. Three generations of both my family and my husband's family have graduated from MSU. I was pained to read your reference to our University's forest system that you called 'Bullfrog Forest' when in fact it should have been the 'Bulldog Forest'. Our mascot for this University is the English Bulldog, hence the name 'Bulldog Forest'. I just wanted to correct for the record.

Sandy Martin, Mississippi

event round-up

CONEXPO 2017 IN LAS VEGAS

Tigercat exhibited on the world stage of CONEXPO – CON/AGG 2017 in March.

What better stage to launch the newest additions to the Tigercat off-road industrial product line than the world renowned construction show in Las Vegas. Introduced for the first time was the Tigercat 480B mulcher equipped with the new Tigercat 4061 mulching head.

Both the 480B and 4061 received a lot of interest with traffic to the booth coming from around the world. Attendees commented on the build quality and easy access to service points.

Taunton, Massachusetts based Street Works provided show support in the Tigercat booth.



A Tigercat flag flying high in the sky at the Las Vegas Convention Centre. Many members of the Tigercat design team were on hand for the five day show to learn from participating vendors and answer customer questions.

This included a Tigercat T726G street trencher on display. The machine provides utility contractors with a quicker, easier, more cost effective and less disruptive method of opening streets for the installation of underground utilities.

The Tigercat 875 logger with a live heel boom system and grapple was also on display to showcase Tigercats purpose-built forestry product line. ■



Wheel feller buncher and mulcher product manager, Rob Pentesco, explaining the features of the Tigercat 480B mulcher and 4061 mulching head.

SUCCESSFUL LOGGING COMMUNITY EVENT



Triad Machinery's Andy Hunter spent much of his day Thursday, explaining the process of felling trees to interested 4th and 5th graders who visited the Triad Machinery show booth.

The Pacific West Coast logging community gathered for the 79th Oregon Logging Conference February 23 – 25th at the Lane Events Center & Fairgrounds in Eugene, Oregon. Cold temperatures and grey skies did not lower the enthusiasm of friends and co-workers as they arrived to visit and discuss the latest logging trends. The Oregon Women in Timber annual auction kicked off the event Wednesday night with an evening of food and fundraising to benefit their forest education program, 'Talk About Trees'. Seminars were also hosted throughout the event for people to earn logging credits and elementary school children toured the show to learn more about the machines and how they work.

Tigercat Dealer, Triad Machinery provided an excellent machine display and warm, welcoming booth to host customers and guests. Tigercat CEO Ken MacDonald along with eleven members of the Tigercat team were also on the ground to support the event.

Tigercat machines on display in the Triad Machinery booth included the LX830D track feller buncher, LS855D shovel logger with grapple, LS855D shovel logger with the 5195 directional felling head, 880D and 875 loggers and a 635E skidder.

Show attendees were able to view the new LX870D Tigercat track feller buncher model on display in the Tractionline booth as a cable assist machine. Tigercat LS855D shovel logger with a 5195 directional felling head and a 635D skidder with modifications for steep slope cable assist were also on display in the Summit Attachment & Machinery LLC booth. ■



Tigercat product support representative, Gary MacDonald, discussing the benefits of the Tigercat 5195 directional felling head with interested guests.

employee news



John Withrow

More product support in the US southeast

Tigercat is pleased to announce that John Withrow has joined the Tigercat product support team. Based out of West Monroe, Louisiana, John will provide support for the southern United States including Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

John has a strong technical background with over twenty years of experience with Tigercat machines from his work with Tigercat dealer, Tidewater Equipment.

“I am excited to be a part of a rapidly growing and constantly evolving company which is on the leading edge of the forestry industry,” states John. ■



Keith Gauvreau

New product support representative for Great Lakes region

Tigercat is pleased to announce that Keith Gauvreau has joined the Tigercat product support team. Based out of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Keith will provide support for the Great Lakes Region.

Keith comes from a mechanical background with a college degree in heavy equipment mechanics, a welding certification from the American Welding Society and twenty-three years of field support experience.

“I am excited to work for a company with such a great quality product,” states Keith. “I truly look forward to doing everything I can in keeping our customers happy with this product.” ■



Trevor Scott

Trevor Scott to lead wheel harvester product group

Tigercat is pleased to announce the appointment of Trevor Scott to product manager – wheel harvesters.

Trevor has been working for Tigercat for nearly twenty years. Trevor’s experience working on harvester head design and the work he accomplished with the H250B processor and 1135 wheel harvester will greatly assist in the engineering of Tigercat’s new wheel harvester product offerings.

“I am very pleased to take on this new role and am grateful for the opportunity,” says Trevor. “I look forward to working together on new product offerings that will impress our customer base.” ■

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