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A New Voice



Tough times have a way of motivating tough people. Challenging times are fueling the formation of a new loggers association in North Carolina. The North Carolina Association of Professional Loggers (NCAPL) is being welcomed eagerly by North Carolina loggers.

The NCAPL started with a core of 12 in late 2007. Since then, the ranks have grown to 34 logging members and six partner members and much is anticipated for the rest of this year.

Movers And Shakers

Doug Duncan, formerly of the North Carolina Forestry Assn., is the Executive Director. The executive committee, a group of people chosen to aid with the organization and steering the association, is Chip Capps, Arcola Logging; Randy Mickey, Randy Mickey Logging; Joe Ross, J&J Logging; and Perry Hunt, Hunt Forest Resources, LLC.



Beyond the executive committee will be a Board of Directors. Area meetings are also on the agenda. "It's pretty much like a start-up business and you take one step at a time," Duncan says. "The charter members wanted to have formal elections at our first annual meeting and leave the door open to those wanting to serve in leadership positions. We are establishing an 'area' concept for evening meetings where loggers plan on a 30-45 minute drive time to local restaurants for dinner, speaker and timely update on current issues. I'll attend all area meetings across the state and lend the continuity and binding elements essential to a statewide association. Each area will elect and hand up its own Board of Director member for scheduled statewide meetings."

Spreading The Word

Initially, a fairly extensive network of loggers, suppliers, and mills helped herald the birth of NCAPL. Word spread fast. "We've been a welcome news item," Duncan says. "We have been congratulated by a fairly widespread and diverse forest industry for stepping up and taking on the day-to-day challenges of helping loggers."

The NCAPL is online at www.ncloggers.com. “We have found that 95% of our logging members are internet capable,” says Duncan. “This has become an essential tool for staying in touch and timely information.” On the website, loggers can learn about upcoming meetings.

A newsletter is in the works and will be written and edited by Duncan. The first issue will come out in the second quarter of this year. It will be posted on the web site, be emailed or faxed to members, and hardcopies will be available anywhere the association will have a booth. Duncan says NCAPL plans to have a presence at all logger attended events.

Partner members play a huge part in helping NCAPL get the word out. “What’s immediately working is our partner members in the insurance, equipment and major forestry companies distributing our flyers and pushing our association,” Duncan says. “We have conducted a series of one-on-one meetings with these partner organizations wherever possible to help get the word out and will continue to do so.”

Mission

As stated on the NCAPL web site, its mission is: “To promote professionalism and business opportunities for business members and the entire forest products network that logging supports.” This statement plainly reflects the reasons loggers came together to combine voices: “We loggers have, by necessity, been very independent individuals used to making things work by ourselves using our own determination and ingenuity,” says Capps. “We realize that, with the changing world economics of the last few years, loggers cannot rely solely on our own individual resources to be successful anymore—we know we need each other (forest products manufacturing companies, paper mills, sawmills, landowners) for different parts of the forest products industry for all to be successful.

“This ‘meeting’ of the two forces is what is driving us to form this association,” Capps explains. “We now know that, in order to survive, we must make use of like individuals’ knowledge and experiences and other state and national associations’ resources.”

Strength In Numbers

According to Duncan, many logger members of NCAPL are joining at the \$1,000 charter member level to get the association financially viable soon out of the gate. The charter dues include the first year membership dues and give them recognition over time for helping get NCAPL off the ground. “We have not heard any negative comments on the cost,” Duncan adds. “The lifeblood of an association is member participation. The NCAPL is their voice and just like other professional organizations the ones that participate are heard and help work out the solutions.”

In light of the initial excitement and response more loggers are expected join as they perceive benefits from their time and financial commitments to the association. “I firmly believe that after the initial networking and exchange of information that our logger leadership is going to do just that, lead the North Carolina logging force into areas of solid business improvements,” Duncan says.

Membership for 2008 is targeted at 300 logger members and 50 partner members.

ALC Support

The American Loggers Council (ALC) was there from the beginning of the concept of the NCAPL. "My sincere appreciation goes out to Forestry Mutual Insurance representatives Keith Biggs and Jimmie Locklear, who were instrumental in hosting a meeting to bring North Carolina loggers together to discuss the formation of an association," says Danny Ductor, Executive Vice-President for the ALC. "Both Crad Jaynes with the South Carolina Timber Producers Association and Jim Mooney with the Virginia Loggers Association helped during those early discussions."

As more loggers join forces, the louder the voice of concern. "Logging is a tough business, and given everything that is happening in our industry right now, from higher fuel prices to depressed markets, I applaud the loggers in North Carolina for making the commitment to the industry and their association to seek solutions to their issues and promote the opportunities that will come before them in the future," Ductor adds. "The NCAPL is currently being considered for full membership into the ALC by our membership committee and we expect them to join our ranks soon."

Currently NCAPL has offices in Cary/Raleigh, Wilmington and staff support in Henderson, NC. Email the NCAPL at contact@ncloggers.com or call (919) 271-9050. To follow the progress of NCAPL, as well as download a membership application, visit its website at www.ncloggers.com.

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