

# BUSINESS

9 T O 5

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## Logging is all in the family

BY RAY HIGGINS  
MTPA Writer

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It's mid-morning just south of Littlefork, and Bruce Junker is slashing tamarack with a Barko 295ML, and loading it onto a waiting truck for delivery to Boise's mill in International Falls, almost 40 miles away.

Today's production is going well. Temperatures are in the single digits above zero with bright sunshine, making this day typical of Northern Minnesota's winter of 2014-15: good cold temps with little snow, ideal for logging.

"The logging conditions don't get any better than they have been this winter," Junker says. "To start with, you have a freeze up in November before the snow came, and it wasn't just two nights of it. It was like about three weeks or a month of nice freeze up at night and then freeze all day long before we even got snow. This freeze up was about as good as it comes. When you can scoot across an ash

swale—and it was dry this fall, which is a plus too—it's as good as it gets."

Plus, the few inches of snow the region has received over the past several weeks is enough to smooth out some of the rough spots of logging roads and landings, but not so much that valuable production time is used plowing.

When you add in the fact that diesel prices are lower than they were a year ago, it's all adding up to a good year so far for Junker Logging, a business that's steeped in the tradition of this area's timber industry.

The business is headquartered on Koochiching County Road 8, just southeast of Littlefork. To locals, the road is known as Cingmars Road, the center of Cingmars Township. Cingmars Hall was established in 1928, where locals have gathered for everything from dances to 4H meetings to voting on election day. The Hall still stands, less than a mile from Junker's place. Back in the day, families like the Imhofs, Hardwigs, Hauners, Promersbergers, and Junkers all farmed and logged in the area, and they're all still represented in some fashion — Bruce Junker's maternal grandfather was Andrew Hauner and Bruce's uncle was Johnny Promersberger



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jace Junker, left, poses for a photo with his dad Bruce Junker, of Junker Logging, near Littlefork.

— in the area's logging community.

Back in the 1950s, both Andrew Hauner and Bruce's dad Carl had dairy farms and logged a little on the side, getting 25 cord contracts from the M&O Paper Mill in International Falls—Boise today.

"The dairy cattle put food on the table," Junker says, "but if you wanted to get

ahead, you'd better be logging because you weren't going any place with the dairy cattle."

By the time Bruce came along and was growing up in the 1960s, like many kids who grew up in the region — particularly boys — he started heading to the woods with his dad.

"As soon as you were able to go to the woods with

him rather than stay home with your mother," Junker recalls, "you'd go out and help a little bit, maybe running the measuring stick, which I did."

As time went on, Bruce's dad Carl would not only fill his own 25-cord contract at Boise, but he'd also go to his father-in-law and uncles and get their 25-cord contracts and fill those too.

Over time as the business grew and he showed he could handle more production, Boise made Carl one of their company loggers. In 1972 when Bruce graduated from Littlefork-Big Falls High School, he basically took over the family logging operation.

"I remember going to get

Junker to A10 ►

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