



## As We See It: Adapt, Change, Overcome

By Ken Martin

As I look at our Logging Profession, I reflect on the change through the years. Remember when you knew in January the product you would be cutting and the price you would be paid for the next 12 months? Remember when that changed to six months, three months, monthly and even weekly? As a southern logger, I have seen the change from the chain saw felling days and



cable skidding equipment to fully mechanized operations. Along with these changes came lower worker compensation insurance costs and reduced chain saw accidents.

While it has been a very interesting 40 plus years of change, there has also been a great deal of improvement in the utilization of forest products, to a point any waste is almost human error. During this time, the forest products industry has worked through performance and efficiency issues at mills while local markets have evolved into world markets, thus requiring us to operate under a whole new set of rules.

Who would have ever thought that truck drivers would be at higher risk than woods workers as related to workers compensation insurance costs? Who would have ever thought that equipment to

harvest timber would come with the current price tags on it? Or be as operator friendly, ergonomically comfortable, and productive as it is today.

During all these industry adjustments, we have seen trade policies debated, a changing U.S. dollar, mills shuttered as well as laws enacted by Congress that have had far reaching effects on our industry. Our adjustment as loggers is we have learned to operate wiser and leaner. Logging professionals have learned to become advocates for our industry by telling our story. We must not sit back and complain, but offer up solutions for the array of problems we face.

The only thing consistent in our Industry is change. We can accept change and with it, take advantage of the situations and opportunities we find ourselves in, or we can be left sitting and wondering what the tag number was on that truck that ran over us. The logging and forest products industry has always adapted—we will continue to adapt.

The American Loggers Council exists to help us transition through some of these changes. We are taking a greater role in both regulatory and logging and trucking safety issues, and have set a goal of having the logging industry disappear from the top “2” list for the most dangerous occupations by the year 2021.

You can help us to achieve those goals by being active. Adapt, change, and overcome.

*Ken Martin is the current President of the American Loggers Council and owns and operates MarCal, Inc. based out of Mendenhall, Mississippi.*

*The American Loggers Council is a 501 (c)(6) not for profit trade organization representing professional timber harvesters in 32 states across the United States. If you would like to learn more about the ALC, please visit their web site at [www.amloggers.com](http://www.amloggers.com), or contact their office at 409-625-0206.*