

In The Woods Demo Offers New Solutions

By Barbara Coyner

Small-scale logging and milling equipment made big impressions as a stinger-steer chip trailer and Davco Twin Cut mobile sawmill performed this winter in the Umatilla National Forest outside Pomeroy Wash.

The two-day event drew 70 loggers, foresters, industry representatives, and community developers. After seeing the Davco in action, demo host and presale forester Ed Koberstein admitted that he put the Twin-Cut mobile sawmill on his wish list.

Moving Biomass with a Stinger-Steer Trailer

The stinger-steer trailer rated highly for efficiently getting woody biomass out of remote spots. The adapted trailer, developed at the USDA's Technology and Development Center in San Dimas, teamed an ordinary logging trailer with a standard cargo container, using the stinger system to maneuver in tight spots. Developer Dave Haston pointed out that the stinger, long used in the industry, allows the trailer to be more flexible than a chip van.

"It's a solution for areas with access issues, where you can't get a chip van in," said Haston. "This is an excellent opportunity to convert existing equipment with lower investment costs."

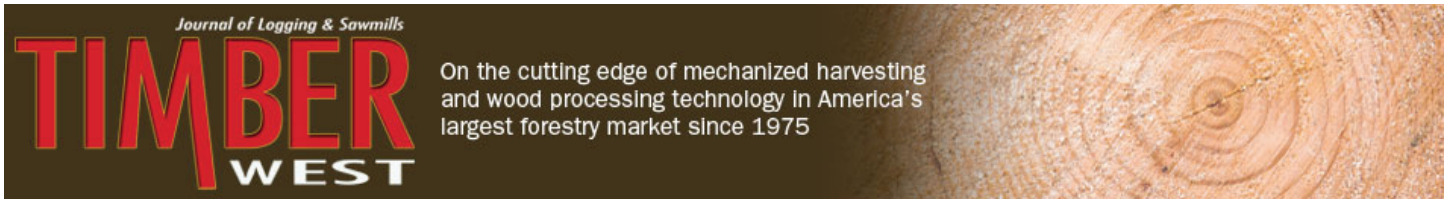
The trailer performed like an acrobat, moving up next to an in-the-woods Morbark chipper run by Ray Moss Logging of Clarkston, then off-loading easily using a movable floor. Clearly the prototype has some additional costs with the movable floor, but Haston said those costs would come down as the unit is developed commercially. He noted that the trailer couldn't haul the same volume as a standard chip van, but the stinger trailer enabled woody biomass haulers to use existing roads instead of building new ones.

Morris Huffman, a woody biomass coordinator from Emmett, Idaho, was clearly impressed. "We have no chip vans in our area," he said. "We need a dozen of these."

Mobile Davco Sawmill

The Davco mobile sawmill also provides flexibility in the woods, giving loggers, agencies, and communities another option in today's world of dwindling sawmills. The twin-blade bi-directional Twin Cut mill beefs up capabilities over some of the smaller sawmills available, meeting a mid-range need.

The sawmill can travel easily on narrow forest roads, be set up in under an hour, and crank out boards using a crew of three. Unlike heavier industrial portable mills that take a full crew to transport and days to set up, the Davco provides flexibility for smaller enterprises.



Davco owner Dave Fenton and mill developer Les Oilund have had the new sawmill on trial runs for some time, and it's already found a following in the oil fields around Alberta. The owners have used the mill to cut salvage timber into boards for use as floor mats.

"The mill is very compact, and it's a complete sawmill on a trailer," said Oilund, noting that the bi-directional feed lets a crew cut up to 20,000 board feet per eight-hour shift. The beefy blades can chew through logs up to 28 inches in diameter, and the John Deere diesel motor averages four gallons of fuel per hour.

Final Note

A Wyoming attendee felt the Davco would be prime for making rough-hewn boards for those living near Jackson Hole who want the rustic look. And a community developer from Idaho thought the mill might be an option for small communities that still have active logging but no mills nearby.