

LOG TRUCKER

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 11

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NOVEMBER 2015

ST. MARIES, ID.

**MIKE MINIER
AND SONS
HEAVY HAUL**



REPORTING IN FROM...

MIKE MINIER AND SONS HEAVY HAUL

Mike Minier grew up in St. Maries, Idaho and was a foreman at the local Potlach Mill for 13 years before the recession hit.

Minier got in a log truck and has never looked back. He recently upgraded to a **2016 Western Star's 4900** with a 16L Detroit engine and 18-speed transmission. Minier hauls for **Pine Creek Logging** based out of Deary, Idaho.

**Mike Minier
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HEAVY METAL HAULER



HOOKING UP HIS ALPINE TRAILER FOR THE SECOND LOAD OF THE DAY is Mike Minier. His 2016 Western Star has been tough and everything the log trucker needed in an upgrade.

*There's no Slow
Down for Mike
Minier and his
2016 Western Star*

Photos by Kevin Core
Story by Brandon Hansen
For Loggers World

Growing up in St. Maries, Idaho, chances were Mike Minier was going to get into the timber

industry.

"It's kind of the central hub for Potlatch and their lands around here," Minier said. "They log all over here, there are probably 40-45 independant log truckers within a 15-mile radius of the

town and there is very few people around here that aren't somehow tied to the timber industry."

Minier was no exception in the

(Continued on Page 14)
See "Minier"



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MIKE MINIER gets his trailer ready for the second load of the day. Minier uses all Alpine gear on his short logger. He spent thirteen days painting and sandblasting his trailer in parts while setting it up for his new 2016 Western Star 4900.



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PAY IT FORWARD. Rob Lundy puts some of the final short logs on Mike Minier's trailer before he heads off to the Stimson Lumber Co. mill in Plummer, Id.



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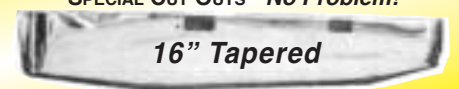


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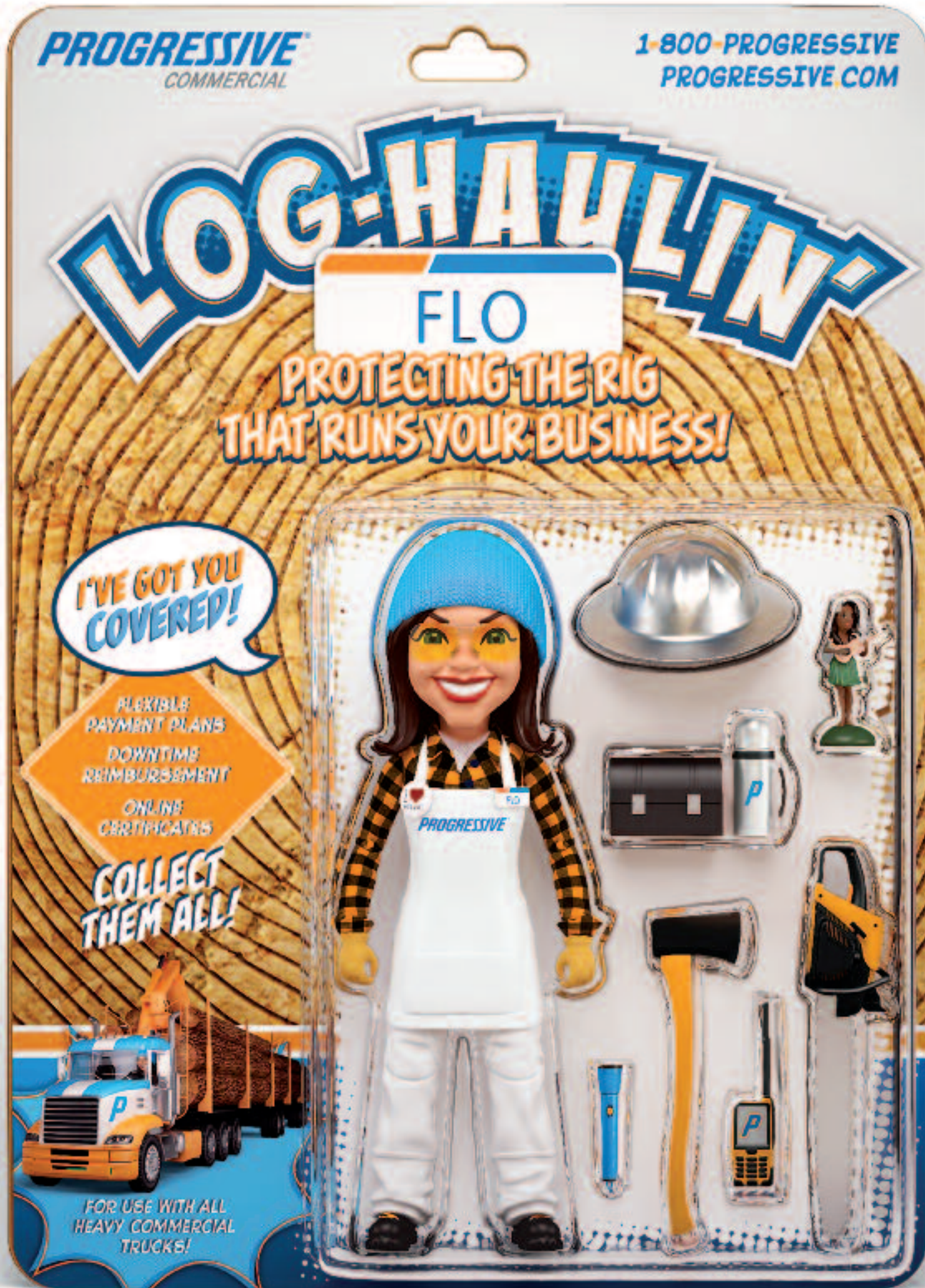


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TIME TO FUEL UP is Mike Minier's Western Star 4900. Minier said his new truck gets 1.8 mpg higher than his old truck and that the savings in the fuel bill pays a significant part of his truck payment.



Coming Soon New 2016 5700XE DC Western Star 4 axle tractor, Detroit DD16 560 HP, 14,700# steer axle, Detroit DT 12 12 spd overdrive automated trans., Detroit 40,000# rears with rear locker on 40,000# airliner air ride suspension, 13,200# steerable pusher axle, 244" wheel base, 48" air slide 5th wheel, all alum. wheels on 11R22.5 and 255/70R22.5 tires. NAP....**POA**



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LEFT: Mike Minier's trailer tags along for the ride to the mill. ABOVE: The custom lettering on Minier's truck was done by Jeremy Demming from Jerm Designs in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

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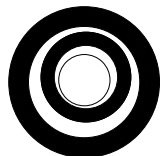
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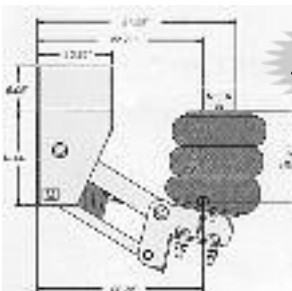
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14 **Minier**

(Continued from Page 4)

NOVEMBER 2015

LOG TRUCKER

town of 2,400. He had lived in St. Maries all his life and his dad had been a timber faller for 30 years.

For 13 years, he served as a foreman at the local Potlach Mill but when times got tough economically in the 2008 recession, Minier made the switch to the log trucking aspect of the industry and has been on the road ever since.

"It was kind of on a whim," Minier said.

He skidded logs in 2008 but with the recession at its hardest, work continued to be less and less. A deal for an 1996 379 Peterbilt short logger with Alpine trailer presented itself to Minier and he took the dive in. He had cut his teeth hauling by driving a dump truck for a summer but the climate for a log trucker at that time wasn't the best out there. Many people were struggling to stay in business and a new log trucker out on the road was a bit rare.

"I had never hauled a log but a handful of guys really helped me out," Minier said.

Independent loader operator and now log truck driver Ronnie Krueger along with local log truck drivers Bill Whitney and Ron Nelson worked with Minier and showed him the ropes.

"I was like a sponge," Minier said "I was probably asking a bunch of stupid questions but they really helped me along. Not everyone did that so I really ap-

preciate what they did for me."

Hauling as far away as Kettle Falls, Wash.- 139 miles away - and Frenchtown, Mont. - 162 miles away - Minier racked up the miles as the market gradually recovered and afforded him a way of life and a living as an independent log trucker.

"I like doing my own thing," Minier said. "It's a challenge, it's not easy. There will be tough times and there will be good times."

With an older truck, however, the maintenance began to pile up as the truck's mileage got over a million miles and he started thinking about upgrading.

"It got to where it was work Monday through Friday then expecting to spend at least Saturday doing maintenance to keep the truck running," Minier said.

An initial attempt to upgrade to a different truck didn't materialize so Minier had decided just to continue the consistent maintenance of the log truck. That's when Idaho Truck Sales' Bill Bartz approached him about a Western Star Truck.

"Bill shot me a number and we started working through the process," Minier said. "He worked hard on everything and made it very enticing."

Another big force in the upgrading process was Minier's fiancée Lori Stoltz, who is the CFO at the local Benewah Community Hospital.

"She really pushed and reassured me about doing it," Minier said. "I wasn't quite sure and she helped me decide. Since

she's dealing with numbers all the time at the hospital. When we got it, she also picked out the logos and the colors, so she probably has more to do with the truck than me."

The result was Minier's 2016 Western Star 4900 with a 16L Detroit engine and 18-speed transmission. It has a 16,000-pound front axle, a Henderson HMX Haulmax, 265" wheelbase and an Alpine trailer and rigging.

"Bill was phenomenal is spec-ing out and building the thing," Minier said. "We went pretty bold with it and I did some wild things."

The spec sheet for the truck ended up being 24 pages and Minier said Idaho Truck Sales treated him great through the entire process.

"They were awesome to work with and they didn't treat me like a drop in the bucket, they treated me like the whole bucket," he added.

The result was a heavier duty truck that Minier enjoys greatly. A heavier front end allowed him to up the gross weight on his truck and the new DD16 engine has 560 horsepower compared to the 455 horses on the Peterbilt. With the set-back axle it drives differently but has a tighter turn radius.

"All log trucks kind of have their strong points and it kind of comes down to a guy's preference," Minier said. "But I have yet to find a weak point on this

(Continued on Page 18)

See "Minier"



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POSING IN FRONT OF HIS TRUCK is Mike Minier. Minier grew up in St. Maries, Idaho and served as a foreman at the local Potlach mill for 13 years. After the recession hit in 2008, Minier went into log trucking and hasn't looked back. He drove a 1996 Peterbilt 379 past the million-mile mark. Looking to upgrade, Minier worked with Idaho Truck Sales and Bill Bartz to get his 2016 Western Star 4900.

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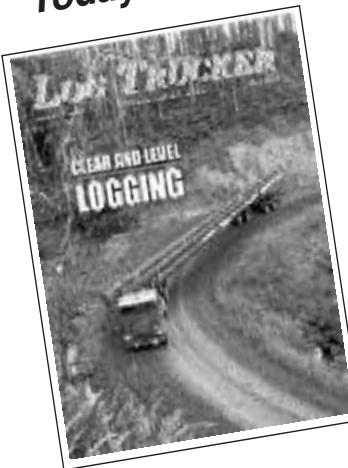
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THE DUST KICKS UP for Mike Minier while getting loaded up on the landing, but that's just part of the job working in the Inland Northwest.



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18 **Minier**

(Continued from Page 14)

truck."

The whole buying process was scary, Minier admits, but it was also made pleasant by Idaho Truck Sales. The new truck has its advantages with less upkeep and better fuel mileage.

"I'm getting 1.8 m.p.g. better than my older truck and that's covering a good portion of my truck payment," he said. "And I also don't have a parts bill anymore."

It's a new, more comfortable and safer truck and with Minier's own flair. He added seven-inch stacks while Excalibur Paint out of Lewiston gave it a metallic black paint job and also painted the grill shell. The custom lettering was done by Jeremy Demming from Jerm Designs in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The St. Maries trucker also added Super 40 rear ends.

The comfort factor, however, did go down when he was setting up the truck over the 4th of July weekend this year. With temperatures outside reaching into the 100s, and those inside Minier's shop reaching into the 120s, Mike and his fiancée's father-in-law Stirley Cochran had to toil in the heat for 13 days.

"I might farm that process out next time," Minier said with a laugh.

With the help of the 68-year old Cochran, Minier broke down his trailer, sandblasting and repainting it to get it ready for the new truck. They eventually just switched to working at night and the early morning to avoid the heat.

"Stirley did an immense amount of work and it was tough going," Minier said of Cochran. "He is pretty invested and interested in the truck."

With his new Western Star, Minier now independently hauls for Pine Creek Logging, owned by Steve and Diana Henderson. They have a handful of their own trucks and keep 15-20 trucks in total hauling logs for them.

When he gets off time, Mike has a few hobbies. First, he's been an avid dirt bike racer for the past 25 years and is a member of the St. Joe's Cycle Club. He does racing with his future step son Tyler.

Mike is also a hunter, and has the monster of all moose

hunt stories from 2007.

After getting an Idaho bull tag with his great uncle, Minier found himself on a once-in-a-lifetime moose hunt in the state. His great uncle got a moose first and after a day break, the two were back at it in the same clothes they did the cleaning and dressing with their first kill.

The scent and their bugling was able to bring in a monster moose. The log trucker found himself staring down the behemoth at point blank range and his first shot from a .270 Weatherby Magnum just grazed off the moose's forehead. Minier's second shot that made contact broke the moose's leg and it rolled up on him. The antlers caught and stuck into his leg three inches and pinned him against a tree. Minier was finally able to shoot the moose in the neck but he still had to deal with a flopping around animal and a leg wound.

It would end up being the 38th largest moose taken in the world and when Minier had the moose mounted he made sure the blood from his leg stayed on the antlers. After all, what good is a story if you have no proof.

Minier should have plenty of such stories hunting and driving log trucks for years to come. After being treated well by Idaho Truck Sales, getting a truck that satisfies and continuing to work in the community he grew up in, it looks like Mike might spend a few more years in the timber industry.



The moose from Mike's hunting story now hangs on the wall in his shop. The moose was a monster, ranking as the 38th largest moose taken in the world. You can't see it in the picture but Mike left the blood from his knee injury on the antlers. Not your average hunting story.



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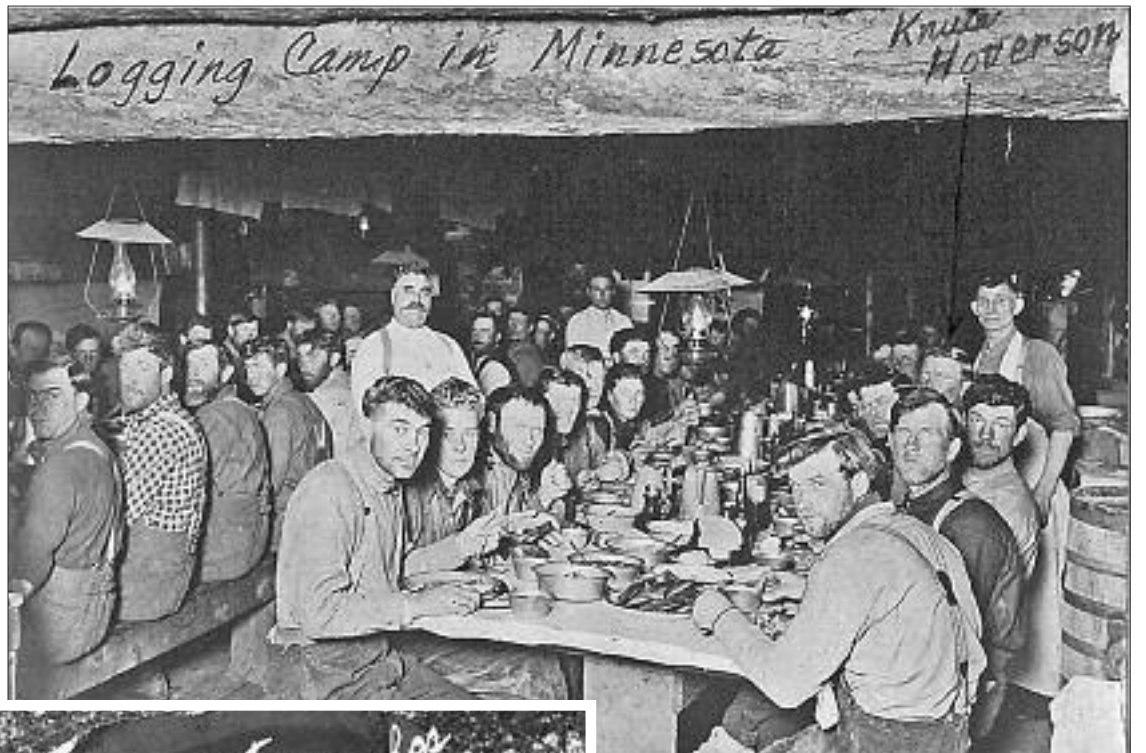
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