

# LOG TRUCKER

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 12

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DECEMBER 2015



SCOTT  
**VESSEY**  
TRUCKING  
ELMA, WASH.

*Merry Christmas!*

From all of us at *LOG TRUCKER*



# FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

## SCOTT VESSEY TRUCKING

Scott Vessey runs a six-truck fleet out of Elma, Wash. hauling poles and logs in Washington and Oregon. Vassey has owned trucks of one kind or another since 1977 and his son Ryan has been log trucking for 10 years. Vassey owns three Peterbilts and three Kenworths, cycling through the rigs every 3.5 years.

## SCOTT VESSEY TRUCKING

## ELMA WASHINGTON

Elma is a town of over 3,100 people in Grays Harbor County in Washington. It was first settled in 1852 by Isaiah L. Scammon. Grays Harbor County has over 72,000 people and is named for the large bay on its border, discovered by Robert Gray in 1792. Elma is 30 miles west of Olympia and 40 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. It was incorporated in 1888 as timber harvesting and agriculture were the economic mainstays that helped drive the town then and now.

## IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER: Scott Vessey gets a load in his 2012 Peterbilt 367 loaded at the Curtis Pole Plant just outside of Chehalis, Wash. Unloading Vessey is Jeremy Ryber.

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### 4. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

SCOTT VESSEY TRUCKING *by Brandon Hansen*

### 19. BLAST FROM THE PAST

A LOOK AT OUR HERITAGE *by Quinn J. Murk*

### 20. ADVERTISERS INDEX

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## LOG TRUCKER

*Founded in 1975 by Finley Hays*

*Published by*

LOGGERS WORLD LLC

Phone **(360) 262-3376**

PUBLISHERS.....Kevin & Nancy Core

EDITORS EMERITI.....Finley Hays, Mike Crouse

EDITOR/WRITER.....Brandon Hansen

ADVERTISING.....Kevin Core

OFFICE MANAGER.....Nancy Core

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

LOGGERS WORLD LLC,  
P. O. Box 1631, Chehalis, WA 98532-8425

E-Mail: [logworld@aol.com](mailto:logworld@aol.com)

SUBSCRIPTION RATE (In U.S.A.):  
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SCOTT VESSEY TRUCKING - ELMA, WASH.

# THE RIGHT ATTITUDE



**JEFF KERR GETS A LOAD** in his 2015 Kenworth T800 out on the landing in Grays Harbor County, Wash. Kerr has been driving log truck for six years, including three with Scott Vessey.

## Scott Vessey Trucking Stays Busy With Versatile Business Model and Can-do Attitude

By Brandon Hansen

**C**hallenging work requires a positive attitude.

And that comes in abundance when talking about Scott Vessey Trucking, based in Elma, Wash. The six-truck fleet is split down the middle in terms of Peterbilt and Kenworth,

but they're all on the same page when it comes to the goal: production.

"I keep these guys busy and they understand what it takes," namesake Scott Vessey said. "I've been fortunate with them. They're a group of younger drivers but they're good and they know

(Continued on Page 8)  
**See "Vessey"**

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**KRIS ANDERSON BACKS UP HIS 2014 KENWORTH T800** to the loader in Grays Harbor County, Wash. Anderson is a fourth generation log truck driver. "I was born into this, so I didn't have a chance," he says with a laugh.



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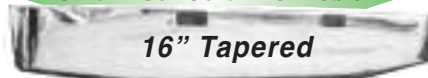
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20k Front

**2012 WESTERN STAR 4900SA**, Cummins 525HP, Jakes, RTLO18918B, 2 Speed Aux Trans, 20k Front, 46k Rears, 4:30 Ratio, Full Lockers, Neway Susp, 4th Axle, 275" WB, HD Bumper, Power Mirrors, 107k Miles.....**\$115,500**



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**(2) 2012 KENWORTH W900L**, Cummins 500HP, Jakes, RTLO18918B, 13200 Front, 52k Rears, 4:30 Ratio, Chalmers Susp, 236" WB, Hyd Wet Kit, Block Heater, Heated Mirrors, Full Gauges, 116k & 198k Miles.....**\$107,500 ea.**



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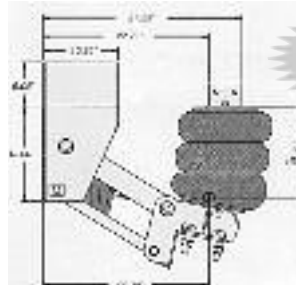


IN FRONT OF HIS 2016 KENWORTH T800, Ryan Vessey poses at the Curtis Pole Plant near Adna, Wash. Vessey has been with Scott Vessey Trucking for 10 years. Ryan and Donnie Crawford have been with the company the longest which is something since turnover is very low in the company

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## Vessey

(Continued from Page 4)

what they want."

Scott is part owner of the company with his wife Lois and son Ryan while employing Jeff Kerr, Donny Crawford, Brett Hatch and Kris Anderson, all hailing from Grays Harbor and all driving relatively new trucks as Vessey cycles through his rigs every 3.5 years.

"I don't have to call them everyday," Vessey said. "They know what they're doing and where they're going."

And Vessey is certainly one that knows what he's doing. Vessey graduated from Montesano in 1977, worked for the construction company owned by his parents - John and Janice - and got into owning trucks soon after that. Between 1977 and 2002, he purchased six different new Mac dump trucks, a mule train log truck and two trucks with hay racks.

"I just worked for whoever needed a truck," he said. "We had connections through the construction company with loggers and mills. People called needing trucks."

When the construction industry slowed in 2002, Vessey bought a Ford truck with a three-axle trailer and a three-month job with Green Diamond.

"I'm still working with them to this day," Vessey said.

The company grew as Vessey's son Ryan got into log trucking.

"It was in my family and I thought that it was the best path for me," Ryan said. "My dad and I get along pretty well and work together well. We still eat dinner together even after working together."

Growing up, Ryan has had some serious power-lifting credentials and also played football and baseball. After a stint in college, he's now trying to learn more and more of the family business and has been at things for 10 years.

"This is a good job and while it's challenging and tough, that kind of makes the week flow by," Ryan said.

With his son on board driving truck, Vessey also got a Mac truck with a hay rack for Daryl Potter. Potter would end up driving with Vessey for seven

years. The Montesano log trucker's next purchase was a used Mac Truck with a used mule train seven-axle trailer for Donny Crawford.

Ryan and Donny Crawford have been with Vessey the longest, and driver turnover isn't a real issue for the company.

"Scott always tries to make sure that we as drivers can make the most of things," Kerr said. "We have to work everyday to keep this going."

Jeff Kerr was around log trucking all his life, and his dad Mark is still in the business with his brother, helping operate Pat Rabey Trucking in Hoquiam, Wash.

"It started in grade school washing trucks and maybe it was just the big nature of the trucks but they just seemed like kind of a big toy," Kerr said. "I as a kid couldn't believe people got paid to drive them."

He worked around trucks through high school and then

while attending college, he returned one summer to drive truck and has been doing so ever since. He's been at it for six years now and the last three have been with Vessey. Kerr also did log trucking for NDC Timber in Elma.

Kerr drives the No. 17 truck, a 2015 T800 and also helps with the dispatching which can result in his cell phone making plenty of noise during the day.

(Continued on Page 12)

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THE WHOLE FLEET IS LINED UP AND LOADED. Scott Vessey began log trucking in 2002 when he bought a Ford truck with a three axle trailer. Things have grown since then.



## LOG TRUCKER VIDEO

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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**BRETT HATCH** steps out of his 2016 Peterbilt 367. Hatch spent some time hauling in North Dakota but has come back to Western Washington to haul for Vessey. Vessey tries to cycle through trucks every three and a half years to keep repair and service costs down. "We like to run them until they get out of warranty and then trade them in to upgrade to something newer," Vessey said.

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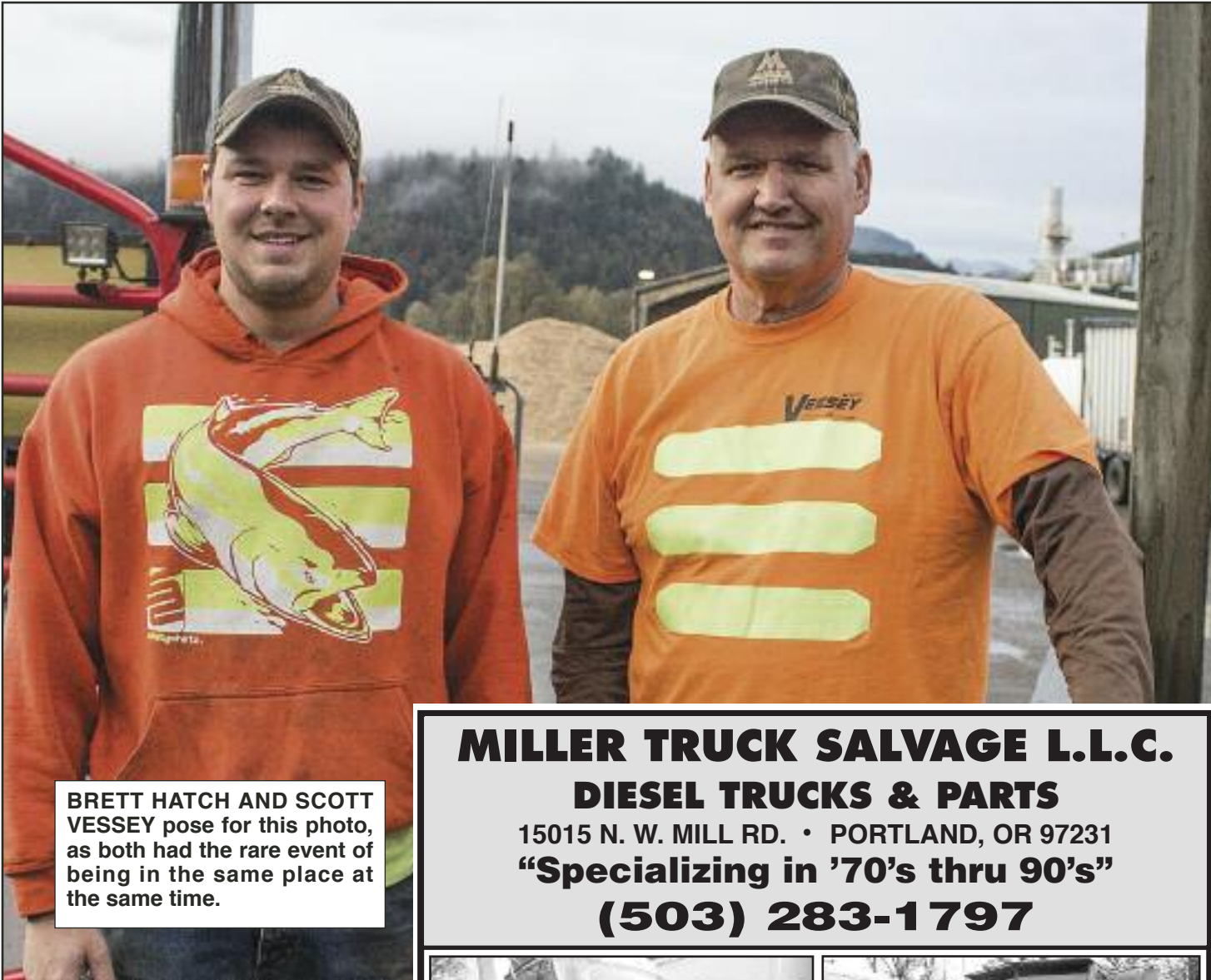
“It definitely makes the day by quicker,” Kerr said. “You kind of don’t realize it but after a lot of calls, talking with people and thinking about how you’re going to do things, you get home and say ‘wow, that was 12 hours?’”

Not surprisingly, Kerr said he feels communication is the key for any log truck business along with a positive attitude. Confirming plans, double-checking with people and always making sure everyone is on the same page are important to be successful, Kerr said.

When you count it all up, the fleet consists of three Peterbilts - a 2012 367, 2016 367 and a 2013 388 - and three Kenworths, a 2014 T800, 2015 T800 and 2016 T800.

Kris Anderson runs the No. 16, 2014 Kenworth T800 and is a fourth generation log truck driver. He enjoys working for Scott and getting off

(Continued on Page 14)



BRETT HATCH AND SCOTT VESSEY pose for this photo, as both had the rare event of being in the same place at the same time.

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## Vessey

(Continued from Page 12)

the freeway for hauls up in the woods and to mills.

"I was born into this, so I didn't have a chance," he said with a laugh on getting into the log truck industry.

Donnie Crawford has been log trucking for 15 years and has been with Vessey for 10 years. The long-tenured log truck driver thinks it's the versatility of the company that makes it successful.

"Scott tries to have the trucks be as versatile as possible and set up to haul poles or logs," Crawford said.

Crawford's 2012 Peterbilt 388 and trailer is set up for logs and poles. Being able to do so much means they're moving around a lot. It's not to the same jobsite and mill day after day.

"We're jumping around constantly," Crawford said. "We do work for a lot of small logging outfits and they move around a lot so we go along with them."

The day can be one long haul down to Oregon, a haul through Seattle traffic, or a few stops to job sites or for mill transfers.

"Scott has done a good job with connections and we rarely sit at all and miss days," Crawford said. "Other than the holidays that everyone has off, I can't remember the last time we had a day where we didn't have anything to do."

Brett Hatch knows a thing or two about being busy. He drives the No. 19 2016 Peterbilt 367 for Scott now but before then was hauling in the boom-or-bust area of North Dakota.

With so much to do, Vessey always tries to keep his trucks upgraded to avoid expensive maintenance and downtime.

"We try to run them until they get out of warranty and then trade them in to upgrade to something newer," Vessey said.

Vessey prefers to have a truck payment as opposed to a large maintenance bill when it comes to running his trucks. He also feels his guys have higher morale running newer rigs and are more invested.

Trucks are taken to Western Peterbilt in Cosmopolis for their 12,000 mile maintenance schedule along with any repairs or service that needs to be performed

by the place's certified mechanics.

The fleet certainly gets to stretch its legs as Vessey hauls as far north at Bellingham and as far south as Eugene. Basically if poles are needed somewhere, his drivers will find some way to get them there.

"I think the reason a lot of companies call us is we try never to have any problems or issues with anyone," Kerr said. "We always show up and get the job done. It kind of seems like when one job ends, another one opens up and I think that's Scott's name and reputation."

Roughly 60 percent of Vessey's business is poles, and not just poles out in the woods but mill transfers as well. After beginning the company in 2002, Vessey got into poles around 2006 when there weren't as many pole truckers out there. With the great care, and great danger of the tailsweep from poles as long as 125 feet, hauling poles is certain challenge that pays out more but is slower in nature.

Vessey has three of his trucks equipped with General trailers since they're heavier duty and can handle the stress of hauling poles. Drivers also don't have to change out their reach with the heavier General trailers as their strong enough to handle longer loads.

The fleet also has one trailer from Capital Industrial in Tumwater, Wash., one Whit Log

trailer and one Peerless trailer. Vessey also makes sure that the trucks have 46,000-pound rear ends.

"With the way hauling poles works and the stress that is put on those trucks, their trailers and bunks, you've just got to have heavier duty stuff," Jeff said. "You've got poles rubbing against an embankment or lifting the truck a little and you have to have stuff that can stand up to that."

Ryan Vessey's 2016 Kenworth T-800 has an automatic

Allison transmission while all the other log trucks have an 18-speed transmission. It comes in handy for Ryan, since he takes plenty of trips north of Seattle hauling poles and has to contend with stop-and-go traffic.

All the trucks run a 550 Cummins engine, except for the No. 17 truck - a 2015 T800 - which runs a PACCAR engine.

"We like it," Vessey said. "It runs well, has a little bit better fuel mileage and will run with

(Continued on Page 18)

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**2009 INTERNATIONAL 4400SBA**, DT466, 300 hp, Jake, Fuller 10 speed, 33,000 GVW, 12' service body, hyd rear outriggers, rear hose reel, **Stellar Summit Mechanic's Crane**, 21' boom, 10,000# cap, radio remotes, Ingersoll Rand 40 CFM compressor, gas powered Lincoln welder STK. #5194



**2006 INTERNATIONAL 4400**, DT466, 245 hp, Fuller 10 speed, 10' service body, hyd rear outriggers, **IMT 6025 Mechanic's Crane**, 25' boom, 10500# cap, hyd air compressor, Miller welder, hose reels STK. #5196

RYAN VESSEY'S 2016 KENWORTH T800 is equipped with an automatic Allison transmission for long trips up past Seattle in stop and go-traffic. That makes things a little easier on the driver, although it doesn't relieve the stress of Puget Sound rush hour traffic. Scott Vessey Trucking hauls north as far as Bellingham and goes down south as far as Eugene. With Scott, Ryan and Jeff Kerr doing the dispatching and communicating all the needs of the company, they've come up with a way to maximize the workload the most efficient way possible.

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SCOTT VESSEY PUTS RED FLAGS on the end of a load of poles before leaving the Curtis Pole Plant outside of Adna, Wash.



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JEFF KERR TIGHTENS HIS WRAPPERS while taking a load of logs off the landing in Grays Harbor County, Wash. Kerr grew up around logging and his dad still is a partner in a log truck company in Hoquiam. Kerr has been driving for Scot for three years.

## Vessey

(Continued from Page 14)

the rest of them."

Vessey tries to keep everything looking nice for his drivers. He makes sure they get a say when a new truck is ordered, and also employs a team of washers on the weekend at his Elma truck shop.

Nolan Robey - who is going to Oregon State University to become a forester - greases every truck on the weekend, while an-

other crew of three cleans the trucks from front to back.

"I think Scott put together a good crew of log truck drivers," Crawford said. "Everybody pulls their weight and it's all a team effort. Everybody is generally happy with hauling here and that makes a difference."

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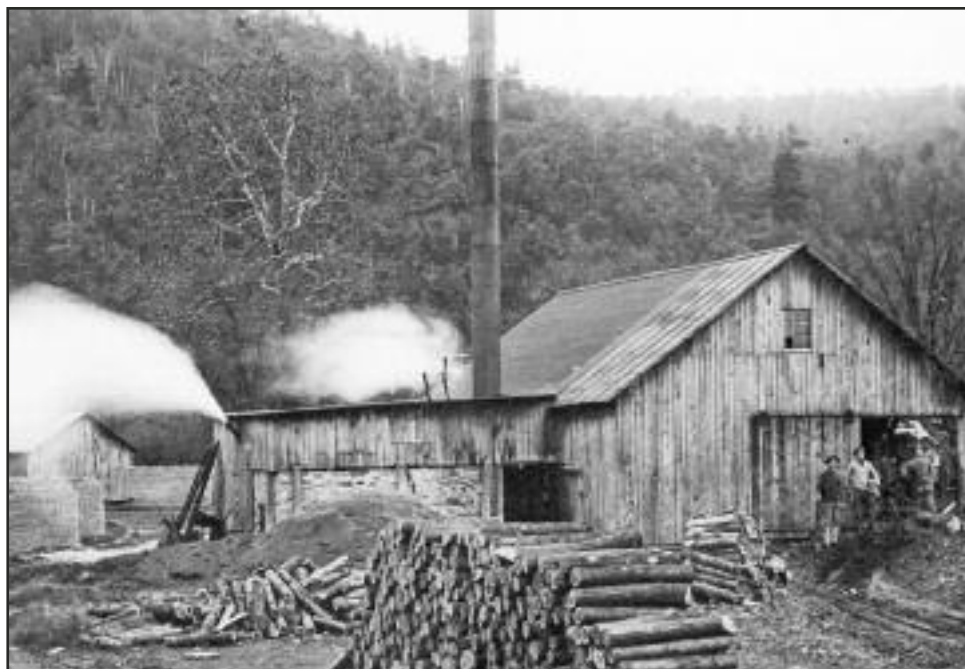
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Bruce, Todd, Aaron & Christine  
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