



October 3, 2016

All Members,

Congratulations! As members of the Wood supply Research Institute you have facilitated the completion of another project. This report, done for WSRI by Forisk, compares logging equipment operators and truck drivers to similar labor forces from the standpoint of pay and benefits. It also defines a procedure for updating this information over time to observe trends. Given the strong competition for good logging labor, this report is timely.

The following are some tips and highlights that may help you as you review the report in detail.

General

- Four regions of the United States were investigated: the South, the Northeast, the Lake States and the West.
- Two primary sources of data were used: publically available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and data collected through a direct Forisk survey of logging businesses. Compensation data from these two sources are presented separately, are compared, and even combined to develop a picture of total compensation. As you read the report it is important to take note of the data source(s) being analyzed at various points in the document.
- Take close note of the section headings and illustration titles. They will help you know when the discussion shifts from logging equipment operators to logging truck drivers.
- The competing labor forces that are used for comparison to logging equipment operators are construction equipment operators and farm equipment operators.
- The competing labor forces that are used for comparison to logging truck drivers are livestock/poultry, cement, and oil and gas. Comparisons are also made to the long haul truck driver labor force. The report makes an effort to differentiate the comparison when it comes to trucking jobs that are "local" to ones that require being away from home overnight.
- An effort was made to highlight key findings and observations at the front of the report in the Executive Summary and Study Summary (pages 1 through 4) as well as in the Discussion section (pages 27 through 29). Members are strongly encouraged to read these sections even if they do not dig into the body of the report.

Notable from the Report

- Compensation competitiveness for both logging equipment operators and logging truck drivers varies by region and by the employment alternative to which they are compared. In some cases these logging jobs appear to be fairly competitive. In some cases there are significant gaps.
- Recruitment and retention of truck drivers challenges all industries. This highlights the need in the logging industry to not only be competitive with wages and benefits but also consider other factors that can affect job attractiveness.
- The data suggest that increases in salary and benefits have been less effective at recruiting and retaining logging truck drivers than logging equipment operators.
- Compensation data on contract drivers for logging firms is lacking. The report suggests that this could be significant when drawing conclusions about the competitiveness of pay and benefits for much of the wood being hauled in some regions.

There is plenty more in the report to digest and discuss. The hope with all WSRI reports is that they will spark legally appropriate conversation that leads to improvements in the wood supply system. Any thoughts you have on how we might leverage the information in this report to serve the interests of our industry are welcome.

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