

# Professional Logging Contractors of Maine, Milton CAT/CAT Forest Products and three Maine community colleges announce new training program for mechanized logging

The Professional Logging Contractors of Maine, Milton CAT/CAT Forest Products and three Maine community college partners announced this fall the creation of the region's first post-secondary mechanized logging operators training program.

The new Mechanized Logging Operations Training Program is being jointly developed by the PLC and Northern Maine Community College, Eastern Maine Community College, and Washington County Community College with support from Milton CAT and CAT Forest Products. It is expected to begin operating early in 2016.

The announcement took place at Gerald Pelletier Inc. on the Golden Road in Millinocket, and included a live demonstration of mechanized logging equipment by employees of the company.

"Maine has been a leader nationally with respect to timber harvesting for the past two hundred years," said PLC Executive Director Dana Doran. "The creation of this new program

not only fulfills a great need that exists within our industry, but it provides a great example of how Maine's professional logging contractors lead the way in tackling issues and finding solutions that will sustain this industry for years to come."

As the economy has started to improve and demand for forest products has increased, it has become clear to the PLC that there is a desperate need for trained equipment operators for mechanized forest harvesting, not only within its membership, but throughout the state. The existing wood harvesting contractors in Maine are anxious to hire mechanized equipment operators who can harvest and process timber efficiently and safely to fulfill the increased demand. This need extends to small, medium and large contractors throughout the State of Maine as they increase productivity and continue to invest in highly technical equipment to meet the ever changing industry standards for forest harvesting.

Peter Collins, forestry industry manager for Milton CAT, announced

the donation of \$1.2 million of equipment to the new program. Additional support for the program is being sought from the Put ME to Work Program, which was recently enacted by the Maine Legislature and provides \$1 million for the next two years to support creation of new job training programs at Maine's community colleges.

Once fully functional, the new certificate program will be offered on a rotating basis at different locations throughout northern and eastern Maine including training at EMCC in Bangor, WCCC in Calais, and NMCC in Presque Isle. In classroom and hands on settings, students will be taught machine operation and repair, maintenance, harvesting laws, best management practices and safety. Students completing the program will also receive industry recognized safety certification.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROFESSIONAL LOGGING CONTRACTORS OF MAINE

Pictured is equipment that is being donated by Milton Cat to the region's first post-secondary mechanized logging operators training program.