

Generational and Industry Changes

By Skye Cunningham

Herald Friedenberger, a long-time Nakusp local wasn't always privy to logging. Now, he and his son, Daniel Friedenberger have seen many changes over the years in the Nakusp forestry operations.

Originally from Manitoba, Herald moved to Nakusp in the 1960s when he was 21, looking for work. His plan was to earn money (at the time, \$2 per hour) to buy a new combine for his family farm back home.

Growing up on his family farm is where his knowledge of trapping started. Gophers and other prairie animals earned the young man 2 cents per tail.

Now, in Nakusp he owns three trap lines with his son and wife. And, has retired as a successful independent contractor.

Marrying a local girl (Bowes family) from Nakusp was one of the reasons Herald made the move to Nakusp permanent.

The work here was different. To wet his feet, Herald started beachcombing for Celgar. Then, at spring break up he moved to hook chokers for Arnie Jensen. It was a learning curve. If parts broke, they were not thrown away, but fixed, as he "learned by trial and error."

"A completely different setting," than what he was used to, Herald learned to enjoy the mountains and early mornings working in the industry. But he missed the sunshine in the winter months that the prairies provided.

The work was different back then too, with looser environmental practices, contractors could cut more volume in varying terrain.

"I remember there was one time he (Jack Raven, BCFS Forest Ranger), came back and said take this cut. I think if you were up the top of Baerg, it looked like you were almost over into Shannon from the Slew. He said take off another lift. Slim Smith was on the old TD 18 and he was building the road. And all of a sudden, she let go, and he went down 200 or 300 feet. We're talking a mudslide. The whole hillside went. He kept that machine on its track wiggled her around and pushed his way out."

Jack goes on to say that was the end of it, and they wouldn't log there anymore because it was unstable. Follow-up assessments and investigations would be implemented now.

When asked about advice for the future generation of workers, Herald advised his grandson, Bryce to go to school. "This logging is going to cease as we know it."

As an independent contractor, Herald invested over \$100,000 in machinery. Now, the equipment for an independent outfit is close to \$3 million.

His son, Daniel Friedenberger knows the struggle of large investments and limited timber opportunities. "Nakusp was built on logging," Daniel says. People moved here for work, and now the industry is dwindling. Nakusp's focus may be shifting to tourism and retirement.

The political environment is changing with the new population. Daniel believes logging will continue in Nakusp, but it will “be a different scale than what it was.”

“There is always going to be a future in logging, it’s just going to be a lot different definitely from when he (Herald) knew about it. And I think people will start to accept it more because it’s going to be on a smaller scale and they are not going to see it as much,” says Daniel.

This new industry landscape may look entirely different to veterans like Herald, “In the old days, we could hardly wait to get up in the morning and go to work. We had a lot of fun going to work and coming home. We worked like dogs, because the harder and faster you worked, the faster the time went.”