

### He Makes Good Money With A Skid Loader

With 15 years and nearly 25,000 operating hours, Art Bargabos is enthusiastic about the quality of the JCB skid steers he's owned and the income he's been able to make with a land-clearing mulching head.

"I feel like the JCB is the safest skid steer out there," Bargabos says. Two features make it stand out for safety: side entry with one easy step, which is much safer than climbing over a bucket; and good visibility because of its one-arm boom. He believes that the JCB skid steer could be easily outfitted for people with disabilities to provide them a way to make a good living.

Bargabos is a custom grading contractor. He outfitted his 1110HF JCB with a Bradco mulching head and hires out to clear land around Lynchburg, Va.

"Many farmers have a skid steer loader on their farm," he says. "They could upgrade and get one with high-flow hydraulics and get a mulching head to allow them to reclaim farm land."

Bargabos works with builders and landscapers. A common job is to turn brush land into several inches of mulch, which can be left on the land, or hauled away. The heavy-

duty Bradco mulcher requires high-flow hydraulics (three lines instead of two) and can limb and mulch small hardwood and large softwood trees.

"This is a relatively new way to clear land that's catching on fast," says Bargabos. "We need to train people to quit pushing and burning."

To set up a business, he suggests contacting local landscapers and general contractors - hiring a mulch operator saves the contractor high transportation costs. About half the sites where Bargabos works keep the mulch for landscaping or erosion control - he goes over it several times to chop everything into small pieces.

If it needs to be removed, he unhooks the mulch head and puts a bucket on his skidsteer to load the mulch on a truck. In some areas, there may be markets to sell the mulch.

Besides new construction jobs, Bargabos finds private work for individuals. He often works some of the mulch into the soil to enrich it and hauls the rest away.

Bargabos charges \$115 per hour for his services, which he says is probably on the low side. He burns 25 gallons of fuel in an 8 to 10-hour day.



Art Bargabos uses a mulching head on his JCB skid steer loader to clear land.

For better traction and to save money, Bargabos puts steel tracks on his wheeled-machine. At \$1,300 a pair, steel tracks last about a year when doing hard work and are cheaper to replace than rubber tracks.

He's willing to advise others how to set up a custom service.

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He also uses big buckets and a set of steel tracks on his JCB.



"Flogos" are made from water, a special soap, and helium-rich air, which causes them to rise up into the sky. They can reach heights up to 20,000 ft.

### Floating Logos Attract Big-Time Attention

Lexington, Alabama inventor, entrepreneur, and former magician, Francisco Guerra and his co-inventor, Brian Glover, have patented a process for making and launching floating logos that they call "Flogos."

They're made from water, a special soap, and helium-rich air, which causes them to rise up into the sky. They can reach heights of up to 20,000 ft. and will travel up to 30 miles away.

Guerra says he's already been hired to create Flogos for companies such as Honda, Nike, Yamaha, Coors Light and Bank of America, just to name a few.

"The Flogo machine forces the foam up through a custom-designed logo stencil that can be as big as 4 ft. across, and just about any shape. The bubbly form is sliced several inches thick and released to rise up high where many people will see it. A steady flow of copies follow at 15-second intervals," Guerra says. "If there's no wind, they just spiral up slowly."

Flogos can be made to last up to about an hour, although weather conditions also play a part. If the creations hit an obstacle like a tree or building, they disintegrate, sometimes leaving a harmless, powdery residue that just blows away.

Guerra and his partner rent out the machines for about \$3,500 per day and also



Custom-designed logos can be made to just about any shape.

offer long term leases. They have international distributors in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, Germany and Singapore. He says Flogos are more economical than sky-writing on banners towed by airplanes.

To provide customers with even more eye-catching options, Guerra says he'll have various solid-colored Flogos available in six months. He's also working on a machine that will use 6-ft. stencils.

Guerra and Glover also make fake snow and foam for Hollywood movies and special events. Their company, Snowmasters Inc., produces the Flogo machines.

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### Sawmill Thrives On Salvaged Logs

By C. F. Marley, Contributing Editor

Kevin Carlen and Bennie Clawson, Shelbyville, Ill., have a thriving lumber business, even if it wasn't planned that way. They're not complaining - just pleasantly mystified by it all. They created the business from cast-off saw logs. Even better, they decided to try eBay as a way to sell the lumber and that, too, has turned out better than expected.

"We started shipping lumber by UPS or postal service one year ago. Now we ship to all 50 states and to Canada. Business has exploded," says Carlen.

Carlen and Clawson have been friends for a long time. They both work for a local electric cooperative - Carlen as a vegetation specialist and tree trimmer and Clawson as a field engineer. They thought it was a shame to burn so many good logs in connection with the construction of rural power lines. They also talked about other sources of good logs just going to waste at the burn pit in Shelbyville. That's when they got the idea to set up a sawmill and turn the logs into lumber.

"Some of the logs we get come from right-of-way clearing work for power lines. However, most of them come from landfills where local tree cutters haul logs and brush," says Carlen. "We go to the landfill every Saturday and load up our 12-ft. trailer, which we pull behind our Dodge Dakota pickup."

They had to decide on the kind of saw they needed. A friend who had been in the lumber business for 20 years recommended the Kasco bandsaw mill, so they bought one in April 2007. At first they sold the lumber to local businesses. Then in September 2007 they started marketing on eBay and things just clicked. For one listing they recorded 800 visitors to the website.

They call their business the Timbermite Sawmill.

Still more happened. People who needed logs sawed into lumber began to call. All this has generated the need for equipment to augment the sawmilling business. They use a Bobcat to handle logs and a 20-in. Powermatic planer.

They also have a NYLE kiln drying system. It's set up in a 12 by 16-ft. Amish pre-



Kevin Carlen and Bennie Clawson with the sawmill they use on salvaged logs.



The men use a NYLE kiln drying system with electric heat to draw down the humidity.

fab building and has a capacity of 4,000 board feet. The kiln uses electric heat to draw down the humidity. "It's the most energy efficient kiln on the market," says Carlen.

In addition to their lumber business, they're suppliers of camper firewood which is split by a hydraulic splitter from Rural King. They use shavings from the planer for bedding horses.

"Most of the boards we sell are 1 in. thick, 8 to 10 in. wide, and 48 in. long," says Carlen. "We don't ship lumber more than 50 inches long by UPS in order to avoid paying higher rates."

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