



SMITH BROTHERS LOGGING

by Joel Moon

Smith Brothers
Steve Smith (L) and
Kelvin Smith (R)

2022 LOGGER OF THE YEAR

Alabama's Logger of the Year, Smith Brothers Logging, is a family-owned business centered around Christian and family values.

They have built a reputation for prioritizing environmental protection, sustainability and crew safety.

Steve and Kelvin Smith grew up in a farming family; however, their father Leon would work on logging jobs during the winter months when it was too wet to farm, and the brothers would sometimes go to the woods with him. There were limited options in the area for the brothers after high school. They could farm, work in the mines or in a plant, or log. They decided to try logging and worked for a few years on Robert Kimbrell's logging crew.

Steve decided to try trucking and bought a truck. He hauled a dump trailer over the road for a couple of years. Steve shares, "This was in 1992 when Desert Storm broke out and the US went to war. Fuel prices went real high and I didn't like being away from home for extended periods." While Steve was trucking Kelvin worked in a plant but realized he missed working outdoors and felt cooped up in the mill. Kelvin adds, "The plant had a big layoff and I needed to do something different, so I started working on Noah Skelton's logging crew." After a couple of years of over the road trucking, Steve made the decision to work closer to home and he joined Kelvin on Noah Skelton's crew.

After a few years with Skelton, they began thinking about starting their own crew. They had learned a good deal about logging from two of the most respected loggers in the area, first on Kimbrell's crew and later with Skelton, so they decided it was time to have a go at running their own crew. In September of 1994, they founded Smith Brothers Logging (SBL). Both Steve and Kelvin have high praise for Thompson Tractor who saw promise in two young men wanting to start a new business, and were willing to take a chance on them and provide financing for their equipment. This relationship has grown stronger over the years and the Smiths are Cat/Weiler to the core.

Their father Leon worked in the woods with them as "crew foreman" early on and they attribute much of their success to his example. "He had instilled in us the value of hard work and strong moral values," says Steve. Their strong work ethic was reinforced by other "old timers" that helped them early on. They tell about Johnny Williamson a long time logger and part of the largest logging family in the area.

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