

Up with the Worms!!

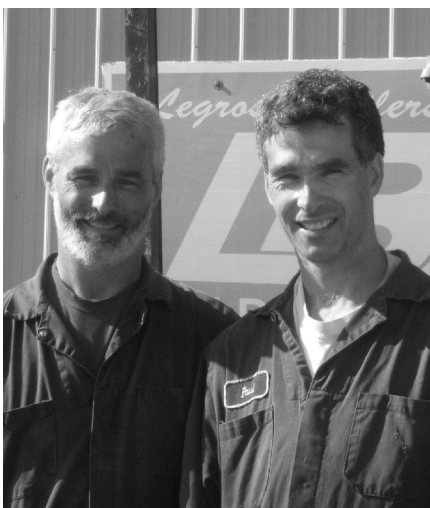
By Pauline Shesnicky
Thunder Bay Ventures

You need to be up earlier than the birds to beat the Legros family.

Brothers Dereck and Paul Legros, owners of LBC Contracting Ltd. are up and 'running' with the worms before most of the rest of us are even dreaming about coffee. When I arrived at their shop at 6pm to conduct an interview, they were still running, tidying up and preparing for the next day's labour. In fact, they have been running since the age of 15 when they entered the workforce in their parents' NE Ontario log hauling business in and around Chapleau and Smooth Rock Falls. There they hauled and loaded tree length wood onto rail cars until the industry in that area moved from rail to road. In 1983 Jacqueline and Paul Legros, Sr. moved Legros Logging and their young family to Thunder Bay to enjoy better opportunities. Of seven children, only Dereck and Paul stayed with the family business and, also in 1983, started their own limited company. While the primary income for the family remained hauling, in 1990 Paul Sr. (also a licensed welder) began buying used trailers, which they repaired and sold. Herein lies the seed of present day LBC Contracting Ltd. at 1070 Gorham Street in Thunder Bay.

In 1995 the Legros family was offered an opportunity to manufacture new trailers. With logging in its heyday, Superior Trailers was backed up 7 months in their orders and asked the Legros family to take over some of their customers. A good relationship between LBC and Superior Trailers exists to this day and Dereck and Paul continue to service customers, running to greet them as they enter the parking lot.

There is more excitement than usual around LBC Contracting these days. In 2005 Dereck and Paul designed, with the help of Joe Lucheski (deceased) and Harold Lindstrom, an innovative logging trailer better suited to the rough terrain of NW Ontario. This trailer is hinged in the middle to allow swivel of 26 degrees to each side and a downward pivot. They have patented their design and expect that it will be very popular because structurally it can hold more weight and is less expensive to build than other models. The MTO seeks trailers that will be safe, but less destructive to roadways. They like the LBC design and are working with Dereck and Paul to



Dereck & Paul Legros

EVERYDAY HEROES

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monitor the new trailer for a 12 month test period. Now into the 5th month of testing by local truckers, the design is performing to expectations.

Paul and Dereck maintain high standards for their customers, with friendly and prompt service a priority. They have no plans to grow LBC beyond its present capacity. Their customers like that they deal directly with the brothers, who are very knowledgeable about the industry. Twice a year they promote their trailers in the region.

Paul is proud of Louise, his wife of 25 yrs., and their children Jena, Sara, Kyla and Cody and happy with their life in Thunder Bay.

Dereck and Paul are also community-minded. They sponsor 10 young hockey players (from Atom to Jr. A) every year. Paul's son Cody currently plays Bantam with the West End Bruins. The brothers are also big supporters of the annual "Parade of Lights" and annually a team of volunteers, led by Sheila Waywanko of the Autism Society, uses their shop to decorate trucks. The Parade benefits Sunshine Dreams for Kids, the Therapeutic Riding Assoc. and Autism Ontario.

The Legros brothers have experienced change in the logging industry in the past and are adapting to the present downturn in that economy. They have already built their first "chip" van and have joined the local Oil Sands Consortium (25 local manufacturers seeking to fabricate items in short supply in the Alberta oil sands). They also are likely to benefit from their trailer design.

Local heroes for sure - is there a global market for them too?

Everyday Heroes is a community initiative by Thunder Bay Ventures. Everywhere there are people living, working, playing and contributing to the fabric of our city. Nominate a hero-heroes@thunderbayventures.com. Read about past heroes at www.thunderbayventures.com