

Will Jones: Making sure everyone goes home safe



Congratulations to Will Jones

The Washington Trucking Associations' Safety Professional of the Year* for 2015!

Will Jones began his working career at 12-years-old as a 4th generation logger. He said in those days the motto was, "Run *in* to save your job. Run *out* to save your life." At the age of 16 while working for his dad, he learned how easy it was to get injured. Will received a bad cut from a chainsaw in Lacey, and instead of going to the local emergency room, his father drove him home to the family doctor in Orting. They had to make sure L&I didn't know he, an underage worker, had gotten injured.

Although he wasn't raised to think about safety, the impact of the dangerous work he was doing left its mark. He noted that in one year, while working for a large employer, they packed 4 guys out of the woods that had been killed on the job. He knew that there had to be more to working than "running in and running out."

He began to really think about safety working for his friend Jeff Van Lierop at Country Green Turf Farms where he was hired in 2000 to drive trucks. Three years later, Will found himself responsible for transportation and the mechanics' shop and essentially the lives of others. He knew his greatest responsibility was to make sure that everyone went home safe every night.

To accomplish this, Will has a strict maintenance schedule for his trucks. Every 2,000 miles or less, the trucks are brought into the shop and gone over together by the mechanic and the driver. The day the truck is scheduled, the driver is given a short run so he can be back to the shop by noon for the truck's checkup.

Jeff, the owner, has never refused a repair and they never patch anything. All maintenance is done right the first time. Will says it would be an embarrassment to him if one of their trucks broke down on the side of the road, so he makes sure that rarely or hopefully never happens. And since they carry a very perishable product that has an entire work crew waiting for each delivery, he cannot afford to have a driver down with an injury either.

Will is careful to hire only the best drivers that work hard and safely. Will says it's the collaboration that makes them successful, from the owner of the company to the employees, everyone is working towards the same goal — to return home each night to their families without injuries.

* The Safety Professional of the Year award is presented to the safety professional whose company and colleagues believe that he or she has made an impact on safety in their company and in the industry. The individual must have a passion for safety that is shown by their dedication and ethics.

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