

## **Profile of a Provider Pal**

Bobby Taylor of Sheridan, Arkansas, is the kind of logger who makes a positive difference for the rest of the industry. He enjoys playing sports with his son, cheering on his favorite team, and traveling with his family. And as a Provider Pal, he shares his experiences in the woods with the classroom of students that he's paired up with.

Provider Pals is a unique cultural exchange program in which resource providers, such as loggers, farmers, fisherman, ranchers and miners have the opportunity to share their experiences with young people in urban areas. It is a chance for these kids to learn where the stuff they use every day comes from, and why these industries are good and necessary.

It is also a great opportunity for loggers who want to preserve their industry in a rewarding way.

Bobby has been logging for 15 years, but his dad started the family logging business 35 years ago.

Bobby first heard about the Provider Pal program through the Arkansas Forestry Association. He got involved with the program two years ago, not knowing what to expect.



“I was surprised at the number of city kids that didn't know about the forestry industry and the products that we provide for them,” Bobby reports. “Things like toilet paper, pencils, milk cartons, etc.”

Bobby spent one day at the school in Little Rock, Arkansas that he was paired up with. “I brought a log truck with logs on it so the kids could see, and we could talk about the forest and what it does for them. The school has the option to email me any questions from the students.”

I asked Bobby what the value of being a Provider Pal is.

“It's important for these kids to see a positive side to the logging industry,” he says. As a logger, Bobby wants them to learn that harvesting timber is not a bad thing. “It provides many items that we use in daily life. We reforest all the timberland that we harvest so that in years to come there will be more timber.”

Being a Provider Pal is a chance to share with young people why logging is valuable. “It is a real eye-opening experience,” Bobby adds, “to see what kids think about our industry. It is a good way to provide information to them.”

Bobby Taylor is now in his third year with the Provider Pal program. He is active in other areas as well; a few years ago he received the Arkansas Forestry Association's Communicator of the Year award. He has also organized the 'Log a Load for Kids' in Sheridan, Arkansas, that raised money for the children's hospital.

There are numerous Provider Pals like Bobby across the United States and now in Canada who are making a difference for their industry. If you are interested in making a difference as a logger or other resource provider, visit the Provider Pals website, About Us page:

<http://www.providerpals.com/aboutus.html>.