

A logger's dream come true

Wilson's fells \$15,000 tree on original Abe Lincoln settlement

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CRESCO - How much is a tree worth?

That's the question a lot of people are asking Jeff Wilson, owner of Wilson Tree Service, Cresco, as they walk by his back lot on First Avenue West and see one large log that stands out above the rest.

That log, Wilson said, is a 30-foot long, 150-year-old walnut tree he and his crew recently took off the original Abraham Lincoln settlement in Elkhart, Ill.

"This is what we call virgin growth timber," Wilson said of the log, which measures 29 inches at the small end. "This one will go for about \$12.50 per board foot - about \$15,000."

To put that into perspective, Wilson said the "Lincoln" log is a very uncommon tree.

"I've been buying for 13 years," he said, "and I find one like this about once each year. No one ever sees a \$10,000 walnut tree. They're so uncommon that I was approached by 25 different brokers after word got out I had this one."

The local logger explained his business was invited to



Local logger Jeff Wilson stands at the end of what he calls a perfect tree - cut off the original settlement of President Abraham Lincoln. (TPD photo by Zach Jensen)

bid on the Elkhart job after his company did work for the Cave of the Mounds in Wisconsin. Wilson's won the bid and was thus the only logging company to ever log on the original settlement of Civil War President Abe Lincoln, Wilson said.

That log, in particular, will be sent to a buyer in Ohio, but Wilson said many of his logs are shipped worldwide and often go to Japanese

buyers. Additionally, the local tree service is the only logging service contracted to do all the tree cutting work for the City of Minneapolis, and out of Wilson's local shop, the company also makes gun stocks, gun cabinets and other wood furniture items from the logs they cut. At one time, Wilson said, he had a contract to sell gun cabinets to several Cabella's stores but had to discontinue

due to the time constraints of his work.

"The most expensive log sold out of Iowa was \$18,000, and this will come close to that," Wilson said with a smile. "A lot of logs only bring about \$1,000 - maybe \$2,000. The two nicest trees taken off a piece of land in Cresco were worth \$5,000 each eight years ago. But, this will be, for me, the best log I've ever cut."