



JARRAFF

All-Terrain Tree Trimmer



5 MODELS

IN THE FIELD

ROW MAINTENANCE

4x4 JARRAFF

Advances in ROW Maintenance: Time Saving, Tree Trimming Technology With Hentges Tree Service, Inc.

The evolution of the vinyl record to the compact disc to the mp3 is a permanent one. With the exception of the occasional walk down memory lane, most people would not go back to the bulky, less efficient music mediums. The same is true for right-of-way (ROW) maintenance with Hentges Tree Service, Inc, Jefferson City, MO. The company has kept pace with the times, updating its equipment arsenal and improving efficiency.

Company Background

Hentges Tree has been specializing in ROW maintenance since 1969 and has undergone many changes in methods and equipment. Harold Hentges started the tree service company 37 years ago, after working as a lineman and recognizing the desperate need for tree trimming.

The company began as a part-time side job and has since doubled and tripled in size. Hentges Tree now services ROW's for 10 electrical co-ops in Missouri and residential customers in several communities. They are kept pretty busy year round controlling re-growth and tackling challenging new projects. To adapt with the times, equipment and approaches to ROW's have changed drastically since the company's conception.

Equipment

"We started out with 500 gallon herbicide tanks that we would spray as high as possible to get to the trees. That made a big mess," says James Hentges, Vice President of Hentges Tree, "that's just the way things were done back then." Large volume spraying soon became less popular with offsite run-off and long stretches of dead vegetation along the road.

It wasn't long before Hentges Tree started using more mechanical control methods. "Twenty years ago, ninety-nine percent of our trimming was done by hand," Hentges explains, "climbers would scale the tree with ropes, saddles and spurs and hang like monkeys while trimming with a chain saw." With miles and miles of ROW's

to clear, this was a slow and dangerous way to do things.

The next evolution for Hentges Tree machinery was the four-wheel drive vehicle equipped with a bucket. This still is a preferred method to climbing as the trimmers are safer in the buckets and are able to concentrate more on the work at hand instead of falling.

Three years ago, Hentges Tree added a four-wheel drive mechanical tree trimmer with an enclosed cab. This machine has a long boom with a saw blade at the end; the men do not have to leave the ground. Hentges Tree chose a Jarraff All-Terrain tree trimmer from Jarraff Industries, St. Peter, MN, to add to their fleet. "We use the Jarraff on a daily basis," Hentges says, "it can handle anything that we encounter and cuts ninety percent to ninety-five percent of the brush. It can also go anywhere we need it to. The insurance company certainly liked it, the workers are much safer."

With all of these advances in technology, Hentges has discovered that the combination of all methods is the most efficient way to do things. "We go in with the Jarraff and trim as much as possible, what



Hentges Tree tackles many off-road line clearing projects involving uneven terrain and difficult access. They chose the Jarraff four wheel drive model for its all-terrain ability and its turntable base that offers a 360 degree range of motion.

PROJECT PROFILE:

Contractor: Hentges Tree Service, Inc

Location: Jefferson City, MO.

Equipment Used: Jarraff 4 Wheel Drive All-Terrain Tree Trimmer

Specifications: Row Maintenance, Missouri

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is left over we can usually get with men in buckets. Occasionally we will have to send a climbing crew in to cover any holes that the machines cannot get to. After the trimming is done we spray lower areas with modern and more environmentally friendly herbicide to control the brush re-growth,” Hentges says.



The ergonomic cab on the Jarraff makes it possible for the operator to rotate with the boom and maintain optimum visibility.

On the Job

Hentges is thankful for advances in tree trimming equipment, especially on a particularly challenging project they started early last year. Hentges Tree negotiated with Webster Electric Cooperative in the fall of 2004 to clear an 87-mile stretch of line in the southern part of Missouri. Hentges Tree was allotted the entire year of 2005 to complete the job. They began work on the long term project in February with three men, a wood chipper and a bucket truck.



All-terrain tree trimmers make ROW maintenance safer by reducing the need to have climbing crews cutting above the lines. The Jarraffs allow operators to stay safe and comfortable in the cab while trimming.

“The project had a high volume of side trimming and in many areas the energized line was over hung with large branches growing from one side of the right of way to the other. After the first month we were moving more slowly than expected. Half of the work was being trimmed with manned buckets, but they couldn’t reach everything. The other half was trimmed with climbing crews.”

Adding to the difficulty, the road had steep slopes on either side. The trees were growing out of the elevated land so they were hanging up to 30 feet above the power lines. This made it difficult for even the bucket trucks to reach that high. As they worked through the winter it became obvious that they would not finish in the allotted time with their current force.

Hentges Tree had two options to make their time limit. They could add more men, or more machines. They opted to add one more man, a heavy duty brush cutter tractor and a Jarraff mechanical tree trimmer.

“We didn’t have a Jarraff in that part of the state, and when the opportunity to get another one came up, I jumped at it. We had the four-by-four model delivered right to the work site and started using it immediately.

We received it just in time for this particularly bad stretch of line. The trees were 30 feet above the power lines but the most challenging part was the over hang. They were also growing out of the steep slope so it was difficult to get equipment to the other side of the lines,” Hentges recalls. “This particularly nasty half-mile stretch of line, along a county road, was estimated to take eight days with a three man crew and a bucket truck. With the Jarraff, a brush cutter and two highly-skilled workers it took only a day.”

The Jarraff’s boom has a 75 foot reach that is able to cut even the highest branches. It is able to reach over the power lines and maneuver with care to the other side. It is also equipped with a turn table base that offers 360 degree range of motion and a 40 degree lateral tilt, the operator can easily see what they are cutting.

The Aftermath

“With the maneuverability and the four-wheel drive we could get to ninety-eight percent of the brush with the Jarraff,” Hentges says, “the tractor brush hog followed up behind and cleaned up the floor. The time savings was unbelievable. We saved similar chunks of time in other areas as the Jarraff allowed us to access lines that would only have been accessible with a climbing crew otherwise.”

The whole job was completed in seven months, five months ahead of schedule with the help of the Jarraff.

“We were all amazed and the co-op was particularly impressed with the tree clearing and personnel involved,” says Hentges. This one job is just a small example of how far the tree trimming process has evolved.



The bucket trucks Hentges used at the beginning of this job were not tall enough to reach the top branches. Jarraff All-Terrain Tree Trimmers were brought in to compliment the bucket crews.

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