



Pioneer Log Homes' Mission of Peace

While many Canadians, and especially British Columbians, are questioning the degree of solidarity between Canada and the United States in light of the continuing softwood lumber woes between our two countries, one man from the Cariboo is on a mission of peace.

When terrorists hijacked and laid the twin towers of the World Trade Center to waste in New York City on September 11, Bryan Reid was in Arizona putting up a log house.

"It took us all day to do a one hour job," He says. "Everybody was so devastated. You just had to feel the emotion and will of the people there."

A day later, Bryan composed a letter on behalf of his company, Pioneer Log Homes, to all his American suppliers and customers expressing his regrets about the vicious attacks. And he stated his resolve to stand by them.

"We feel as close to America and Americans as we do to our own town and country," he wrote. "May God bless America."

"We have partners in the United States who we deal with on a regular basis," Bryan explains. "They chose us, and put their faith in a Canadian company and we want to show them that we care."

To get back to the Cariboo after that fateful day, Bryan drove his company's hummer, a military style vehicle manufactured for the general public, that he kept in Phoenix. The airlines were grounded and he had no other way back to Canada. The Hummer, Bryan explains, was purchased by his company three years ago to make an impression on their customers they picked up at the Phoenix Airport. Pioneer Log Homes has a branch office in Phoenix, he says.

"The Hummer gives us credibility. Customers can see instantly that we can afford to build their house."

We're several million dollars worth of log work and construction at a crack here. Currently Pioneer is working on a 114,000 square foot mansion that will be shipped from the Cariboo to Colorado and set up

there. This 70-foot high structure is the largest undertaking by the company yet.

"That's 50 man-years of employment," explains Bryan's business partner Andre Chevigny. "Fifty people working for a year."

Bryan explains what the Hummer symbolizes to his clientele. "It signifies to the American people the greatness of their own technology and economic might all rolled up in one."

The trip home to Canada driving the Hummer through the States was the toughest of his life, Bryan admits. "All the way back I kept thinking, what can I do?"

Then he got an idea. He took the hummer to a local body shop, Mark IV Collision, and had Jason Mundeling paint American and Canadian flags across it. Then he towed it back to Arizona.

"When I drove it up it was white. When I drove it back, it was red, white and blue."

If his trip up north was tough, his return trip south with his newly decorated Hummer was just the opposite. "Everyone said how much they appreciated Canada. I even had a priest bless the Hummer at a rest stop."

Bryan says his idea was to show Americans that the Canadian people and the Canadian governments stand with them against terrorism. "I'm proud of what Prime Minister Jean Chretien said on parliament hill, that we're standing shoulder to shoulder with our American cousins. I'm concerned about my freedom. I don't want to step on a land mine when I take my grandson fishing or take him shopping."

Bryan says the response he got with his newly decorated Hummer was overwhelming. He drove 9,000 miles (14,000 kilometers) in three weeks attending benefits for the terrorist victims and trade shows. In a San Francisco fund-raiser for the New York City fire department the flag draped Hummer became a centerpiece parked between two of the world's largest fire trucks with their ladders forming an arch overhead.

"I had people eight to eighty years old come shake my hand," Bryan says. "It was the most photographed vehicle in the United States."

At a log home trade show in Denver, people lined up to have their pictures taken with the Hummer.

Bryan's mission now is to promote patriotism for both countries. When University of British Columbia professor, Sunera Thobani, in her speech to the Woman's Resistance Conference in Ottawa last month, stated that the U.S. foreign policy was soaked in blood, Bryan and his partner Andre Chevigny fired off letters to the Prime Minister Chrtien and Premier Gordon Campbell condemning Thobani for what he calls treason.

A week later Bryan got an invitation from Minister for international Trade, Pierre Pettigrew, inviting him to join the Prime Minister and western premiers on a Team Canada West trade mission to Texas and California at the end of November.

Meanwhile, Bryan is heading back to Phoenix with his Hummer in tow for another log home trade show. And it says on his Hummer's license plate holder sporting a custom-designed Pioneer Log Homes license, his message will continue to be: "God Bless America."