

Composite Products acquires new division

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

One piece of wood with a wavy edge is responsible for employing seven members of the Confederated Tribes, and even more may be put to work.

Warm Springs Composite Products, a maker of components for fire doors and fire door jambs, recently purchased the closure strip division of Millstone Industries of Redmond.

The move included bringing all of the closure strip equipment to Warm Springs, and with it Millstone's plant manager. The move also resulted in the hiring of seven tribal members.

"The reason we did this," said Duane Darnell, chief executive officer of Warm Springs Composite Products, "is, number one, we can utilize recovery waste, and Forest Products Industries doesn't have a recovery waste program.

"We hooked together with them and started doing some testing with some of the waste material and it worked fine, so we went and

bought the company."

Composite Products kept the operation running in Redmond until it was moved to its location in Warm Springs.

Before the plant was made ready in Warm Springs, Composite Products employees slated to work in the new division, the Millstone Division of Composite Products, went to Redmond for a month of training on the new equipment.

Even more important than creating a useful outlet for Warm Springs Forest Products Industries' (WSFPI) waste wood, Darnell said, is putting people to work.

"Our mission at Composite Products is to create jobs, and we do that by growing a business," he said. "To grow a business, you have to make it stable first, and then you can start growing into these other by-products."

This by-product, the closure strip, is marketed and sold to suppliers for lumberyards and box stores like Home Depot and Lowe's, a base of "about seven to eight customers," Darnell said.

"It's a not a big market," Darnell said. "The people that buy it are people who put up these corrugated panels, and

they go over your patio, or they can go as a skylight on an industrial building, or a side-light panel."

They look quite simple. A thin piece of wood, maybe an inch thick, with an undulating pattern cut on one of its edges.

The Millstone division uses a band saw with adjustable moving parts that move the saw blade to create the precise patterns to fit any corrugated surface to provide more support.

"Then they can screw right through the top, right into these slopes," Darnell said.

"It's been around for 40 years. It was actually developed by a guy over in Bend. They went bankrupt, and Millstone bought this and a couple other businesses, and we ended up buying this division of Millstone."

Millstone had been buying lumber from Canada, and still making a profit. Darnell said Composite Products could also generate a profit by using waste wood from WSFPI.

"Our vision is, if they could make this pay, then we can also," he said.

See WOOD PRODUCT on 12

Community events calendar

The Celilo, Salmon and Smoke lecture series continues on May 19 with the topic: Catching up with Kenniwick Man, where the court case stands now. Speaker will be Roberta Kirk, representative of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The lecture is at noon on May 19 at High Lookee Lodge. Call 553-1182 to make an appointment. Bring lunch or be served at the lodge for \$3. This is a program of the Central Oregon Community College Continuing Education program.

There will be a class, The Mystique of Infants and Toddlers, from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. on Friday, April 22 in the Early Childhood Education building. The instructor will be Edith Jones. Cost is \$29. The class will help you understand the way, what and how of early childhood, so that you can appreciate the magic of this age. Call Central Oregon Community College Educational Services for information, 553-1428.

The Warm Springs Extension Office of Oregon State University is presenting a Seekseequa family learning session this evening Thursday, April 14, at the Seekseequa Fire Station. Dinner is from 5:30 to 6:30 with the learning sessions beginning at 7. There will a lesson on horse anatomy, plus tips from Master Gardeners. The meeting is to bring learning to all ages in the Seekseequa area. Future activities are being planned for Kah-Nee-Ta, Wolfe Point and the Sunnyside areas.

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