

PROUD TO PROSPER

Sawmill salvages dead-standing trees



by Tom Mullen

Where most people saw a crash in the local economy, John Giuliani saw opportunity. Where others see dead-standing trees and destruction, John Giuliani sees a renewable resource, a way to promote healthy forests and a specialty timber product.

Giuliani owns Lakeside at Georgetown, a parcel of land near Denton's Point on Georgetown Lake. Four years ago, as the timber market began to spiral downward, he hit upon an idea.

"As the economy crashed," he told the *Silver State Post*, "I wanted to find some unique way to bring a product to market that was different and that was sustainable—a product that brought value to the timber market."

The product he envisioned was Ranchwood, specialty handcrafted lumber with the allure of weathered barn wood. The rustic look of barn wood is prized by craftsmen and designers to add seasoned warmth to modern cabins, lodges, and resorts. The difference: rather than dismantling historical structures to reclaim old barn wood, Giuliani's raw material would be the reddish dead-standing timber most people in these parts have been expecting to fuel the largest forest fire in a century.

He gathered a talented team with industry experience and set upon creating Montana Timber Products. The goal: to create the newest trends in sustainable and responsible timber products.

"In a nutshell, we take new wood and make it look old. We purchase wood from small local mills, then we take their product and remanufacture it into Ranchwood," Giuliani said.

"The primary source is dead standing trees (often beetle kill) from areas in the Rocky Mountain West." Harvesting these trees promotes healthy forests and reduces the risks of forest fire.

Another of the company's unique features is its streamlined distribution—it sells its products directly

to the consumer.

"Historically, in the lumber industry wood is harvested and the product is distributed through traditional channels. Typically the value of these channel partners was to carry inventory, but no one wants to carry inventory in this economy, so we sell our product directly to the end user," Giuliani explained.

"We develop intimate relationships with our end users. That direct relationship allows us to know exactly what our customers want and to provide them the best value."

That's where Giuliani's sales team comes into play. Handpicked talent represents MTP across the U.S. and Canada, especially the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest states. Their backgrounds range from high-end custom home building to architecture and design. In May, Giuliani will host the entire team for a tour of the Montana Timber Products facilities, and that will include a visit to Deer Lodge.

"We utilize what is commonly viewed as a byproduct and add value. After the timber is milled, it goes to Deer Lodge to be remanufactured. We have a partnership with Montana Correctional Enterprises as part of their vocational training program. We train offenders in the use of our equipment then it is taken to our primary facility in Anaconda to be finished. We have a dedicated member of our team who works to train offenders with the goal that when they are released from prison we have an opportunity to employ them at our facility in Anaconda, or to recommend them to work in the mills that we utilize. It is our hope that during this vocational training we give them enough skills and confidence that they don't need to return."

He said he sees his work as a sustainable way to develop a culture of responsible use of natural resources, taking a waste product (dead standing timber) and turning it into a useful product and as an example of contributing back to the State of Montana.

A personal touch

by Lloyd Mullen

For the past 39 years, 1st Security Bank of Deer Lodge has been helping Powell County to prosper by keeping things local.

"Keeping our money local has allowed us to make all kinds of different loans," said Tom Christnacht, President of 1st Security Bank of Deer Lodge.

Not only are they able to provide a variety of loans from home loans and car loans to even vacation loans, 1st Security Bank of Deer Lodge prides itself in its personalized service.

"Being a part of the community allows us to actually know our customers and meet any and all needs that they might have," said Christnacht.

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