



THE OBSERVER NEWS ENTERPRISE


Published on *The Observer News Enterprise* (<http://www.observernewsenterprise.com>)

[Home](#) > Change makes big impact

Change makes big impact

By *composing*

Created 07/06/2011 - 8:55pm

 [7-7 lumber grant 1.jpg](#) [1]

By NASH DUNN

nashdunn.one@gmail.com [2]

In nature, sometimes the smallest change makes all the difference.

A few rocks in a stream make a dam. A couple seeds in the ground produce a plant. Like the old saying reiterates – with every action, there is a reaction.

A lumber company in Maiden is proving that the same saying goes for society too, as one minor facility change at the company will produce numerous benefits for people as well as the planet.

Lawrence Lumber Company, a wood treatment, drying and shipping facility in Maiden, will soon update its lumber drying equipment. The change will save the company bundles of money, produce jobs in the area and help the environment prosper.

Lawrence will update its downdraft predryer system, which currently uses airflow and heat to dry red and white oak wood during the treatment process. Looking more like a warehouse than a drying system, the predryer is massive – slowly sucking out water and acid from 450,000 board feet of lumber stacked to the ceiling on a daily basis.

The facility's downdraft predryer is inefficient.

“Doing it the downdraft way is very inefficient because the top (of the lumber stacks) get the driest, and it decreases as you go lower and lower,” said Lawrence accounting representative Kim Beam.

Because of this, Lawrence is investing in a new cross flow predryer that will evenly distribute air throughout the stacks of lumber instead of top-to-bottom.

“The new system is a cross dryer, and it comes from the side so the airflow is evenly distributed across the wood,” Beam said.

Cross flow cash

The cross drying system will produce a better product, but will also save Lawrence bundles of money.

Currently, Lawrence can fill its downdraft predryer about eight times a year – drying a total of 3,645,000 board feet a year at an electrical cost of \$50,208.54, or \$12.88 per board foot, Beam said.

With the new cross flow predryer, Lawrence can fill its facility about 12 times a year, allowing the company to dry about 5,400,000 board feet in a year at a much lower price of \$5,785.32, or \$1.07 per board foot, Beam said.

The change will be an 88 percent reduction in electrical costs.

The drastic drop in cost is because of drying time. With the downdraft dryer, it currently takes 45 days for a full load of lumber to be dried. It will only take 30 days with the new cross flow predryer, allowing Lawrence to do more loads throughout the year and use less energy.

“The upfront cost is a bit higher, as the total project will cost about \$1,000,000 total,” Beam said, adding that the company will make its money back through lower electricity costs.

Lawrence recently received a little help in paying for the project as well, as the state granted the company about \$230,000 to help with the project. The money came from the North Carolina Green Business Fund, a fund created in 2007 that grants money to companies using energy and electricity smarter to create jobs.

“As part of our statewide job creation strategy, we must continue to invest in North Carolina’s growing green economy,” said Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco. “These fast growing industries hold vast potential for the future and resources like the Green Business Fund are critical to keep our momentum strong.”

It’s sustainable, too

As the grant shows, the cross flow predryer will help save energy, too.

The natural gas savings from the new predryer will total about 2,307 MMBTUs annually, Beam said.

“It’s also going to be saving gas,” Beam said. “Basically, the money you were afforded was based on your saving of energy.”

As Beam said, the state grant money was awarded based on the amount of energy each company would save.

More jobs as well

Because Lawrence will be predrying and processing more loads of lumber each year with the new cross flow system, Beam said the company will need more manpower.

Beam estimates that about 50 jobs will be either created or retained at Lawrence, with some of them also coming from Southern Installation Inc., which will help install the new system.

“Maiden is proud to have companies like Lawrence Lumber being very successful during a time in which the entire nation is facing such a troubled economy,” said Maiden Town Manager Todd Herms. “Not only is Lawrence Lumber expanding, it is also looking for ways to become a more ‘green’ company, which is great for our environment.”

Beam estimates that about 5,680 labor hours will be created for the whole project.

“It is outstanding when a company who has been in your community has an opportunity to expand and create more jobs,” Herms said. “Whenever Maiden has an economic announcement that brings jobs to our community we are excited and grateful, but whenever it is a local company adding more jobs to its workforce, well, there is just a little something extra to it.”

Copyright 2010 Observer News Enterprise

Lawrence Lumber Company, a wood treatment, drying and shipping facility in Maiden, will soon update its lumber drying equipment at its facilities that will save them bundles of money, produce jobs in the area and most importantly help the environment prosper.

MAIDEN, N.C.

O-N-E Staff Writer

Observer News Enterprise

656ee282d97fced92dfd918f9bf273c8

**Copyright © 2011 The Observer News Enterprise | 309 North College Avenue | Newton, N.C. 28658
| (828) 464-0221**

All property rights for the entire contents of this publication shall be the property of The Observer News Enterprise.

No part hereof may be reproduced without prior written consent.

Site Development: Maine Web FX

Source URL: <http://www.observernewsenterprise.com/content/change-makes-big-impact>

Links:

[1] http://www.observernewsenterprise.com/sites/default/files/7-7_lumber_grant_1.jpg

[2] <mailto:nashdunn.one@gmail.com>