

Product / Market Diversification and Forest Products Development Center

An important component in the renewal of the forest products economy of northern NH is product diversification. We cannot expect the traditional uses of wood to support the economy of our region as it has for most of the last century. In renewing the forest products industry, a goal would be to maximize resource utilization and add as much value as possible, locally. As we see today, most of the timber harvested in Coos County is transported to another state or country for processing.

Much work is being done in R&D laboratories at universities, colleges, and public agencies across New England and the country. Knowledge of these developments is not always readily available to entrepreneurs. Also, these newly developed products do not motivate every entrepreneur or investor in the same way. Some of these products and ideas may become viable at a different time or if presented to different entrepreneurs. We must develop a mechanism that will bring the R&D folks together with the entrepreneurs and the investors.

A Forest Products Development Center would be the repository of information for new and emerging forest products or any forest product idea that hasn't been commercialized yet. These would be products that could be manufactured locally with local resources. In addition, this would be where research activity and research needs would be exchanged. In this way, academics would be working on the needs of the entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurs could see what is being developed in the forest product labs across the country and the world. This marriage of scientist and businessman should stimulate more interest in the industry, which could lead to business development and/or expansion.

The Center could provide information and advice that may help the entrepreneur expedite the development of the venture, such as overcoming infrastructure constraints, getting the required permits, meeting environmental regulations, meeting the key people, etc. The Center would be the first stop for anyone interested in contributing to a forest-based economy in northern NH.

People are drawn to this area for variety of reasons, but these factors are frequently outweighed by the restrictions found here or the opportunities given elsewhere. The purpose of the Center would be to facilitate the renewal of the forest products industry by providing ideas, information and highlighting the opportunities.