

# Fourth generation sawyers continue the legacy founded more than fifty years ago.

## B & K Wood Products wins Wood-Mizer's Business Best Award



Switching from traditional circle mills to Wood-Mizer's thin-kerf bandsaw mills increased production and log-to-lumber footages.

By Jenna Gehlhausen and Jake Mooney

"Four generations for fifty-five years" is just the beginning in describing B & K Wood Products, the winner of Wood-Mizer's 2010 Business Best Contest. Their business has grown from humble beginnings in Kentucky to producing over 80,000 board feet per day and surviving a recession. B&K attributes much of their success to their front-end production equipment including three thin-kerf headrigs and an edger from Wood-Mizer's industrial line.

B & K Wood Products was founded by Jesse Baize who began logging in the vast forests of the Western Coalfield and Pennyrile regions of Kentucky, back in 1955. "At the time, Jesse harvested timber using mules and dilapidated road tractors," explains Jordan. "Good jobs were hard to come by, so, with an entrepreneurial spirit, Jess made his own work. In 1957, Jesse's sons Allen and Nathan began working with their father in the woods. The family crew purchased a portable hand operated sawmill in 1958, and the trees harvested were sawed into cross ties and lumber on the spot. Allen and Nate became partners with their father in 1967 until Jesse's passing in 1981."

The business continued to grow steadily over the next few decades, with more and more of the family becoming a part of the lifestyle. Robbie Baize and Del



B & K Wood Products boasts a nine-building campus with four headrigs and an edger from Wood-Mizer's industrial line.

Knight, son and son-in-law of Allen Baize, stepped up in 2004, reorganized the company for maximum success. What was once known as Greenville Log & Lumber was now the company we know today – B & K Wood Products which began operating on one LT300 and 15 employees. Today the company boasts a nine-building campus, three LT300s, a WM3500, and an E430 edger, all from the Wood-Mizer Industrial line. These products are the front-end of all production, which continues to prosper.

During B & K's peak season, they employ more than 100 employees.

Jordan admits to being a bit skeptical when it came to switching to the Wood-Mizer line of mills. "Coming from an output-driven organization that operated six circle sawmills daily, the more slowly-moving, lighter weight LT300 was a 180 degree turn-around – or so we thought. We were amazed at the amount of production that could be generated from a three-shift approach to operating the new

mill. Not only were we surprised by the production possibilities, the gains we recorded from log-to-lumber footages were increased by 15%."

Keeping in mind that despite the size, B & K WoodProducts is still a family business, Jordan adds, "B & K Wood Products is both our families' means of income and our hobby. Needless to say, the mill was doing our family a wonderful job. Enough so that in the six years we have increased our production by nearly 300,000 board feet

per week – all as a result of adding a Wood-Mizer sawmill." The recent addition of the new WM3500 has also been a boon to the company. "Within the last month we've added a fourth Wood-Mizer mill. Our new WM3500 is the shining star of our production equipment."

As with many companies, the recession hit B & K – and hard. Jordan explains, "Our company, just like dozens around us, has been very negatively affected by recent economic conditions. The recession sent many friends and competitors to other industries or out of business ownership altogether. We pride ourselves in the diverse forest product line made available to our customers. Because of this, we survived the 2008 – 2009 economic recession not unscathed, but leaner and still in a manufacturing state of mind."

The company relies on a regimented way of production, one which they've found to be immensely successful. "Our company uses a 'rotating break period' approach in the day-today manufacturing by using a designated employee to operate equipment while the primary operator takes his or her lunch and breaks," Jordan explains. "Because of this, we add approximately one hour a day to each of our sawmills. With two 10-hour shifts operating daily, that makes for 22 hours of production per mill, per day."

Twenty-two hours a day on four industrial mills adds up to approximately 80,000-85,000 board feet production per day. They produce a varied assortment of wood products for their customers from grade lumber, cross ties, craned mats, manufactured firewood, and they've



B&K considers Wood-Mizer's industrial WM3500 the "shining star" of their production line.

recently gotten into the wood fiber market. Jordan credits Wood-Mizer products for helping him get to this level of production.

"We have been totally pleased with our ownership of Wood-Mizer products. B & K Wood Products, LLC. is still operating the very first LT300 we purchased in 2004, and the mill has produced millions of board feet since its original commission began six years ago. Because of this fact alone, we feel that saying we are pleased with Wood-Mizer products is an unjust understatement."

Congratulations to all the staff at B & K Wood Products, LLC. for their hard work and dedication to the wood industry.

*"Editor's note: The preceding was paid advertorial by Wood-Mizer."*

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Logs are delivered to the four industrial mills which produce approximately 80,000-85,000 board feet per day.

Left to right: Dave Mann of Wood-Mizer; Del Knight, Robbie Baize, Allen Baize and Jordan Baize all of B & K Wood Products; Doug Keele of Wood-Mizer

For more information on Wood-Mizer, visit [woodmizer.com](http://woodmizer.com)