

Westbury Lumber: Business at Its Best

Small Hardwood Business Starts, Expands, Thrives with Wood-Mizer Equipment

RED CREEK, New York — Jason Smith grew up working in the woods as a logger with his father. While his love for the woods was strong, he was more drawn to the finished product and pursued a career in lumber.

In 1993 he graduated from the National Hardwood Lumber Association school for lumber grading and began work at a large hardwood mill, where his interest in sawing peaked and inspired him to start his own business.

“With \$250 in my pocket, I set out and rented my first Wood-Mizer,” said Jason. “I was so impressed with the quality of lumber I could produce; I decided to buy my own Wood-Mizer sawmill.”

Jason’s first mill was a gas-operated Wood-Mizer LT40, which he set up in a vacant field on his uncle’s property. To keep sawing through the winter, he purchased a building without sides and cut lap siding for it, and his operation was under roof.

STEADY GROWTH

Over the course of eight years, Jason’s business experienced steady growth. He upgraded his operation with five different Wood-Mizer sawmills, added a couple of edgers, and employed three to four people. Greg Fatcheric, the main sawyer, has been with Jason from the beginning and “does an excellent job,” he said.

“We started running 10-hour shifts straight, staggering our breaks and lunches so the mill would start up in the morning and run straight through,” said Jason.

“Wood-Mizer has been with me every step of the way,” he said. “Their advances in equipment and blade technology have allowed our company to grow at a steady and cost effective pace.”

STEPPING UP

With his sights on a larger operation, Jason visited Wood-Mizer’s research and development facility in Kentucky in 2002 and began moving to a new site and setting up a new, larger and more efficient mill.

In 2003, Jason constructed a new plant and purchased an LT300 industrial sawmill from AWMV Industrial Products, a division of Wood-Mizer, along with the company’s three-way tables and an E430 edger.

What began as a small sawing business operating in a vacant field has grown into a large hardwood mill. “I am proud to be the first production facility of its kind in the Northeast with an LT300 at the core of the operation,” said Jason.

There were two reasons Jason decided to go with the AWMV LT300 system. One was his experience with Wood-Mizer. “We had such a good relationship with Wood-



AWMV LT300 thin-kerf head rig at Westbury Lumber; company uses the band mill to cut hard maple and other hardwoods.

Mizer’s Northeast Branch Manager, Dave Scott, and his crew. I knew they would keep us sawing. They have been great to work with.” The other reason was cost. Jason figured the LT300 set-up was half the price compared to a big band mill. “I was confident that production would not suffer with this equipment choice,” he said.

ABOUT THE OPERATION

Jason’s business, Westbury Lumber Company supports five families and manufactures quality lumber. Westbury Lumber employs five people and saws 42 hours per week, producing 33,000 to 35,000 board feet of grade lumber. All lumber is graded and tallied at the trimmer.

“There are a lot of critics of the smaller band mill,” said Jason, “but we can silence them pretty fast if they give us a few minutes and watch. That little band is hungry! You just have to feed it fast.”

At Westbury Lumber, 90% of the logs are delivered to the yard. Production starts with an industrial debarker, and then the logs head to the LT300 for flat sawing to produce grade lumber before the heart of the log is ‘boxed’ into one of many cant sizes. Material is then sorted with the Wood-Mizer 3-way tables. Waste is con-



Westbury Lumber cuts grade lumber and other products at its plant in Red Creek, N.Y., which is located near Syracuse.