

Success

A STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY FactSheet

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Ron Porter,
Entrepreneur and
Owner of Porterbilt
Company

Ron Porter, owner of Porterbilt Company in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley has been in the small diameter wood utilization business for over 40 years. Porterbilt started out as a post and pole business, and then when the log home manufacturing took off in the valley, Porter expanded his business by building log home railings. With post and poles being a seasonal commodity, and supply of small diameter logs decreasing, Ron has used innovative thinking and creative financing to expand his business into other realms of the biomass utilization world. It was at this point that he began making more value added products in addition to his commodity based products.



In 2002, using a design developed by the Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory and funds from the Forest Service State & Private Forestry Economic Action Program, Porter’s company built kiosks, with trusses and I-beams made of small diameter logs, for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Porter’s has continued building kiosks for various community parks throughout Montana and he believes that kiosks and the building of similar small diameter roundwood structures will play a viable role in the future success of his business. **“These sorts of things have helped diversify our business and we now manufacture and market value added products, which helps us get more bang for our buck!”** said Ron Porter.



Porterbilt Company built the roundwood portion of the Darby, Montana public library, which has been nicknamed the **“Sistine Chapel of Small Diameter Roundwood”** (photo - above). The library now serves as a national demonstration site for small diameter roundwood engineering.

Porter has also expanded his business to include log furniture making, and most recently dowelled all of the six inch diameter logs to be used in a 120 foot cable suspension small diameter roundwood bridge (shown below), being built over Rattlesnake Creek near Missoula, Mont.



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