

Success

A STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY FactSheet

April 2006

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Craig Rawlings,
Smallwood
Enterprise Program
Director

USDA Forest Service
Northern
and Intermountain
Regions



Economic Action
Program

The Smallwood Enterprise Program is a four year old program that helps Montana businesses, large or small, diversify into the smallwood market by providing grants and financing opportunities, as well as technical and marketing assistance. According to Craig Rawlings, Smallwood Enterprise Program Director, *“My job is to help entrepreneurs answer the question of how to create value-added uses for small diameter trees.”* The program is currently helping 75 clients achieve business success and that number is expected to grow as time goes on.



Funded partly by US Forest Service State & Private Economic Action grant funds, the Smallwood Enterprise Program has helped a wide variety of businesses since its inception. From a one person rustic log “doggy furniture” builder to a 500 employee pulp and paper operation, the program is capable of providing services to any size business. One of the most important aspects of the program is the ability to bring people and businesses together to combine their strengths.



Craig Rawlings, Smallwood Enterprise Director and staff member of the Montana Community Development Center, says about his job *“I’m also the guy who connects the dots. I help people form networks so that resources flow efficiently – across town or across the country. One of the most satisfying parts of this job is to introduce talented people to each other and then simply let good things happen. Forest Service support and grants help make all of this possible.”*



CONTACT

Craig Rawlings
Smallwood Enterprise
Agent
Tel: 406-728-9234
EXT: 203
crawlings@mtcdc.org

Dave Atkins
USDA Forest Service
(406) 329-3134
datkins@fs.fed.us

The Smallwood Enterprise Program provided support and technical assistance and/or helped secure funding for the following projects:

- Rattlesnake Bridge – Engineers from the US Forest Service Forest Products Lab and the University of Idaho have designed a method to assess the flexibility and strength of small-diameter timber and then demonstrated the effectiveness by grading 6 inch diameter pine for use in two bridges, one being the Rattlesnake Bridge near Missoula, Mont.
- Tri-Con Lumber Dry Kiln – The owners of Tri-Con Lumber expressed an interest in expanding their business beyond 2x4's and the traditional stud mill market. Tri-Con decided to get into small diameter larch flooring, but needed a newer, faster, and very expensive dry kiln to make it work. The Smallwood Enterprise Program helped make it happen.
- North Slope Sustainable Wood LLC – Four men forged a partnership to build a company that makes tight-grained tamarack flooring milled from small-diameter trees harvested from “sustainable” forest restoration projects.
- Biomass Utilization - The program is helping businesses convert to biomass heating systems and biomass electrical systems. The program is also involved in the Fuels for Schools Program, by helping find supply sources for schools with biomass heating systems.
- Small Diameter Wood Collection, Processing, and Transportation from Fuel Reduction Project Sites – One result of this effort was the design and use of large roll-off containers to cost-effectively move slash, hog fuel, or wood chips from the fuel reduction site to the slash collection area.
- Porterbilt Company – This post and pole company diversified their business and started utilizing small diameter timber to build outdoor pavilions for various community parks throughout the state.



OUR PARTNERS

- MONTANA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
- INTERMOUNTAIN ROUNDWOOD ASSOCIATION
- MONTANA WOOD PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
- MONTANA LOGGING ASSOCIATION
- MONTANA WOODY BIOMASS WORKING GROUP
- MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
- USDA FOREST SERVICE
- RESOURCE, CONSERVATION, AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS
- VARIOUS OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

