

Success

A **STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY** FactSheet

April 2006

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USDA Forest Service
Northern
and Intermountain
Regions



Economic Action
Program

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Tri-Con Lumber located in St. Regis, Montana has come up with some innovative ideas on how to utilize small diameter fuels in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Ken Verley, the owner of Tri-Con Lumber attended a seminar in 2003 on small wood that was co-sponsored by the Forest Service State & Private Forestry (S&PF) and the Smallwood Enterprise Program of the Montana Community Development Corporation (MCDC). Several presenters addressed the topic of flooring as a value-added wood product, and Ken became intrigued by the idea of supplementing his lumber business. When Ken found out that his mill could use smaller trees and offer a product that could potentially bring in more profit and was easy to market, he decided to research the idea further.

Ken found that making larch flooring from small diameter timber requires a very specialized and expensive slow-drying kiln. MCDC and the Forest Service S&PF helped Tricon Lumber apply for a Forest Service Economic Action Program grant. With the money received from the Forest Service grant, Tricon was able to purchase the kiln and begin to make strides in the world of biomass utilization.

Tricon, a traditional stud mill, started making flooring from small diameter wood, and with cooperation from MCDC and the Forest Service S&PF they found a market for their product, and Tricon was able to find a new niche in the often unforgiving and tight lumber market.



TRI-CON LUMBER MILL

FOREST SERVICE STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY PROGRAMS PROVIDE:

- **INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW IDEAS**
- **MATCHING GRANTS TO HELP ENTREPRENEURS TRANSITION TO NEW MANUFACTURING PROCESSES**
- **TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO SUCCESSFULLY IDENTIFY AND MOVE IN TO NEW MARKET AREAS**

FINISHED FLOORING INSTALLED IN A DANCE STUDIO

