



COW CREEK CEDAR

Wall, South Dakota

An Economic Action Program Success Story



Glendon Shearer and his sons, Trent and Colby, have a lot of Eastern red cedar, Rocky Mountain Juniper, and Eastern Cottonwood on their property. They live along the Cheyenne River breaks in western South Dakota on a working cattle ranch called the Cow Creek Ranch. The Shearer's come from a long line of cowboys, beginning with Texas cattle rancher George Shearer in the mid 1800's. Their ranch also has historic significance as the place where the 1876 Deadwood Trail crossed the Cheyenne River at the mouth of Cow Creek.

In January 2003, the Shearer's contacted the South Dakota Department of Agriculture with a business plan to begin utilizing the juniper and cedar on their property to make wood products. The intent of the project was to process the wood into precision round posts & poles and to start manufacturing furniture. The product is unique from other types of wood being colorful, rot resistant, and highly valued for furniture, railings and decorative fencing.

The Division of Agricultural Development provided the Shearers with a low interest loan that helped them purchase a dowel machine. The dowel maker processes bark-on timber into a round straight dowel with a smooth finish. The machine can take a log as short as four feet and up to twenty feet in length and from two inches to nine inches in diameter. A small portable band saw has also been added, primarily for sawing cottonwood.



The Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry provided an Economic Action Program grant to help Cow Creek Cedar with operating expenses and marketing of their products. The division has also provided forest management assistance to the family.



Colby has run the harvesting operation. Harvests have focused on removing dead trees from the property. All of the harvested cottonwood and 70% of the harvested cedar/juniper has been salvage of dead trees. The salvage has gone a long way toward cleaning up fuel on the property. Trent is in charge of the furniture and railing operation. His experience working for a log home company has turned out to be very useful.

The demand for their product has been good, often exceeding their expectations. Right now they have more orders than they can supply. Glendon has started the process of hiring additional help so they can keep up with orders. For more information about Cow Creek Cedar, visit their website at <http://cowcreekcedar.com>.