



Yoder Lumber™
Quality is Our Tradition



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DECEMBER 2015

Manufacturing the **Finest** Appalachian Hardwood

Products
for more than
70
Years

Written by Robert Hoshowsky

Providing a wide range of lumber products and solutions, the family-owned and operated business is now in its third generation, and continues the same dedication to clients fostered by company founder John J. Yoder over 70 years ago.

"The business has always been in the Yoder family," says Mel Yoder, Chief Executive Officer, and son of John Yoder. "There were several years where my dad and his brother were in partnership together — this was early on — and also my dad and a friend of his were in partnership." When John bought out his business partner in the 1960s, the company became an exclusive family business. Prior to starting the company, John Yoder worked in a sawmill back in the 1930s. Eventually setting out on his own, he purchased a portable sawmill, moving from woods to woods, cutting timber for farmers who were building barns.▶▶

Built on a decades-long tradition of quality, excellent customer service, superior selection, and timely delivery, Yoder Lumber Co. Inc. remains one of the most respected providers of top-quality hardwood products in America.



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► Today, with a skilled staff of around 200, the team at Yoder Lumber comprises a sawmill staff, a wide range of equipment operators on the manufacturing side, office staff and salespersons, accountants, and managers. Expanding to four locations over the years — three in Ohio, and one in Parkersburg, West Virginia — the company continues to operate its first permanent sawmill in Sugarcreek, Ohio, as it remains a respected leader in the production of high quality Appalachian hardwood lumber.

Over the years, the company has steadily grown its operations and its services and made considerable investments into new equipment including saws, kilns, pre-dryers, and more to increase quality and productivity and improve safety. Increasing its manufacturing, warehouse, and office space, the company has its own fleet of trucks, 20 tractors, three straight trucks, and a wealth of trailers for hauling logs to the mill. With an impressive annual sawmill production averaging 12 million to 13 million feet between its two sawmills, Yoder also purchases another eight million feet per year from other producers in the area, which continues to increase.

Celebrating its 70th year in business in 2014 — and installing a Woodeye Scanner and Talon Optimization Line from Eagle Machinery at the Berlin location — this year has seen Yoder



Lumber take on a bold, brand new approach. With a well-crafted website at www.yoderlumber.com, the company created seven new division names complete with logos, and rebranded the entire Yoder organization.

Architectural Wood Solutions

Along with other forward-thinking moves, Yoder Lumber has introduced an innovative new division called Architectural Wood Solutions (AWS). Capitalizing on the company's woodworking expertise and decades of experience, AWS was formed to support the growing commercial, retail, architectural, custom home and restaurant fixtures markets. Providing highly precise and well-crafted Appalachian hardwood millwork, the company's finely crafted wood products and solutions are seen in retailers and restaurants today.

"This year has seen Yoder Lumber take on a bold, brand new approach."

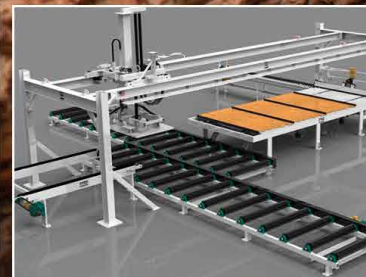
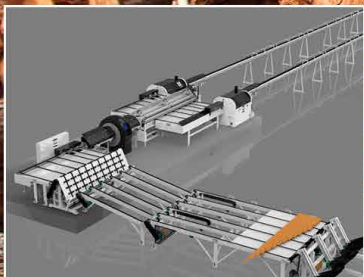
"With our new division, Architectural Wood Solutions, we decided to focus on more of a restaurant/commercial end for fixtures," says Dennis Hange, Marketing Manager for the company. "We have a full-time salesperson who is ultimately working with architects, construction, retail showcases, and wood products seen in stores like Starbucks, Abercrombie & Fitch, and other high-end fixture components." Combining ►



Optimized Automation Solutions

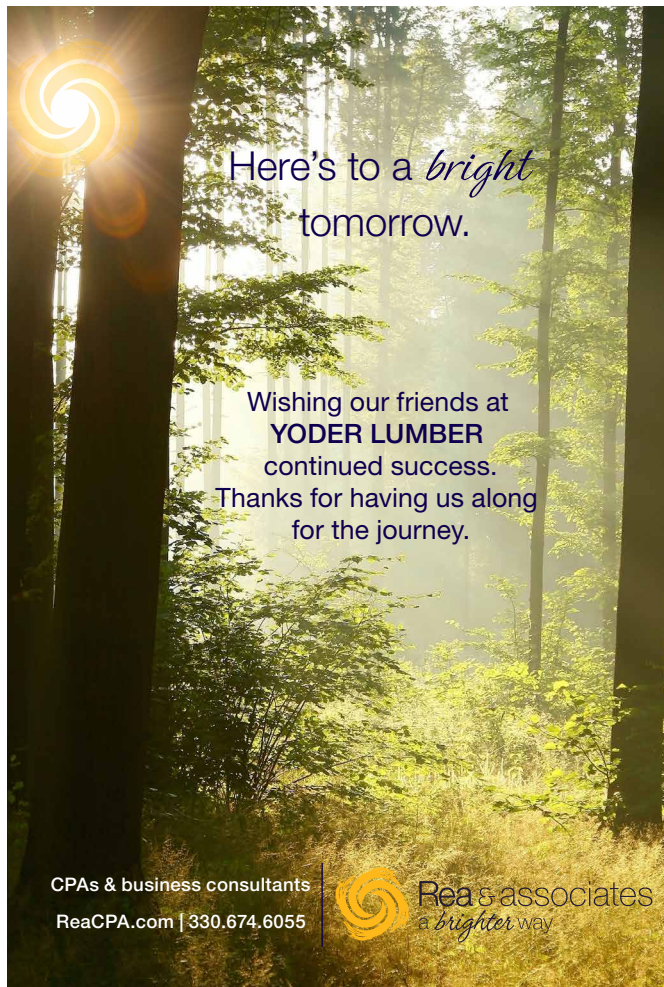
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- decades of woodworking expertise with the latest technology, Yoder Lumber works in tandem with architects, interior designers, and builders to create unique wood solutions. These types of customers are looking for a variety of wood species to craft display cases, tables, counters, flooring, trim, wall cladding and more to give homes, retail spaces, restaurants and more, a unique, elegant style.

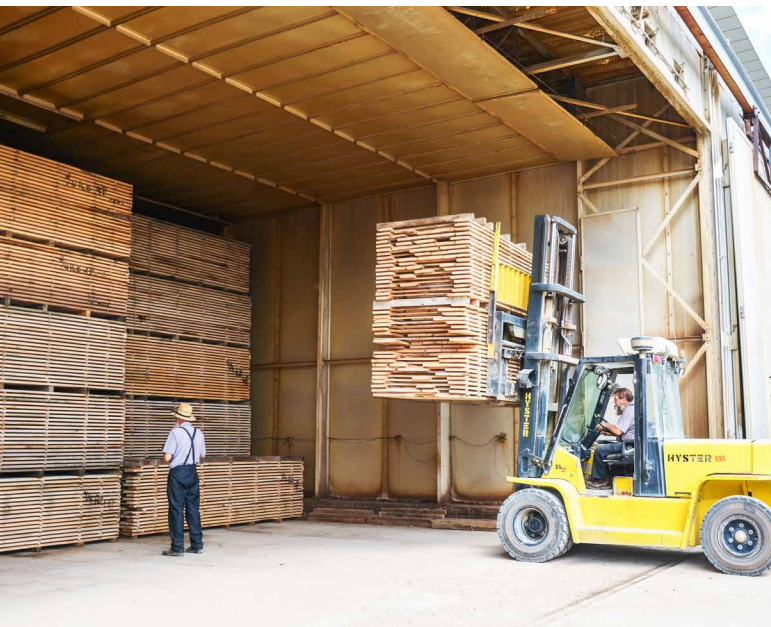
A One-stop Shop

Owning between 2,000 and 2,500 acres of woodlot, the company also makes purchases of timber within about a 100-mile radius of its headquarters in Millersburg, Ohio. Maintaining a network of local suppliers not only assures quality wood products for the company, but makes hauling timber less expensive and uses less fuel, which is better for the environment.

"Yoder Lumber has introduced an innovative new division called Architectural Wood Solutions (AWS)."

Able to assist woodlot owners with forest management, Yoder has three staff members with forestry degrees, and works with landowners on issues surrounding proper forest management and harvesting. "We try to make sure that the land owner, when we're done harvesting, still has a good stand of trees left," says Trent Yoder, Operations Manager at the company's Buckhorn Millwork and Distribution division. Providing free, on-site visits with its professional foresters, Yoder Lumber can advise on opportunities and assist with a variety of forest management services and prepare a forest management plan, including timber harvesting, inventory, and valuation.

Yoder exports quality veneer logs worldwide, to areas such as Europe, Asia, and South America. Containerizing logs at its facility for shipment, the company prides itself on harvesting primarily native Appalachian hardwoods, including ash, basswood, beech, cherry, grey elm, hard maple, hickory, poplar,




red elm, red oak, sassafras, soft maple, sycamore, walnut, and white oak. For purchasers across the United States, the company's locations are conveniently accessible by major highways, rail, and ports, making transport convenient.

Providing customers with the finest quality Appalachian hardwood lumber products requires years of experience, a dedication to customers and the environment, and the latest equipment. "In terms of technology, we've gone to a lot of optimization, computerization, and scanning in the sawmills and in the secondary manufacturing," says Mel Yoder of the company. About 80 percent of the company's dedicated staff on the manufacturing side are Amish, and are skilled at operating machinery.

Utilizing state-of-the-art sawmills and kilns to produce green and kiln-dried lumber, industrial wood products, and specialty items, the company's array of equipment includes a resaw turn around mill — one of only two in existence — along with two band mills, a 500,000-b.f. dry kiln, an 800,000-b.f. pre-dryer, and a 45-bay bin sorter. Producing a range of lumber and millwork, Yoder's state-of-the-art manufacturing capabilities enable the company to produce millions of feet of board of varying thicknesses, dimensions and species, along with S4S (surfaced on four sides) products, millwork, and custom moldings designed and crafted to exacting specifications. Additionally, the company's custom capabilities include quality hardwoods for door and window frames, staircases, and much more.

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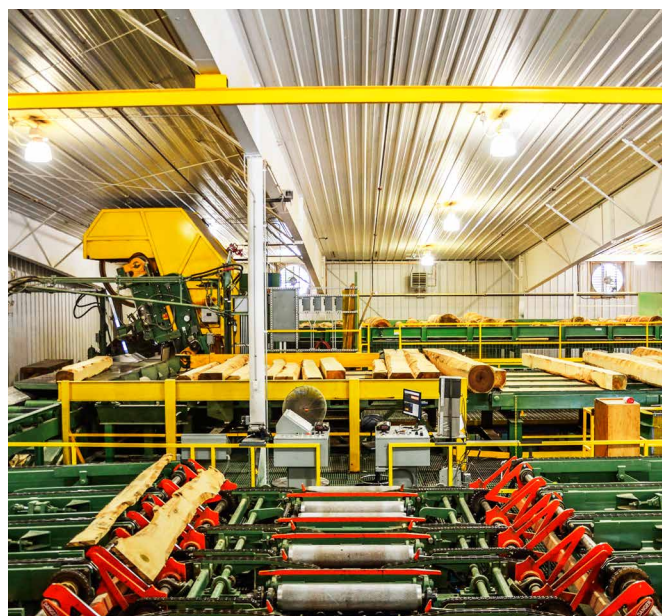
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equipment, but the best talent possible. In addition to local workers, Yoder Lumber works with high schools and colleges on summer internships. "As we continue to grow as a company, we look to recruit," says Hange. "We bring in school tours, and ►►

"Maintaining a network of local suppliers assures quality wood products for the company."



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- ▶ provide educational tours where students can learn about the science and gain an appreciation for the wood industry." With very high retention rates, the company provides orientation and safety training for new hires along with all necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and monthly safety meetings.

With many long-term customers, some of them going back over 40 years, Yoder Lumber sells about 85 to 90 percent of its products through direct sales, with the remainder through brokers or other agents. Not selling to large chain retailers ensures better control over the product. "We feel that it is more benefi-

cial to have better quality and maybe a little higher price than it was to match some of the big box stores," comments Trent Yoder. While some processes such as drying are fairly uniform industry-wide, the company believes it produces better quality lumber and millwork than much of its offshore competition. The company's commitment to quality speaks volumes.

**"Yoder Lumber can advise
on opportunities and assist
with a variety of forest
management services."**

MIKE SZCZEPANOWSKI
Sales Rep for Eastern Michigan and Northern Ohio

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"We try to sell our product more on service and availability to the local domestic users," says CEO Mel Yoder. "With Chinese product coming into the U.S., sometimes delivery is a problem... so we tried to stay competitive and get our customers to think more in that line, that they don't have to carry big inventory. They can just contact us, and we can make a quick delivery to them, so they can stay competitive against the Chinese finished goods product market." While lower-grade lumber is purchased by pallet manufacturers and sometimes the construction industry, a higher quality grade of lumber is often bought by flooring manufacturers, and furniture and cabinet manufacturers.

Coming a very long way from the early years, which saw founder John J. Yoder and five employees sawing wood into lumber on a portable sawmill for local landowners, Yoder Lumber Co. Inc. looks forward to growing in the future, working with existing customers while attracting new ones. "The past couple of years we've had growth in sales of anywhere from 12 percent to 15 percent, and there are other areas we are looking at," says Mel Yoder. "Possibly more value-added product and secondary manufacturing, and more dry kiln capacity." The future certainly looks promising for this long-standing company. ■





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Yoder Lumber Co. Inc

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