



PEOPLE, PLANET & PROFIT

Pioneer Millworks and its sister companies find and reclaim vintage wood with hopes of bringing it back to life

By **STEVE BUCHIERE**
sbuchiere@fltimes.com

FARMINGTON — Jonathan Orpin can't save all the dilapidated buildings and barns across America. He can, however, rescue some of the wood that made them.

The CEO and founder of Pioneer Millworks and two sister companies has made it a mission to save vintage wood from those old buildings, as well as other sources like wine barrels from Finger Lakes vintners. Those reclaimed woods — they're found in just about every state — are featured in homes and businesses nationwide.

Using reclaimed materials is good for the environment, Orpin said, explaining that before wood reclamation became popular, most of the materials ended up in landfills. It also reduces the need for virgin timber, he added.

It may be good for Mother Earth, but it's also good business.

Pioneer Millworks is the largest domestic resource for reclaimed and sustainable wood products, offering

more than 50 species, grades and specialty items.

Orpin didn't see the potential for such a business when he was a builder back in the 1980s. However, when a portion of a roof his design build company, Shortsville-based New Energy Works, collapsed back in 1989, workers discovered some old timbers.

He didn't think much about what to do with them, but a British couple did. They asked him to use the timbers for the cottage he was building for them on Honeoye Lake. In Britain, they told him, builders often used old timbers for new structures.

The seeds of Pioneer Millworks were planted.

Since then, the Farmington company, which also has operations in Portland, Ore., has enjoyed steady growth. The company, along with sister outfits New Energy Works Timberframers and

NEWwoodworks, has approximately 130 employees. There are 110 on the East Coast, mostly in Ontario County.

Orpin calls his three-pronged business

philosophy the "triple bottom line." It's focused on people, planet and profit.

"They're all of equal value," he said, saying the world's businesses are in the best position to help the planet by adopting practices based on sustainability.

Pioneer Millworks and its sister companies have integrated that philosophy into their day-to-day operations as well.

They purchase renewable power from wind and solar sources — they have their own solar panels on the roof of their building — and use scrap wood from their operations to heat their building and fire their two kilns. Wood dust is sold for fuel and agricultural bedding.

Orpin's emphasis on employee well-being comes with a stiff demand of his workers: Everyone needs to take at least a 45-minute break for lunch, a walk or whatever gives them a chance to recharge.

The focus on the planet and on worker happiness helps Orpin attract top talent. "Every study will show you that people want to work at a place they can believe in," he said.

His companies also believe in Ontario County.

They're expanding the Farmington headquarters on a 9-acre campus at 1180 Commercial Drive, where they landed in 1989, with a new, 23,000-square-foot building utilizing cross-



Business of the WEEK

Pioneer Millworks, New Energy Works Timberframers and NEWwoodworks

Founded: 1990

Locations: Main operations at 1180 Commercial Drive, Farmington; locations in Shortsville and operations in Oregon

Employees: 110 on East Coast (mostly Ontario County) and 20 in Oregon (Portland, McMinnville)

Website: pioneer millworks.com/#

Facebook: facebook.com /pages/Pioneer -Millworks/98386800804

■ See PIONEER on Page 2C



Submitted photo

Jonathan Orpin (above), CEO and founder of Pioneer Millworks and two sister companies, has made it a mission to reclaim vintage wood that may otherwise be cast away into the landfill. Settlers' plank reclaimed mixed hardwoods (pictured) were used for the bar wrap and shelving at Kindred Fare, a restaurant on Hamilton Street in Geneva. American Prairie reclaimed softwoods make up the tongue and groove ceiling.

PIONEER

Continued from Page 1C

laminated timber, a relatively new building material in the United States — cross-laminated timber is an engineered wood product.

“We’ve already started the foundation for the building,” said Orpin, who said the Ontario County Industrial Development Agency has provided some “short-term tax relief” for the \$2.5 million project.

The panels are made up of layers of individual pieces of lumber laminated together, with each layer arranged perpendicular to the next rather than longitudinally. CLT panels can be made in dimensions up to 10 feet wide and 40 feet long and more than a foot thick. They’re so strong that they can be used instead of concrete or steel, Orpin noted, adding that they are being used to construct high-rise buildings in Europe and here.

“They also have a much smaller carbon footprint because wood is more renewable than steel,” he said.

The new building will house the sister company NEWwoodworks, which is currently working in Shortsville. NEWwoodworks is the fine woodworking group that crafts custom cabinetry, stairs, doors, furniture and more, often using reclaimed wood from Pioneer Millworks, company spokesperson Megan Larmouth said.

“It will certainly increase our products capacity,” said Orpin, who

added that the new building demonstrates a “maturing of the company.”

The search for lumber

Orpin notes that Pioneer Millworks searches far and wide for vintage lumber, some of it dating back to nation’s formative days. It generally comes from building demolitions, where they have recovered anything from gym floors to old barns. The company has rescued 25.89 million board-feet of wood since its formation 27 years ago.

The material is brought back to Farmington, where metals such as nails and bolts are removed. It then moves on to the 50,000-square-foot shop, where the wood is planed. The wood then spends a good amount of time in kilns to kill pests and reduce moisture. Then, tongues are cut in the wood for things like walls, roofs and flooring.

The recovered wood has become a hot commodity, and those DIY (do-it-yourself) YouTube channels are helping to fuel the appeal of recycled wood.

“I think it makes people feel comfortable,” Orpin said.

While materials such as barn wood drove a good portion of their business over the years, it’s not a priority now because too many of the vintage barns are disappearing. He believes many of them can be saved.

“We’re moving away from old barns and looking for other sources,” he said. “(Those vintage barns) part of our landscape.”

But, he added, if a barn is coming down, “we want it.”

Orpin noted that while he retains the title of CEO, he has stepped back somewhat in recent years to let his talented staff run much of the day-to-day operations. He emphasized he remains very involved in strategic operations for the three sister companies.

“The company has grown to a point that I did not feel I was as valuable on a day-to-day basis,” he said, calling it “founder’s syndrome.”

He said sometimes the best thing a person in his position can do is “get out of the way” and let his people do what they do well.

He does, however, take a more active day-to-day role at operations headquarters in Oregon.



A walnut table top at Kindred Fare features butterfly joints on a base crafted by NEWwoodworks. It is made of reclaimed hemlock from Pioneer Millworks.

Submitted photo



Submitted photos



Marriott Downtown on the Commons at 120 S. Aurora St., near Green Street, opened Monday. It has 150 guest rooms, each featuring stylish décor and comfortable furnishings.

Upscale Marriott opens in downtown Ithaca

ITHACA — Marriott recently held a grand opening for its new upscale hotel in the heart of Ithaca’s downtown.

“This hotel makes sense on so many levels. In the spirit of community sustainability, it is strategically located in the heart of downtown, next to public transportation, parking, and city infrastructure. It is a classic in-fill project, occupying a former parking lot left over from urban renewal days. It activates the street, bringing food and beverage activity to a previously quiet area. It will have a significant economic impact

on the Downtown community, adding 66 new jobs and up to 55,000 new guests each year. This is a project that has been worth the wait,” said Downtown Ithaca Alliance Executive Director Gary Ferguson.

The 11-story hotel — dubbed Ithaca Marriott Downtown on the Commons — is at 120 S. Aurora St., on the 8,000-square-foot triangular lot off Green Street at the east end of the Ithaca Commons.

“The city of Ithaca’s goal is to be the best small city in America. The best place to live, work, and visit. This hotel opening gets us

closer to that goal, because this hotel is unique ... It will benefit a lot of people,” said Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick, noting the hotel has created 66 jobs.

The \$32 million hotel development boasts several amenities such as a restaurant, fitness center and three conference/event rooms. It provides more than 150 smoke-free guest rooms and seven suites. Each room features stylish décor and leading edge technology that allows guests access to cable, Pay Per View movies and to their personal Netflix accounts. The rooms are also equipped with high-speed

Internet access, a spacious work desk, a spa shower and more.

On-site laundry services and valet dry cleaning are also provided to guests and free WiFi is available in the hotel lobby. In addition to those amenities, the hotel offers a complimentary shuttle to Ithaca College, Cornell University, and the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport.

Ithaca Marriott also includes a restaurant, Monks on the Commons,

which will open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and feature American cuisine in a casual atmosphere.

“We look forward to serving more than 55,000 visitors a year and we commit to representing Ithaca in the best way possible,” said Ithaca Marriott and Monks on The Commons General Manager Cathy Hart.

Ithaca Marriott will be operated by Maryland-based Urgo Hotels & Resorts.

Located immediately outside of the hotel is Ithaca’s restaurant hub, offering an array of distinctive dining options, Finger Lakes wines, craft beers, and farm-to-fork cuisine. Many independent stores and boutiques and more than a dozen art galleries are also within walking distance of the hotel.

For more information, contact Ferguson at (607) 277-8679 or email gary@downtownithaca.com.

UNABLE TO WORK? • DENIED BENEFITS? • WE CAN HELP!

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

BILL GORDON & ASSOCIATES
 ★★★★★
 Fighting for Your Social Security Disability Benefits for Over 20 Years!

“I could not be happier about the job performance of BGA. They have proven that they are there to help unfortunate people who are in need of a helping hand. America should be proud to have them represent those in need. I would recommend them to anyone.” -Gil B.

- ✓ Applications/Hearings/Appeals
- ✓ Immediate Access to Experienced Personnel
- ✓ We Strive For Quick Claim Approval
- ✓ Free Consultation

Call for an Immediate Evaluation **(800) 375-6709**

Bill Gordon & Associates, a nationwide practice, represents clients before the Social Security Administration. Member of the TX & NM Bar Associations. Mail: 1420 NW St Washington D.C. Office: Broward County, FL. Services may be provided by associated attorneys licensed in other states.

A Help Button Should Go Where You Go!

MobileHelp	Traditional Help Buttons
✓ At Home	✓
✓ In the Car	✗
✓ On a Walk	✗
✓ On Vacation	✗
✓ At the Park	✗
✓ Shopping	✗

MobileHelp
1-800-361-3997
 No Contracts, No Hidden Fees, No Risk
 Nationwide GPS Location Detection
 24/7/365 Emergency Response Center

\$29.95 Value
Order Now & Receive a FREE Lockbox!
 Place your door key in this box so that emergency personnel can get help to you even faster.

FDA Registered
 Optional Fall Button™

*Service availability and access/coverage on the AT&T network is not available everywhere and at all times. Fall Button™ does not detect 100% of falls. If able, users should always push their help button when they need assistance. Current GPS location may not always be available in every situation. MobileHelp is a registered trademark and Fall Button is a trademark of MobileHelp. Patented technology. MobileHelp is a FDA registered Medical Device Manufacturer.