

# STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY'S ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAM

## THE SMALLWOOD ENTERPRISE PROGRAM - FINDING ECONOMIC USES FOR SMALL DIAMETER WOODY MATERIAL HELPS FOREST MANAGERS AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

- A western Montana lumber mill wanted to expand beyond the traditional stud mill market and decided to start with small diameter larch flooring. But they needed a newer, faster, and more expensive dry kiln to make it happen. Working with the Smallwood Enterprise Program, their new equipment was soon up and running.
- A local post and pole company diversified their business and started utilizing small diameter timber to build kiosks and the structural components for larger buildings. The Smallwood Enterprise Agent helped solve some of the technical challenges encountered. Next time you're in Darby or Townsend, MT, check out the Darby Library and Kiosk, and the Townsend Park Pavillion!
- Engineers from the US Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory and the University of Idaho designed a method to assess the flexibility and strength of small-diameter timber. When they needed help locating a site where they could build a project demonstrating the effectiveness of grading 6 inch diameter pine for structural use in bridges, the Smallwood Enterprise Agent helped coordinate with the City of Missoula. The end result? The new Rattlesnake Footbridge.

The Smallwood Enterprise Program was created to help Montana businesses diversify into the smallwood market by providing technical, marketing and financing assistance.

**“My job is to help entrepreneurs answer the question of  
how to create value-added uses for small diameter trees.”**

*Craig Rawlings, Smallwood Enterprise Director, MCDC*

Initiated in partnership with the Bitterroot National Forest utilizing National Fire Plan grant funds, the program has proven its value and now works with businesses large and small through Montana. The program is currently helping 75 clients achieve business success. In addition to helping local entrepreneurs and thus, local economies, the goal of the program is to create a market for material that is currently expensive to dispose of. The results help forest managers reduce the costs of some hazardous fuels and healthy forest restoration projects.

Funded partly by the US Forest Service State & Private Forestry's Economic Action Program, the Smallwood Enterprise Program is operated

by the Montana Community Development Corporation. 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 busiensses together to comine their strengths and interests.

**“I’m also the guy who connects the dots. I help people form networks so that resources flow more 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.”**

*Craig Rawlings, Smallwood Enterprise Director, MCDC*