DIFFERENT APPROACHES

WISCONSIN COMPANIES TURN WOOD RESIDUALS INTO REVENUES

Recycling methods include using reclaimed timber to build stairs and flooring, setting up bins on an as-needed schedule, and grinding C&D debris for dewatering operations.

Some firms recycle cutoffs into such uses as stairs, flooring and trim, while others grind woody materials.

What can be done with the 360,000 tons of woody residuals generated in Wisconsin each year from construction and demolition sites? Several Wisconsin businesses have found new and innovative ways to reuse and recycle these materials, both in residential and commercial projects.

Glenville Timberwrights, a design-build firm in Baraboo, Wisconsin, has found a way to craft timber frame homes without an on-site dumpster by reusing and recycling their wood residuals. Glenville Timberwright owners Tom and Sue Holmes use reclaimed timbers from former industrial buildings to build new, timber frame homes. The cut-offs taken from the remilling operations are used as much as possible for items such as stairs, railings, flooring, baseboard and trim. Pieces too small to use for millwork are used to fuel the wood stove that heats their shop. Even the shavings find a new home as animal bedding for local farmers’ sheep and horses or as mulch for plants.

Other homebuilders working to recycle their wood residuals include those participating in the Metropolitan Builders Association of Greater Milwaukee (MBA) 2001 Parade of Homes. With the success of last year’s program, MBA decided to again include a wood and cardboard recycling program for the builders participating in this year’s Parade of Homes. The MBA partnered with WasteCap Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization providing waste reduction and recycling assistance through business-to-business peer exchange, to help organize and monitor the recycling program. Aspen Waste Systems, the wood recycler chosen for the program, provides 30 yard bins at each homebuilder’s site for clean, separated wood. Builders close together may share a bin. Using a time-based management system, the bins are sited when the majority of the wood waste is being generated, typically during the beginning framing stages. The wood is collected by Aspen and used as road cover at a local landfill.

One commercial project utilizing wood residual recycling is the new Alliant Energy headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. This project received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for its innovative approach to comprehensive reduction, reuse and recycling of construction debris. Alliant Energy also partnered with WasteCap Wisconsin to help implement and document the program. On site, Opus North Corporation, the contractor, ensures that workers first determine if wooden boards can be reused in other areas of the project. Boards that can be reused are organized by size and placed in a designated reuse area. If unable to be reused, the wood is placed in a separate wood recycling bin. Green Valley Disposal, their hauler, ensures that containers are properly placed and labeled and helps provide education to the subcontractors. For both the Alliant Energy and MBA programs, the cost to recycle the wood was found to be cheaper than landfilling.

Advanced Waste Disposal provides another reuse strategy for wood waste in Wisconsin. They use a grinder at their facility to chip up wood from construction and demolition sites. The wood chips are then used to absorb liquid from the dewatered residuals from their operations. This service helps save trees that might have been used to make the wood chips and provides an additional use for treated or painted wood waste that can’t be used for other purposes such as mulch due to these treatments.

Interest and demand for recycling wood from construction sites around Wisconsin is growing, with an increasing number of businesses interested in implementing programs to reduce, reuse and recycle their wood waste.

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