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Companies Try To Meet 'Green Label' Demand

KANE - U.S. consumers are looking for green label products and the Collins Companies, owner of Kane Hardwood, is working to meet the demand.

Increasingly, more and more products are being offered that have been certified as produced from sustainable forests.

The certification process requires a lot of documentation. One of the few organizations that certifies well-managed forests is the Forest Stewardship Council located in Mexico. Kane Hardwood markets CollinsWood® FSC certified products.

Dee Pardiny, marketing communications specialist at Kane Hardwood, said the market for certified wood products has been increasing in recent years. Although the manufacturer must foot the bill to gain certification and market products, the Collins Companies believe that in the long run it is a good business strategy to offer green label wood products.

Some of Kane Hardwood's customers for certified products include Home and Planet (retail furniture), C.F. Martin (guitar maker), Perma-Grain and Thomas B. Morton.

Locally, the building, which is being renovated to house Kane's new community center, will be floored with certified wood.

Elsewhere in the state, the Heinz Foundation specifies certified wood for many of its projects.

Jim Quinn, president of the Collins Companies, headquartered in Portland, Ore., said the Collins Companies began in Kane in the 1840s and managed a sustainable resource with heritage and vision, which has been preserved for today's and tomorrow's wood products market. The certification process has helped to fine tune a job that was already well done.

"We didn't know what was on our land before we went into certification," Quinn said. He explained the Geographical Information Systems satellite technology that has brought sustainable forestry into the 1990s.

He said that because of the third part certification process critique, the Collins Companies runs a better forest now and can better identify its resources. The

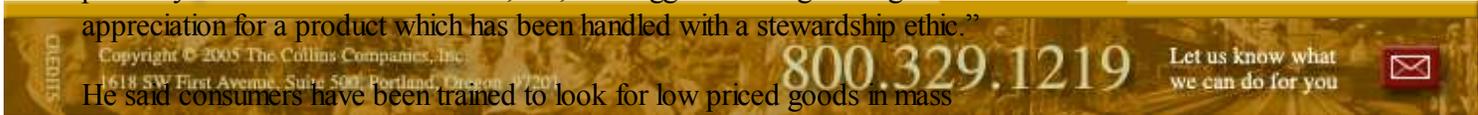
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company considers biological needs and social issues as well in its big picture of the forest.

Quinn said that in a relative sense the cost of certification was not expensive, probably less than a new automobile, but, “the biggest challenge is to gain market appreciation for a product which has been handled with a stewardship ethic.”



He said consumers have been trained to look for low priced goods in mass quantities. Part of marketing certified stamped wood products is the educating of consumers beyond the few niche markets that exist today.

—Doug Callen
Tri-County Sunday Writer
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