

Champagne & Aishihik Truss Plant and Dakwakada Forest Products

Haines Junction

Started: Truss plant was started about ten years ago.

Dakwakada Forest Products started in January 1999.

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Owned by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, the truss plant in the Junction manufactures floor and roof trusses for the Yukon, Haines and Skagway markets. The First Nation recently set up Dakwakada Forest Products (DFP) to log, process and manufacture Yukon timber.

Getting started: The combination of the spruce bark beetle outbreak, the need to diversify and the ongoing expense of importing lumber from BC and Alberta provided a strong incentive to move toward processing and manufacturing of local timber. Three years of intensive market research, training and business planning, combined with external financing



and other internal resources, paved the way for the creation of Dakwakada Forest Products.

Key to success: On its own, the success of the truss plant has been marginal due to the distance from the supply of lumber and the markets. Much of its business is based on overflow from the only other competitor located in Whitehorse. The move to diversify into all aspects of the lumber business—logging, processing and other manufacturing—has built a stronger economic base. Ongoing training of staff continues to build local capacity.

Lessons learned: The distance from the lumber supply and the market for truss plant has been a substantial barrier. Although there is a local supply of timber, the lumber required for trusses must be planed, kiln dried and stress tested. In the near future, after DFP finishes its mill and acquires the necessary equipment, the plant will be able to replace imported lumber with a local product.

Future of business: The supply of local lumber to the truss plant will make it a more viable and competitive operation. As a whole, DFP will be increasing its secondary processing and manufacturing capacity. Many value added products will be developed to provide diverse employment in the area. Fire-killed, bug-killed and green wood will be turned into flooring, wainscoting, lumber and other wood products. DFP also plans to provide competitively priced book shelves, bookcases, planters and other products for the Yukon and Alaska market.