

Newsbeat

Supply secured for log home firms

A trio of South Cariboo log home builders received a four-year 45,000 cubic metre timber sale within the 100 Mile Forest District.

On Feb. 11 Cariboo South MLA David Zirnhelt made the announcement.

The association is made up of Sitka Log Homes, Pacific Log Homes, and Canada's

Log People, formerly MWZ Log People.

Sitka General Manager Walter Bramsleven said the sale will provide the companies with half their combined timber supply over the next four years.

Theo Wiering, owner of Canada's Log People, said sales are a key part of the company's business, as the wood ensures a stable supply of raw

materials.

"When you become an established company, timber is a very key element of your success," Wiering said. "You can't go to work without timber."

Also, if a company needs a specific log — such as a curved one for a banister — they can put in the order with a logger. The association is the only log home builder in B.C. that employs its own logger. The companies use about 10-25 per cent of the trees they cut and then trade the rest for logs they can use.

The association has been receiving timber sales since 1988, when it won a five-year, 150,000 metre sale. He'd like larger, longer-term sales, which would provide more stability and better leverage for financing. The province is starting to recognize the unique needs of the industry.

"They are putting up some sales with suitable timber," he said.

The association's companies directly employ about 120 people and build about 175 project every year. In the last two years, they have rapidly grown, with Sitka growing from 11-30 employees.

Zirnhelt said that kind of growth needs government encouragement.

"This is the log home building capital of B.C.," Zirnhelt said.

He added the industry has been adding more jobs every year, replacing those lost in the primary forestry sector.

Bramsleven estimated there are about 300 direct log home building jobs in the 100 Mile area.

"Those aren't jobs that pay \$10 an hour. A good

log home building makes more than a mill worker," he noted.

The industry brings a great deal of foreign capital into the area, as well. Bramsleven said that last year 70 per cent of their homes sold to U.S. buyers, 20 per cent to Japanese buyers, and about 10 per cent to Canadians.



Cariboo South MLA David Zirnhelt discussed the log home building industry with Sitka Log Homes General Manager Walter Bramsleven after the announcement.