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Beasley Finds Opportunities to Grow

Cooper Machine Scragg Mills Are Key Machines at Flagship Sawmill

By Tim Cox

HAZLEHURST, Georgia — Beasley Forest Products makes no bones about claiming to be among the largest hardwood sawmills in the U.S. The company's flagship sawmill produces up to 125 million board feet of hardwood lumber products annually.

A major reason for such impressive production levels is a key supplier, Cooper Machine. Almost 60 percent of the company's lumber production is in industrial grade products, and the logs for those products are processed by two Cooper Machine primary breakdown machines.

Beasley Forest Products is a diverse company with operations in five states. Beside the company's flagship sawmill, it operates several other sawmills- Thompson Hardwoods, also located in Hazlehurst, Georgia, Beasley Forest Cross Ties in Sandersville, Georgia, Denmark Lumber in Denmark, S.C., and Ashland Mat in Ashland, Wis. Another affiliated business, New England Mats located in Winchester, N.H., manufactures mats for the crane mat industry. Beasley Forest Products also has its own logistics and trucking company,



A crane view of the log yard at Beasley Forest Products. The sawmill and woodyard are located on a 138-acre site in Hazlehurst, Georgia and employs over 280 people.

Beasley Logistics.

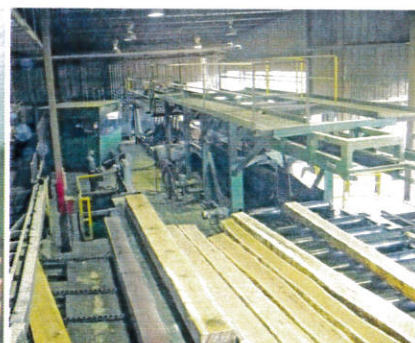
Hazlehurst is in southeast Georgia, a little over 100 miles almost due west of Savannah. It is located close to an abundant supply of hardwood bottomland forests. Nearby are three major rivers: the Oconee, the Ocmulgee, and the Altamaha.

The company's reach extends well beyond the immediate area, however. Its log procurement business, Beasley Timber Management, buys timber in a 5 state region

encompassing a 200 mile radius from Hazlehurst.

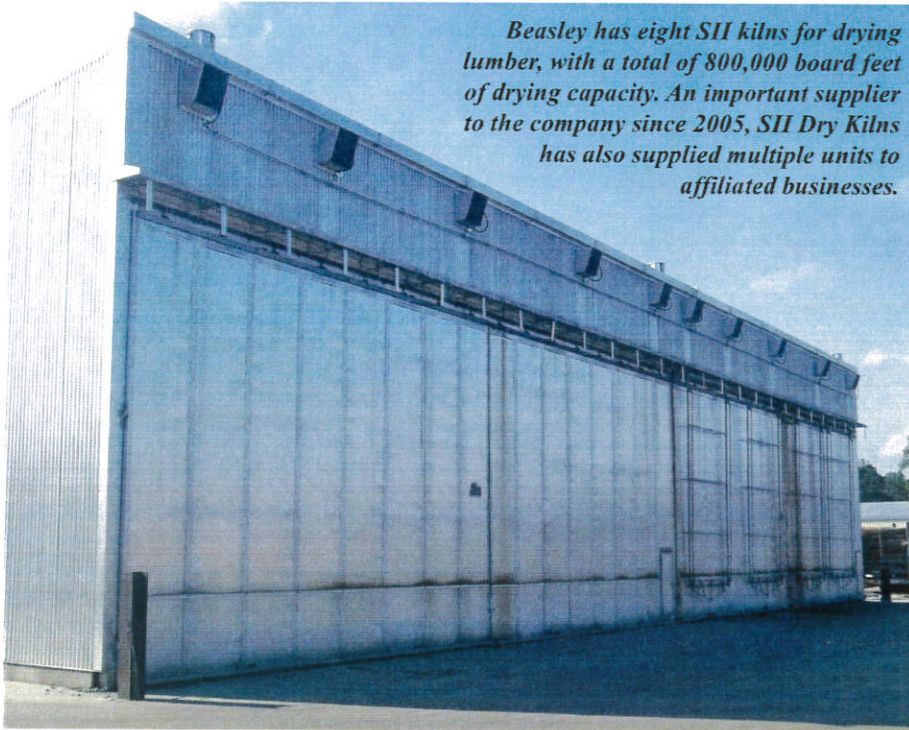
The timber management operations employ more than 25 people, including 16 foresters. The company does business with more than 30 logging contractors and has seven satellite wood yards in Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Florida.

Rabun Beasley operated a logging contracting business in the 1960s and was a major logging contractor and timber buyer



Left: Two Cooper Machine Scragg mills are used to break down logs. Beasley took delivery of the newest machine, a Cooper Machine Skewing Overhead Scragg, in 2015. Middle: The new scragg is used to process logs up to 26 inches in diameter and down to 12 inches on the small end and in lengths ranging from 8 to 18 feet. Normally used to square up two sides of the log, it also can be used to process the log into a four-sided cant. Right: Two sided cants, 6-9", go to a gang saw for further processing.

Beasley has eight SII kilns for drying lumber, with a total of 800,000 board feet of drying capacity. An important supplier to the company since 2005, SII Dry Kilns has also supplied multiple units to affiliated businesses.



in the Southeast for 30 years before launching Beasley Forest Products and entering the sawmill industry in 1998.

When he started the company, he already had markets for grade logs and pulp logs, so his initial focus was cutting industrial grade logs to produce material for the pallet and container industry. He purchased an old pine sawmill and turned to Cooper Machine to equip it. Most of the old machinery and equipment was removed, and Cooper Machine installed two scragg saws, a Yield Champ and an Overhead.

Through growth and acquisitions, the company has become much more diverse. "Today we are fully integrated and diversified," said Phillip Jarriel, vice president of administrative services.

"We sell a diverse product offering from the residuals to high end grade lumber for export. When you throw 7-8 different

wood species in the mix, it helps create additional opportunities," he added. The company processes 8 species of hardwoods and sends its lumber to several markets, depending on species and grade.

Mats are an important part of the company's utility grade lumber business. Beasley Forest Products has become a leader in the manufacture of various hardwood mats. These mats are manufactured for logging operations, oil and gas exploration, and pipeline construction. The company also produces custom-made mats for specific applications. Mats are assembled at Hazlehurst, Wisconsin and New Hampshire.

Another important product in the company's portfolio is the crosstie and switch tie market for the railroad industry, with Beasley being a supplier to the Norfolk Southern Railway.

For the pallet and container industry, Beasley Forest Products supplies everything from cants to pre-cut stringers and deck boards and other components. Pallet lumber is supplied to pallet companies in the Southeast, generally within a 200-300 mile radius. The majority of the company's pallet stock is sold direct to pallet manufacturing businesses.

The Beasley Forest Products sawmill and woodyard is located on a 138-acre site. It employs over 280 people. The sawmill has two Cooper Machine Scragg mills to break down logs. The newest machine is a Cooper Machine Skewing Overhead Scragg that was installed in 2015.

"We replaced (another Cooper Scragg) that had been running about 16 years," said Phil Clements, mill manager. The original machine continued to perform well, but the company wanted to improve its production. "Cooper, like us, has grown over the years and has developed some very good equipment," he added.

The original scragg had been designed to process logs for 16-foot lumber. As time went on, Beasley Forest Products had Cooper modify the machine to process logs for 18-foot lumber. When it made the decision to invest in a new scragg, it purchased a machine designed for processing logs of that size.

Cooper Machine, which has specialized in overhead end-dogging scragg mills for 50 years, built on the best features of its standard overhead scragg and added new features to increase yield and production for the Skewing Overhead Scragg. Skewing log turners can skew the log up to 3 inches left and right, allowing the scragg mill to cut two equal faces. Yield on marginal logs is increased, and the number of boards requiring edging is reduced. A new design allows the rear pivot dog to lift, allowing the log to load more quickly and increasing production. It comes with Cooper Machine's X/Y scanning and centering system and graphic log display. Cooper Machine manufactures several models to cut logs from 3-½ feet up to 20 feet. Optional equipment offered by Cooper Machine includes two or three saw vertical edgers, 3D scanning, and chipping heads for as small as a 4" face. Like other Cooper Machine scraggs, the Skewing Overhead, operated by one man, is designed and built to provide many years of service and require little maintenance.

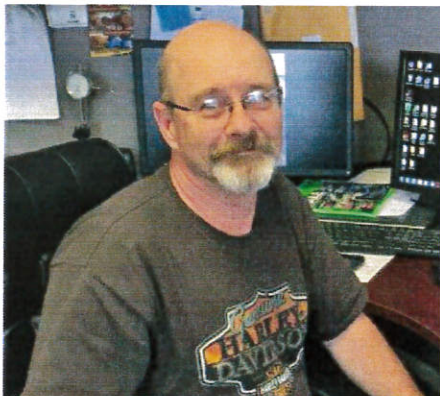
"We also wanted new features like skewing log turners," said Phil. "For the value and the price, Cooper was very attractive."

The enhancement of skewing log turners is a big advantage. Industrial grade logs typically are not as round and cylindrical as grade logs. The skewing log turners ensure the log is centered in the chucks. Centering the log better positively impacts the company's bottom line.

"It has a very big impact in yield," said Phil. "We can see it in our logs. A lot of timbers have less wane, and the appearance of the lumber is much better with logs being centered better."

The new Cooper system, which runs twin circular saw blades, has performed very well, reported Phil.

Cooper used the same exact footprint as



Phil Clements, mill manager at Beasley Forest Products.

the original 16' Overhead Scragg. The new machine was tested and tuned at the factory, then over a six day period it was installed and running. "It was a very quick turn-around," said Phil. The installation was a team project involving Cooper staff, Beasley Forest Products staff, and additional contractors that Beasley brought in for the project.

The new Cooper Machine Skewing Overhead Scragg is used to process logs up to 26 inches in diameter and down to 12 inches on the small end and in lengths ranging from 8 to 18 feet. Although normally used to square up two sides of the log, the scragg mill also can be used to process the log into a four-sided cant. "This machine is pretty versatile," said Phil.

Although Beasley Forest Products looked into other suppliers, when it got down to deciding on a machine, there was not much question that Cooper would be the choice, indicated Phil. Cooper has proven to be an important partner in the company's operations and has earned the company's respect for the performance and longevity of its machines, sales process, and service.

The other Cooper Machine Scragg mill at Beasley Forest Products is a Super Modified Yield Champ. Like the other breakdown system, it uses twin circular saws to square up two sides of the log simultaneously, but it also is combined with an edger to process the cant further. The Super Modified Yield Champ uses a sharp chain system for moving the log through the saws. It is used to process logs up to 18 inches in diameter and 18 feet long.

The Beasley Forest Products sawmill has a McDonough 7-foot band mill for sawing grade logs. About 40 percent of the

sawmill's production is grade lumber cut from a large variety of Southern hardwood species, including red oak, white oak, poplar, cypress and ash.

Grade lumber is sold green or dry. The company has eight SII kilns for drying lumber, and the kilns also have the capability to provide heat-treating services for pallet material with certification provided by Timber Products Inspection.

SII Dry Kilns has been an important supplier to Beasley Forest Products since 2005. The company's eight dry kilns provide 800,000 board feet of drying capacity. In addition, SII Dry Kilns has supplied units to affiliated businesses. Multiple SII kilns provide 600,000 board feet of drying capacity at Thompson Hardwoods, and 600,000 board feet of capacity at a flooring mill acquired by Beasley Forest Products in Macon, Ga., in 2015. The flooring plant also is equipped with a cross-flow pre-dryer from SII Dry Kilns with capacity of 2 million board feet.

The SII units are computer-controlled, and those at Beasley Forest Products and Thompson Hardwoods feature the company's EMC Mistifier, a system of conditioning the lumber that is an alternative to conventional steam equalization. The EMC Mistifier, which uses cool water and a high pressure water pump to create a cool fog, offers several advantages compared to conventional humidification systems. It usually is faster, increases drying capacity of the boiler by conserving steam, and reduces the expense of costly boiler chemicals.

"They've been extremely good to us and good to work with," said Dan Mathews, president of SII Dry Kilns, of his company's relationship with Beasley Forest Products.

"We've worked very hard to maintain that loyalty," added Dan. "We like to think that we're not just in the equipment business, that we have somewhat of a partnership with our customers." SII personnel continue to support Beasley Forest Products and other customers with their knowledge and expertise of the company's kiln technology as well as the lumber drying process.

(For more information on SII Dry Kilns, visit the company's website at www.siidrykilns.com.)

The sawmill operates two shifts daily, and the Cooper Machine Skewing Overhead Scragg processes 600-800 logs per shift, according to Phil.

The mill is equipped with other machinery and equipment manufactured by well-known brands in the pallet and sawmill

industries, including Nicholson, Brewer, Pendu, and Brewco.

Additional Cooper Machine equipment operates at other Beasley Forest Products sawmills. Thompson Hardwoods, acquired by Beasley Forest Products in 2010, is equipped with a Yield Champ scragg mill. The Sandersville operation is also equipped with End Dogging Overhead scragg. Both mills have Cooper Machine log cut-up systems, and the Thompson Hardwoods mill has a Cooper Machine Splitter Saw.


Cooper Machine scragg mills, built to customer specifications, include the latest in computerized networks and profiling software and are designed to get the most from every log, slab and board.

In addition to its overhead and sharp chain scragg mills, Georgia-based Cooper Machine manufactures and distributes a wide range of other machines and equipment for producing grade and low-grade lumber products. The range of equipment includes everything from tree length cut-up systems to kilns for drying finished lumber. Cooper Machine manufactures edgers, gang saws, trim saws, log and lumber handling and conveying equipment and stackers. The company also represents other manufacturers of bandsaws, carriages, chippers, metal detectors, dry kilns, fuel pellet equipment, chamfering and block-cutting machines for the pallet industry, and specialty equipment for producing wood barrels.

(For more information on Cooper Machine and its products, visit the company's website at www.coopermachine.com or call (478) 252-5885.)

Although the recession triggered by the bursting of the housing industry 'bubble' in 2008 was a blow to the forest products industry, the diversity of Beasley Forest Products kept the company operating on a normal schedule during the downturn, according to Phillip Jarriel. "It pretty much impacted our whole industry in one way or another," he said. "We were able to adapt, changed a little tooling and kept running."

"There's a silver lining in adversity," said Phillip. "With adversity comes opportunity."

Beasley Forest Products is active in a number of trade associations, including the National Hardwood Lumber Association, the Hardwood Manufacturers Association, and the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association. In fact, two members of the sales staff have previously served as presidents of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association. 



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In 2015 Beasley Forest Products upgraded to a Cooper Machine Skewing Overhead Scragg mill.

"We replaced another Cooper Scragg that had been running about 16 years." The original machine continued to perform well, but the company wanted to improve its production. "Cooper, like us, has grown over the years and has developed some very good equipment." – *Phil Clements, Mill Manager, Beasley Forest Products*

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