

Domtar strengthens its commitment to sustainability along with the local Menominee Tribe, as a major Rothschild and Nekoosa wood supplier becomes nationally certified.

Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE), located in Neopit on the Menominee Reservation in north central Wisconsin, was awarded a five-year certification under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program along with its chain-of-custody handling of wood products. Scientific Certification Systems, Emeryville, Calif., made the announcement in 2008.

“MTE runs a world-class forestry operation,” said Jeff Plunkett, Fiber Procurement manager for the Rothschild Mill. “We have built a strong two-way relationship that benefits both the local tribe and the workers here at the Rothschild mill.”

Currently, MTE harvests and sells to Domtar approximately 15,000 cords (35,000 tons) of FSC-certified wood. That amount equates to almost 12 percent of the mill’s needs for the year.

At Nekoosa, MTE began supplying approximately 8 percent of the mill’s needs beginning in August 2008.

“MTE has very strong leadership on both the Tribal Council and in their forestry department,” said Joe Kies, senior buyer – Wood Procurement at Nekoosa. “They began sustainable forestry practices long before it became popular.”

The wood from MTE is used in Domtar’s flagship grade, Cougar, a premium-printing grade that is certified to FSC standards, and carries support from leading environmental groups. Cougar brand paper also carries the WWF “Panda” logo, as a sign of Domtar and WWF’s mutual commitment to sustainability.

“We’re proud to partner with MTE,” said Plunkett, “this kind of collaboration ensures social, environmental and economic benefits to both parties. It’s a ‘win-win’ for everyone involved, including the forest.”

The certifications coincide with Menominee Tribal Enterprise’s celebration of its 100th anniversary as the business arm of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. According to MTE, the forest serves not only as a source of employment (currently at 460 jobs) and harvesting opportunities, but also as a source of enjoyment and spiritual wellness for the Menominee Tribe.

Marshall Pecore, MTE Forest Manager, notes that there is more standing saw timber volume (1.7 billion board feet) now than there was in 1854 (estimated at 1.2 billion board feet). During this same period, over 2.25 billion board feet have been harvested from the same acreage.

“We are fortunate – everything we cut, we sell, and FSC certification adds more value to our lumber and wood products in the marketplace, “ said Adrian Miller, president and CEO of MTE.

When speaking with Jeff Plunkett, this strong partnership is based on trust between MTE and Domtar.

“We have built this relationship over the years and it allows me to have guaranteed wood for the mill. When they committed to delivering a specified amount of wood to the mill, you can bank on it, which isn’t always the case with some pulpwood suppliers,” said Plunkett.

“I agree that MTE is very true to their word and delivers wood when they promise. That is a large benefit for me so I don’t have go looking for wood that may not be available on the market,” said Kies.

That relationship has also been appreciated by MTE.

The MTE organization awarded Domtar’s Rothschild Mill as its “customer-of-the-year” in 2006.

On MTE literature, the company lists a strong commitment to their business practices. Domtar shares this commitment.

“Menominee Tribal Enterprises is committed to excellence in the sustainable management of our forest, and the manufacturing of our lumber and forest products providing a consistently superior product while serving the needs of our forest, employees, wood products customers, tribal community, and future generation.”

Domtar shares those values and looks for an even stronger business partnership in future years.