

CAREFUL PLANNING AND KEY EXPANSIONS PUT IDEAL ON FAST TRACK TO SUCCESS

Company President Steve Morency (right) says IDEAL Architectural Doors & Plywood has boosted production capabilities 20 percent since installing the Joos custom feedthrough press.

IDEAL Architectural Doors & Plywood has an impressive legacy and bright future, thanks to some key decisions over the years. The New Albany, IN, company is a fifth-generation manufacturer of AWI premium grade five-ply and stile and rail architectural wood doors. The original family business, Bedard & Morency Millwork Co. was founded in 1886 in Oak Park, IL. Bob Morency, Steve Morency's father and a past president of Architectural Wood Institute, bought IDEAL Architectural Doors & Plywood in 1977 and ran both companies until 1986 when he sold the millwork business and made IDEAL the focus of his efforts.

IDEAL produces and supplies from 4,000 to 5,000 AWI premium grade doors a month, depending on the mix of orders and projects, and stocks 1.5 to 2 million square feet of raw veneer. The company makes five-ply flush doors, stile and rail doors, door panels, plywood, blueprint-matched hardwood plywood, stock plywood, veneer inlays and two-ply veneer faces for architectural millwork firms.

IDEAL President Steve Morency said the company has a tradition of recognizing and capitalizing on opportunities. His great grandfather responded to the downturns in business by expanding operations and adding machinery. His father also acted proactively by buying IDEAL. "My father saw an opportunity to provide doors and plywood to what were then his competitors in the millwork business," he said. Morency himself also followed in the tradition of his forbears when, in the face of the recession and post-Sept. 11 drop, he expanded the plant and added \$1.5 million in new machinery. Today the manufacturing facility covers 96,000 square feet. IDEAL employs close to 70 people.

Morency's most recent additions in manufacturing space and machinery fine-tuned and expanded the Fast Track process. For an additional fee, a pre-machined, prefinished order of doors which would normally take four weeks to complete, can be filled in two to three weeks under the Fast Track



process. IDEAL uses an extra two hours every day, and Fridays and Saturdays when needed, for Fast Track orders.

Before the new setup, projects would run smoothly through the plant on Fast Track until it came time to create two-ply veneer faces for laser work on the doors. IDEAL had subcontracted the logo and specialty inlay design work to another firm, which often led to a delay in the production process while they waited for the outsourced work to return to IDEAL.

Morency solved the problem by adding three key machines to bring the two-ply process and laser work in-house. IDEAL replaced an old press with a customized Joos DLP 135 feedthrough press and bought a Savi veneer flexer and a Preco laser. A 5,000-square-foot addition was designed to accommodate the new machinery and create a flow between the three machines.

The first step is pressing the veneer onto a paper back to create a two-ply material. It is pressed in the Joos feedthrough press, which was custom-built for IDEAL's special pressure and temperature requirements. "We purchased the Joos press after visiting their booth at IWF 2002. Their flexibility of design and willingness to listen to our needs was something we couldn't find from any other exhibitor.

"IDEAL needed a custom press. Our needs for high temperature and pressure in a 5-foot-by-10-foot platen size was not something offered by anyone else. The continued attention to detail prior to, and after delivery, convinced me that this was the correct route for IDEAL."

IDEAL presses both five-ply doors and two-ply material on the Joos press; architectural millwork customers will oftentimes contour wrap two-ply veneer for columns and reception desks. "Now if we are doing doors for a project and they are making a desk that has several added contours, we can give them two-ply material made from the same flitch stock so everything matches."

"We are very happy with the machine," Morency added. "Startup was made easy by allowing our in-house installers to communicate directly with Joos. We were prepared for the machine in every way, from extra support for the weight of the press, construction of a mezzanine to rest atop the press and carry the pump/heater unit, to all of the electric and hydraulic requirements. Less than three days from delivery, we were pressing doors.

"If I were to do it again, I would choose Joos."



With the new Joos press, IDEAL can press five-ply doors and provide two-ply flexible veneer sheets to customers who need sketch faces.

SEE THE JOOS PRESSES AT IWF BOOTH #9550