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RE: Johnson Brothers Lumber Expands Business

By Sharon A. Driscoll, Media Director

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, June 03, 2016 to celebrate the completion of Johnson Brothers Lumber's (JBL) five new drying kilns located at the Buyea Rd. Landfill site in the Town of Lincoln.

Johnson Brothers is using the excess heat from the Gas-to-Energy plant at the main landfill to dry their lumber. They are the first company to take advantage of the excess heat produced by the Gas-to-Energy facility owned and operated by Waste Management Inc. The kilns at JBL's Cazenovia facility are heated with a waste wood burning boiler.

Construction for the \$1.7 million drying kilns began in May of 2015 when Whitney Construction of Camden, NY began work on the foundation for the kilns. William Dougherty Construction of Cazenovia worked with Whitney on the foundation as well. Johnson Brothers secured a NYSERDA Grant that covered approximately 25 percent of the project cost.

"We are happy to see this project come to fruition and proud that one of the first facilities to locate at the Agricultural and Renewable Energy Park (ARE Park) is a local company who is expanding their operations," said Kipp Hicks, Director of the Madison County Industrial Development Agency. He explained that the primary goal of the new business park is to encourage energy conservation and the development of green energy initiatives.

Johnson Brothers recently expanded their saw mill in Cazenovia increasing production proportionally to match the throughput of the new kiln capacity. JBL purchased low cost land from Madison County as the new site for five drying kilns. This land purchased from the County has been put back on the tax rolls.

According to Paul Johnson one drying kiln can hold five tractor trailer loads of lumber for a total green weight of 280,000 lbs. After dried, the lumber weighs approximately 50 percent less. One kiln full of lumber has an average value of \$75,000.00.

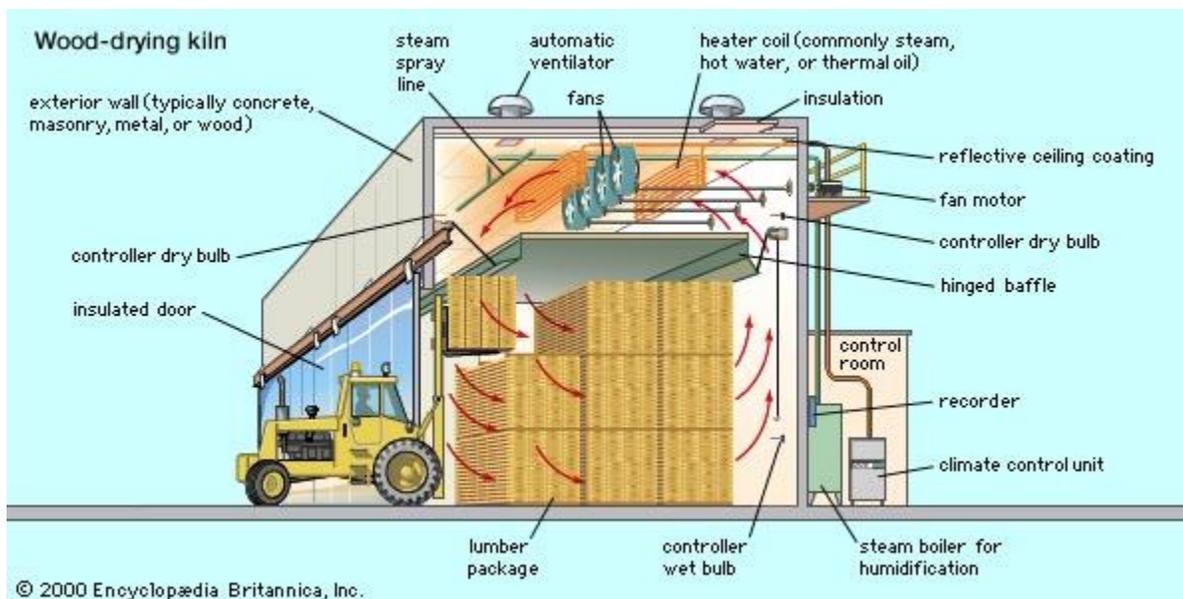
"The new facility will provide jobs for area residents. This is a win-win situation for both Johnson Brothers Lumber Company and Madison County," said Director James Zecca.

The kilns went online in March, 2016. Dimensions for the facility are 180 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, housing five large drying ovens and a control room to manage heat and humidity levels. Temperatures in the kilns during the drying cycle fluctuate between 90 and 150 degrees for 2 to 4 weeks (depending on wood species and moisture content) before it is ready to be milled.

Kara Johnson Connellan, Paul Johnson's daughter, explained that the lumber is purchased from a 90 mile radius of the Cazenovia mill. JBL purchases all hardwoods: hard and soft maple, ash, cherry, red and white oak, birch, basswood and hickory. After being kiln dried the lumber is sold both domestically and internationally. Approximately 30 to 40 percent of Johnson Brothers lumber is sold internationally, Asia, Europe and Canada representing a majority of sales.

"The kiln dried wood is made into flooring, furniture, kitchen cabinets – material used in the finished housing markets," said Connellan.

Compartment-type kilns are most commonly used by timber companies. A compartment kiln is filled with a static batch of timber through which air is circulated. In these types of kilns, the timber remains stationary. The drying conditions are successively varied from time to time in such a way that the kilns provide control over the entire load of timber being dried. The drying method is well suited to the needs of timber companies, which have to dry timbers of varied species and thickness, including refractory hardwoods that are more susceptible than other species to check and split.



This family run business, located in Cazenovia, NY, was established by brothers William and Victor Johnson in 1937. Located in Central New York, Johnson Brothers Lumber has access to some of the finest growing hardwoods found in the world, according to President Paul D. Johnson who took over the company in 1983.