

Province Rd. Kiln-Dried Firewood doubles capacity

BELMONT — Province Road Kiln-Dried Firewood, which has been turning out 1,000 cords of wood a year, has doubled its capacity with the addition of a second kiln.

The first 18 cord load processed in the new kiln served as the backdrop for a chopping block ceremony celebrating the completion of the project, which will enable the firewood company to expand its deliveries to keep up with the strong demand for its product.

"People who have been using our kiln-dried firewood tell us they'll never go back to the seasoned firewood they used to burn. Our wood is drier, insect free and cleaner, and gives people more heat per cord than any other firewood," says Ruth Mooney, known by the company's many customers as "the Firewood Lady" because she handles all of the calls for delivery.

She'll be a lot busier in the month ahead, as production ramps up. The company had been unable to fill new orders because all of its production through the end of February had already been spoken for. In anticipation of the increase in business, the lumber yard at the operation is filled with hundreds of tree-length logs which will be processed into firewood this year.



COURTESY
Celebrating the completion of the first run of 18 cords of wood in the new kiln at Province Road Kiln-Dried Firewood are Brian Hutchins, general manager; Jim Hutchins of Hutchins Electric of Gilford; Jerry Hendricks of Gilford, building fabricator; Pete Nelson of Penco Plumbing and Heating and Ruth Mooney, the "Firewood Lady" who takes customer orders for the firewood business.

Brian Hutchins, general manager of Province Road Kiln-Dried Firewood, says that the operation has become year-round, and that the system actually works better during the summer months.

"Drying time changes with the weather. In the win-

ter, it can take four or five days. The wood is frozen, and you have to unthaw it to start driving the moisture out. Summer is the best time. You can put two loads a week through the system," says Hutchins.

During the summer, it only takes three days to drop the

moisture content of the wood from about 55 percent to the 12 to 15 percent range. Hutchins says that the log length wood supply is much better than it was late last year, when loggers were hampered by wet conditions and couldn't venture into the woods for weeks on end.

The new 24 foot by 24 foot kiln was prefabricated by Nyle Kiln of Brewer, Maine, and brought to the site in January. After that, a metal building was fabricated by Jerry Hendricks of Gilford to house the 750,000 BTU wood boiler, which heats some 3,200 gallons of water to more than 200 degrees, with the heated water then circulated through the kiln. Jim Hutchins (no relation to Brian) of Hutchins Electric of Gilford handled all of the electrical work, and Pete Nelson of Penco Plumbing and Heating of Gilford was the mechanical contractor for the project. Mark Mooney, owner of Province Road Kiln-Dried Firewood, says that the decision to build the kiln-dried firewood processing

center came in the winter of 2007-08. Several years before that he had bought a wood-processing system and brought it to a sandpit at the former Province Road Sand and Gravel operation where maintenance workers from his Briarcrest Estates development were kept busy during the winter months by turning out firewood, as many as 400 cords per year.

"We'd been talking about doing something like this for quite some time. But that winter, when we were pulling firewood out from under 40 inches of snow, I decided we'd have to move the operation under cover," says Mooney.

So he built a large dome-like shelter for the processed firewood capable of holding as much as 600 cords and put up a large building with a kiln which can hold 18 metal cage-like buckets filled with a cord apiece of loosely stacked processed firewood. And he bought a new wood processor which takes whole logs: maple, beech, ash, and other hardwood species, and saws them into

16-inch chunks, which drop into a chute where a hydraulic ram pushes them into a four-way splitter. The split wood is then carried upwards by a conveyor belt which drops them into the metal cages, which are moved to a storage area once they are filled. He installed a custom-built one million Btu wood-fired boiler which heats the kiln to between 180 and 200 degrees, reducing the moisture content of the wood from 54 percent to the 12-15 percent range in a three or four-day period. The business took after that and demand for the firewood became so high that he decided a second kiln was needed.

"It's a major investment, but there are a lot of advantages to kiln dried. The wood is clean, insect free, and burns a lot more efficiently than wood which is naturally dried. And we can provide really good burning wood during the winter months. People won't have to take chances with green or partially dried wood," says Mooney.

Gunstock marks 75th anniversary with season pass sale

GILFORD — Gunstock is getting ready to celebrate its 75th anniversary with the 2012/2013 season pass sale that starts Monday, March 5.

This year, Gunstock has actually lowered the adult pass to coincide with the 75th Anniversary to \$375! That is an adult (18-64) unlimited, no blackout date pass good for the entire 2012/2013 season. The unlimited season passes will be just \$369 for teens (13-17), and just \$259 for seniors (65 and up) and children (six to 12). Pass quantities are limited, and this price can expire before the May 1 deadline.

But wait, there is more. If you want to upgrade your 2012-2013 season pass, you can — for just \$75 you can ski or ride for the rest of this season, too.

"At these prices, everyone in the family can come out and play, this year and next," says Bill Quigley, director of Marketing and Sales.

Gunstock has upped the

anniversary ante with more bonus offers, as well — if you purchase the pass prior to April 1, you can choose two of the summer 2-for-1 options that will include the ZipTour, Segway Tours or Aerial Tree-top Adventures. If you buy from April 2 to May 1, you can choose one of the offers.

"We are excited to include offers to our pass holders to let them experience the attractions at Gunstock Mountain Adventure Park in the summer. This is one of the best values in New England," says Greg Goddard, Gunstock's General Manager. "After the May 1 deadline, the rates will significantly increase; there are no blackout dates on this pass, so get them while they are hot."

Passes go on sale March 5 online, by phone or visiting Gunstock. The last benefit of the pass is that all preseason pass holders will be able to ride the lift all summer for half price.

Although there hasn't

been as much snow as last year, the investments made in snowmaking gave Gunstock excellent conditions all season, and with today's storm they are looking forward to a great March. Closing date has been set for Sunday, April 1, with night skiing and tubing through the weekend of March 17/18. Check out the events calendar, as we are adding fun every day, and watch for a concert on the mountain March 25.

Gunstock, located in Gilford, is one of the state's largest recreation areas. The first ski area in New England to have a chairlift, Gunstock boasts 1,400 feet of vertical, 227 acres of skiing, and 300 campsites during the summer, spectacular views of the Lake Winnepesaukee at every turn. It is also the host of major events such as the The Lakeside Living Expo, CraftFest, Soulfest, Warrior-Dash and the TimberMan Triathlon.

Inns & Spa at Mill Falls named one of state's top wedding destinations

MEREDITH — The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls, located in the historic village of Meredith and a premier lodging destination in New Hampshire's Lakes Region, has been named a 2012 Best of Wedding Pick from The Knot.

The Knot (www.the-knot.com) is the Internet's most-trafficked one-stop wedding planning solution, reaching out to millions of engaged couples each year through its award-winning Web site, books, magazines, and broadcast offerings.

"This is a very special honor, to be recognized by The Knot as one of its top picks for Best Local Wed-



ding Vendor in the state," said Gail Batstone, General Manager of the Inns at Mill Falls. "Our experienced wedding planners and staff are always ready to create an elegant and memorable experience, and we are ful-

ly committed to ensuring the satisfaction and happiness of our brides, grooms, and their families."

The Knot selects its top vendor picks based on guest reviews and ratings from brides and grooms around the U.S.

The Inns family includes the four Inns: Mill Falls, Bay Point, Chase House and Church Landing, as well as the Mill Falls Marketplace, the Cascade Spa and Meredith Gas Station. The new Birch and Boathouse Lodges at Church Landing are scheduled to open in June, 2012.

For more information, visit www.millfalls.com.

Irwin Toyota wins company President's Award

LACONIA — Toyota Motor Sales has once again recognized Irwin Toyota among its list of stellar dealerships by awarding them with the 2011 prestigious President's Award.

In order to qualify as a President's Award winner, Toyota dealerships must excel in each of a series of categories, including customer sales satisfaction and customer service satisfaction.

Chris Irwin, Vice President of Irwin Automotive Group, commented, "One of Toyota's primary goals is to

emphasize the entire ownership experience, ensuring that customers are satisfied not only at the time of purchase, but as long as they own their vehicle. We are honored to receive this award because it truly represents Irwin's dedication to that mission and superior customer service."

About Irwin Hyundai Located at 59 Bisson Ave. and 446 Union Ave. in Laconia, the Irwin Automotive Group is central New Hampshire's largest dealership, selling Ford, Lincoln, Toy-

ota, Scion and Hyundai vehicles with a State of the Art Collision Center, and a Quicklane Tire and Auto Center. The Irwin Group is also known for their innovative Irwin Price Guarantee and Irwin 10 Point Guarantee. Irwin Toyota can be found online at www.irwinzonetoyota.com.

Northfield resident named to Dean's List at Drew University

MADISON, N.J. — Drew University student Raymond Alan Schmelzer of Northfield has been named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2011 semester.

In order to qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a grade point average of 3.4 or above, which is equivalent to a B+ or better.

Founded in 1867, Drew is a

selective, independent, coeducational university with a total enrollment of more than 2,300 students in its College of Liberal Arts, Caspersen School of Graduate Studies and Theological School. Widely recognized for academic excellence, Drew is routinely listed among the nation's top colleges by The Princeton Re-

view. Having won Rhodes, Fulbright, Truman, Marshall and National Science Foundation scholarships, Drew students are among the best in the nation. The university is one of three in New Jersey with a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's most prestigious academic honor society.

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