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BEST PRACTICES FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS ■ MAY/JUNE 2005



## **CRANK IT UP A LEVEL**

How IBM and W.L. Gore fine-tuned their manufacturing and supply chains to attain new standards of success.

**BENTLEY GETS IT THERE ON TIME WITH ZERO DEFECTS**



"We promise zero defects out of hundreds and thousands of shipments," says CEO Tom Bentley.

## BENTLEY GETS IT THERE ON TIME WITH ZERO DEFECTS

**D**uring World War II, the U.S. military needed to ship packages overseas. Bentley Construction Co. responded to this need by forming a subsidiary, Bentley World Packaging (BWP), to build wood crates for this purpose.

The work dwindled after the war's end. When Tom Bentley graduated from college in the 1960s, however, he decided to rebuild the Milwaukee-based packaging company.

"I started almost from scratch," Bentley explains. "All I had then was some company history and one carpenter. We built wood boxes for stuff being shipped overseas."

BWP had grown to be the biggest wood box producer and export packager in Wisconsin by the early 1980s and continued to grow. Bentley received an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for the state of Wisconsin in 1996 in recognition of his progress with the business.

"In the past 10 years, we have

gone significantly outside the state and continue to look for growth opportunities," he says.

"Our Georgia operation is up and running, we're in the process of opening a Pennsylvania location, and we're on the ground in North Carolina and will be operating by late summer," Bentley continues. "We're probably looking into at least two other locations, as well. Our next effort is to go a little more nationwide in the heartland."

The company specializes in export and military packaging work and ships worldwide for manufacturing customers.

"We do some air shipment and loading airship containers, whatever mode will work best – the customer relies on us to make those judgements," he says.

Bentley World Packaging excels in logistics, he says. "Logistics is now a buzzword," he notes.

"Lots of companies say they are logistics experts. The trick is to sort through and find out what their core strengths are. Our strengths are all of the part-handling packaging, overseas shipping and warehousing, but not freight. We are not in the traffic business and we're not in the freight-forwarding business.

### PROFILE

**Bentley World Packaging**

[www.bentleywp.com](http://www.bentleywp.com)

**Projected 2005 sales:** \$22M

**Headquarters:** Milwaukee

**Employees:** 230

**Products:** Packaging, carton and wood-crate products

**Tom Bentley:** "We have non-existent damage claims. We pride ourselves on that."

"As a third-party logistics company, we can step in as a vendor and offer our services and judgment for their packaging needs, saving them internal time and effort to figure that stuff out," Bentley continues.

"Some customers like to do their own packaging, so we manufacture crates and boxes and send them to them. We also offer reusable containers for their use."

It remains a sister company to Bentley Construction and operates what Bentley calls a "huge wood crate manufacturing operation" six days a week with two shifts. It produces skids, boxes, crates and packages and makes shipments up to 50 tons and more.

The company has six plants in Wisconsin and three in other states.

Its primary plant in Wisconsin features 280,000 square feet situated on 15 acres with 10 overhead cranes.

According to Bentley, the company grew by 40 percent in 2004 and continues to grow. It currently employs a staff of 230.

Bentley says the company's success is tied to its ability to assess and meet specific customer needs.

"There are several ways we got to where we are," he says.

"When the customer asks us to do something that's impossible to be done, we say we'll do it. Even if they should have given us 10 days' notice, we just say yes. We work Saturdays and Sundays and get it done somehow. Our service and turnaround times provide what they can't do themselves. We do the impossible.

"For some customers, we can ship anywhere in the world in 72 hours," he adds. "A couple of years ago, that was impossible. The extent of our services – that's what they love about us. They come to us if they have to get something to Kuwait or China and turnaround times are essential."

Quality is also a differentiator. "We promise zero defects out of hundreds and thousands of shipments," he says.

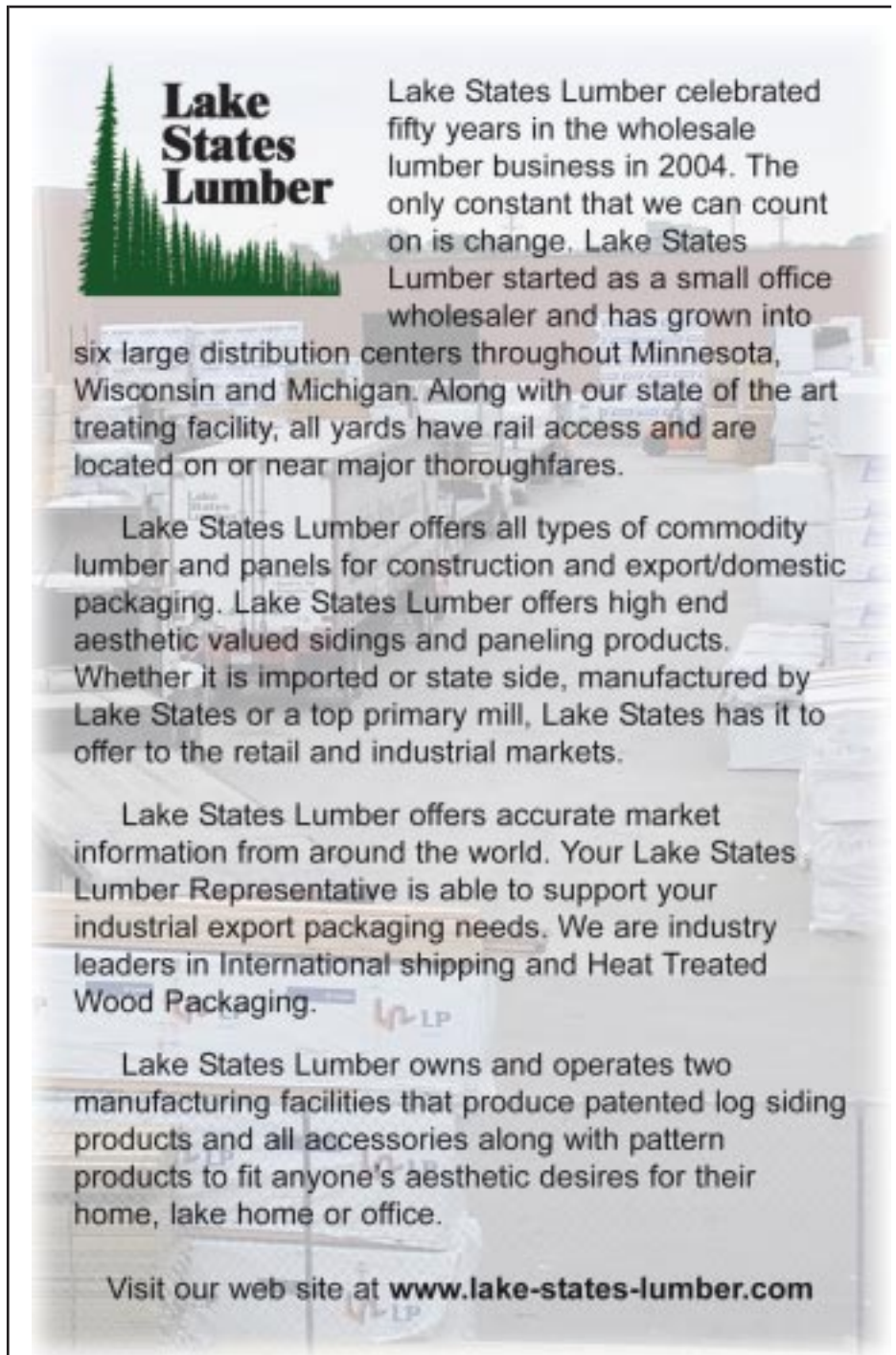
"We have non-existent damage claims. That's a big benefit and we pride ourselves on that."

BWP says its top-25 key employees and managers have more than 400 combined years of industry-specific experience.

The range of services, Bentley says, also sets the company apart from its competitors.

"We can do hazardous goods shipping and in-house packaging," he says.

"We have the capability to engineer packages to meet European standards and we can heat treat special lumber. We »



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Lake States Lumber celebrated fifty years in the wholesale lumber business in 2004. The only constant that we can count on is change. Lake States Lumber started as a small office wholesaler and has grown into six large distribution centers throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Along with our state of the art treating facility, all yards have rail access and are located on or near major thoroughfares.

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» really offer one-stop shopping with a full range of packaging and export services. It's hard to get that all in one spot.”

Bentley notes the company has been honored with two Wisconsin Governor's Export Awards and the Presidential E Award, received in 1990 from the U.S. Department of Commerce for export excellence.

**COMFORT IN CONTINUITY**

The Bentley Co., founded in 1848, says it became the oldest family-owned and managed general contracting firm in the United States with sixth generation involvement in 2003.

That year, Bentley, a fifth-generation owner, introduced his son Todd Bentley, who joined the firm in the business development department. It was Todd's great, great, great grandfather who started the company, “building homes and churches for Wisconsin's first wave of immigrant brewmasters, tanners and machine tool engineers arriving in search of freedom and opportunity,” the company says.

“There's comfort in continuity,” Bentley said at a company event celebrating its new status.

“Todd's coming on board should reassure clients that we're continuing to look forward and think young. We're honoring the past while simultaneously positioning ourselves for a very dynamic future.”

More than 200 invited clients, employees, friends and community leaders attended the ceremonies held in October 2003 at the Wisconsin Club in Milwaukee.

That facility, once home of local banking and railroad baron Alexander Mitchell, was the first built by The Bentley Co.'s predecessor company, Bentley Brothers, in 1848, the year Wisconsin became a state.

The firm continues to handle the landmark's ongoing restoration and remodeling projects.

“Demonstrating his firm's legacy of tradition and vision – working upon the traditions our past has taught us and building forward on the visions of today and tomorrow – Tom Bentley presented a sculpture by Montana artist Mike Capser to the people of Milwaukee,” the company says.

Capser's work has been commissioned previously by President Ronald Reagan, by the National Wildlife Federation, and is on display in numerous galleries nationwide. **MT**

**LAKE STATES LUMBER**

In 2001, the international shipping world collided with the international world of forest products. There had been a number of major parasitic infestations throughout the world that took place and decimated countless acres of timberlands. The changes in protocol to offset these issues turned these two vital industries into an international frenzy to gain control of the epidemic. Bentley-World Packaging Ltd. approached Lake States Lumber to educate customers for the International shipping product application and proper paperwork. Four years later, both companies have established themselves as national leaders in supply and education for International export packaging. Bentley-World Packaging Ltd. and Lake States Lumber continue to evolve and excel in international export packaging products. For more information, contact Kenny Bonin at [kbonin@lake-states-lumber.com](mailto:kbonin@lake-states-lumber.com).