

POSTSAVER, Extends Life Of Wood Products

By Terry Miller

Lebanon, Pa.—Postsaver,, a revolutionary concept for protecting in-ground wood, is a non-toxic and environmentally-friendly barrier for both treated and untreated lumber when used in below ground applications. Postsaver, boots and sleeves offer double barrier protection to products such as fence posts and building timbers by separating the vulnerable areas of the lumber from the soil to protect the wood from the harmful elements of ground contact decay.

Postsaver USA provides lumber producers, treatment plants and distributors with the technology and equipment to apply the product in house to service their local markets. The Postsaver,

machinery offers a fully automatic application process, complete with auto-stackers easily controlled by one or two operators. The machines ensure that the Postsaver, boot or sleeve is properly applied by using high intensity, infrared lamps to melt the bitumen inner coat to fluidity while the polyethylene outer layer heats and shrinks tightly around the vulnerable portion of the wood. The post is then transferred to a pressing station where soft platens press the boot or sleeve tightly to the surface of the wood. The finished product is then transferred to an auto stacking device. All this, and the machines are able to process from 2,000 to 5,000 posts per day.

John Makuvek, general manager at Postsaver USA, said that the process can double or triple the service life of a wooden post. Postsaver enables manufacturing companies to install the machinery necessary to apply the boots or sleeves to provide a value-added enhancement to the products they are already selling. In addition, Postsaver products offer new market opportunities outside of their current product line sales strategies. He added that this is not only a benefit for untreated wood, but also treated posts as well. The boot or sleeve provides a physical barrier around the treated wood so the preservatives stay available to protect the critical ground line area where decay usually occurs.

Makuvek said the product may enable the forest products industry to gain back some lost market share from competitive products such as concrete, plastic or steel alternatives.

Barrier wrap technology has been around for more than 40 years and Postsaver, technology for almost a decade. Postsaver is currently being marketed in 16 countries, but Postsaver has only been supplying the United States market for a little more than a year. In that time, companies that have begun using the technology have seen great results in a short amount of time.

Postsaver is presently pursuing standardization within the American Wood

Preserver's Association (AWPA), ASTM and International Code Council (ICC-ES) for building code compliance.

According to Don Bratcher, national sales manager for Conrad Forest Products in North Bend, Ore., the product extends the life of wood up to triple that of untreated wood installed below the ground.



Ed Hicks, director of technical operations at Postsaver, commissions a new PS-2000 at Conrad Forest Products' North Bend, Ore., facility.



John Makuvek, general manager at the Lebanon, Pa., facility, showing applied Postsaver® boots.



Postsaver USA uses high intensity, infrared heat lamps in the heat-shrinking application of their sleeves and boots.

Bratcher's company recently installed a PS-2000, one of the machines that sleeves wood with Postsaver,. He said that the product is the first new and practical application that has come out in the past 20 years that actually extends the life of fence posts, signposts and even large timber construction for homes and commercial build-

ings.

"It's a value-added product for the end user," Bratcher said. "The consumer can put this post in the ground and know that they will not have to replace it for a long long time. That's a great benefit to the consumer."

Bratcher said the business has increased so much at Conrad with the Postsaver, products, that the company is already talking about installing another Postsaver, application machine to service the demand.

"We installed a machine that produces around 2,000 posts a day," he stated. "Now, we have had to order additional equipment because our production can't keep up with the demand from our customers."

Bratcher said that the PS-2000 can handle 4x4 and 6x6 posts up to 16 feet long. The new equipment they

are installing will handle the same dimension posts, but with the capabilities of handling posts up to 10 to 12 inches in diameter and 40 feet long as well.

"The potential uses even include round post markets such as corrals, vineyards, tree stakes, hop and bean poles; piling for aquatic applications; as well as large timber construction—both homes and commercial buildings," Bratcher said.

According to Makuvek, the benefits to the product go well beyond just the longevity - the product is friendly to the industry and the environment as well. For those companies, like Conrad Forest Products, who serve the fencing and construction industries, the installation of Postsaver, machinery is a benefit from a business standpoint, according to Makuvek.

"Our customers can make an investment to which they will see a great return," he said, "while also offering better and safer technologies to protect ground contact lumber. Our industry processes an enormous amount of products for in ground application, and with Postsaver the opportunities are almost endless."