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▼ 56.74 -0.4% NASDAQ 2561.25 ▼ 0.6% NIKKEI 16301.39 ▲ 0.3% DJ STOXX 50 3721.94 ▲ 0.1% 10-YR TREAS ▲ 10/32, yield 4.596% OIL \$71.97 ▲ \$0.88 GOLD \$666.80 ▼ \$1.20 EURO \$1.3647 VFM 114.00

Integrated Wood Acquires Indian Country Board Facility



INDIAN COUNTRY IS NOW being operated by Integrated Wood Components, Inc. Shown in the photo left to right are: VP Gerard Kamp, Sec/Treas. Tom Stobert, CNC machine operator Donnie Meade, Melissa Mills and President John Kamp.

The machines are running once again at the board division of the Indian Country plant on Airport Road. Brothers John and Gerard Kamp are back at the helm as President and Vice President. Their hope is to return the plant to its earlier successes during a time when their family owned the company.

After Indian Country was sold on January 31st 2005 to the Stonehill Group of Minnesota, the brothers went their own ways. John stayed with the Indian Country Plant for a year. When he realized the new company's goals and ambitions didn't match his own, he moved on to work for a competitor.

Gerard was busy with his half interest in a local data entry company and also had formed the American Sino Processing Inc. a business that imports solid wood products from China.

But John said his heart was really in running his own business. He also missed the camaraderie that he and his brother had shared at In-

dian Country so he called Gerard. "We've worked together since we were 12," Gerard said of his brother John.

Coming back from a business trip in January of 2007, the brothers discussed the idea of forming a company that would integrate the composite wood products and the imported solid wood products. They also discussed locations for the new company. There were possibilities at Scranton, North Carolina, and Florida but the Deposit location beckoned. The Indian Country Company was floundering and John said he and his family were saddened and disturbed by the loss of customer base and local jobs over the past two and one half years.

In March of 2007 John began to put together a plan to purchase back the family heritage and core business of woodworking. His father Frank and uncle Henry Kamp had formed the original Indian Country Inc. after the sale of their

successful "Deposit Lumber Company" in 1972. Having identified a need for components to the furniture industry, they introduced "medium density fiberboard" which was little known at the time and sold under the name "Baraboard", to the furniture market.

By the early 1980's, Frank and Henry's sons and daughters had joined the company. The fiberboard concept was extremely marketable and soon in great demand. Employment jumped from 23 full timers in 1982 to over 120 at the company's peak.

Now, following in the Kamp tradition, John is once again restructuring the product for a new generation of customers. Making a shift from totally composite wood manufacturing to a combination of composite and solid wood products, his company will be able to supply products to the makers of solid wood products and those companies making composite products.

When they opened for business on September 20 they had no employees. The previous owners had laid off the entire workforce. Thankful to have a base of trained, knowledgeable, dedicated people to draw from, they immediately began hiring back those that had previously worked with them. Tom Stobert, who has 18 years of experience, was tapped as Secretary/Treasurer, and Melissa Mills who has eight years comprised the office staff. 10 others, experienced in the manufacturing, completed the initial roster. In four weeks they had hired 12 employees.

"We're going to start small and focus on maintaining the valuable employees we have while increasing sales," John explained. He said they planned to hire two more employees this week. Within a few years he plans to add 49 people.

"This growth, although a fraction of what we used to employ, is realistic and obtainable," he said. "Obviously, if we exceed our sales goals, employment will increase accordingly, which is not an unreasonable expectation."

Along with hiring employees and re-building the customer base, the Kamps have been contacting local sawmills as potential solid wood suppliers. Not only is Deposit home, the abundance of local solid wood resource was another draw for locating the business here- why use totally imported products when local products are readily available?

The brothers agree that the comeback will take time and some major commitment, but there are also many favorable factors. The building, constructed in 2001, is a state-of-the-art, 150,000 square foot facility and fully equipped. "It's laid out with exactly what we need for now and also for what we project for the future," John explained. "There's plenty of room for growth." He is excited about the prospects and excited to be back at the helm of his family's business.