

New Hampshire's Sawmills Success Story

The Challenge

Sawmills can be intimidating. Between piles of logs, mounds of sawdust, muddy yards, and loud machinery, it is not surprising that neighbors and local communities develop a negative view of the forest products industry. New Hampshire sawmill operators have invested over \$74 million in capital improvements over the last 10 years. However, the lingering perception is that sawmilling is old fashioned and on its way out. Combine this perception with the independent nature of the sawmill manager and you have a recipe for a challenging relationship between this industry and the local community.

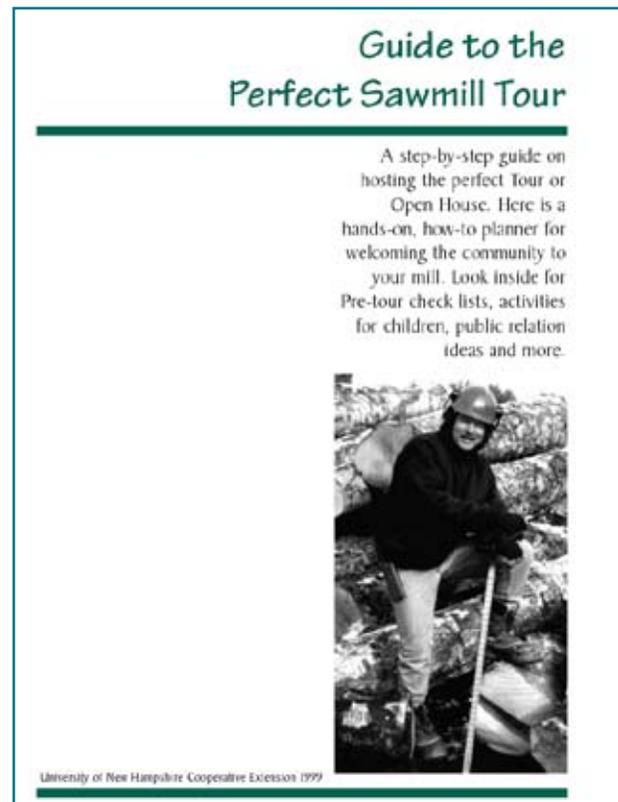
The Solution

A few sawmills have always opened their doors to the local community, and the result has been better relationships with both municipal officials and private citizens. Taking off on this concept, a University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension specialist worked with the State's sawmills to develop a "Guide to the Perfect Sawmill Tour" using funding provided by the Northeastern Area's Rural Development Through Forestry Program. This publication uses the best ideas from sawmills to clearly describe how to organize and conduct a successful tour through a sawmill facility. The guide offers suggestions on how to handle small children (have strict rules), promote the tour, develop a sawmill factsheet, and keep your visitors safe.

Resulting Benefits

- More sawmills regularly host tours that include legislators, children, community officials, and others.
- There is an increased awareness of the importance of sawmills to the forest products industry, local community, and the economy.

New Hampshire is 84 percent forested. The forest products industry is the third largest industry in the manufacturing sector and is important to the State's economy by contributing property taxes to local communities.



A step-by-step "Guide to the Perfect Sawmill Tour."

- Relationships between sawmills and local communities have improved.

Sharing Success

- Copies of the publication were distributed to forest products utilization and marketing specialists in the 20 Northeastern States. To view or download a copy, go to <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/forestry/docs/sawtour.pdf>.
- Presentations have been made to the New England Lumberman's Association, Northeastern Loggers' Association, Loggers Congress, and at sawmill seminars.
- A companion publication—"The Perfect Woodlot Tour"—was developed and widely distributed in the Northeast.
- A sawmill tour calendar is developed annually by a school group for distribution in the community.



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