

RED STAG IS ROARING

New Planer Mill

Strong support from customers, management and staff is backing Red Stag Timber's decision to invest to expand the productive capacity of Waipa Mill by 50%, or 100,000m³ per annum, from 200,000m³ to 300,000m³ on two shifts.

The construction of the massive new building – the largest on the Waipa Mill site – is now practically completed and installation of the plant is progressing apace with completion scheduled for June 2006. When finished, the new planer mill will be the largest and fastest in New Zealand, with output capacity of 75 m³/hour, consolidating Waipa Mill as the largest sawmill in New Zealand.

“This is a state-of-the-art plant” says Red Stag Timber general manager, Tim Rigter, “It represents a major move forward in the development of the New Zealand timber industry and is another step in our ongoing drive to meet our customers' highest expectations”, he says.

The new building measures 5600 m² and has a height of 11 metres. This special height feature is needed to house the planer outfeed and bins which have a height of 10 metres.

Red Stag processing manager, John Keefe, says the new planer mill will remove a bottleneck at Waipa Mill, which at present can cut more timber than it can process.

“We have three aims. First, we will lift the production at Waipa Mill to 300,000m³/pa; second, we want to achieve the lowest processing costs of any sawmill in New Zealand, to be the most cost-competitive; and, third, we aim to utilise these advantages to ensure we maintain the quality of our product and our service to customers, to meet their highest expectations”, he says.

“We have a company policy of always striving to be the best, so this very large investment is being made to equip the Red Stag team with the tools to do the job”

The new planer mill will be commissioned in June – now only a few weeks away. From then, production will be progressively increased. In the meantime, Red Stag is doing all it can to meet demand from its existing customers. The official opening will be held around September 2006.



New Kiln Drying Capacity

More production creates a need for more kiln drying capacity.

Red Stag Timber is also investing to remove another bottleneck at Waipa Mill. It has let a contract to Mahild for the construction of a new kiln which, too, is leading edge technology.

The new kiln will have a capacity of 100,000m³. This new capacity will almost double the kiln drying capability of Waipa Mill.

General Manager, Tim Rigter, says the new technology will not only lift the mill's capacity for kiln drying, it will also maintain Red Stag's ability to ensure the highest quality finished product.

“We know our customers have to stand behind the quality of the timber they sell to their customers, so we consider we have a duty to make quality assurance and customer service our highest priorities”, he says.

“This is essential, too, if timber is to compete with other substitutable building materials”.

“When our customers buy timber from us they in effect back our quality standards. In turn, timber of the highest standards, by certification, enables them to compete for business and transact sales with confidence”, he says. “To us, that is the highest priority we have”.

The new kiln will be commissioned by September 2006, in time to meet Waipa Mill's progressive production ramp-up schedule.

Red Stag Leads Staff Training

To back quality and service standards, Waipa Mill staff have made Red Stag Timber the industry's leader for staff training.

When Red Stag encouraged its staff to undergo the training courses for Solid Wood Processing, based upon the experiences of other companies it expected around 20 staff would enrol. It says a lot for the staff spirit and morale at Waipa Mill that 90 of its staff stepped up to the mark, making Red Stag the leading staff training company in the industry.

"The company has a policy of encouraging staff training and welfare", says Red Stag Human Resources Manager, Melissa Bennett.

"The board, management and staff all recognise that staff skills are a key component in the company's ability to compete in the global market, which every company has to do, to survive".

Red Stag executive chairman, Phil Verry, says the staffs' commitment to training to acquire skills was a material consideration in the company's decision to invest in its current expansion programme.



NZ Wood Innovation Centre – Shanghai

Red Stag Timber is also providing leadership in the development of offshore markets for New Zealand wood.

While its highest volume market is the New Zealand structural timber market, followed by Australia, Red Stag Timber also has customers in Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.

"With the forthcoming production increase, we recognised that we would have more non-structural timber to sell, so we have a

strategy for offshore market development and diversification", says Red Stag executive chairman, Phil Verry.

"Basically, it is due to this recognition that I have agreed to devote time to chairing the consortium of six leading New Zealand timber companies that have partnered with Trade and Enterprise New Zealand to establish the 'New Zealand Wood Innovation Centre', in Shanghai, China".

"The Centre is a splendid exposition of many of the high quality and diverse applications in which New Zealand Pine can be used", he says.

As Chairman of the consortium, Phil Verry was one of those who officiated at the official opening of the Shanghai Centre in early March.

Rotorua Energy Events Centre

Red Stag's leadership is not confined to the timber industry. When Rotorua's civic leaders were short of funds to build a new indoor events centre, Red Stag Timber offered substantial sponsorship.

This, in turn, enabled Rotorua District Council to leverage off Red Stag's leadership to obtain other corporate support, to supplement the core funding from the Rotorua Electricity Energy Trust and the Council. The result is the splendid new \$25 million Rotorua Energy Events Centre, which is now under construction in Rotorua's historic Government Gardens.



Red Stag general manager, Tim Rigter, says Red Stag's contribution to the new Events Centre is an example of the culture of leadership that now exists at Waipa Mill.

"As we see it, what is good for the city is good for the company, and vice versa. Rotorua is a great place to work and live. The more we can enhance that, the better it is for our staff and for staff recruitment", he says.

Already, bookings for conference, cultural and sporting events – some for over 2,000 people – are pouring in for the Centre, which is scheduled to open in January 2007.