

## Post and Pole Manufacturing

The Forest Biomass Business Center will be receiving regular loads of woody material from harvests on nearby federal and private lands. The plant will either accept clean chips as a feedstock, or could utilize an on-site chipper or tub grinder to produce chip fuel from small-diameter wood. Since both chips and small-diameter logs can be brought to the site, there are possible efficiencies to be gained by having other on-site enterprises that utilize both of these materials. Post and pole manufacturing (including trellis poles for agriculture) is an ideal value-added product for smaller logs, provided there are efficient production and sorting systems, and markets for the residuals. Hop poles have been a very successful market in Washington State.

### Feedstock Specifications:

- Straight, low taper softwood is preferred (lodgepole, ponderosa, white fir).
- The process is efficient up to 20' lengths and 12" diameter, and down to 8' lengths and 3" diameter.

**Jobs (Full-time Equivalent):** 5 – 15

### Equipment Needed:

- Post peeler and/or doweller.
- Merchandizing line (log in-feed, out-feed roll, transfer and incline chain) with a debarker.
- Bucking saw.
- Residual handling (of bark and sawdust) could require a blower, blow pipe, chip bin and van-loading conveyor.
- Truck scale to determine value of small diameter material delivered

### Competition:

- Peeler cores from the plywood industry.
- Treated pine posts from Idaho and Montana (where there is a lower cost of insurance and labor).

### Challenges:

- Species are generally of lower quality than lodgepole.
- Poles are commodity products in a variable market.
- Seasonal markets mean high inventory costs & challenging cash flow.
- Low profit margin, even with efficient production.

### General Notes:

- Can produce up to 4 MBF per shift.
- It is OK to sort after peeling.
- Bark mulch can be sold as a residual product if a de-barker is used to prepare the posts.