

SAWMILL PROFILE

FOUR GENERATIONS OF HARD WORK & SUCCESS: NETTERVILLE LUMBER COMPANY

Matthew Netterville, operations manager for Netterville Lumber Company, along with his brother, Seth, represent the fourth generation in the family to operate the business in Woodville, Miss., which is just east of the Mississippi River and just north of the Mississippi/Louisiana border. Started by his great-grandfather in 1952 and serving the Gulf Coast and Southeastern U.S. regions as well as overseas markets, the lumber company specializes in a variety of products including industrial lumber and ties.

Netterville said while he has been in the sawmill business officially for 23 years, he was “born into it.” He recently shared details about the company as well as his thoughts on the evolving sawmill industry.

What are Netterville’s primary products and species? Red oak, white oak, poplar, ash, mixed species, crossties, industrial timbers (2’-30’ in length), grade lumber kiln dried of green, board road, ripped-to-width products, surfaced lumber.

How many people does the sawmill employ? 120

What makes your mill stand out above the competition? We try to be very versatile and produce whatever product our customer wants and needs. We are capable of cutting industrial timbers as long or

short as you may want, kiln drying material, ripping material and surfacing material, just to name a few things.

Since you started in the industry, what changes have you encountered in the industry, i.e., personnel, technology, marketplace expectations, resource availability, etc.? Our industry can be as complicated or simple as you want it to be. Computer-, scanner- and cloud-based systems have become more common in everyday life, but I feel like our equipment is simplifying itself and we are using older technology that is easier to use.

What is your biggest challenge, and how are you working to overcome it? Our biggest challenge is continually reinventing ourselves and making sure that we are a needed industry that can fulfill what our customers want.

If you could change something about the sawmill industry today, what would it be? As inflation has risen and all input costs have gone up, we have to make our clients understand that the prices of material can’t be the same as they have been for the past 20 years. Status quo is out the window. We all have a part in this industry and it’s important that we are all able to stay healthy financially—from the logger who brings the timber to the mill to the trucker



From left: Matthew Netterville, operations manager; Charlie Netterville, president; and Scott Wesberry, sales manager.

who delivers the finished product to the customers.

What advice would you share with newcomers to the field, and would you recommend others get into the business? Proceed with caution! The sawmill business is ever-changing. There is always some sort of uncertainty in good times and bad. Log procurement is a challenge because of weather patterns, labor shortages, equipment and parts shortages. The markets are like a roller coaster, and there is a lack of price stability in lumber markets. This industry is not for the faint of heart. It is both a passion and a lifestyle. ■



Netterville Lumber Company’s Woodville, Miss., facility



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