



NEWS RELEASE - September, 2020

Town of Ashland, Maine to Pursue New Markets for Timber

For more information contact: Cyr Martin, Ashland Town Manager. (207) 435-2311
info@originalmasstimber.com

The Town of Ashland has secured \$600,000 in grants for an initiative to position the community as an east coast production hub for structural round timber (SRT).

Structural Round Timber (SRT) is a mass timber building product requiring no adhesives and minimal processing, and one that can be fabricated using existing facility infrastructure using local timber supplies. With markets for mass timber construction growing, the project seeks to position Ashland and the Maine Woods to take advantage of an estimated \$130 million market for structural round timber products in the north and mid-Atlantic east coast of the United States.

Ashland Town Manager Cyr Martin says the opportunity comes at the right time. “Ashland has been actively looking at multiple market opportunities to restore more wood products manufacturing to our local business mix, says Martin. “We’re strategically located at the gateway to the Northern Maine forest resource and have proximity and transportation access to significant markets. The Town has a 100 acre industrial park and numerous un- or under-utilized manufacturing sites that could support such businesses. What is missing is market demand to justify business investment in those sites, and this project will help us grow one of those markets.”

Local land managers like Seven Islands Land Company are supporters and partners in the project. Given mill closures and the recent explosion at the pulp mill in Jay, Maine landowners have lost markets for millions of tons of pulp wood over the past several years. Structural round timber offers a new and higher-margin market opportunity for that material.

National SRT firm, WholeTrees Structures, has partnered with the initiative to oversee the market development campaign as well as preparation for Maine-based production in the Ashland-area.

To launch the program, Ashland and its partners secured a \$450,000 from the Northern Forest Future Forest Economy Initiative, coordinated by the Northern Forest Center, and \$150,000 from the

FOR/Maine (Forest Opportunity Roadmap) coalition and the Maine Development Foundation. Ashland will use the resources to hire a staff member focused specifically on growing structural round timber markets, engage a SRT market development firm, and take on other activities with a goal of growing a \$1-2 million sales funnel for SRT from the Ashland area in the next three years.

Joe Short, Vice President of the Northern Forest Center, said “As markets for wood and wood products continue to shift, identifying and growing new markets to complement Maine’s traditional strengths like paper and saw logs is essential. Ashland’s initiative to bring a new market to the region is one that holds promise in Maine and across the Northern Forest region.”

Yellow Light Breen, President of the Maine Development Foundation, said “MDF is proud to be able to support the collaborative efforts in Maine’s Forest Economy communities to attract jobs and investment in the next generation of forest products. Ashland’s historic position at the heart of the northern Maine wood basket, and town leaders’ spirit of grit and innovation in pursuing new opportunities, are important ingredients in a comeback effort we are pleased that federal and state funders have jointly committed resources to move ahead. This could not have happened without industry and community leaders, Maine’s congressional delegation, and state economic development officials working in common purpose.”

###