

The image shows the interior of a large, well-lit sawmill. The structure is made of light-colored wood, with a high ceiling supported by a network of wooden beams. On the left side, there are several tall, neat stacks of finished lumber, including what appears to be redwood. In the center and right, there are more stacks of wood, some on pallets. A worker in a white shirt and shorts is visible in the background, standing near a piece of machinery, possibly a planer or a conveyor system. The floor is a smooth, light-colored concrete. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, organized industrial space.

How To Be Successful With Your Small Hardwood Sawmill

Terry Connors
Department of Forestry
University of Kentucky

Typical Small Portable Sawmill Setups

There are many good brands on the market. Choose the one that fits your needs.



Portable bandmill

Typically saws part-time, at customer's convenience, customer's species. Can't provide dry lumber, can't resell to other customers. Service-oriented rather than product-oriented, and paid by the job or by the hour accordingly.



Stationary bandmill

Logs are brought to the mill. More control over schedule. May do custom sawing. Might provide air-dried, solar-dried or other KD lumber. May have a retail sales orientation Product-oriented. Responsible for marketing business.

Components of a Successful Small Sawmill Business

On-Site Facilities:

1. Sawmill (stationary)
2. Signage
3. Office
4. Air drying area
5. Kiln
6. Sales area(s)

Off-Site Requirements

1. Loggers
2. Network of Colleagues
3. Customers
 1. Website
 2. Craigslist ads
 3. Social media

Keys to Running A Profitable Sawmill Business

First Priorities

- Take the job seriously, be professional.
- Production and sales areas must look professional too.
- 6 Ps (*Proper planning prevents ...*)
 - LLC, Insurance, Business plan
 - ***Know what customers want (or at least what's otherwise locally unavailable)***

Second Priority: Feeding Your Business

- Don't buy logs just because they're cheap, buy according to what you need



What are you going to do with all those ash logs, anyway?

Google Earth

Establish a good relationship with local loggers.

- *Pay for better logs.*
- *Low-quality but cheap logs won't save you any money.*



Log Inventory Management

- Manage your log inventory (First In, First Out)
 - Don't saw according to *Lumber* Inventory needs, saw to keep *Log* Inventory as fresh as possible, especially in warm weather.
 - If you overbought logs and let them sit, they'll degrade and you've lost additional money.

Third Priority

Establish a reputation for quality (uniqueness?)

1. No sapwood on walnut and cherry
2. No decay/worm holes
3. Quartersawn lumber draws customers. "Oddball" species, turning blanks, bow staves may be valuable for some customers but won't attract a lot of traffic.

Third Priority

Establish a reputation for quality (uniqueness?)

3. Live edge slabs have recently been popular but market may be oversupplied. Can you provide them flat and dry?
 - ✓ (*Alaska chainsaw mill* - Collaborate with neighboring businesses.)
4. Lumber must be properly dried and stored!!!

If You Custom-Saw, Charge by the Hour (not by the board foot)



Successful Hardwood Sawmill Marketing

Principal Consideration

You need to market *yourself* almost as much as your *products*.

Look Professional, Give Business An Identity





Spirit
SILVERADO

McInturf
PORTABLE SAWMILL
Gary McInturf
cell - 859-608-1060
FROM LOGS TO LUMBER
KILN DRYING



Office



Photo Taken at
Open House



Pretty Good Traffic



Air Drying Building



Don't Do This!



4000 bf Capacity DH Kiln



Scale and QC the Lumber

Measure BF as you load so the customers know exactly how much they're buying.

Perhaps give lumber a quick swipe or two with a pinless moisture meter to prove properly dried?

Receipt should include statement to effect that customer has inspected lumber and everything is satisfactory.

Lumber Grading

You may want to avoid grading lumber, but if you charge the same price per BF regardless of quality you're losing money!

Good, Better, whatever your grades are called – if you're a small mill you likely don't have to grade your lumber according to NHLA standards. Most customers will visually inspect what they buy.

Stack by grade to make retail experience better – and to make your life easier for inventory and shipping.

Lumber Grading

Some customers will request standard grades – do your best to give them the quality they request and the lack of an NHLA-certified grader won't be important. (You probably aren't selling in truckload quantities.)

Retail Sales



Impress customers by keeping neat & tidy.

Retail Sales



For Kiln-Dry Lumber Especially: Be Sure to Dry and Store it Properly

- If you have a problem discover it in advance of sales.
 - *Bugs? Moisture content? Honeycomb?*
- Don't wait for complaints to show up.

Improvement Possible

Butternut lumber



Turning Blanks, Bow Staves, Etc.



Other Product Possibilities

- Barn patterns, siding (not kiln dried)
- Live edge slabs for bars, countertops (dried?)
- Railroad ties
- Firewood (slabs)
- Sawdust (horse bedding – *no walnut!*)
- Air-dried eastern redcedar mailbox
- Cedar closet lining, HW flooring
 - Partner with local shop to S4S or T&G/back relief with moulder as needed (blunt end or 4-sided?)



**Home Depot,
October 2016**

**I've seen similar
at Aubuchon's
Hardware and
the like in New
England.**

LIGHT 'n GO
ALL NATURAL PORTABLE BIRCH LOG
BONFIRE
 2.5 HR APPROXIMATE BURN TIME
 Lights With One Match!
JUMBO

ALL NATURAL / SAFE FOR COOKING **CLEAN BURN FOR INDOOR USE** **PERFECT FOR ALL SEASONS**

GREAT FOR BEACH OR TAILGATE PARTIES
INDOOR FIREPLACES
OUTDOOR FIRE PITS
SAFE FOR COOKING CAMPING

DIRECTIONS: Place log wick-up and centered on level, dry, nonporous base surface in a fireplace, wood stove, fire pit or other suitable nonflammable receptacle. Make sure the area is well ventilated and free of combustible materials. Have water and/or a working fire extinguisher available for immediate use before lighting paperboard wick and allowing log to burn down naturally without moving or poking.

CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 65 WARNING:
 All wood, including this wood, produces chemicals known by the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm when burning.
 Use of this and other solid fuels may be restricted at times by law. Please check 1-877-4NO-BURN or <http://www.8774NOBURN.org> before burning.

NEW YORK APPROVED HEAT TREATED FIREWOOD / PEST FREE

STATE OF FLORIDA
 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
 1911 S.W. 34th St./ P.O. Box 147100, Gainesville, FL 32614
FIREWOOD AND UNPROCESSED WOOD PRODUCTS CERTIFICATE
 Section 581.031FS./Rule 58-65
ESSAY GROUP LLC
 1099 Wall Street West, Suite 357, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
DPI FW 2010-05
 This is to certify that all regulated articles have been treated to minimize the introduction or spread of serious plant pests.
 DACS-08459 Revised 06/09
 This certificate is valid unless revoked for cause

CAUTION: DO NOT PLACE ON ANY NON-COMBUSTIBLE HEAT SENSITIVE SURFACE SUCH AS CONCRETE, ASPHALT AND THE LIKE.

WARNING: LARGE OPEN FLAME CAN CAUSE FIRE AND BURNS.
 Use indoors **ONLY** in a fireplace. Use outdoors **ONLY** in a fire pit, chimenea, or a flat, level, non-combustive surface. **DO NOT** leave children unattended near log. **DO NOT** use near flammables or combustibles. Avoid all contact with burning log. **DO NOT** knock over.

USDA PERMIT NO. P40-08-00114
 WOOD ORIGIN: LATVIA
 MADE IN LATVIA
 ESSAY GROUP LLC,
 LYNDHURST, NJ 07071

Find us on Facebook

Eco Forest

USDA PERMIT NO. P40-08-00114
 WOOD ORIGIN: LATVIA. 
 MADE IN LATVIA.
 ESSAY GROUP LLC,
 LYNDHURST, NJ 07071

Find us on Facebook

Latvia? Really?

Take Credit Cards!



Maintain a Lumber Inventory Spreadsheet

- Put it on line using *Google Sheets* or similar
- Share the spreadsheet with employees.
 - If you're travelling you can still answer questions about whether you have 500 bf of dry red oak, for example.
 - People back at the office can update in real time if stock gets sold so you don't promise what you don't have in inventory when you're away.

**Increase Sales by
Using the Internet!**



kentucky sawmill

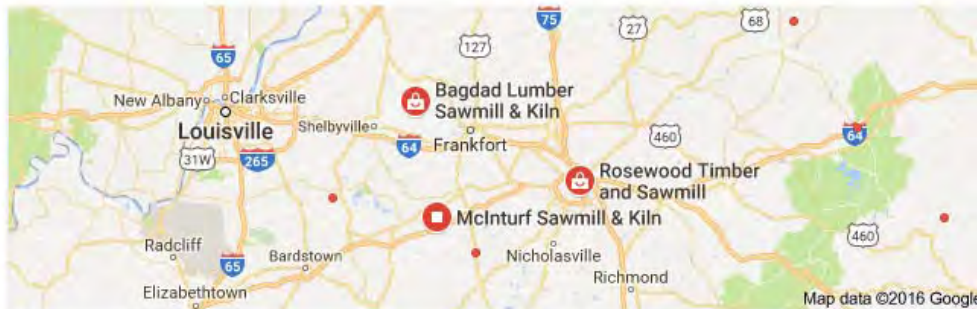


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All Maps Shopping News Images More Search tools



About 403,000 results (0.68 seconds)



Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln

4.3 ★★★★★ (6) - Lumber Store
2932 Christianburg Rd · (502) 321-0509
Open until 5:30 PM

 
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

McInturf Sawmill & Kiln

2 reviews - Saw Mill
1136 Ballard Rd · (859) 608-1060

 
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

Rosewood Timber and Sawmill

1 review - Saw Mill
168 Burnett Ave · (859) 230-4916
Open until 6:00 PM

 
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

 More places

October 2016

All featured mills are small businesses.

McInturf Sawmill & Kiln | Lawrenceburg, KY 40342

www.kysawmill.com/

McInturf Sawmill & Kiln. 1136 Ballard Rd. Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. 1 ... Website Designed by McInturf Sawmill & Kiln © 2016 at Homestead™ Create a Website ...
Photo Gallery · Contact-Us · About Us · Services

Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln LLC - Home

www.bagdadlumber.com/

Welcome to the Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln LLC website. ... page and we are also Kentucky Concealed to Carry instructors and putting on classes now!!

HARA SAWMILL

The Mill On The Hill 2

Home

Products & Services

Shop

About

Blog

Testimonials

CRAFT BOXES

Home



Welcome To Hara Sawmill, Kiln, & Wood Working Shop!

Hara Sawmill is a family owned business located in south central Kentucky in close proximity to major Highway 127. Owner David Hara has over 30 years in the logging and sawmill industry. We use an environmentally sound solar kiln to dry our wood, which produces a much more stable wood product. We employ Amish and master craftsmen to manufacture custom wood products in our

wood shop, such as cabinets, molding, tables, and flooring. Check out our [Products & Services](#) page to learn more about our sawmill and the products we offer.

Location & Business Hours

Hara Sawmill

3637 Chestnut Level Rd.

Special

Announcements

We have large slab pieces for sale. Great for making tables. We do have some that are Live Edge also. Come and check out our pieces, they are beautiful.

Location

Hara Sawmill
3637 Chestnut Level Rd.
Liberty, KY 42539
Phone: 704.614.7349

[Email](#)

USE COLOR ON YOUR HOME
PAGE

Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln LLC

Visit Us
On Facebook
& Twitter



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[Lumber Products](#)

[Clients projects](#)

[Contact](#)

[Product Blog](#)

[Click here for the most up to date status on our lumber!](#)

Fine Furniture Grade Lumber
Sawmill, Kiln, Custom Sawing & Custom Orders

Welcome to the Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln LLC website. Here you will find what we do, what we carry in stock and prices! Our inventory changes by the minute!!!

We specialize in turning logs into furniture grade lumber. We do custom sawing, custom orders, kiln drying and custom kiln drying of your lumber in our two kilns, we buy logs, sell fire wood slabs and sawdust for bedding. We do not focus on barn siding, fence boards, etc but at "times" we do carry some, not every log makes furniture grade stock. Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln assures quality and customer satisfaction, and we hold our work to the highest standard..

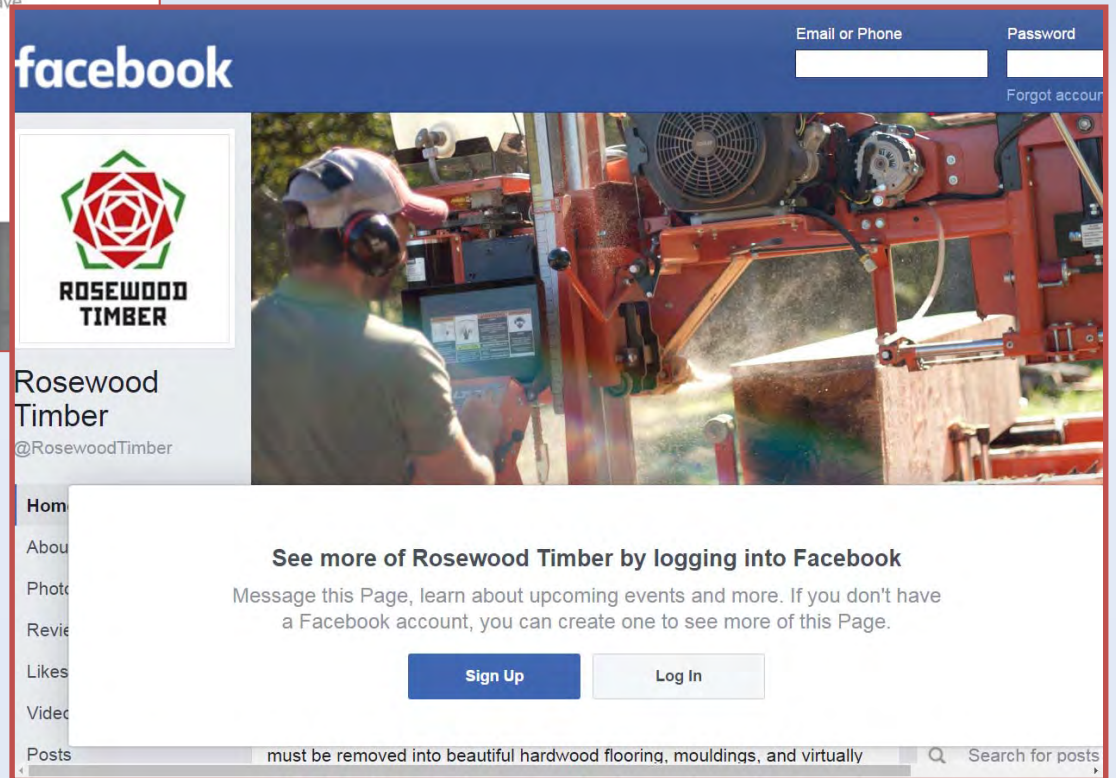
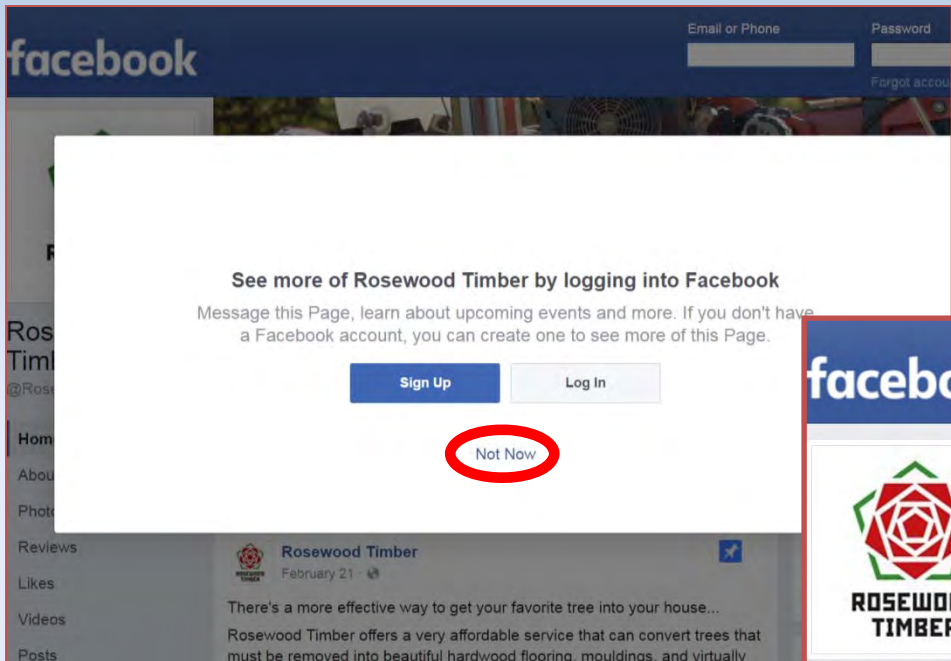
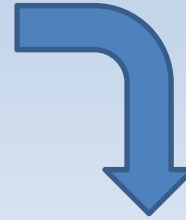
Owner/Operator
-Ron Harris



Design Webpages With Users in Mind

- Make sure the pages load quickly. Check things periodically to be sure everything is still working!
- Fancy graphics or animations don't help if the customer gets tired of waiting for something to show up.
 - A “woody-looking” background graphic on every page looks great but is an example of something that can bog your website down on slower connections.

Get a Real Website!



Frustrating!

Keep a Blog on the Website

Update 1-2X/week

Sammill Update

10/25/2013

[0 Comments](#)

Walnut, Hack Berry and red oak slabs out of kilns mid to late next week along with 8/4 red oak, hickory and poplar. We have sawed several bowl blanks and large cedar log rounds see photo's. We have big hit with some really BIG sales this past week and inventory has depleted in several species but we have more drying and more waiting for kiln space. Because we are behind we will be running FULL crew Saturday with saw moving!! along with plenty of help to wait on customers.



**It's Hard to Overstate the
Usefulness of a Free Craigslist Ad**

CL > lexington > all for sale/wanted > materials - by dealer

Reply

jj987cedtwu@sale.craigslist.org

flag

[miscategorized](#)

[prohibited](#)

[spam](#)

[best of](#)

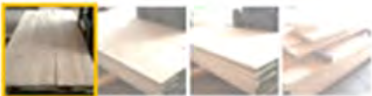
Posted 2016-6-16, 8:45 am

Coffeetree Lumber Kiln Dried



A Good CL Ad:

- Photo
- Price
- Delivery available
- Hours open
- Location
- Phone
- Website



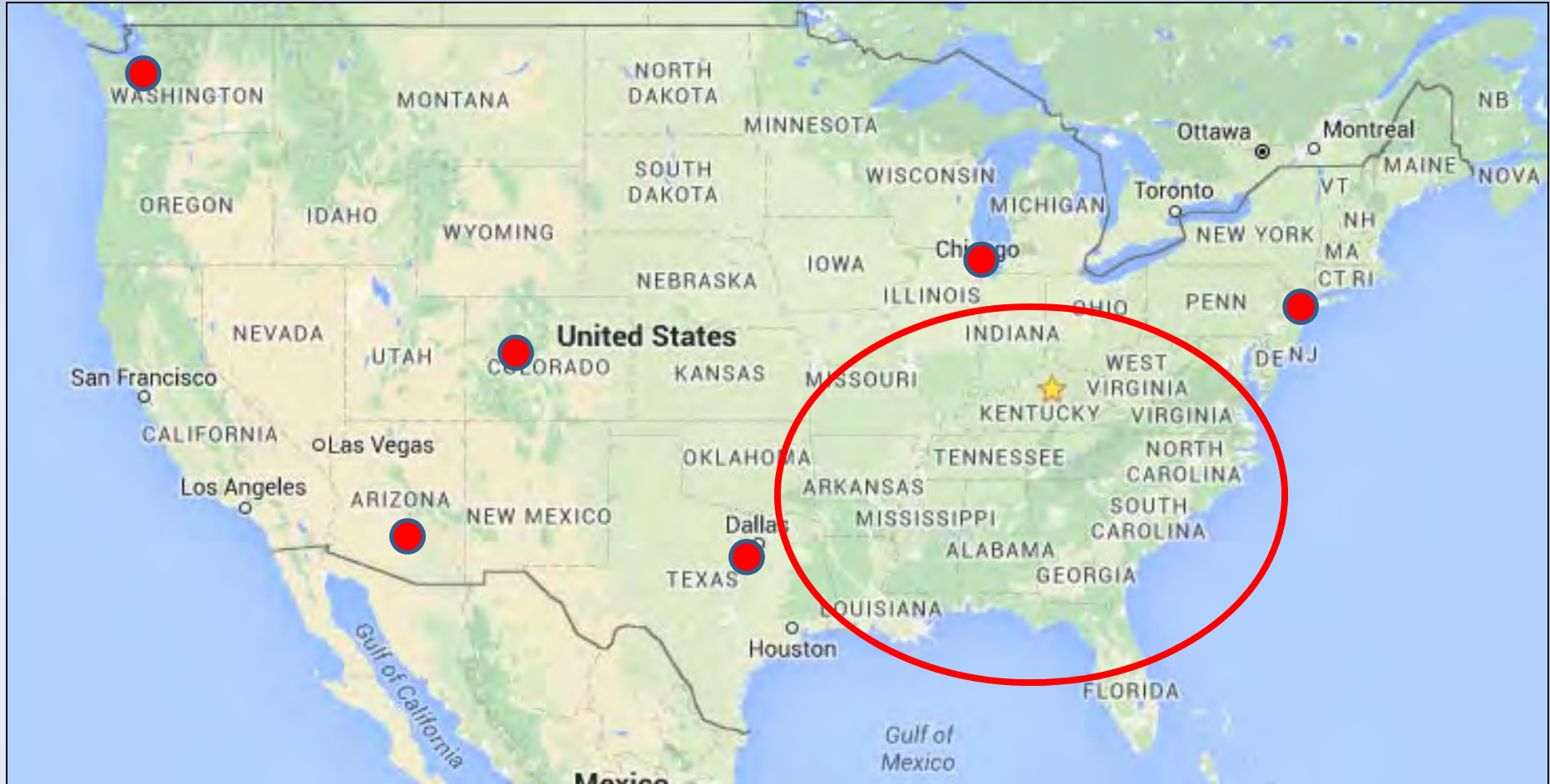
1000 bf of kiln dried Kentucky coffeetree lumber, very nice! \$3.00/bf. No minimum order required. Free delivery for larger orders. We are at 296 Spruce St in Lexington, KY, just about an hour and a half south of Cincinnati, Ohio. Open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 to 5:30, Sundays I am usually around but please call first (859) 555-1234. Visit our website for more! www.connerskdlumber.com

- It's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests.

Use *Multiple* Craigslist Ads

Range of KY Customers from CL Ads

Internet sale, sold 400 bf



**\$6-8,000 lumber,
three times a year**

\$30,000 trailer load

Maybe Add A Gimmick?

THE BAGDAD LUMBER GIRLS !!!!!

Preview of 2016 Bagdad Lumber Girl calendar!!! Word has it that this calendar will have a lot of Bikini's !!!!!



Ashlee with a 50 Cal.

Facebook – In Addition to Main Website



The image shows a Facebook profile for 'Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln'. The main cover photo is a large stack of wooden pallets in a warehouse at night, illuminated by blue lights. A smaller profile picture shows a man in a green shirt standing in front of a wooden structure. The profile name is 'Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln' with a 5-star rating and 30 ratings. It has 271 likes, 13 people talking about it, and 11 people who were there. The business information includes: Business Services, 2932 Christianburg rd, Bagdad, Kentucky 40003, phone (502) 321-0509, and hours 'Closed until tomorrow 8:00 am - 5:30 pm'. There are buttons for 'Like', 'Follow', 'Message', and a settings icon. A 'Photos' section shows a photo of a person working with wood, and a 'Likes' section shows a thumbs-up icon and the number 271. At the bottom, there are links for 'About' and 'Suggest an Edit'.

Bagdad Lumber Sawmill & Kiln
★★★★★ (30 ratings)
271 likes · 13 talking about this · 11 were here

Business Services · Add A Category
2932 Christianburg rd, Bagdad, Kentucky 40003
(502) 321-0509
Closed until tomorrow 8:00 am - 5:30 pm

About – Suggest an Edit

Like Follow Message *
Photos Likes
271



Instagram

Search

Get the app

Sign up | Log in



bagdadlumbersawmill

Follow

BAGDAD LUMBER SAWMILL & KILN Specialize in furniture grade lumber but also do custom sawing, drying, logging, firewood, sawdust, live edge slabs!!!

www.facebook.com/pages/Bagdad-Lumber-Sawmill-Kiln/1414728915412237

47 posts

212 followers

104 following



Twitter

Home Moments bagdad lumber bagdad lumber Have an account? Log in

bagdad lumber

Top Live Accounts Photos Videos More options

New to Twitter?


Sign up now to get your own personalized timeline!

Sign up

Worldwide Trends

- #NationalPoetryDay 85.2K Tweets
- #FelizJueves 35.3K Tweets
- #RollingStones 13.5K Tweets
- #ارواح_نفوسك 217K Tweets
- #روان_بن_حسين_ماتينا_سوق 6,627 Tweets
- İstanbul Yenibosna'da 12.2K Tweets
- Steven Woolfe 37.9K Tweets
- サッカー 131K Tweets
- Juan Carlos Vélez 10.4K Tweets
- Daniel Ford 9,941 Tweets

Arcadia Mill @ArcadiaMill · 12 Feb 2015
It's #ThrowbackThursday! @ArcadiaMill was the predecessor to the **Bagdad** Land and **Lumber** Company (see photo)



← ↻ 1 ❤️ 1 ⋮

Megan Fisher @DJMeggieFresh · 5 May 2014
In the crik #BagdadLumber #BagdadLumberGirls #BagdadLumberCalendar2015 #kentucky #model #redhead... [instagram.com/p/noUK_fADTv/](https://www.instagram.com/p/noUK_fADTv/)

← ↻ 1 ❤️ ⋮

Megan Fisher @DJMeggieFresh · 4 May 2014
2015 **Bagdad Lumber** Girls Calendar shoot today!! :) — at **Bagdad Lumber** Sawmill & Kiln [fb.me/15nLHAV/c](https://www.facebook.com/15nLHAV/c)

← ↻ 1 ❤️ ⋮

Crabbycathe @crabbycathe · 19 Apr 2014
Wow. Can't wait to see it finished! @McQuixoteLouKy: We went shopping for wood at **Bagdad Lumber**... He helped us pick... [instagram.com/p/m-](https://www.instagram.com/p/m-)

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A Bagdad Lumber Hat? In Britain?



See YouTube videos by Gervais Sawyer:

“The SawDoctor Tensile Test”,

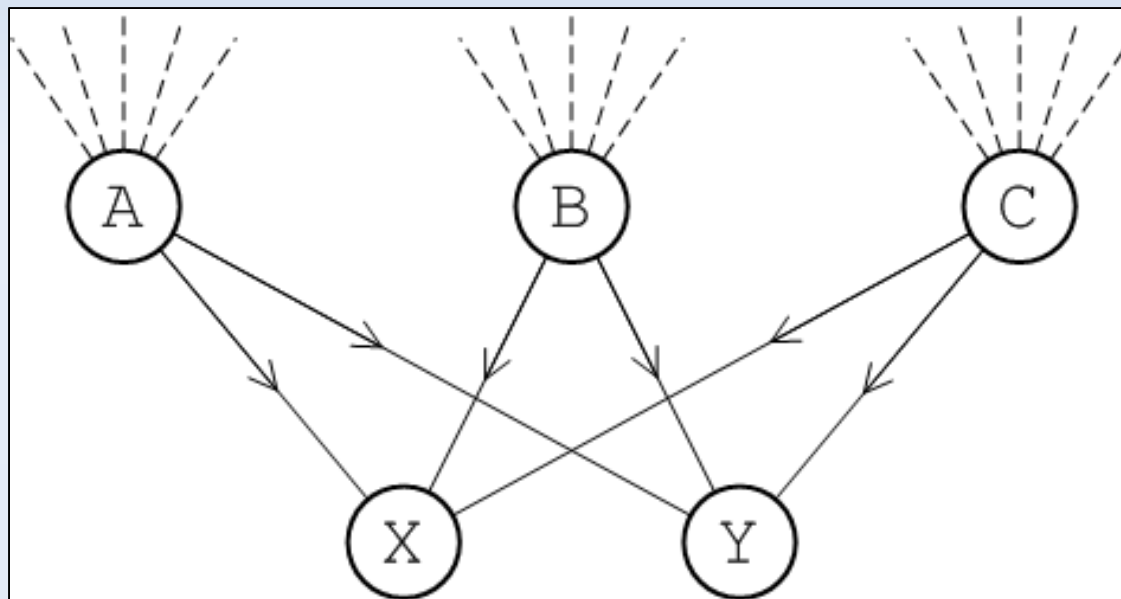
“The SawDoctor Water flow in Wood” and others.

Grow Sales
Cooperatively

Deal With Other Small Wood Businesses



Wood Products Producer Networks



Consider Brokering

- You don't have to saw every stick of lumber you sell. Maybe buy green and dry it for sale?
- Find a sawmill that specializes in cedar or yellow-poplar, for example. Buy from them instead of sawing these yourself. Even if you pay for trucking you'll often come out ahead.
 - Conversely, only saw cedar or Y-P and find someone to buy from you a truckload at a time!

Summary

- Present yourself in a professional manner.
- Sell retail.
 - Dry lumber sells better than green lumber and has a higher margin.
- Market yourself and your business. You can do this effectively with little expense.
 - Craigslist
 - Website, social media
- Take credit cards.
- Broker/Collaborate with other mills.

