

Louisiana Pacific
June 2-6, 2008

My experience at Louisiana Pacific OSB plant in Hanceville Alabama was one that I will definitely be able to use in my future classes as a Science teacher. The plant as a whole is very well ran facility with the majority of the dirty work performed by machines which keeps the workers of the plant out of harms way. Out of the 40 hours that I spent at the plant only one day was spent out of a control center and it was the very first day that I was there.

On the first day I was able to meet a gentleman by the name of Tim Thornhill who was the director of logging operations for Louisiana Pacific. In other words Tim is the guy who has to make sure that the plant has enough wood to run 24 hours a day 7 days a week. After meeting Tim he took me to what I thought was the most interesting part of the whole plant, the wet dock. The wet dock is a large clearing where wood that is purchased that is not immediately needed is placed and kept wet until it is to be used. Tim explained that each row had a time period of when it was harvested so they would know exactly what wood needed to be used first. The wet deck has mixed reviews throughout the plant due to the fact that if too much wet deck wood is used at one time the machines will stop up with the extra water that is brought in. However, since there are such tough laws enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency saying when logs can and can not be cut wet deck wood is a must for the plant to continually keep running.

The most interesting day that I was able to spend at the plant was the very last day that I spent in the lab with David Cox who is the Technical Supervisor. During the last day David Took me through the way that they tested the boards in the plant for quality. David told me that the biggest concern for him and his technicians was to make sure that every board that left his plant met very specific guidelines for expansion due to water. David and his crew used several types of testing but the one most interesting to me was the pressure test. At certain times every day the technicians would take a select board off the press and cut it into small pieces for testing. During the pressure test one of these pieces is then placed in what is comparable to a high pressure cooker and let sit for several hours. If when the board is removed it does not meet the criteria for swelling then that whole run of boards is removed and tested.

In my opinion Louisiana Pacific offers a great employment opportunity for those with and without a college education. During my stay at the plant I did not hear a single bad comment about the plant from any of there employees which lends to the idea that the plant is also a very enjoyable place to work. Louisiana Pacific is also a great place to work your way up the corporate ladder where employees that are willing to put forth a little extra effort are rewarded with promotions. If an employee at Louisiana Pacific is hired in with a college degree they will be given twice the salary of a worker who does not have one. So with that being said Louisiana Pacific also rewards those who have worked hard in the classroom and have earned a degree.