

WRAL-TV
July 27, 2000

Apex Lumber Company to Shut Down After 73 Years of Business

APEX —With all the building going on in the Triangle, one would think the local lumber industry would be booming. That is not the case. The last sawmill in Wake County is closing down because it cannot keep up with competition.

The Apex Lumber Company has been churning out southern yellow pine for 73 years. Bill Booth Jr. took over the family business after his father died.

"My father started it in the 1920's," Booth says. "He had a small sawmill here, plus a few years later, he put in the planing operation."

Apex Lumber Company evolved with the times. The business survived the Depression and provided boards for the military during World War II. Later, it became a major supplier to local homebuilders when the Triangle started to boom.

Now, the sawmill is about to shut down. Booth says cheaper wood from other countries like Canada and Brazil has slashed his sales to builders.

"I guess I'm prejudiced toward southern yellow pine," he says. "It's a stronger, better wood for home building, but that's not what they're using today."

Booth also says he has been feeling pressure from environmentalists.

"There are different groups. I'd rather not mention any names, but there's different groups that their big push is not to cut any trees," he says.

Booth says all those factors cut into his business and left him no choice but to shut down.

"It's kind of sad, but it's a way of life I guess," he says.

Apex Lumber Company is holding a liquidation sale. It should be closed by the end of next month.

Reporter: Laurie Clowers
Photographer: Keith Baker
Web Editor: Kamal Wallace

Copyright 2009 by Capitol Broadcasting Company.