

**FINAL REPORT  
FOREST SERVICE GRANT NO. NA-99-0410**

Period covered by this report: September 17, 2000 through May 31, 2001

**NOTE: Please review the following information and revise/complete as necessary.**

**Issued To:** Resource Conservation and Development for Northeast Iowa, Inc.

**Address:** PO Box 916, Postville, IA 52162-0916

**Congressional District Number:** 2

**Project Name:**Urban Trees to Household Furniture

**Contact Person/Principal Investigator:**

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**Date of Award:**September 17, 1999

**Grant Modifications:** N/A

**Date of Expiration:** May 31, 2001

**Funding: Federal Share: \$50,000 Grantee Share: \$62,270 Total Project = \$112,270**

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**Provide a 100 word abstract on your project as defined by your initial proposal and contract. This abstract will be posted on the Council's Internet home page.**

This project has combined two of our precious natural resources, people and trees. We accomplished two main objectives. One, was to add value to low-quality, hardwood lumber, and urban trees that are unwanted or storm damaged. Two, was to provide vocational training and a sense of well-being for the physically and mentally challenged clients of Spectrum Industries who will build quality furniture and craft items that will be marketed throughout the Midwest. This project has been successful in obtaining over 8,500 B.F. of lumber from unwanted trees that were derived from city tree cuttings, from clearing trees at housing developments, and from individual citizens who needed a tree removed. Through the use of grant funds, we have been able to assist Spectrum Industries in establishing a sound woodworking business that provides quality vocational training for their clients. The goal of Spectrum Industries is to have this woodworking program continue to grow in such a way that it allows individuals to move into competitive jobs, and to provide high quality products for the community to use and enjoy. We feel that this project has served as an educational model to demonstrate that value can be added to trees that are removed and used for lumber and also assist an organization in establishing a sound business for their clients to work and train in, so they can possible move into competitive jobs in the community.

## Project Objectives:

1. Providing wood resource through partnerships
2. Develop a plan, layout equipment, and list of training.
3. Marketing
4. Dissemination of Information

## Objectives met Successfully to-date:

### 1.) Providing wood resource through partnerships

By the end of this project period, over 8,500 B.F. of a variety of lumber was sawn, kiln dried and delivered to Spectrum Industries, Inc. to be used in their wood working business. This lumber is all hardwoods, except 800 B.F. of pine and is approximately 45% select and better, 45% #1 Common and the remaining is knotty. This wood was completely processed for approximately \$2.00 per B.F., which is a savings to Spectrum Industries who had been paying up to \$3.00 per B.F. for quality oak boards. There is another 1,200 B.F. of rough, lower grade lumber that is also available to them when they want it, that could be used for wood to be used for samples and testing.

RC&D worked with many different partners throughout this project. They are: Northeast Iowa communities, Trees Forever, Alliant Energy, private forestry consultants, private dry kiln owners, private portable sawmill owners, and private citizens. The main partner was Spectrum Industries, a non-profit vocational training facility that serves approximately 135 individuals with mental and physical disabilities as well as the elderly population. A partnership with Trees Forever staff helped to initiate a complete inventory of the communities in northeast Iowa who have unwanted trees that they wanted to remove. Trees Forever also had a program in conjunction with Alliant Energy that would benefit communities also with money for replanting trees. Trees Forever had two Americorp students working with them who surveyed the communities and sent out news releases outlining the program. When a community was identified as being interested, RC&D was contacted and then we had the forestry consultants who we had subcontracted with, go to the site to make sure that the trees were of enough value to be turned into lumber. There were four different towns that trees were taken from and several different individual citizens who had just one tree that they did not want and were lumber quality. One of the main challenges in selecting trees was to make sure that the cost of removal, sawing, and dry kilning was cost effective in comparison to the quality of lumber that would be reclaimed from the trees.

Another source of trees that was discovered while doing the survey with the communities was in housing development settings. There were two different tree removals done at sites where a new home was being built in a wooded area and the home owner had to remove many trees that were of good quality in order to make room for their new home. The trees were removed by the forestry consultants at no cost to the landowner and then utilized for the Spectrum program by having a portable sawmiller saw them into lumber and then contracting with a kiln dryer to dry the lumber.

Spectrum Industries set up an area for storage of the lumber. They were fortunate in having heavy lumber shelving donated to them from a lumberyard that had closed. They are now able to keep an accurate inventory of their lumber, by species and also able to keep the unused lumber banded together as it was from the kiln, until it is needed, which will help to keep it from warping.

## 2.) Develop a plan, layout equipment, and list of training.

A detailed plan and design was developed for the woodworking area. Spectrum staff worked with woodworking professionals to make the area as efficient and safe as possible. (A copy of the layout is attached) Additional equipment has been bought for the program and modifications have been made as needed throughout the first two years of the woodworking program. The woodworking facility has been re-arranged to accommodate different types of training ranging from easier work to very difficult jobs with a variety of finishings. Spectrum is now confident that they have an efficient, safe and modern facility for the clients to work in and learn many different skills.

The training for the clients will be a continual job since they are not able to remember every detail, there will always be repetitive training. Clients with less experience begin with easier projects and move up, which again has increased the training and quality of the work. The jobs range from doing the cutting, working with the different machines, fine sanding, gluing, staining varnishing and packaging of the wood items. Spectrum staff started out with training just a few clients in the woodworking program and by the end of the first year had 10 people who were trained in at least on some aspect of the woodworking program. By the end of the project date of May 31, 2001, Spectrum had increased the number of clients receiving training to 20. The clients at Spectrum have enjoyed working in the woodworking program and have excelled from seeing a product from start to finish. This has been a very therapeutic vocational training programming addition to Spectrum Industries and the capability of the client is endless.

## 3.) Marketing

Throughout the term of this project, many different marketing ideas and strategies were evaluated and tried. Not all of the marketing ventures were successful, but we feel that many things were learned from them. The marketing of the entire woodworking program at Spectrum was done by holding open houses, radio announcements, attending a local Home and Farm show, as well as a fine furniture show in Cedar Rapids, IA and direct mailings with the quarterly newsletter from Spectrum. Spectrum worked with a professional marketing person from Dubuque, Iowa to look at ideas and marketing strategies for the woodworking items. Marketing was done in Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota and a mass mailing was sent out to over 300 businesses.

Spectrum designed and built nightstands, shelves, coffee tables and magazine racks that would be specifically marketed to nursing homes and RCF facilities. There has been over 100 night stands sold to these type of facilities and these products are continuing to be marketed and sold.

The first contract for making a new product was obtained with a local entrepreneur in producing picture frames for him. This was done for about a year and a half and Spectrum was producing up to 25 frames a week. A new contract has been obtained with Featherlite, Inc. of Cresco who produces NASCAR trailers. Spectrum is assisting by making a portion of the inside cabinets. This contract is currently the main work that is being done in the woodworking program.

Spectrum also continues to make cedar benches, potting stands, potting benches and these are sold in various businesses in town and also at the Heartwood House, which is connected to the thrift store that Spectrum Industries operates. Smaller wooden craft items are made in the Adult Services Program and are made from the scrape wood from the woodworking program. The woodworking program has in turn benefited the Adult Services program by supplying them with a ready source of small wood pieces to make their items out of and it has eliminated a problem with waste wood also.

Different markets and contracts are continually being sought after. There were growing pains experienced at Spectrum Industries throughout the first two years, and one of the main ones would be the change over of program supervisors. There have been three different supervisors during this period, which set the program back each time a change was made. The current supervisor, Dale Goettelman is doing an excellent job providing training and high quality woodworking items. Dale is excited about the opportunity to work with the clients and help them produce quality wood items. Spectrum feels that they

are now in a position with an excellent program supervisor on staff to look into contracts that would have them make repetitious items to increase the quality of the products they do.

4.) **Dissemination of Information**

The information about the development of the woodworking program at Spectrum Industries that was developed with the assistance of RC&D for NE Iowa, Inc., has been distributed by both of the partners. This has been done through extensive write-ups in their agency quarterly newsletters, reports, and reporting project accomplishments at board meetings, agency meetings both state and regionally. Both the RC&D and Spectrum have state, regional and national organizations that they have distributed information to about this project. Some of these organizations are the National Assoc. of RC&D Councils, the State and National Organization of the American Network of Community Organizational Resource (ANCOR), the utility companies in our region

Sometimes the easiest distribution of information is by word of mouth with the satisfied clients who are making the wood items, and the satisfied customers who are purchasing the wood items.

**Objectives not yet met:**

We feel that we have met all of the objectives that were set. Although some of the initial thoughts on where the trees and ultimately the lumber would come from and how easy it would be to get unwanted trees, did not always follow the plan, in the end we feel that we have been able to obtain quality lumber. All of the trees used were unwanted, damaged, or older trees that needed to be sawn down and if the trees had not been used for this project, they would have been either burned or landfilled.

Marketing will continue as an ongoing part of the entire woodworking program. Spectrum will RC&D and Spectrum Industries plan to continue to work together to insure that this new program works for Spectrum and both partners will continue to distribute information within their various professional arenas.

**How will this project increase the knowledge we have about urban forestry? How will the public benefit?**

By doing a project such as this, we will be working with many different partners from communities in our area who are involved with urban forestry which includes areas where new homeowners are building homes in timbered areas where there will be small areas of timber removed which is not enough for timber buyers to bother with. This new aspect looks to be another great way to utilize the timber into a lumber source instead of just having the homeowner burn it or pile it to rot away.

The project is a win-win situation for the public, using local lumber for value added products, demonstrating that even isolated, damaged or unwanted trees have value and creating jobs and respect for a group of the most disadvantaged members of the community.

The biggest benefit for the public would be the quality wood items that they will be able to obtain in their own community and also the potentially skilled clients that will be able to join the community workforce in the future.

What specific quantifiable results will be produced?

We are placing value on the unwanted trees through the value of the lumber obtained. We are creating additional jobs for the private portable sawmill operators and dry kiln operators. We are helping to provide material and training to the mentally and physically challenged clients of Spectrum Industries, so they may be able to enter the traditional work force at some time. We are also finding a local lumber source for Spectrum Industries for their woodworking business at a lower price than they are able to purchase it from the lumber stores.

A complete list of contacts, addresses and phone numbers will be provided to Spectrum Industries so they are able to continue the partnerships that have been developed and Spectrum Industries can continue to use these to obtain quality lumber at a reasonable price for future use.

All of the above results have been more than worth the effort this project has taken.

How will the results be disseminated to the public?

See details outlined in objective 4 of this report.

If a no-cost time extension has been requested for this project, why is(was) it needed?

List the active partners (key individuals or organizations) involved in the project to date:

To date we have been working with Spectrum Industries staff members, Trees Forever NE Iowa representative and Americorp workers with Trees Forever, Alliant Energy Representative, City of Postville Tree Board and Council Appointees, Local Contractor to remove trees, Private Sawmill Owner, Private Forestry Consultants and several private citizens. Many different private business that have bought products, as well as facilities that we have sold furniture to are considered active partners.

Comments considered of importance but not covered above:

This report was prepared by:

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Date: 7/12/01