

Local businesses building buzz on national TV

by Matt Driscoll
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Photo by Matt Driscoll

PROJECT PARTNERS. Ric Singor, president of Muskoka Timber Mills, and Jean-Guy Lafleur, district sales manager with Gemthane Siding Systems, show off some of the plans and products that will be used in the TV show Let's Build.

Global Television is looking to score a hit with its new series Let's Build, and they can already count a couple of local residents among their dedicated viewers.

Ric Singor, president of Muskoka Timber Mills, and

Jean-Guy Lafleur, district sales manager with Gemthane Siding Systems, will have their products and their Bracebridge-based businesses featured on the show.

The weekly program, which began airing at the beginning of the month, follows the construction of a stately, three-storey, 10,000-square-foot cottage in the Creemore area. Located on 10 acres, the fully furnished cottage, complete with home theatre and fully stocked woodworking shop, is eventually expected to sell in the \$2.5-million range.

"The show's producer was looking for new and innovative products to use in the project, and one of our clients recommended he talk to us," said Singor. "We thought it sounded like a pretty good deal . . . to get some added publicity, and we agreed to provide some materials."

Among those materials were heavy timbers for the frame, along with some of the wood jointing and pine panelling for the ceilings.

What sets Muskoka Timber Mills apart from other sawmills is not so much the product, as the method of acquiring that product.

The mill gets all of its timber from the Trent-Severn Forest. The wood harvesting practices within the forest are governed by the non-profit organization Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc., which has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). FSC is a worldwide organization that sets standards for sustainable international forestry management.

"That forest is our wood basket," said Singor. "All of our wood comes from a well-managed forest and we pride ourselves on that. It's also something that's becoming more and more important to members of the general public."

When the producer asked for Singor's input on other innovative products that could be used in the show, Gemthane jumped to mind.

"We're very excited to be a part of this building project," said Lafleur, whose wood siding business has been operating on Muskoka Beach Road for the past 18 months. "It's been great exposure for us. We're already getting calls because of the show."

Lafleur acquires the wood for his siding from Muskoka Timber Mills, and then puts it through a unique process.

Madison Chemicals, Gemthane's parent company, specializes in industrial coatings. Recently it decided to apply that knowledge of coatings to wood siding.

"We apply marine grade polymer coating to the best quality kiln-dried wood . . . which completely protects it, front and back," said Lafleur. "Essentially, our siding is maintenance-free and it comes with a lifetime warranty. We're the only ones in Canada making this."

Both local businessmen will also have their shops featured during the program, with some of the filming at Muskoka Timber Mills already completed.

Let's Build airs Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. on Global.

