

Construction material 'reincarnated' at ReSource

Salvaged doors, floors launch new businesses in deconstruction, appraisal

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BOULDER — After 10 years, ReSource, formerly Resource 2000, has not only become a pivotal program for contractors and homeowners, it also has created demand for new types of businesses.

ReSource diverts 5 million pounds of building materials from the landfill each year. It then sells these reclaimed items to the public at its sales yard for an average of 50 percent below retail. The success of this waste diversion program has brought about new opportunities for deconstruction contractors as well as appraisers.

"Once there is a place like ReSource, then you can have an industry like deconstruction, and once there is an industry like deconstruction, then you can have an industry within the appraising industry that can actually determine the value of the (reclaimed) materials," explained Tom Plant, executive director of the Center for ReSource Conservation. ReSource is one of several conservation programs run by the center, a Boulder-based nonprofit.

In the past, ReSource would carry out whole-house deconstructions, an alternative to demolitions, and it would dismantle entire homes to salvage the building materials. Now, homeowners call one of three independent deconstruction contractors, allowing ReSource to focus on "soft stripping," or taking out easy-to-remove items such as doors, flooring and cabinetry.

Another business opportunity created by the diversion program is appraising the value of deconstructed materials. At this time, ReSource provides the estimates, but it is searching for qualified appraisers, Plant said. "No outside appraisers are qualified, but if there are people who are in that industry who get this training, I think there is a whole lot of potential business for them."

ReSource also has expanded operations with a new ReSource sales yard in Fort Collins. Unlike the Boulder sales yard, which grew up "organically," said Seth Portner, operations director of the Center for ReSource Conservation, "We had the gift of opening a store

with 10 years of experience behind us, so we knew exactly what it takes to open a used building-material sales yard."

In the first week of operations, sales and donations were good, Portner said, and community feedback was great. At the Fort Collins yard, all materials are protected from the weather, unlike the Boulder yard.

But more materials are now protected at the Boulder sales yard thanks to a \$140,000 grant from the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division. Two metal structures, totaling 6,600 square feet, protect inventory from weather and house a new workshop.

Shawn Hoven, manager of the ReSource workshop, constructs benches, tables, chairs and mirrors out of reclaimed wood. Because of the workshop, ReSource can accept smaller pieces of lumber, diverting even more waste from the landfill.

Landfill lifespan was one issue that inspired Larimer County to donate money toward the purchase of the land for the Fort Collins sales yard.

"Larimer County operates their own landfill," Plant said, "So, they know if they can keep these materials in the stream of use as opposed to just being thrown out, then that's going to greatly increase the lifespan of their landfill." ReSource also received donations from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Bohemian Foundation for the Fort Collins yard, all of which totaled \$80,000.

ReSource also benefits homeowners who donate materials. Homeowners receive a tax deduction, which, for whole-house deconstruction, can range from \$3,000 to \$65,000.

In Boulder, homeowners can also accrue Green Points, a certain number of which are required for building permits, toward their building project.

In Fort Collins, homeowners also receive 12.5 percent of the value of the materials — or 25 percent for cash donations — in Colorado state tax credits because the sales yard is located in an enterprise zone. Between reduced landfill costs and tax deductions, "People have found that they can save or even make money through the deconstruction process as opposed to demolition," Plant said. There is no pickup fee for contractors who donate materials to ReSource. For homeowners, pickup fees vary, depending on the materials.

For contractors, ReSource "helps builders close the loop on green building," said Nate Burger, owner of Eco Handyman LLC, a home renovation and handyman company in Boulder. Burger and his eight handymen donate and purchase building materials from ReSource. Currently, they are using lumber from ReSource on a number of small jobs.

Some of Burger's clients want ReSource's affordable building materials for their rental units or budget

remodels. Other clients specifically want reclaimed materials because they are often of a higher quality and more unique than new materials. "If you are opportunistic and creative, you can get a terrific deal," Burger added.

In the future, updated information about the inventory at ReSource will be accessible online at

www.resourceyard.org. The new point-of-sale inventory system also was partially funded with the grant from the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division.

ReSource's sales revenue in 2005 was \$380,000. The program supports eight full-time and two part-time employees. In Boulder, Western Disposal Service charges ReSource \$12 per year for the sales yard on 63rd Street near the Western facility. ReSource purchased the lot in Fort Collins for its sales yard.

To become a member

Businesses and individuals can support ReSource by becoming a member of the Center for ReSource

Conservation. Business membership includes a suite of marketing benefits, depending on the type of

membership. Members can be recognized in such venues as the CRC's magazine, the Boulder Solar Home tour, or at the annual dinner and auction. For more information, see www.conservationcenter.org.