

# Atlas Products, LLC

Nampa, Idaho – Member Since 1992



*Atlas Pallet Company located in Napa, Idaho.*

Through the changes over the past twenty years, Atlas Products has become one of the largest and most efficient automated pallet, crate manufacturers and recyclers in Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Nevada. Atlas is proud of their ability to customize and offer value-added products and services, becoming a partner with each company. They find they are often able to assist in reducing costs, inventories and complexities for their customer's entire shipping plan.

To maintain a competitive edge in the low margin, high volume business of pallet manufacturing and recycling, Atlas has successfully implemented automation (where appropriate) and has adopted lean manufacturing practices, which are executed by a cross-functional production staff. Products manufactured and recycled by Atlas are "pulled" through the operation and are initiated by customer demand. Raw materials are handled minimally as they move through the production process. In this way, Atlas is able to maintain a high level of efficiency in order to maximize returns.



*Sotero Palomera feeds notched 2X4 stringers into the Viking Champion automatic pallet nailer.*



*Petra Aguilar places 1X4 and 1X6 boards for nailing on the Viking Champion.*

New and customized pallets are made from hardwood purchased from mills along the Washington and Oregon coasts. Softwood is purchased primarily via lumber brokers from mills in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, many of whom are also members of the Timber Products Manufacturers Association. On the recycled pallet side, Atlas has dry van trailers placed at certain retailers and distribution centers in Southwest Idaho. These places load up their used and broken pallets into the trailers. The trailers are brought back to the plant where they are sorted and repaired. Those pallets that are odd-sized or not repairable are then sent into the wood grinder. The wood chips produced are then either sold for livestock bedding or colorized by Atlas and sold as landscape mulch.

Atlas utilizes three Viking Champion automatic pallet nailing machines for assembling new wood pallets. Primarily, these machines are utilized to produce the standard-sized pallets, but can be utilized for odd-sized pallets as well. The pre-cut lumber is staged on the machine's rollers.

The machine operators will feed in the 2x4 stringers, which are automatically placed into position on the machine. The operators will then set down what will be the bottom 1x4 and/or 1x6 boards. The machine carriage moves overhead and nails the boards in place. The

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*Eusebio Sanchez (left) nails the bottom boards to a custom-sized pallet, while Jose Leyva-Lopez (right) completes the pallet assembly by nailing the top boards on the pallet utilizing a pallet jig.*

machine automatically flips the pallet over, and the operator places the top 1x4 and/or 1x6 deckboards into place. The machine then nails these boards into place. The completed pallet is then automatically conveyed over to the pallet stacker, where the pallets are collected into stacks of 20 and then rolled down to where a forklift can pick up the stack. Each machine can produce approximately 600 pallets per day.

Although the hardwood is purchased already precut to the required lengths, only a portion of the softwood arrives precut. Softwood is generally purchased in longer lengths. These units are then brought to the L-M package saw and can be cut to the required lengths for the custom-sized pallets. Once cut, the units are sent to the pallet jigs, where two people utilize hand nail guns to assemble the pallets, one for the top deck and one for the bottom deck. Wood waste from the fall-out of the cut lumber on the L-M package saw is conveyed to a Cresswood Destroyer grinder, where the wood is ground into wood chips. These chips can then either be sold by the truckload as livestock bedding, sold for raw product in engineered wood products, or colored by Atlas and sold as decorative landscape mulch.

Atlas Products is one of the few automated pallet manufacturers in the Pacific Northwest able to offer ISPM 15 certified heat treatment for both softwood and hardwood pallets. ISPM-15 regulations have been adopted by the United Nations and require all solid wood packaging be fumigated or heat treated before being certified for shipment to other countries. Fumigation and heat treatment methods are often costly. The integrated inline manufacturing process used to make the Atlas pallets export-compliant, easily translates into savings for the customer.

Atlas prides itself on product quality. As new pallets are being produced, those assembling the pallets will sort out any boards not meeting quality specifications. As the trucks are being loaded for delivery, the forklift operators will then again inspect the pallets to ensure that the customer quality specifications are being met.

Companies that require inspection by the FDA can take advantage of a trade-secret process to eliminate and prevent mold from developing on the pallets or crates provided by Atlas. In the Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon region, a significant portion of the pallets are used by companies in the agricultural and food products industry, as well as those supported by these industries. This would include cheese plants, onion packing sheds, potato processors, fruit orchards, as well as cardboard container manufacturers. Trucking firms will also come by to pick up pallets as needed for the loads they are picking up in the area for shipments.

Atlas is a very customer oriented company, working with each unique shipping need. For those customers who require four-way forklift entry into their wood pallets, Atlas utilizes a West Plains double-head notcher to cut the notches into the 2x4 boards for production of four-way pallets, such as the standard-sized GMA pallet. With the assistance of the customer's forecasting, Atlas can establish an inventory stocking program. When a fully functional inventory and delivery program are in place, Atlas can provide pallets within a few hours notice, ensuring that the order is at the company as they are needed. Atlas has a fleet of trucks and trailers that makes this possible, delivering to the door when the product is needed.



*Stacks and Stacks!  
Assembled 48X40 inch 4-way wood pallets ready for shipment.*

Although the current Vice President of finance, Andy Tomlinson was not with the company in 1992, when Atlas Products became a member of TPM, he appreciates the responsiveness of the TPM staff and the insights they provide when assistance is required. Andy stated, "We greatly value our membership in the Timber Products Manufacturers Association. The TPM Trust provides quality and affordable health care coverage for our employees. Additionally, we look to TPM for human resource and safety consultations and value the relationships we have developed over the years with the staff in the TPM office. Knowing that TPM has our back when it comes to human resource and safety issues, provides great comfort to those of us in those frontline positions."

Atlas Products, LLC can be reached at (208) 463-9400  
131 North Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687  
<http://www.atlaspallet.com>