

Withers Lumber Company

Woodburn, Oregon

TPM Member Since
November 2008



In 1928, Lee and Ann Withers bought interest in a sawmill in Woodburn, that was then operated under the names Livesay–Withers Lumber. The couple relocated from McMinnville to Woodburn, Oregon and quickly became part of the new community where they would spend the rest of their lives. Mr. Livesay ran the sawmill while Lee Withers handled the bookkeeping and retail-contractor sales office.

In 1929, the stock market crash plunged the country into depression. Then, in 1931, J.W. Copeland came to



Withers Lumber since 1928, located in Brooks, Oregon.



The friendly Withers Lumber team, Eric Tranter and Brad Nida are always ready to help their customers.

Woodburn and told Mr. Livesay and Lee Withers that if they didn't sell their lumberyard to him, he would open a yard across the street and run them out of business. The young partners welcomed the challenge. However, Copeland took enough business from in Livesay–Withers that they ultimately could not survive and they went ahead and sold.

Lee and Ann then moved to Mt. Angel, eight miles away, and started again. This was now in the depths of the depression. Times were very tough, in fact, in May 1931 sales were \$13.81 for the entire month. The Withers' were

determined to succeed as Mt. Angel Lumber and decided to knock on every door in town and introduce themselves and ask for the community's support as they struggled to keep the doors open. With the loyalty and support of many people things got a little better and they managed to get by.



Part of the Withers Lumber yard in Brooks, Oregon.



Covered warehouse in Brooks, Oregon.

In 1934, it was Copeland's turn to fall on hard times and their Woodburn store was put up for sale. Lee and Ann borrowed all they could from family and friends and bought the yard. Now with two lumber yards, Ann came to work with Lee at the Mt. Angel yard and took care of payables and receivables and served as the community liaison—she had the personality to build relationships!

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The Woodburn location was run by their first employee, Fred Hurris. All during the depression and most of World War II, this is how the two yards operated. All of its contractor customers had their own keys, so if Lee or Fred were gone they'd simply come in, take what they needed and leave a note.



One of the delivery vehicles at Withers Lumber.

Brooks served the Salem, Oregon area and quickly became the highest volume yard, but it was still the employees who made it a fun place to work and a fun company to shop at.

In 1998 Bob retired and his son Trent, took the reins. As the company entered its third generation, more expansion took place: the Silverton store opened in 2004, followed by Molalla in 2010.

One thing has never changed after all these years: Withers Lumber strives to open facilities in small communities staffed with local people. We believe that if you simply find the best,



Withers provides materials for all facets of construction.



Withers Lumber in Molalla, Oregon.

As the 50s began, both the Woodburn and Mt. Angel yards started to grow and more people were hired. Both locations hired local folks and were vital parts of the community. In 1962, the Withers' eldest son Bob came home from the service and went to work full-time in the same town where he had grown up. The Woodburn store was now the much larger of the two locations and Lee, Ann, and Bob all worked there along with about 10 other employees. Bob took over in 1964 and opened Brooks Lumber in 1965.



From left to right: Brad Nida, Ryan Brook and Eric Tranter.

most honest and hardworking people who enjoy helping others, then you will be appreciated and supported by your community.

At Withers Lumber it is all about team work to help others accomplish their goals. Homeowners and contractors both appreciate the same things. They want reliable, caring, knowledgeable people to help. From the foundation to the roof and everything in between - small project or large - new deck or pole barn - it's the experienced and knowledgeable crew at Withers Lumber that makes the difference.

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