

Marks-Miller Post & Pole

Located in Clancy, Montana

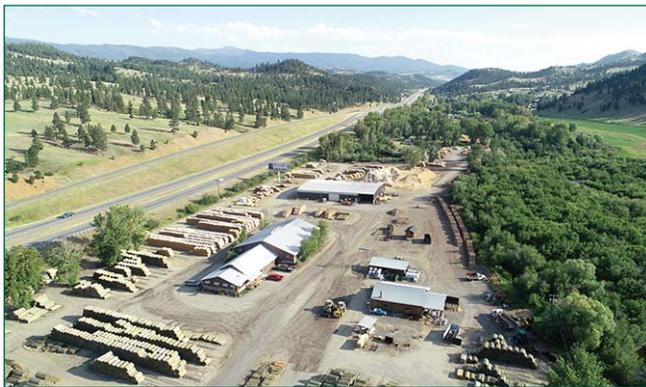
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Growing up on a ranch in Clancy, Montana, Gary Marks developed a hardy work ethic. That mindset inspired him to start a sideline producing and selling fence posts while he attended vocational school. Gary and his father took the opportunity to purchase a homemade post peeler from a nearby rancher/post supplier. The extra income became a business and by the late summer of 1975, Gary had obtained a contract to provide posts for a Montana Department of Highways job. With the fulltime work, Gary asked his Cousin Karen's husband, Darrell Miller, to work for him. In a few short months, Gary and Darrell decided to become partners. The company, Marks Post & Pole, that had begun in 1974 – as money to get through school – had become a full-time company as Marks-Miller Post and Pole, in just two years.



Marks-Miller Post and Pole crew work hard to provide the best post and pole stock for Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.



Overview of Marks-Miller Post and Pole in Clancy, Montana.

The family affair continued, with Gary's wife Debbie and Darrell's wife Karen, providing for the families' day-to-day needs, while the men poured their profits back into the company. Although Gary and Darrell were not drawing much in salary, they were able to steadily grow the business.

In the beginning Gary and Darrell did everything, including all of the maintenance and fabrication. They cut posts in the winter with chainsaws and hand loaded them onto a two ton flatbed. In the early spring they would peel the posts on a homemade peeler and stack them to dry. When dry enough they would

manually put them in baskets and soak them in a tank of preservative. As time went on they began to purchase raw fence posts from Gyppo post cutters. (A gyppo logger is a lumberjack who runs or works for a small scale logging operation that is independent from an established sawmill or lumber company.)

Growth was slow but steady and equipment and employees were added to keep up with the growing demand for posts and rails. Debbie and Karen became an active part of the business



Here, the operator is cutting raw logs into the appropriate length.



Cut-to-length raw posts ready to peel.

early on, and helped with bookkeeping, environmental stewardship and safety culture, which all played a key role in the success of the business. Today the company employs 20 full-time employees and two seasonal employees. Many of the employees who were hired over the years are still with them today.

Marks-Miller has always operated the business in an environmentally conscious manner. Both Gary and Darrell played key roles in establishing and participating in trade

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organizations. Because of the constant change in the regulatory world, the men teamed with those organizations to lobby for new and realistic regulations, with the purpose of protecting human health and the environment, while at the same time ensuring that the general public can still obtain the products they need at an affordable price.

In 2014, Darrell and Karen sold their shares of the company to Gary & Debbie, who continue to run the company today. Marks-Miller's goal has always been to produce a high quality product at an affordable price. As a result, the company has gained the reputation as one of the premier post and pole businesses in



The process of becoming a post is only partly finished. The posts now go to the preserving process.



The pole peeler provides rails that are uniform in size and make a good looking fence.

ultimately pushed deep into the wood to provide a product that conforms to American Wood Protection Association guidelines.

The preserved wood is then removed from the cylinder and placed in a contained, impervious heated area called a drip-pad until fixation occurs. Fixation is a complex series of chemical reactions where the preservative becomes locked to the wood fibers in a highly insoluble state. With completion of this process, their customers are assured of a product that is durable, safe to handle and will not harm the environment.

Montana and surrounding states. The company continues its commitment to providing customers with the best service possible.

Marks-Miller closely monitors the preserving process. Preserving is accomplished in an enclosed, heated containment facility that conforms to all State and Federal regulations. Dry wood is placed in a metal cylinder, sealed shut and then run through a series of vacuum and pressure cycles. The wood preserving chemicals are



Preservative treating cylinders where pressure cycles push preservative into dry wood cells. After final vacuum, posts return to drip pad for 7 day fixation period.



Completed poles and posts in the drip pad are ready for inspection to confirm that the wood has received the proper treatment before being sent to market.

Marks-Miller offers custom preserving services to anyone with a need to protect wood from decay. Prices are determined by the volume of material being considered, how it is packaged when it arrives and what the final specifications are. Turnaround time is usually about two weeks, but ultimately depends on a variety of factors, including the moisture content of the product.

Marks-Miller's top priority is to provide for the safety of its employees in producing a high quality durable product that customers will know they can use in an environmentally, health conscious manner.

Marks-Miller Post and Pole can be reached at: Phone 406.933.5981
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