



HFN Forestry LP

For Immediate Release

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Huu-ay-aht partners with ReaplyWOOD to produce value-added wood tiles in Port Alberni

PORT ALBERNI – HFN Forestry LP is now the majority owner of the innovative value-added wood tile company, TimberTiles. www.timbertiles.ca

On April 17, 2023, HFN Forestry LP, a member of the HFN Group of Businesses (HGB) closed a partnership with ReaplyWOOD Research and Design Inc. Together the two businesses will continue to produce TimberTiles, a product that promises to challenge the dominance of ceramic in the wall tile industry.

TimberTiles was first pitched in 2015 by FP Innovations as a research pilot project. Mark Anson and his partners decided to commercialize the idea, and they started looking for a location suitable for manufacturing the tiles. They set up their business in Port Alberni in 2019 and started manufacturing TimberTiles.

It was always the plan that ReaplyWOOD would find a community partner to help operate the business. After extensive research, they approached Huu-ay-aht First Nations. Huu-ay-aht First Nations elected councillor Evan Cook and HGB CEO Patrick Schmidt believed the timing for this product was perfect and that the Nation would be smart to get involved.

“Huu-ay-aht is already invested in the forest industry, and this offers an opportunity to close the circle by getting involved in the value-added end of the business,” Cook explains. “TimberTiles is part of a move toward carbon-neutral home construction and addresses the consumer’s desire for socially purposeful purchasing. It is part of the bigger picture as we move into a future where consumers will shop based on their values and beliefs.”

Anson and his business partners, John Hoffmann and Dave Dempster, are passionate about partnering with a First Nation and are excited at the opportunities it presents.

“I knew Huu-ay-aht was forward thinking – the story of TimberTiles is so much stronger with this partnership,” Anson says. “It offers an opportunity to follow the product from tree to tile because Huu-ay-aht has everything the company needs under one umbrella.”

The factory in Port Alberni is the first of its kind and will employ up to 30 full-time employees. Anson says it is just the beginning. He hopes to build on its success, and that of the partnership with HGB, and expand the business to other communities in the future.

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Photos and video available upon request.

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Backgrounder

In 2015, a group of innovative thinkers got together and came up with the idea of TimberTiles – manufactured architectural wood tiles. It was the brainchild of FP Innovations, a not-for-profit group that was exploring ways to create value-added products to strengthen the forest industry in British Columbia.

Although the idea was strong, the group could not find a manufacturer to produce their product. That's where Mark Anson and his partners came in. Mark and his wife decided the idea was too good to pass up, and they started looking for a location suitable for manufacturing the tiles. Their search brought them to Port Alberni, where they set up their business, ReaplyWOOD in 2019.

They had a lot of challenges in the beginning because of the pandemic and a forest worker's strike, but soon things started to turn around.

It was always the intent that TimberTiles would partner with a local organization once they got set up in a community. HGB and ReaplyWOOD also received support from the Indigenous Opportunities, Innovation, Bioeconomy and Indigenous Opportunities and the Nuuchahnulth Economic Development Corporation's Aboriginal Capital Fund.

About the product:

TimberTiles offers an opportunity to use hemlock, which is a lesser-desired wood in the construction market yet would be more than suitable to the value-added market. Port Alberni and HGB have a consistent supply of wood to support the business, and the product promises consistent financial returns, as manufacturing will smooth the forestry cycles.

Most importantly, the product they are manufacturing is high quality and promises to compete against ceramic tiles.

They have many advantages including being:

- carbon neutral/carbon sequestering
- a green building product
- certified in many areas

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The way the tiles are manufactured and cut across the grain ensures they are strong and resist warping, cupping, shrinking, or cracking. The unique cutting style also means the grain is attractive and varied, making it visually striking.

The operation

The factory in Port Alberni is the first of its kind and could employ up to 30 full-time employees. It is located on Second Avenue, in an industrial building that offers enough room to expand if needed. The process takes the raw material through various steps until the final product is cut and packaged to be shipped around the world.

Port Alberni is the perfect place for the manufacturing operation because of its strong forestry workforce, steady wood supply, and welcoming community.

About HGB

On April 1, 2011, Huu-ay-aht First Nations became self-governing. To separate business from politics, the Nation implemented a corporate structure that included the creation of several arms-length limited partnerships, one of which is HFN Forestry LP. These limited partnerships are collectively referred to as the HFN Group of Businesses.

About ReapplyWOOD

ReapplyWOOD Research and Design Inc. is committed to developing innovative wood building products. Our goal is to provide designers with products that make rational, economical, and ecological use of Canadian wood. Work to date includes contract consulting to FPInnovations to develop the Laminated Veneer Cylinder (LVC), Timber Culvert, CLT curtain walls, and Wooden Tiles.