

Ralph Beckwith



Ralph Beckwith was born in Taylor County in 1934 and grew up in Barton in Webster County. In 1961, at the age of 26, he borrowed \$1,000 on a handshake and began operating a sawmill in Slaty Fork, W.Va. Over 50 years later, Beckwith Lumber Company continues in the same location. It is among the most productive mills in the state – producing 50,000 board feet of lumber a day – and is a true family operation, employing most of the Beckwith family and multiple generations of other families.

The company is also known for utilizing technology to maximize efficiency and conserve raw material. Eighty percent of Beckwith Lumber's raw materials come from 65,000 acres of managed timberlands in 15 counties personally owned by Ralph. Beckwith Lumber is also a fully integrated lumber operation that includes five separate companies: the sawmill, real estate company Tall Trees and Land, trucking company

Maple Leaf Trucking, dry kiln facility Woody Forest Products, and wholesale lumber division High Point Hardwoods.

The West Virginia Forestry Association presented Mr. Beckwith with the Outstanding Large Sawmill of the Year Award in 1995 and 2011. He also received the Governor's Safety Award for mining and timber operations in 1995. In 1998, he and his wife, Glenda, were recognized as "Distinguished West Virginians" by Gov. Cecil Underwood. Mr. Beckwith was featured in a 2002 feature article in Southern Lumberman Magazine, and was included in the State Journal's "Who's Who for 2010 in Manufacturing."

He has also worked to preserve forests and wildlife. In 2004, he sold 1,480 acres of land to the Nature Conservancy. The land is now part of the Monongahela National Forest. He has also worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect northern flying squirrel habitat.

Besides his business interests, Mr. Beckwith is a member of the Pocahontas County Chamber of Commerce and has served as President of the Pocahontas County Development Authority for several years.