

VRLDA Lumber Person of the Year: Scott Flynn, rk MILES

A lot of life stories in this industry start with the subject at a young age, learning the trade by sweeping up sawdust or loading trucks. In his early years, Scott Flynn, however, was picking up a slightly more advanced set of skills.

“I was welding at 16,” he recalls. “Working on a dairy farm you need to learn how to run and repair all the machinery at an early age.”

Scott grew up on a family dairy farm in Derby, Vermont, but he opted not to follow in the family business. “I enjoyed the outside work, but I decided the herdsman part of the job did not hold my interest,” he explains.

He left the farm in the early ‘80s, but didn’t stray too far from the dairy industry, taking a job at Northeast Farm Service as a technician. He put this mechanical skills to good use again, working on milking equipment, electrical motors and pumps, and getting certified in refrigeration. But he still hadn’t found the right career.

“Although I gained a lot of knowledge, it still wasn’t what piqued my interest,” he says. “An opportunity to work for a lumber company opening a new location in my area sounded like a good challenge.”

It was by then the mid-‘80s, and Poulin Lumber was opening a yard in Scott’s hometown. That’s where he began the familiar arc of a lumberman’s career: “I started running forklifts and shucking lumber in the yard to driving, dispatching and then moved into inside sales,” he summarizes.

Later in the decade, Scott decided to strike out on his own with Flynn’s Custom Wood Products, building custom cabinetry. But by the early ‘90s, he returned to Poulin Lumber as an outside salesperson. He rose through the ranks to assistant manager and then, in 1995, took on the role of store manager at the company’s new location in Hardwick. By 2000, he was promoted to general manager, where he remained for the next 16 years.

In August of 2016, Scott decided to pursue a new opportunity with rk Miles in Middlebury.

With a history that stretches back to 1886, when Frederick Miles first logged timber on the slopes of Red Mountain, rk Miles is a true Vermont family company. Its modern incarnation dates back to 1940, when the former Miles Lumber Co. of Arlington opened a second location in Manchester and the company name became rk Miles.

By the time Scott joined the team in 2016, rk Miles had grown to four locations. He arrived just in time for a period of rapid growth. In the four-plus years after Scott took the job as general manager at the Middlebury store, the company has ballooned to 10 locations serving Vermont and Massachusetts. Scott has helped enable that growth by implementing the automated delivery dispatch system in all new locations. He is also the fifth rk Miles employee to win Lumber Person of the Year.

In addition to helping rk Miles grow, he’s active in industry leadership. He spent a decade on the VRLDA board of directors, including a term as president from 2015-17, and has also served on the NRLA’s board of directors and convention committee.

“If you get a chance to participate or serve on a board in your industry, do so,” he advises. “The networking will only empower you and bring you to new levels.”

Outside of work, Scott has been married to his wife, Marie, for 11 years. He has two daughters, two step-sons, and a total of six grandchildren. He and his wife make a pretty handy home improvement team. “We’re known for our combined talent in taking a project from ruin to beauty,” he boasts.

He also loves getting out and riding his Harley.

Looking back on his life and career, Scott says his biggest mentors were his parents, and his advice to others sounds like the kind of wisdom one might pick up on a family farm.

“Take the time to grab a shovel. Dig down to the root of the problem and work your way back up the tree until you see where the branch broke off. Only then will you know what really happened and only then can you make the correct plan to stop it from happening again,” he says. “Every day brings something a little different to the forefront and the challenge of working through it is what make us stronger.”