

Lape Industrial Fiberglass Built From Bottom Up



By Jennifer Sikorski,
CF Assistant Editor

CF: How many employees do you have?

JL: Right now I have about 24.

CF: What is the nature of your company?

JL: Most of ours is industrial for the pulp and paper mills. Probably about 98 percent is pulp and paper.

CF: How did you get started in the industry?

JL: In 1953 I needed a job and this is what I found—fiberglass. And I just worked my way up.

CF: What was your introduction to the industry?

JL: As a laminator. I started at the bottom, the very bottom.

CF: How did you work up to having your own company?

JL: I worked for Corrosion Controllers for seven years out of Canvas, Wash. Then the part owner started his own company. I worked for him in Vancouver, Wash. for about 14 years. Then he started a satellite shop in Biloxi, Miss. and I transferred down. In 1985, I decided to go out on my own. That's how I ended up here.

CF: Did you face any problems when getting started in the industry?

JL: Not really. Being a Yankee down South was the only problem [laughs]. Other than that, no, because I was well known in the pulp and paper industry. I knew all the customers, and when it came time to start my own, a lot of them came over with me.

CF: What sets your company apart?

JL: I guess that I'm from the old school, and I still believe in quality. You don't see a lot of that nowadays. It's really competitive now because the pulp and paper industry kind of bottomed out, and

they're not really doing a lot. So we're diversified now, going to chemical and refinery work.

CF: Do you face any obstacles in the regulatory area?

JL: No, I don't see any obstacles other than trying to find work.

CF: Can you describe your marketing efforts?

JL: I've never had a salesman, so it's all been word of mouth. Like I said, I had a really well-known name in the pulp and paper industry all throughout the United States and Canada.

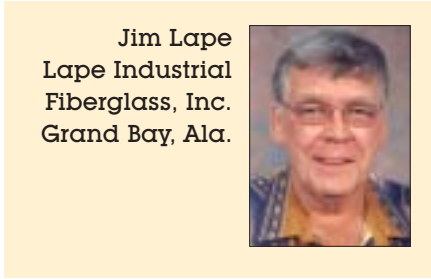
CF: What developments or research would you like to see happen to improve the industry?

JL: There are probably a lot of areas we could get into, but I've got none in particular because we're strictly industrial. I'd like to see some more research done into the offshore oil rigs to get more resins Coast Guard approved.

CF: Where do you see your business in five years?

JL: Probably about the same as it is now. I don't think I want to upsize because when you do, if things get bad, you have to get rid of people, and you don't like to do that. I have a good crew; I have young people who have worked for me since they started. I'd like to stay about the same. ☺

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