

# Genesis: In for the long haul

The company has grown from one line for RV, to multiple facilities and more markets.



This U-shaped lamination cell line produces “thousands and thousands” of laminated panels for Genesis’ high-volume customers.

**T**he roads in and around Goshen, Indiana, bustle with energy as semi-tractors, RVs, and the occasional buggy go about their daily activities. Busy at mid-day, but the thoroughfares get especially crowded around 5 a.m. when trucks pull out from the docks at Genesis Products’ facilities.

For Genesis, a manufacturer of laminated panels, wood components, and custom-moulded solutions to OEMs across myriad industries, that time of day is considered rush hour.

Filling those trucks are goods

produced at the four Genesis plants in Goshen and three plants in Elkhart, Indiana, only a few miles away.

Overall, the company has nine plants with more than 1 million square feet of production, assembly, and warehousing space across the Midwest and East Coast. It employs approximately 1,200 people. Those numbers, impressive as they might be, will grow even greater when plant #10 comes online in Goshen later in 2022. Plant #11 is already under consideration.

The facilities seem to be around every street corner, and once inside these factories, which measure more than 100,000

square feet, a retrofitted golf cart is the preferred mode of transportation for visitors traversing the cell-based facilities.

The guided tour announces each cell: lamination line, solid surfacing, vacuum press to name a few. Each cell is a hive of worker activity and filled with towers of wood-based raw materials such as MDF, particleboard, plywood, and more, as well as the adhesive spray booths, edgebanders, CNC machines, moulders and other equipment. Essentially, any raw material, hardware, tool, or technology that is needed to produce that particular product.

This year, the company is celebrating



Founded in 2002 with a single lamination line, Genesis has grown into one of the leading laminate panel and component suppliers in the United States.

20 years in business. Its growth can be charted several ways: numbers of plants, products and people, as well as its ranking in the FDMC 300, a list of the largest wood products producers in North America. Last year, it ranked #38 with \$218 million in sales, and this year it climbed to #34 with \$346 million.

### Two decades of progress

Founded in 2002 with a single lamination line, the company's initial focus was to create better solutions for OEMs in the RV market. This made sense as Genesis is situated in the heart of RV country. In fact, more than 80 percent of the nation's RVs are produced in this area of Northern Indiana, according to the RV Industry Association.

Jon Wenger, company president, CEO, and co-founder of Genesis, worked as a manager in one of those RV companies in 2000 when he met John Helmuth. Helmuth had previously run a panel lamination facility, and

the two men spent many conversations discussing laminated panels and the opportunities that they held. A meeting with a salesperson serving the RV industry found that some companies were unhappy with their panel suppliers. Thus, an idea began to form.

"We felt we had the knowledge to address the complaints the RV customers were having with their panel suppliers," said Wenger. "So, we found a piece of equipment, we found a building, we found an interested customer and suppliers willing to work with us."

The pieces came together, and in 2002 the idea became a reality.

Over time, Genesis moved from a focus on RVs to a slew of industries including cabinets and storage, furniture, healthcare, office and education, manufactured housing, building materials, marine, and transportation.

To best serve these OEMs, the number of options available also expanded. Laminated surfaces and substrates ex-

#### GENESIS' PLANT NETWORK

##### PLANT 1

Elkhart, Indiana  
Laminated panels, panel processing

##### PLANT 2

Elkhart, Indiana  
Interior doors

##### PLANT 3

Goshen, Indiana  
Wrapped moldings

##### PLANT 4

Keysville, Virginia  
Furniture components, drawer parts, panels

##### PLANT 5

Goshen, Indiana  
Thermofoil components, panels, countertops

##### PLANT 6

Elkhart, Indiana  
Interior trim, components

##### PLANT 7

Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Laminated panels, components

##### PLANT 8

Goshen, Indiana  
Panel processing, interior treatments, countertops

##### PLANT 9

Goshen, Indiana  
Laminated panels, panel processing

panded. Panel processing capabilities became far-ranging with CNC expansion. Presses, vacuum, and membrane, were installed. Door types grew in construction types from traditional five-piece to trendy curved Euro doors. These are just a few examples.

"Our customers and their needs are constantly changing, and so we're constantly changing," Wenger said. "At the end of the day, we are a high volume, custom job shop."

Continued...

## + FDMC 300 PROFILE

To meet these production demands, Genesis has expanded outwardly with new facilities, and internally with technology, design and engineering teams, and a soon to be launched product development department.

Despite operating nine facilities, “capacity is pretty much maxed out at the moment until we get the new plant up and running,” said Wenger. “Most of the equipment we are adding is to increase capacity.”

The company’s current equipment roster is impressive. It includes HolzHer equipment, Homag edgebanders, Schelling panel saws, C.R. Onsrud CNCs, Wemhoner membrane presses, Harlan lamination machines, profile wrappers, thermofoil presses, moulders and more.

### Growing lamination capacity

As a laminated panel focused company – the company had at one count 11 hot and cold lamination lines – it has expanded lamination capabilities throughout the network including at its Ft. Wayne, Indiana, plant #7, which had been more kitchen cabinet oriented, and at Plant #4 in Keysville, Virginia, which had previously focused more on solid-drawer components.

The current lamination lines can produce pretty much any component, said Scott Flom, Genesis’ industrial sales and marketing manager. Still, he added, the company felt it could better serve its high-volume customers.

This is evident with the installation of a new U-shaped lamination cell in plant #8. The line is “one of the fastest laminators available, and it’s the only



To increase capacity, Genesis Products has added numerous new technologies including CNC and lamination equipment.

one in the United States,” said Flom.

While not sharing certain key descriptors, the laminator has many features. It can do double-sided lamination and can be auto-loaded from the back. It can run as a hot or cold press and can use different glue types specific to the application.

Panels can be trimmed vertically and turned automatically for horizontal trimming. The process can be customized, such as flipping the panels face-to-face or adhering labels and barcodes so that the panels are ready for sale once they reach the customer. Each panel goes through an in situ sensor quality check. “If the sensors see a wrinkle,” said Flom, “it’ll kick out the panel.”

But volume is the line’s biggest attribute. Without revealing specific figures, for some of its biggest customers such as large home improvement stores, Genesis Products will run

[Continued...](#)

#### LAMINATED PANELS

##### Capabilities

- Hot & cold presses
- One & two sided
- 4 & 5 feet wide
- Lengths up to 16 feet
- EVA, PVA, and PUR gluing

##### Surfaces

- Standard lightweight papers & decorative foils
- Resin impregnated papers
- PVC 2D vinyl
- OPP (oriented polypropylene)
- PET & PETG polyester films
- HPL
- FRP
- PET felt
- ABS thermoplastic sheet

##### Substrates

- Particleboard
- MDF & LDF
- European laminate grade
- SE Asian laminate grade
- Domestic plywood
- Lumber core & veneer core
- OSB
- Meranti & lauan
- Non-woven PET
- Weltech poly-fiber panels
- EVA, PVA, and PUR adhesives



## + FDMC 300 PROFILE

“thousands and thousands” of laminated panels, said Flom.

### Banding the sides

As sales and capabilities grew, the need for edgebanding grew too. Edgebanding is a big growth area, Wenger said, especially banding cabinet doors with its vast varieties. To meet demand, the company invested in Homag edgebanders and now has eight in its arsenal.

A challenge faced by edgebanding cells is the number of changeovers required. “Every machine might do 20 setups a day because of the part diversity,” said Wenger. “An order might be 100 different sizes, and three or four different colors.”

When expanding its edgeband capabilities one important feature was quick changeover, a Homag strength, Wenger noted. Most machines have six banding options, and changeovers are achieved through a touch of an HMI. “Change setups are relatively automated as far as PLCs are concerned,” he said, “not in the machine making changes.”

### Growing acceptance

Laminate acceptance is growing, which can equate to new markets. For instance, the company is marketing a fully-assembled door for the multi-family residential market, said Wenger.

Assembling these doors is an example of how Genesis uses technology and labor that best suits the job.

In a small, flexible cell, workers assemble multi-component doors and produce as many as 30 style doors with part lists ranging from 10 to 100 parts.

Laminated panels are cut-to-size,



A door is assembled at one of the company's many production, assembly and warehouse facilities.

rails are cut, moulded, and wrapped, and all components are delivered to the cell. Workers load and arrange the parts, assemble them with pneumatic drills and drivers and offload them.

Next year, the company might automate this cell with robotic technology, but not today. “At some point we’ll get to a point where we’re fixing things that aren’t broken, but this process is not broken,” said Wenger. “We’re getting the output we need, at the cost we need, and the customer is happy.”

Making customers happy is also a focus when it comes to new materials. While laminates are its core, the company has not stood still on this front. Its Wellformed division, for instance, uses recycled post-consumer plastics and custom composite materials. And its Premium Rock product digitally imprints a textured image onto lightweight stone.

The company’s solid-surface countertops joined its thermoformed and

lightweight countertops. Non-woven composite panels are also available.

“We’re expanding our material skill sets,” said Wenger. “We want to be known as much of a materials company as we are a manufacturing company.”

### Continuing growth

Despite its growth, Wenger said there are more opportunities for increased sales, especially as OEMs grow more comfortable with buying components and outsourcing services such as the company’s supply chain management and product development options.

“We’re focused on being a great supplier to OEMs so they can differentiate themselves, and we can be part of their story as a resource for them to improve their product lines.”

With this in mind, Goshen and surrounding communities may want to consider roadway upgrades to handle early morning traffic bottlenecks. Rush hour might be getting longer.