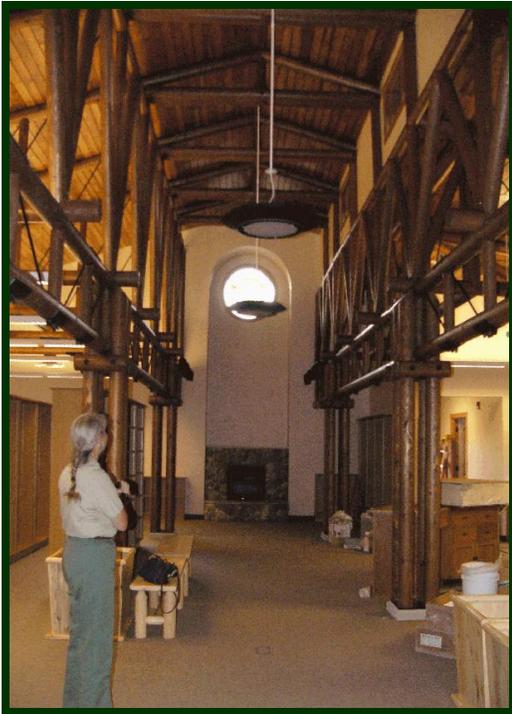


Exceeding the Challenge

Darby's Community Library



“Push the limits on how small diameter material can be used in the structural components of buildings.” Sue LeVan,
Assistant Director, USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory



Gail Kimbell, Regional Forester, Northern Region, USDA Forest Service, tours the progress of the Darby Community Library.

What started as an effort to get a restroom for library staff and customers in the old Darby Library quickly snowballed into a community-wide campaign to build a new library for south-valley residents. Add some grants from the Forest Service – R1/R4 State & Private Forestry Programs and the Forest Products Laboratory, and support from the Bitter Root Resource Conservation & Development Area and Montana Community Development Corporation to promote small roundwood utilization. Mix in the skills of local building contractors and roundwood manufacturers willing to try new ideas. Allow the process to be run by an incredible group of community volunteers. The end result? ... much more than “just a new library”!

Described admirably as the **“Sistine Chapel of Small Diameter Roundwood”**, the new Darby Community Library is an inspiring example of what partners can do when they put their minds together. Challenged by a F.S. Forest Products Laboratory Director to “push the limits on how small diameter roundwood can be used in the structural components of buildings”, the Library Board worked with area architects and engineers to create a building that is not only functional but also reflects the culture of a “timber town”, and the spirit of the many residents that contributed in ways small and large.

The new 5,000 square foot Library is a national demonstration building, showcasing a new type of construction that features small diameter roundwood for beams and trusses. It was constructed using local contractors and suppliers incorporating as many locally made supplies as possible. The furnishings were manufactured by local craftsmen and were made from area timber products. The nearly \$900,000 building opened debt free, due in part to Forest Service grants, numerous fundraisers, and donations of businesses & organizations throughout the Bitterroot and Missoula area.



Lowell Baltz, Library Board Trustee, enjoys a newspaper in front of the fireplace at the new Darby Community Library.



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