

SBMA Dealer of the Year 2006 - GBS Lumber Inc.



Pictured: Left to right: Ron McNeely, Lou Hutchings, Larry Adams (SBMA President) and Russ Henson receive award for SBMA Dealer of the Year.

Southern Building Material Association (SBMA) presented GBS Lumber with the Dealer of the Year award at the annual Building Products Buying Show February 1 at Show Place in High Point, North Carolina.

GBS Lumber opened in 1972 and joined the Carolina Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association as Greenville Builders Supply in 1974. In 1977 they opened a location in Anderson, SC and in 1981 acquired the store in Hendersonville, North Carolina. The addition of this store put GBS in two states and made them a major factor in the market area. This past year the store in Six Mile (just north of Clemson) was added to the GBS Corporation.

GBS started as a stocked owned company with 10 employees. In 1984 GBS set up an ESOP. Today, with 115 employees they are over 98% employee owned. When asked "What makes you different?" The response came easy. Employee owned! Everyone has an interest as it is their company, not just a job. They are locally owned and employee owned. "We are small enough to be responsive to the customer's need and large enough to offer the competitive prices they need," stated Russ Henson. In every location there are employees that have been with GBS for over 20 years. The Vision Statement of GBS says it all. "GBS Lumber is an employee owned company characterized by integrity, dependability, and fairness in our dealings with customers, employees, suppliers and stockholders. We are dedicated to providing top quality products and the highest quality service to our customers."

Ron McNeely, general manager, has been with GBS over 34 years. Russ Henson is the operations manager and just completed a two year term on SBMA's board of directors. Lou Hutchings is the marketing director. One of the criteria to be SBMA Dealer of the Year is community involvement.

And boy, does GBS have the community involvement. You may remember reading in past issues of "Nailed It", SBMA's monthly newsletter, of GBS's Lou Hutchings work for Katrina victims. They have worked closely with the Better Business Bureau (Kathy Barrett) and have sent over 14 truck loads to the Gulf Port and Biloxi area. They have also sent trucks from Jackson, Mississippi totaling 25-30 truck loads. After the initial trips to just get people help, Lou realized schools would need help. They sent over 800 desks and chairs and most recently mattresses to the area.

Beside the Katrina efforts, GBS is active in the community working with the American Cancer Society, specifically the Relay for Life. Last year's team made over \$1,000. They work with the Kiwanis Club and do food drives for Miracle Hill (a home for children whose parents are not capable of caring for them and adults with substance abuse problems). GBS Lumber is also greatly involved with Habitat For Humanity and is working with local area builders on this year's Habitat Builder Blitz.

SBMA is not the only organization who realizes GBS is special. They were awarded the Associate of the Year from the Greenville Home Builders Association and the Better Business Bureau Award for Community Service. Lou Hutchings is the Chairman of the Better Business Bureau of the Upstate of South Carolina.

"The mission of GBS Lumber is to provide products and service of unsurpassed excellence and thereby achieve recognition from customers, employees, suppliers, and the business community as the preferred building material supplier in our market area. We believe this mission can best be accomplished by recognizing and fulfilling our responsibilities to our customer, employees, stockholders and communities."