

Good business often begins outside of the workplace.

Fred Doane of Northland Forest Products met Tony Berke of River City Software at a five-year-old's birthday party.

While talking shop, Fred mentioned to Tony, "I've always thought it would be possible to use digital pictures and a computer to tally lumber bundles...instead of current process of manual end tallies." Tony liked the idea, and had personally written software for digital imaging systems. Tony and his company decided to take the idea forward; Tony thought he could make the process almost completely automatic.

After several design and discovery meetings and plenty of additional input from both sides, it was time to join forces and develop PictureTally™. A deal was inked where Northland contributed expertise in the lumber business and River City Software contributed expertise in developing automation systems. Northland would get a system that did what they wanted and River City Software would retain ownership of PictureTally.



Developing PictureTally took over one and a half years. System design and lumber photo sessions took place at Northland's Kingston, NH yard with the active cooperation of the yard staff. Several months prior to going into production, the staff of River City Software ran PictureTally side by side with the manual end tally crew. Tallies were compared, and programming changes were made to fully address the needs of the hardwood lumber industry and Northland's management.



Results?

Accuracy.

Piece counts and total board footage are consistently more accurate than the manual end tallies. Productivity gains.

Tally time is reduced by over 66%, removing a major bottleneck and resulting in improved

throughput. Tallies are managed from a heated tally booth and download instantly into a database with a few mouse clicks, rather than the constant squatting and manual data entry required to tally a two hundred plus piece bundle of lumber. Needless to say, at production levels of up to 80 bundles a day, the tally crew is quite enthusiastic with the PictureTally system.

Northland and River City Software also built an inventory management system for PictureTally. The primary design criteria was: "Easy enough for my mother to use and she doesn't use computers." The result is an inventory system that runs like a web site because it is a web site. Kerry Smith, Northland's Kingston yard manager sums it up, "This is simple and it works".

Visit www.picturetally.com to see how a picture can be worth a thousand words... or more accurately a thousand board feet.

