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### CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

# Tire recycling venture seeks local support

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SALAMANCA — For once, the Cattaraugus County Legislature’s Development and Agriculture Committee was approached by an entrepreneur who didn’t ask for money.

Re-Tread Products, with a pilot-scale production facility at Snyder Manufacturing in Salamanca, is looking for a collaboration and is asking only for support.

The firm has tested and developed a patented production system to construct an innovative “Tire Log” from waste tires, beginning with a prototype in 2001 and moving forward in 2006 and 2007 with two \$200,000 grants administered by Empire State Development.

That money, which comes from the \$2.50 per tire collected from consumers by retail tire dealers, promotes recycling and beneficial use of waste tires through the Waste Tire Management and Recycling Act of 2003.

The logs are being billed as a sustainable, energy-efficient “green” building product that could be used in a range of engineering applications — as a replacement for lumber, concrete and other building materials, and for projects such as flood-control dikes, levees and retaining walls that will bend but don’t break.

The legislators, together with representatives of Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board, Cattaraugus County Business Development Corp., Emergency Services and others, sat through a video presentation that, among other things, showed the log’s potential to withstand explosives as a military bunker.

The group saw how the tires are cut and flattened, and then, using a patented machine designed by Re-Tread founder Tom Hansen, woven and riveted into a 16-foot log. They then viewed the logs fashioned to form walls of a small cabin and saw how they stack up as a reusable erosion-control device compared with sand bags.

“What is next . . . is to give Re-Tread Products an opportunity to build a pilot project,” said John Sayegh, the county’s Economic Development, Planning and Tourism director.

Hansen, who has brought the concept to this stage with his son and company president Shane Hansen, easily passed his own exuberance to the audience during the presentation.

“I’d love to provide you with a project,” said committee chairman Jerry E. Burrell, R-Franklinville, noting the Legislature must set specifications and award bids for all types of public works projects.

When Jim Ellis, R-Cattaraugus, asked if the process could be outsourced to a country like China, Hansen pointed out that the raw material is evenly distributed around the U. S.

He replied, “If we can ship these back here because it’s cheaper, then we’re doing something wrong.”

He said he would like to keep the momentum going and asked the group to help build support by forming a collaborative team of government agencies, engineers, manufacturers and designers. Hansen said that will boost the chances for obtaining a high-profile demonstration project and, later, grants, investors and sales.

He said he plans to meet with State Sen. Catharine Young, R-Olean, Tuesday in Albany to seek her support and to look into the status of the Waste Tire Management and Recycling Fund, due to shut down in 2010. He then plans to seek the support of other elected officials.

“I’d love to be your poster child for green manufacturing,” he said.

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