

Gienow helps make view sharper than glass

By MIA GROLEAU

For The Free Press

People have been seeing right though Gienow for 50 years now.

Actually it's just that fact that's led to the company's success.

Gienow Building Products Ltd. is celebrating its 50th year in the window and door business.

Although products offered by the company aren't new to Prince George, the name is gaining recognition.

"Take a drive through any new area around Prince George and you'll see most of the new homes are bannered with Gienow windows," says Gordon Mah, branch sales administrator for Gienow in Prince George.

Until two years ago, Gienow's products were available through the window division of Canadian Woodworks, in their store at Quinn St. and 15th Ave.

When Canadian Woodworks decided to shut down its window division, Gienow, the company's supplier, stepped in and took over the business.

Mr. Mah explains that in January of 1996, Gienow bought out the window division of Canadian Woodworks, but worked under a combination of the two names. Gienow has gradually walked away from its alliance with Canadian Woodworks and now stands on its own name.

Gienow window and door products are now available in Prince George solely through the company, which has kept the same location for its showroom.

The staff has also stayed the same



Gienow Building Products celebrates its 50th Anniversary with a renewed commitment to making the view a little bit clearer. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

since the change from Canadian Woodworks, he adds.

Some of the secret to 50 years of suc-

cess is part innovation and part communication, says Mah.

By working under the Japanese

inspired "Just in Time" manufacturing system, Gienow is able to ensure the customer gets a product that meets their exact specifications.

Some window companies pre-build their product and keep a warehouse full and waiting to be shipped to the customer.

While Gienow does offer a selection of windows and doors available for cash and carry at their Quinn St. store, most of their product is built on the JIT time line, says Mah.

Working on the JIT principle means last minute changes can be easily accommodated — a boon for home builders and the do-it-yourselfer.

Besides its flexibility, Gienow also thrives on the success of its "Intercept" insulating glass. "The technology reduces frost on windows during the harsh winter and results in lower heating bills," says Mah.

Metal-clad windows that allow for minimal maintenance, yet keep the beauty of wood inside the home are also a popular product, adds Mah.

"People are moving to vinyl because it's maintenance free, but we can offer a wood window that's just as easy to care for," he adds.

While all of Gienow's manufacturing is done in Calgary, the products travel a lot farther. Besides B.C. and the rest of Canada, Gienow ships to the U.S., Japan, Chile, China, Mexico, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria and Argentina.

Plans for the next 50 years are simple: to open as many windows and doors in homes all over the world as possible.

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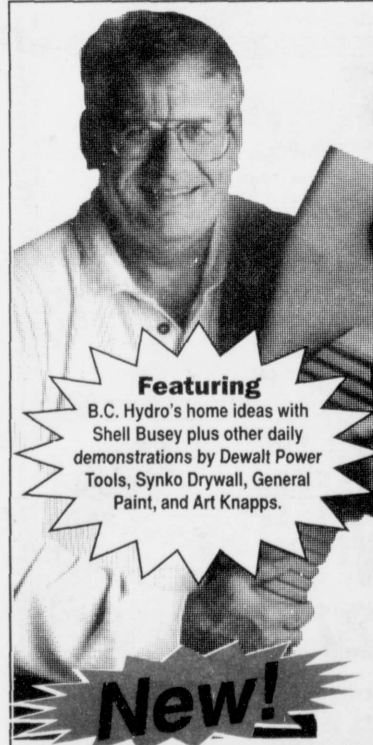
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