

Arrow Lumber buys Bethel Builders

▼ *Building materials supplier enters the peninsula market.*

By **PAT JENKINS**
Editor

The growth of Arrow Lumber and Hardware has reached the South Kitsap area with the company's purchase of Bethel Builders Home Center.

The Aug. 30 switch of Bethel Builders to Arrow Lumber is the latest piece of Arrow's "aggressive expansion plan," said

Barney Wagner, president of the company that until now has been a Pierce County operation.

Stores in Eatonville and Buckley preceded the South Kitsap location. More may be in the works, but Wagner said that's a secret for now.

"The Port Orchard area will be a great market for us," he said. "We like rural areas and small towns."

Arrow, which markets lumber, hardware and building materials for retail consumers and building professionals, will remodel the inside of the former Bethel Builders site at 6100 Bethel Road SE., double the size of the lumber yard and add a quarter of a million dollars in new inventory, Wagner said.

"This is a great facility with a huge potential," said John Stafford, the store's

manager. Stafford, who transferred from the Eatonville store where he was an assistant manager, said he'll focus on developing retail and contractor trade.

Arrow Lumber was formed in March 1997 by Wagner and Al Meier, longtime business partners and friends.

Meier owned and operated Al Meier's Building Centers, a six-store chain in the Puget Sound area, from 1956 to 1991, when he sold them to Lumbermen's.

Wagner was executive vice president and general manager of the Meier's operation for 18 years and was an executive with Lumbermen's until 1997.

Wagner said Meier grew tired of semi-retirement "and wanted back in the business. We've been together for 28 years, and it's great to be working side by side again."

Meier said the expansion into Kitsap County "will allow us a great presence in the growing peninsula area."