

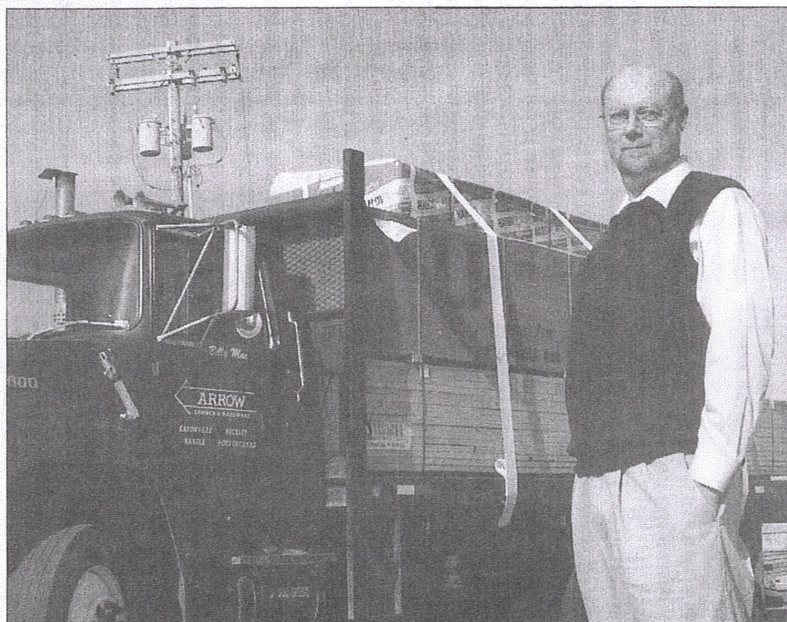
Q&A

A candid conversation with

Barney Wagner,

Arrow Lumber &

Hardware owner



Barney Wagner has built the Arrow Lumber & Hardware empire in rural areas.

Barney Wagner started in the lumber and hardware business at the age of 12. He worked during the summers, after school and during spring break stocking shelves, cleaning the lumberyard and duties as assigned. His first introduction to the lumber business was in 1959 working at Vis-Rey Building Materials, a family owned business located in Spanaway.

He started at Vaughan's Building Materials in 1963 doing building maintenance and part-time sales. Upon graduating from Mount Tahoma High School in 1965, he joined the Navy. After his discharge four years later, he returned to Vaughan's. In 1975, he helped start a new lumberyard named "South Hill Lumber" in Puyal-

lup. In 1982 it was re-named "Al Meier's Building Center" as part of a chain of six locations. His last title there was vice president and general manager. In 1991, the chain was sold to Lumbermens Building Centers.

He continued with Lumbermens as regional director of operations until 1997, when he pursued his life-long ambition of owning his own multi-store lumber and hardware business. Arrow Lumber & Hardware's first location was in Eatonville, followed by stores in Buckley, Port Orchard, Randle and Orting. The company is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

You've found a niche in the industry in what most people would call rural areas. What was

your initial interest in opening such a business in these "under-served" areas?

We love the rural markets and have become part of the communities in which we operate. We bond with the customers, schools, city officials, food banks and other community entities. We feel we provide services and resources for the rural towns. We have increased our inventories to give the customers added product choices. We give back a large percentage of the profits to the schools for scholarships, food banks, and a variety of civic events.

What does your expansion plan look like as areas around Buckley, Eatonville and Orting continue to experience overflow growth from

'We are always searching for new rural markets in which we can be of value to the local community. Our goal is summed up in our mission statement: to be the premier provider of quality building materials to the professional contractor and the do-it-yourself homeowner. Our hallmark is customer service based on honesty, integrity and commitment.'

South Hill and Bonney Lake?

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As areas around East Pierce County continue to grow rapidly, how do you remain successful with big box giants like Home Depot and Lowe's moving into surrounding areas?

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