

# SCRAP PLUS INGENUITY

IN TEXAS, 'BLACK GOLD' USUALLY REFERS TO BUBBLING CRUDE OIL. FOR RUMBER MATERIALS, IT MEANS SCRAP RUBBER AND PLASTIC BYPRODUCTS.



Manufactured from scrap tire rubber, 'Rumber' is an environmentally friendly, cost-effective replacement for wood in many applications. Rumber is frequently used in oil and gas applications, where wood is often subject to splintering and rot.

## COMPANY PROFILE

Rumber Materials Inc.

[www.rumber.com](http://www.rumber.com)

Headquarters: Muenster, Texas

Employees: 19

**Products:** Boards and other products manufactured from 100 percent recycled materials

**Keith Melville, COO:** "We have some really creative people in the company who know how to work with our product."

Historically, wood has been a product that has proved useful in countless applications. The drawback, of course, is that in exposed environments, wood seems to have almost as many disadvantages as advantages. To address these issues, a new product was developed that offered a better way, and it was called "Rumber."

Rumber®, the company's trademark, as well as the name of the product, is a combination of the words "rubber" and "lumber." In many environments where wood is used, Rumber offers certain advantages such as additional strength and durability; resistance to the harmful effects of UV rays, water, oil, fuel and fluid leaks; cushioning; noise reduction; and increased safety due to traction surface.

In addition, Rumber typically is a more cost-effective choice because it is easier to maintain and it lasts much longer than wood. As a result, Rumber is frequently used as a replacement for wood.

Rumber is made from tire rubber – a waste product of the tire manufacturing process – and post-consumer or post-industrial scrap plastic. These raw materials are recycled to make a remarkably useful and unique product. In myriad applications, with many more still to be discovered, Rumber is superior to the material it replaces.

Rumber Materials' initial market was a Texas cultural fixture: the horse trailer. Impervious to rot, liquids and other horse trailer perils, the Rumber material was a perfect fit to replace the wooden floorboards of the trailers. "We later expanded our markets to include all kinds of other trailers, truck products, oilfield, military and marine applications," says Keith Melville, chief operating officer.

## Natural Fit

Being in Texas, oil and gas applications were an obvious product area for the company to explore new opportunities. Drilling rigs require lengths of pipe stem to be racked vertically while carefully protecting the downward-facing pin threads. In the past, racking areas typically used wood as the cushioning material, Melville explains.

But wood is also subject to splintering, rot and other environmental deterioration. This means periodic replacement is necessary. Using Rumber means not

only a long-term cost savings, but also less downtime for maintenance, Melville says.

"It's not necessarily the cost of the wood being replaced, but it's the time involved in replacing that wood," he adds.

Instead, Rumber has a number of strengths.

"Rumber will not absorb water and is impervious to fluids, mud and oil. It will not rot or crack," Melville says. Since the product does not absorb water or other fluids, its weight does not change, which is clearly an advantage in the oilfield. Rumber has become a favored material for multiple applications in oil and gas exploration where wood is typically used, such as for drilling platforms, equipment trailers, truck beds, v-doors, catwalks and pipe stripping, Melville says.

"The boards are manufactured with a traction surface. This provides additional safety when compared to wet or oily wooden boards," says Rumber Material's president, Kelley Southwell.

Another benefit is that Rumber usually lasts significantly longer than wood, she says.

Applications where the material is subjected to chipping and other physical degradation are perfect for Rumber, Melville adds. An example is the dunnage

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used in shipping. Whether to separate lengths of pipe or other manufactured material, dunnage is essential to allow vertical space between segments of stacked cargo, he explains.

Traditional dimension lumber has always been the material of choice. Over time, abrasion and cracking are the result. For this reason, wooden dunnage requires frequent replacement. The hazards of dunnage failure while the load is underway are also a concern, Melville says, adding that, "Rumber has none of these issues and is available in standard sizes similar to traditional wood."

### Customers Drive Innovation

The company spends a significant amount of time and resources on new product development. Much of that innovation is customer-driven, Melville says.

Many of the employees who work in Rumber's manufacturing facility in Muenster have been with the company for a long time. Melville says these veterans really know the product well and are always willing to jump in and come up with a new way to meet a need or make operations run more smoothly.

"People in the plant are always finding ways to improve the process," he says.



**100% Recycled Material Products**

Rumber products out-perform traditional materials and offer a superior choice for a wide variety of oilfield uses.

- Stronger and more durable than wood
- Impervious to water, oil, fuel, or fluid leaks
- UV resistant
- Easy to clean
- Cost effective due to life of board
- Traction surface increases safety
- Boards have cushion and reduce noise level
- Withstands extreme heat and cold

Racking Boards • Sound Abatement • Equipment Trailers • Pipe Stripping • Matting Boards/Pads  
Truck Beds • Dunnage Boards • Crown Bumpers • Blast Bunkers • Collar Pusher • Tool Racks for Saver-Subs  
Chock Blocks • Floors for Doghouses • Collar Basket • Walkways and Steps  
Offshore Uses-Rub Rails, Bumpers, Docks, Mast Stand Flooring



**CONTACT US TODAY!**

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## “WE CAN TYPICALLY TAKE A PRODUCT CONCEPT FROM START TO FINISH IN SEVEN TO EIGHT WEEKS, MAYBE EVEN LESS.”

Several years ago, an oilfield customer asked Rumber to help with noise reduction on its rigs. That customer now uses Rumber boards to cover many of the surfaces where pipe typically hits steel surfaces on the rigs such as v-doors and catwalks. Use of Rumber has reduced noise on the rigs, making operations close to populated areas much more acceptable, Melville says.

Another customer-driven application where Rumber is utilized is in the construction of military shoot houses. Used in training combat troops for asymmetric urban conflict, shoot houses are full-scale buildings of various kinds, complete with window cutouts, roofs and other typical architectural features, Melville explains. When components are made of Rumber, maintenance is significantly reduced. They are also dimensionally stable, thus assuring that no unplanned cracks or openings change the visual components of the training exercise, he says.

**+** One of Rumber's many uses in the oil and gas industry is to cover surfaces where metal pipes typically hit metal floors and reduce noise.

In a more basic application, many U.S. Army tank berms that were previously made of wood are now being made of Rumber. In training exercises, rapid, precise tank handling is the goal. Positioning the tank often causes the exposed tank treads to contract and destroy wood berm materials, Melville says. Damage-resistant Rumber has solved the problem.

An additional example of innovative design occurred when Rumber recently created a specialized combat offload pallet used for training purposes by the Air Force. When U.S. troops are in harm's way, transporting needed material quickly is essential, meaning the reliability of the material handling elements in those supply lines is vital, Melville explains. Rumber is a part of that effort, he says.

“We have some really creative people in the company who know how to work with our product and expand its uses,” he adds. “We are constantly taking customer requests and turning them into new products.”

### Short Cycle

Rumber Materials' short product development cycle is a big factor in the company's growth into new markets. “We can typically take a product concept from start to finish in seven or eight weeks, maybe even less,” Melville says.

Through Rumber Materials' exposure to the oilfield industry – and therefore offshore drilling – numerous applications have been identified for marine uses of the product. For example, racking boards are being used for setback areas on offshore rigs and barges. The company says Rumber boards are also ideal for stacking pipe, for use as bumpers and fenders on barges, and for rub rails, docks and mast stand flooring.

Melville adds that in a world where “green” is everything, Rumber provides the oilfield industry with an opportunity to add a green component to what companies are already doing. “It's a recycled material and there are no harmful emissions from the manufacturing process,” he says. “Our only manufacturing byproduct is steam.”

Although that advantage portends well for the future, Melville sees continued growth from the numerous applications already utilized in the oilfield industry and the other industries that Rumber serves. “As additional needs are identified, we will work to develop solutions for our customers,” Melville says. ■

