

# New Milling Business Stateline Wood Co-Op Wants To Help Rockford Area Create Projects With Character

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Jesse Sodergren, Joe Perrin, and Bryce Micka sit on their mill at their business, Stateline Wood Co-op, on Saturday, May 27, 2023 in Rockton. (Photo by Albert Riley Jr./Special to the Rock River Current)

By Kevin Haas  
Rock River Current  
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ROCKTON — When Mark Bolin was confronted with the need to cut down a walnut tree on his riverfront property, he decided to make sure a piece of the roughly 60-foot tall tree would remain a part of his home forever.

The tree had been part of his childhood home since his family moved to the Machesney Park property in 1964, but it had long been growing into the backyard deck and it was impeding needed renovations.

“This tree has been growing through our deck for 50 years, and I thought it would be a really cool feature to have some of this wood reclaimed, finished and then installed into certain functional pieces inside of the house,” he said.

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Stateline Wood Co-op, a new saw mill business started by a trio of Hononegah High School graduates, played a key role in helping Bolin do just that.

Instead of being mulched or burned, the wood was cured and milled for future carpentry.

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The milling work for Mark and Leslie Bolin’s home was among the first projects that Joe Perrin, who runs Stateline Wood Co-op with Jesse Sodergren and Bryce Micka, tackled after purchasing the mill.

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It’s emblematic of what the business aims to accomplish: helping people reclaim wood to create memorable and lasting projects with hand-milled lumber.

“We want to collaborate with other small, local businesses and carpenters looking to get more pieces of wood for local projects,” Micka said. “We’re just little guys who are just getting started right now ... but I think if things work out we’ll be able to do some pretty cool stuff in the future.”

After the wood from Bolin’s home was milled, Dan Starry’s company S&R Custom Homes and Remodeling and carpenter Justyn Langley worked to build barn-style doors that shut off the entrance to the master suite, a bench around a Benson Stone fireplace, doors that open into a utility closet and a custom bench for the new deck.

“The tree lives on forever,” Bolin said. “The wood is a really deep, rich color. It’s really, really beautiful.”



Joe Perrin works on his company's mill on May 27, 2023 in Rockton. (Photo by Albert Riley Jr./Special to the Rock River Current)

Perrin has worked as a carpenter for more than a decade, starting shortly after graduating Hononegah in 2012 when he traveled the country building log homes. The first he helped build was in Galena.

He prides himself on his expertise in every part of the carpentry process, "all the way down to the tree," he said.

Two years ago he started his own business, Rockford Remodeling, with Sodergren. The mill was purchased with the intent to source wood for his own projects with hand-milled lumber. Just last week the mill company officially formed and the trio chose its name.

He hopes to inspire people to have an appreciation for the craftsmanship and tradition of carpentry.

"I will build anything for anyone," Perrin said. "It's hard to find quality and people who are willing to take their time instead of make more money."

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Bolin, who has also seen Perrin's work on other projects in his home, said his attention to detail shows.

"You can tell the craftsmanship and the quality and the care that he put into his projects," Bolin said.



Jesse Sodergren pushes lumber through a mill on Saturday, May 27, 2023, at Stateline Wood Co-op in Rockton. (Photo by Albert Riley Jr./Special to the Rock River Current)

Perrin also thinks there have been missed opportunities in Rockford to use trees knocked over in storms for lasting projects, rather than mulching or burning them.

"It really breaks my heart to see that happen," he said. "That takes years to be able to be that big. To throw it away in 10 minutes for a little warmth or material to walk around on."

He hopes to work with local government agencies and residents to use the wood from fallen trees.

"Instead of turning this beautiful log into firewood, I'll come pick it up and turn it into stuff that we can use and keep around and make into art," Perrin said.

By doing so, Perrin said the Rockford area can build a community with more character.

"It seems like that would be a really cool selling point for Rockford to have more character," Perrin. "That's all of what craftsmanship is, is having a genuine true character that is one of a kind."

## Contact | Stateline Wood Co-op

Phone: 815-980-0126 or 779-537-0775

On the web: You can find them on the web, through their other business, Rockford Remodeling. [facebook.com/RockfordRemodeling](https://facebook.com/RockfordRemodeling); [rockfordremodelingllc.com](https://rockfordremodelingllc.com)



Jesse Sodergren and Bryce Micka secure the log in place on May 27, 2023, at Stateline Wood Co-op in Rockton. (Photo by Albert Riley Jr./Special to the Rock River Current)

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