

Moffatt Scrap Iron & Metal Inc. - Business Feature

BY REID KENNEDY
NHC

Steve Moffatt learned early in life one man's junk can become another man's new car.

Moffatt first became involved in the scrap business at age twelve helping local peddler Don Miles gather and sort scrap iron and metal as a summer job in the early 1970's. "Miles showed me there was a little money to be made from scrap if I was willing to work day and night to collect it," he recalls ruefully.

At age 16, Moffatt struck out on his own after purchasing a pickup from his summer earnings. "I sure saw a lot of fence rows in Nassagweya collecting old farm machinery and vehicles to scrap."

The life-long resident of Moffat decided there was a future for him in scrap iron. He set up shop on his property he had purchased in 1982 just below the village. "There I made the transition from scrap peddler to scrap processor," explains Moffatt. "The recycling of scrap metal was fast becoming a viable business venture and our operation quickly outgrew the home property. I incorporated in 1984 and moved to a 22 acre property on the Guelph Line just north of the Mohawk Raceway."

There exists little similarity between his operation and traditional scrap yards that store acres of vehicles for the second-hand parts market. "We receive the material, sort it and ship it out immediately."

Moffatt Scrap Iron & Metal Inc. now recycles over one billion pounds of scrap annually. "Once at the new yard, we basically became a hands-on operation that works long, hard

hours. I owe a lot to my employees." However, an expansion of container services and the continued improvement of processing equipment has allowed the operation to keep pace with the area's growing industrial, service, and institutional sectors. But Moffatt is quick to point out that "our strength remains the people that work here."

Moffatt currently employs 12 people full-time, and his fleet has grown from one old pickup to five container trucks utilized to recover and ship scrap for re-milling. "Most of our business comes from within a 15 mile radius of our yard," outlines Moffatt.

Primary sources for scrap include manufacturers, demolition sites and service sector operations. "We pick up from a wide variety of businesses that have scrap metal as a by-product of operation, including auto wreckers, plumbers and electricians."

The installation of a

weigh scale provides a focal point for area farmers and small businesses to recycle scrap metal. Scrap peddlers also drop off at the Moffatt Scrap Iron & Metal yard regularly.

Moffatt's also provides a metal recycling depot located at the front of the yard. Open seven days a week, the depot is intended for local residents. "It isn't a big part of our operation, but it does provide an outlet for people to recycle their old appliances and machinery."

Once collected, the tedious task of sorting the scrap falls to Moffatt and his staff before it can be shipped to a steel mill for reprocessing. The basic categories for sorting are ferrous and non-ferrous. Ferrous metals have iron content such as old cars. Non-ferrous metals include stainless steel, copper, aluminum and brass.

"Everything is sorted and streamed except vehicles which we compress and send to a secondary processor for complete stripping." Moffatt then

ships the sorted scrap to companies such as Dofasco milling into industrial grade steel.

In Moffatt's opinion, the number of times scrap metal can be recycled is infinite. "The old myth that recycled metal is inferior metal is just that, a myth. Perpetual re-milling has evolved to such a high level that all oxidized (rusty) metal is now completely removed. Today's manufacturers using re-milled steel produce a superior product that only gets better with age."

Supply and demand are creating such a huge market for scrap metal that there is consideration being given to mining old landfills for scrap metal. "Fifty years ago scrap metal ended up in the dump because it had little or no value. Now it's more cost-effective for steel companies to use recycled material." Moffatt adds the business of recycling scrap in manufacturing holds environmental benefits as well. "With so much scrap being recycled today, strip

mining for iron ore has been drastically reduced."

A supporter of the Milton Fall Fair, he and his crew are avid participants in the Fair's annual Demolition Derby. "We certainly have a choice selection of vehicles to demolish here."

Steve is justifiably proud to be the founder of an operation that recycles such a high volume of material for reuse.

"Scrap peddlers and processors are not the original recyclers, but we've certainly been around a lot longer than the blue box."



Keeping Pace -

Magnet crane at Moffatt's ScrapMetal & Iron sorts scrap metal for shipment to steel mill.

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