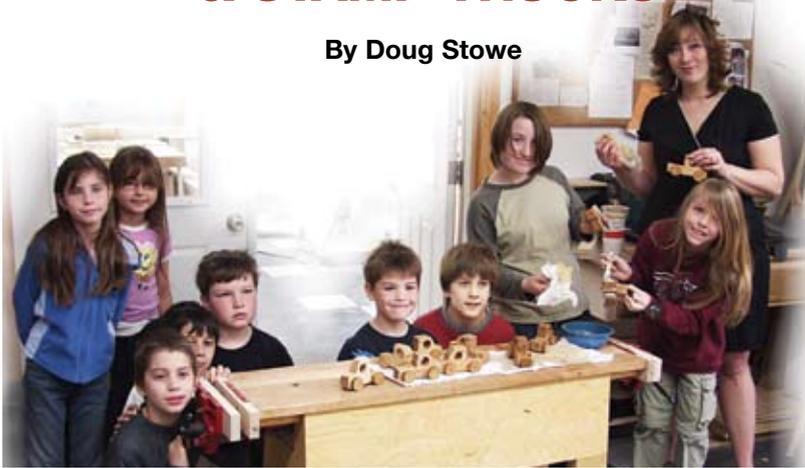




ECONOMICS, WOODWORKING & STAMP TRUCKS

By Doug Stowe



CLEAR SPRING SCHOOL STUDENTS show off their toy truck stamp holders. From left are Jessica Turner, Promise Hicks, Will Alee (front), Ryan Garcia, Brendon Thomas, Brian Turner, Hendrik Pot, Kurtis Raneshottom, teacher Michelle Sullivan and Sam Klemett (front).



At the Clear Spring School in Eureka, Ark., the Wisdom of the Hands woodshop was created as a

place in which all subjects could be integrated through working with wood, and in which each subject could assume greater meaning in a child's life.

Economics in action

To understand how the woodshop integrates and enriches learning, let's take a look at the third and fourth graders who made stamp and penholder toy trucks as Christmas gifts. In planning a trip to Springfield, Mo., they wanted to do a woodworking fundraising project, and at the same time they were studying the economy.

In a practice session, students first made stamp dispenser trucks for themselves while refining their techniques and raising their

workmanship standards.

They used 5/4 soft maple that had been given to them as surplus from a hardwood lumber supplier. First the material was planed to 1 1/4" thick. To form the body of the pickup truck the adult staff made the rounded scroll saw cuts to form the cab, while leaving all the straight cuts to be made by the students using Japanese pull-style saws. When the trucks were cut to



shape, students drilled the axle holes using the drill press, while adult staff members held the truck bodies in position.

To make the wheels, old hickory and ash tool handles were cut on a sled on the table saw to a 3/8" thickness and a 1/4" diameter hole was drilled in the center of each wheel.

Marketing basics

After the construction of their test products, the students each made a second stamp dispenser truck to sell at a parent-teacher meeting. They developed their own individual sales flyers, marketing strategy and cost analysis, including the costs of materials and even some allowance for the teacher's materials and prep time.

The stamp trucks sold out at a price of \$10 each, and one parent displayed hers at work and took orders for more.

In further studies, students became interested in manufacturing processes and wanted to make trucks using Henry Ford's assembly



line methods. So they did the same project a third time with each student assigned a position along the assembly path.

It is easy to see how this project integrated math, history, introductory studies in economics, quality control, self assessment, development of attention, skilled tool use, understanding of basic production processes, cooperative project participation and more.

It was also fun.

Visit clearspringschool.org to learn more about the school.