

ANCHORS

WEIGH

Spiral bevel gear manufacturers—pay attention. There may be a whole new segment of the market that nobody has tapped into. This kind of marketing venture doesn't require travel to Third World countries, expensive machines or additional employee training.

Fred Young, president of Forest City Gear in Roscoe, Illinois, discovered this new market on a fly-fishing trip on the White River in Arkansas last year. His group was aboard a johnboat, a 16–20' boat with a special motor to move up and down the river. The group found a spot in the middle of the White River that was filled with trout, and the captain tossed out a weight to keep the boat in place—but instead of a normal anchor, he was using an old, rusty spiral bevel gear!

"It worked because the shape of the beveled teeth could grip the bottom of the river," Young explains.

It seemed funny to Young that a spiral bevel gear, which usually costs thousands, could be cast into the water and effectively used as an anchor.

As random as this was, it wasn't the only gear-related instance on this vacation. A couple days later, the ship docked in Cotter, Arizona, the trout capital of the world.

Young and the other fishermen were browsing around the riverfront shopping district, looking in windows, when he came across the first-ever boutique for his friends in the gear industry. "White River Gear" seemed the perfect spot to get an off-the-rack gear without taking too much time away from the fishing trip. Sadly, there were no worm gears inside, only actual worms to dangle from the end of a fishing pole.

Ever the entrepreneur, the whole day started the wheels turning in Young's head about the gear business venture possibilities there. For instance, located very close to the gear shop is The Lodge and Fly Shoppe above Rim Shoals at the White River. Maybe this could be a possible site for an engineering conference facility? Stocked with an open bar, the Lodge and Fly Shoppe could be a great spot to unwind after a trade show...

Taking that idea even further, Young jokes that this town in the Ozarks might be a good spot to transfer his company someday:

"I don't know if any (*Gear Technology*) reader happens to be the store owner, since, as an addicted fly fisherman, this strikes me as the perfect merger or acquisition candidate for Forest City Gear." ⚙



Fred Young models 2004's coolest gear accessory.



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