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The E. K. Wood Lumber Co. Maintains An Important Industrial Operation That Stabilizes Some Thirty Sawmills

A dependable market is created for the rough lumber cut by these saw-mills located in the Roseburg area and, manufactures some 800 to 1,000 car loads of finished lumber annually—Approximately 100 workers are regularly employed.

By R. KENNETH EVANS

The volume of saw timber in Douglas County is greater than that of any entire state in the nation except Oregon, Washington, California, Montana and Idaho, according to a report of the U.S. Forest Service. Douglas County contains more than one-fourth of the remaining saw timber volume in Western Oregon and one-sixth of the saw timber in the Douglas fir region. The "forced-draught" development of the forest industry in Douglas County, in answer to World War II and post-war demand for lumber and other forest products, attracted the attention of such pioneer lumber operators as the E. K. Wood Lumber company, identified with the industry in the Northwest for 57 years, operating sawmills, retail yards and a general lumber business.

After a thorough investigation as to the need of a remanufacturing plant to stabilize the operation of the smaller sawmills in the region, the construction of such a plant was started in July 1944 by the E. K. Wood Lumber company. It was completed and put into operation in April 1945.

A Decade Of Expansion

Like the days of the "gold rush" the development, in a big way, of the lumber industry in Douglas county soon got noised around and, many sawmills were established from a two-man sawmill to larger mills that cut at high as 30,000 board feet of rough lumber daily. The location of these mills was made largely on privately owned timber land.

Experienced engineering and planning is evidenced in the facilities that were installed for the operation of this new remanufacturing plant to make it capable of meeting the established demand for a dependable market for the rough lumber that would be cut by these newer sawmills. A re-saw plant capable of handling 120,000 board feet per shift was the first installation. This was followed immediately by the additional facilities of a planer capable of surfacing, on four sides, the 120,000 board feet of lumber coming from the re-saw plant per shift, in sizes 1 x 4 up to and including 4 x 12 inches. The finest equipment known to the market was secured for this modern plant which is approximately all electrically operated.

Economic Value Inestimable

The economic value of the remanufacturing operation of the E. K. Wood Lumber company in stabilizing these smaller sawmills in inestimable. To enable these mills to operate on a profitable basis a dependable market for their out of rough lumber was imperative, along with a market price that would be sufficient to pay a reasonable profit and provide a surplus for maintenance and repairs. Today, there are approximately 30 sawmills in the county that are supplying the E. K. Wood Lumber company with the rough lumber to keep the remanufacturing plant in continuous operation. This is due to the fact that the E. K. Wood Lumber company set up a market for this production and has consistently maintained as high a market price as it was possible to do in keeping with good business management.

It is also fortunate that the years of experience behind the operation of the E. K. Wood plant in Roseburg has built up a permanent and dependable outlet for the finished lumber. In other words there is no logical reason why this market for the output of these thirty sawmills should ever become glutted. As long as the operation in the woods is continued on a good management or sustained-yield basis, the industry will be permanent for all time to come.

The E. K. Wood Lumber company is remanufacturing and shipping to established markets in all

sections of the United States from 800 to 1,000 car loads of this surfaced lumber every year and, has been doing this from the Roseburg plant alone since 1945. These outlets are, in the majority, permanent ones that have relied upon the E. K. Wood Lumber company's wholesale department for the last 50 years to keep them well supplied.

Emergencies Can Be Met

The continuous operation of the lumber industry from the woods to the finished building, must always take into consideration the uncertainty of weather conditions. There are seasons in the Pacific Northwest lumber regions where heavy snows in the forests will curtail logging operations. Likewise, hot and humid summer weather causes logging operations to cease because of the danger of fire which is the forest enemy "Number One." When logging ceases the sawmills cannot operate unless many of these sawmills in the vance to meet these contingencies.

Many of these sawmills in the Pacific Northwest have built up cold-decks of logs to meet these emergencies. However, the E. K. Wood Lumber company, no doubt, has foreseen the possibility of not having sufficient finished lumber to meet the demands of these established outlets in all sections of the nation. As an example, as the rough lumber comes into the remanufacturing plant in Roseburg and is processed through the re-saw and planer a certain percentage of the production is placed in a stock-pile as a reserve to meet these possible contingencies. Today, there is approximately 11-million board feet of surfaced and rough lumber stock-piled in the storage yards adjacent to the remanufacturing plant. A comparable stock-pile is constantly maintained. As rapidly as the demand makes it necessary to ship from this stock-pile of finished lumber it is replaced as soon as possible.

There are 241 sawmills operating in the Inland Umpqua basin and of that number 37 are located in the immediate Roseburg area. These sawmills in the entire basin provide employment for 1,606 workers. The operation of these mills creates a basic industrial structure that calls for the creation of auxiliary industrial plants such as the E. K. Wood Lumber company's remanufacturing plant. There are approximately 100 people employed by this company including those used for car loading, mill crew, and office personnel, consisting of the manager, Don G. Baxter, assisted by Dan Kennerly. This establishes an annual payroll over \$350 thousand dollars and adds, materially, to the overall industrial payroll structure of Roseburg and Douglas county.

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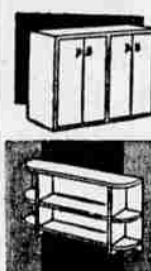


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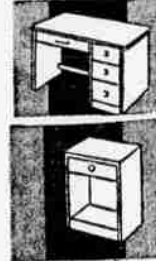
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