

## COMMUNITY

# Pickers gone, not forgotten

By Brian Bloch  
Emerald Reporter

The picket lines in front of Springfield's Morgan-Nicolai plant are gone, but for the more than 250 union workers who lost their jobs, the two-year strike will always be remembered.

The labor strike that began July 11, 1988 ended two weeks after replacement workers and about 50 union workers who crossed the pickets at the door manufacturing plant voted out the union Oct. 30, 1990, forcing hundreds of union workers to look for other employment in an ailing Oregon timber economy.

Since then, the Western Council of Industrial Workers Local 3035 has shut down its office and left the group of displaced workers with no formal representation and little hope for better employment.

"It's really been a dramatic turnaround for these people, for their families and their lifestyles," said LeRoy Robinson, president of local 3035. "What they did to the union was economic warfare."

In spite of the outward defeat, Robinson said pride and a sense of value remain in the minds of the workers who lost their jobs.

"I think by our actions we've brought awareness to unions and the issues they face," Robinson said. "It's not many people who can say they stood up for what they believed in. We did."

What they believed in for

more than two years was not conceding to Morgan-Nicolai contract offers that would have drastically cut benefits and reduced wages by up to 30 percent, Robinson said.

Nicolai contended it needed

to make cuts to remain competitive while striking workers said they believed the cuts were primarily an attempt to force out the union for higher profits.


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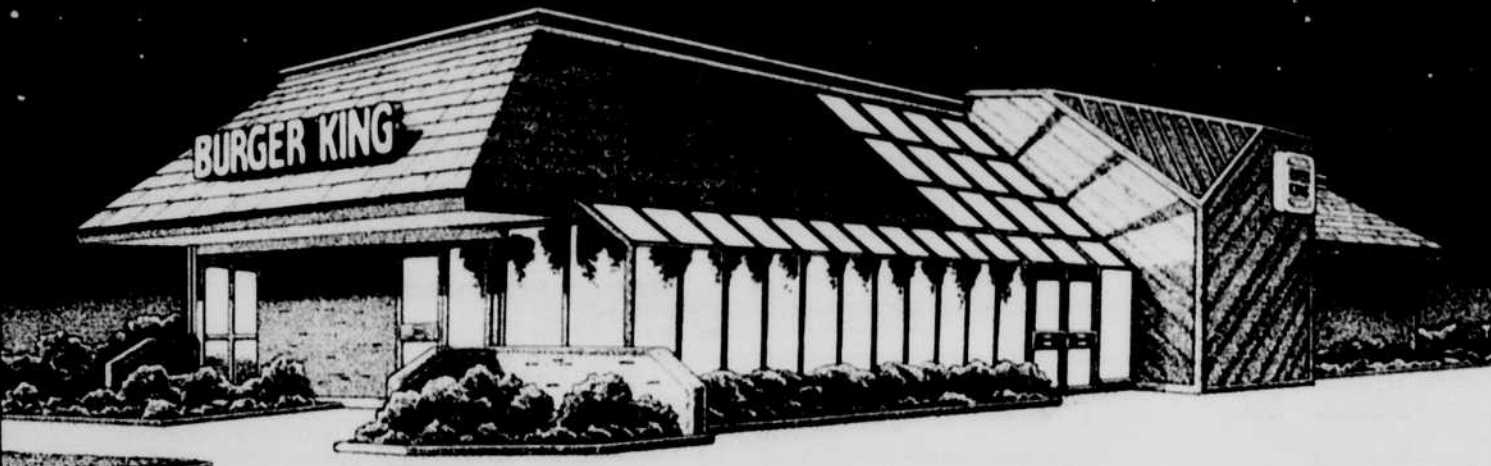
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