

# NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

## Hundreds of laid-off timber workers are sent back to work



**BOISE, Idaho (AP)** — Boise Cascade Corp. says it's recalling almost all of the 256 employees temporarily laid off at Idaho sawmills because of a slump in timber prices. Three sawmills will resume operations Monday.

In a prepared statement Tuesday, Jim Weathers, the company's Idaho region manager, said prices have improved for ponderosa pine products, particularly on commodity grade board products. Although the upward trend is modest, it's encouraging, Boise Cascade said.

Weak market conditions caused a curtailment of operations at Cascade and Horseshoe Bend on Oct. 28. Lumber planing and finishing was stopped Nov. 3 at the company's Emmett plant.

The restart recalls 233 of the 256 furloughed employees. Weathers said a few production and maintenance functions were consolidated, causing a permanent reduction of 13 positions at Emmett and 10 at Cascade.

No reductions were made at Cascade, where there was some consolidation earlier this year.

The company said its sawmill at La Grande, Ore., which has been idle for the past month by weak market conditions, also will resume work Monday. That will put 160 workers back to work.

Boise Cascade's Idaho Region includes a plywood plant, speciality products mill and electrical cogeneration plant at Emmett. They have continued to operate. The company owns 200,000 acres of timber in southern Idaho.

## Gene brings scientists one step closer to preventing cancer



**NEW YORK (AP)** — Scientists have identified a gene that might play an early role in producing breast cancer, a finding that might lead to ways to prevent such cancers.

Scientists found that the gene was frequently overactive in early breast cancers but only rarely so in noncancerous breast abnormalities.

If further research shows that the overactivity promotes breast cancer, drugs aimed at slowing it down may prevent some breast cancers in women at high risk, said researcher Dr. David Page.

The finding may also eventually lead to a test to tell whether certain microscopic breast abnormalities signal a particularly high risk of breast cancer later on, Page said. That could allow preventive treatment, he said.

The work is presented in the December issue of the journal *Nature Medicine* by Patricia Steeg of the National Cancer Institute, Page of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville, Tenn., and others.

The gene tells cells how to produce a protein called cyclin D. The protein is one of several that tell cells to produce an extra set of genetic material to be passed along when the cell divides into two. It may also have other jobs, Steeg said.

The researchers looked at an indicator of the gene's activity in 94 breast abnormalities that had been removed in biopsies. They found that the gene had been overactive in only 18 percent of noncancerous lesions.

## Former African defense minister on trial for murder



**PRETORIA, South Africa (AP)** — A former defense minister accused of murder said Tuesday he is innocent because the military cannot be blamed for crimes later committed by people it trained.

Gen. Magnus Malan, who led the government assault against anti-apartheid groups in the 1980s, also said he feared former soldiers and policemen would be treated unfairly by President Nelson Mandela's government.

Malan and some of his top generals are accused in the murders of 13 African National Congress sympathizers killed by an alleged military-trained hit squad in Natal Province in 1987.

The 20 suspects will appear in court Friday to be formally charged, and their trial is expected to begin in March.

The case has highlighted the debate over a new Truth and Reconciliation Commission intended to investigate murders and torture by apartheid-era governments and anti-apartheid groups like the ANC.

The Truth Commission will have the power to subpoena witnesses, and refusal to testify could bring a fine or prison sentence.

"I am concerned, and I feel that my concern is justified, that the security forces of the past and the opposing forces of that period will not be treated equally," Malan told the Foreign Correspondents Association.

He outlined his likely trial defense, saying he was unaware of any conspiracy among top government officials to commit murder.

## Two boys sentenced for child's death

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Two young boys who dropped a 5-year-old to his death from a 14th floor apartment because he wouldn't steal candy for them will be confined to a youth home for no more than 10 years, a judge ruled Tuesday.

The boys, now 11 and 12, were convicted of the juvenile equivalent of first-degree murder. They could be kept in custody until they are 21 years old, but could be released earlier if a court determines they have made enough progress.

Juvenile Court Judge Carol Kelly said she wants the state to locate a center that can offer hope of returning the boys to society.

Kelly set Dec. 19 for a hearing on a defense motion for a new trial and to find out if the state has found a facility that will accept the boys.

The neatly dressed boys stood impassively before the judge, surrounded by parents, lawyers and parole officers, during a brief hearing that made no mention of the horrifying details of the death of 5-year-old Eric Morse.

He was killed Oct. 13, 1994, when he was dangled, then dropped from a 14th-floor window at the Chicago Housing Authority's Ida B. Wells apartment building.

Eric had accompanied the boys to a vacant 14th-floor apartment in the building. His 9-year-old brother, Derrick, testified that the older boys lured the brothers there by asking if they wanted to see a clubhouse.

The older boy grabbed Eric and hung him out the window, Derrick testified.

"I pulled him back in," Derrick said. But the boys grabbed Eric and hung him out the window again.

Derrick said he ran down the staircase, hoping to catch his younger brother before he crashed to the ground.

## stranger

THAN FICTION

## Texas woman goes to trial over flowers

**BROWNFIELD, Texas (AP)** — Is it a lighthearted hobby or a ruthless business move for Mary Gunnels to make silk chrysanthemums at home for the high school homecoming game?

Ms. Gunnels is headed for trial a second time over the issue after jurors deadlocked the first time she was charged with "knowingly and intentionally operating a flower shop" in a residential area.

"What am I, the killer mum-maker?" she asks. "Yeah, watch out. I'm going to get you with my glue gun."

City officials told her in September that she couldn't sell the elaborate homecoming mums — complete with ribbon streamers and trinkets attached — out of her home since it wasn't in a commercial zone.

She countered that since she only sells about 30 mums every fall for \$23 each she couldn't possibly be considered a florist.

They took her to court.

Not only was Ms. Gunnels running a business, she was drawing traffic into a residential neighborhood, argued Bill McGowan, city attorney in Brownfield, a town of about 10,000 residents 40 miles southwest of Lubbock.

Ms. Gunnels' attorney argued that it was legal to sell crafts from a home.

The jury deadlocked Nov. 14 and she faces trial again early next year. She faces a \$500 fine if convicted.

But the flower fracas has already taken its toll of Ms. Gunnels, who says she sold only about 10 mums this year.

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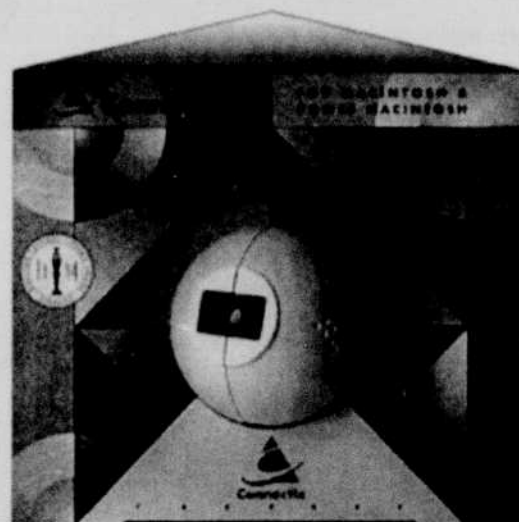
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