

Oregon

Nation's largest 'mass timber' building underway

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

HILLSBORO, Ore. — As a crane lowered a “glulam” beam and construction workers on either end deftly guided it into connection with two upright wooden columns, a tour group member shook his head and said, “It’s like Lincoln Logs.”

Kind of. Which may in part explain some of the attraction of builders and designers to the potential use of strong, precisely engineered, carbon-storing wood beams, columns, wall panels and floor decking. As Chris Evans, a Swinerton Builders project manager put it, wood is the first building material people use to make the forts, homes and hideouts of childhood.

These days, builders and designers are joining mill owners, university researchers and policy makers in taking a fresh look at advanced wood products, “mass timbers” and what’s come to be called “tall-wood” design. Advocates believe it can replace concrete and steel in mid- to even high-rise buildings, and provide an economic jolt to rural Oregon in terms of forest management and mill jobs.

In Hillsboro, Evans and Swinerton Builders are overseeing construction of the largest known U.S. building to date that uses cross-laminated timber, or CLT, for flooring, and glulam posts and beams.

The Oregon headquarters of First Tech Credit Union will be five stories tall and have 156,000 square feet of office space. Swinerton Builders is the general contractor.

Another tall wood building planned for Portland, called Framework, will be 12 stories tall and have five floors of affordable housing. That project was awarded a \$1.5 million federal design competition grant to help with seismic and fire testing and certification.

Oregon is trying to jump start the technology and potentially revive its timber industry.

CLT panels, made by layering lumber in alternating directions and bonding them with adhesive, can be up to 65 feet long and 20 feet wide. DR Johnson Lumber Co., in Riddle, Ore., was the first U.S. manufacturer certified to make CLT.

Meanwhile, Freres Lumber Co., in Lyons, Ore., is opening a milling facility to make similar “mass plywood panels” out of veneer.

Oregon State University’s forestry and engineering programs have partnered with the University of Oregon’s architecture program to form the TallWood Design Institute on the OSU campus.

About 50 people took part in an Oct. 3 tour of Portland-area projects organized by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, and heard talks by architects, builders and developers.

For now, speakers said, mass timber construction is more expensive than concrete and steel, but is much quicker because of the way pre-fabricated sections can be fitted together.

Experts said the technology will be “open sourced,” meaning it will be available for replication elsewhere, which should speed market expansion.

At the First Tech building construction site, architect Scott Barton-Smith said wood is an authentic regional material in the Pacific Northwest and “part of the solution” when it comes to carbon sequestration.

He also talked about the warmth of wood products.

“The best reason to use wood on a building like this is because it’s beautiful,” he said.



A worker guides a glulam beam into place Oct. 3 during construction of the First Tech Credit Union headquarters building in Hillsboro, Ore. The building, which will be five stories tall and include 156,000 square feet of office space, is believed to be largest U.S. structure so far built using advanced lumber products such as cross-laminated timbers (CLT) and glulam beams, posts and flooring. Advocates believe such wood products can replace concrete and steel in modest high-rises, and revive Oregon’s timber industry.

Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Organic farm wins \$26,500 for cow trespass

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

An Oregon dairy farm whose cows escaped to trespass onto a neighbor’s property owes about \$26,500 for trampling and manure damage to organic crops.

The incident occurred in 2014 but Simington Gardens, an organic produce farm, didn’t file a lawsuit against the dairy, Rock Ridge Farms, until last year.

According to court documents, the two farms tried to resolve the problem out of court but were unable to agree on the amount of compensation.

The plaintiff alleged that up to nine cows, as well as several dairy workers who later rounded them up, caused roughly \$55,000 in destroyed property, lost profits and mitigation costs.

Organic farming regulations required Simington Gardens to leave the field where cows defecated fallow for 120 days.

In its lawsuit, Simington Gardens argued it was owed double or triple that amount



Chuck Eggert

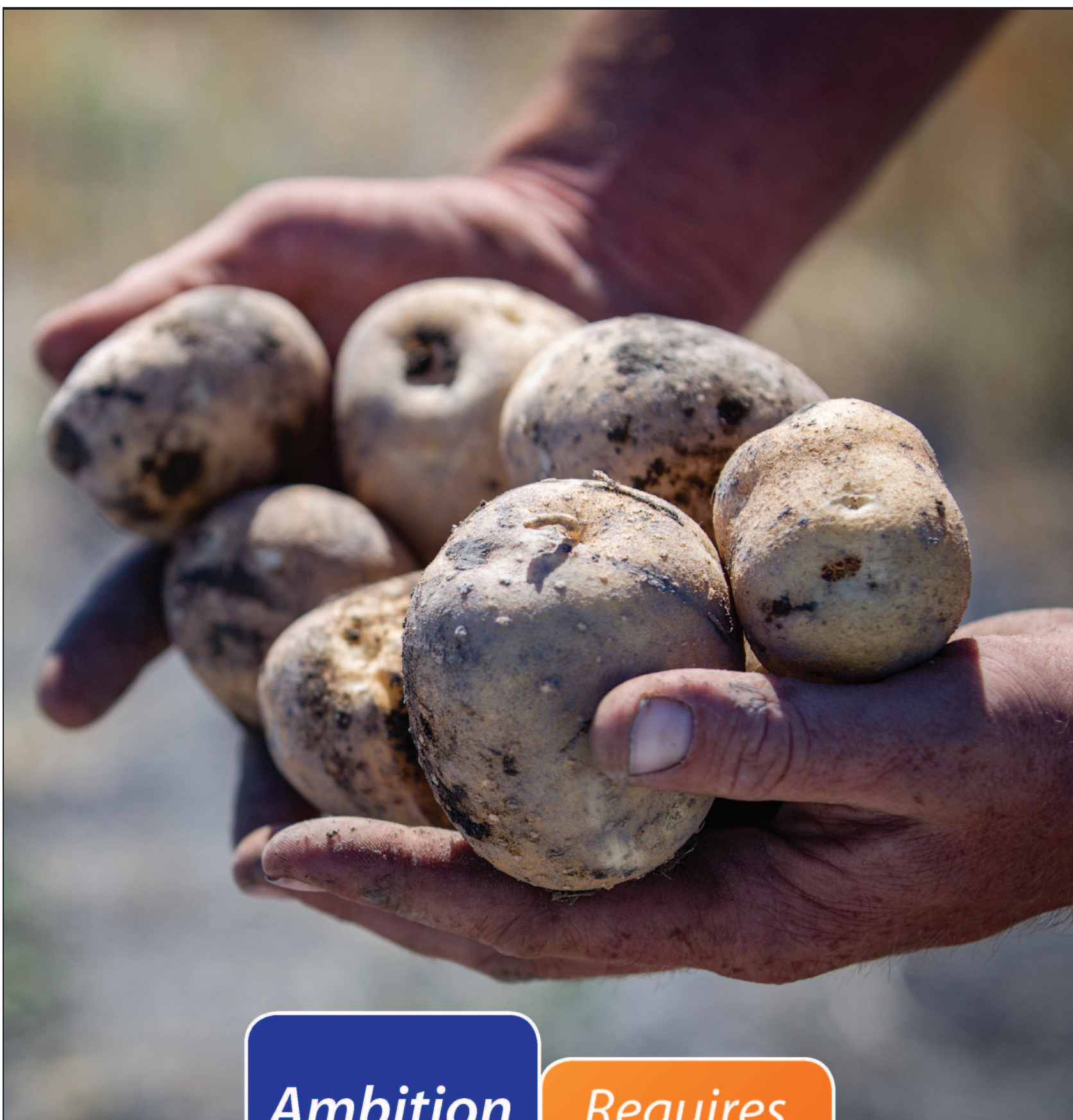
under Oregon laws intended to discourage damages caused during trespass.

Rock Ridge Farms is owned by Chuck Eggert, an entrepreneur who also founded Pacific Natural Foods, which the Campbell Soup Co. agreed to buy for \$700 million earlier this year.

The defendant argued the lawsuit could have been avoided, as Rock Ridge Farms offered to pay “out-of-pocket” costs and provide its own organic-certified property for Simington Gardens to plant replacement crops.

The trespass by cows was unintentional, so the organic produce farm wasn’t entitled to double or triple the amount of damages, according to the dairy.

After a four-day civil trial, a 12-person jury found last month that Rock Ridge Farms had committed trespass and awarded Simington Gardens about \$20,800 in lost profits, \$2,500 in property damage and \$3,200 in mitigation expenses.



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