

A New Future for Banks Sawmill

On August 29, 2016, Hampton Lumber announced its acquisition of the Banks lumber mill assets in Banks, Oregon. The Banks lumber mill, which employed roughly 60 people, had been in operation since 1961 producing high quality green Doug fir narrow dimension lumber.

The location of the Banks sawmill is ideal for Hampton, which currently operates three sawmills in Oregon in the communities of Warrenton, Tillamook, and Willamina. The Banks mill is conveniently located 25 miles from Portland's urban markets and transportation systems and has access to rail and a quality workforce in Washington County. Most importantly, the mill is situated near several state and private forestlands, including lands managed by Hampton near the Wilson River.

Access to a reasonably priced timber supply is a critical factor in the long-term viability of any sawmill. With the purchase of the Banks sawmill, Hampton is relying on the state's continued commitment to working public forests and a dependable timber supply. "Any additional restrictions or reductions from current modest harvest levels on nearby state forests could negatively affect the employment levels of all our sawmills in Oregon," said Hampton CEO, Steve Zika. "However, we believe the Banks sawmill has the potential to be a successful business enterprise."

In recent years numerous sawmills

throughout the region have shuttered due to log shortages, high log costs, and declining lumber prices. These challenges forced the previous owners of the Banks sawmill to postpone further investments and upgrades at the mill. Hampton plans to change that by investing in upgrades to improve safety and productivity at the mill. To make these improvements, Hampton will keep the mill shut down for approximately six months. During that time Hampton will hire some of the workers laid off by the previous owner to help with mill improvements and employ a number of local contractors for the more technical electrical and mechanical projects.

"With all the challenges, one might wonder why a company would continue to invest in sawmills," said Zika. "But we have over 70 years of experience in the sawmill business and people still need and want renewable wood products." Nearly 100 percent of a log is used when manufactured locally, creating a wide variety of value-added products for construction, paper processing, landscaping, and energy generation.

"Working forests are an important part of the Pacific Northwest economy, our history, and our culture," said Zika. "We happen to think that managed forests and the sawmills they support will continue to play a key role in the sustainability of rural and urban communities in Oregon long into the future."

WOEC 2016 Annual Meeting

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section of underground distribution line along Hayward Road, a project to convert overhead line at the tunnel on Highway 26 to an underground line to improve reliability, re-establishing a backup feed for the Hamlet area, and a repair to the Timber-to-Elsie line.

General Manager Bob Perry also discussed the weather event from last year and reported that total cost of damages and repairs for the event to WOEC was \$1.425 million and FEMA will reimburse the co-op for the full 75% of that amount, with WOEC recovering \$1.1 million. Perry also introduced the idea of implementing a voluntary round up program to assist those who have difficulty paying their bill. Perry also discussed the difficulty for the co-op in establishing service for customers involved in legal marijuana grows. Perry said some of the operations are very large and create issues with providing the needed load requirement. "This has become a major source of frustration for our operations department," said Perry.

State Senator Betsy Johnson briefly addressed the audience and encouraged them to support the Vernonia Schools Bond Measure on the ballot in November. "This will let us do some improvements but most importantly allow us to refinance the Bond and close the books on the schools and be finished," said Johnson. Johnson also discussed the upcoming construction of the Vernonia Senior Center, and the economic impact on Columbia County with new industrial growth in Scappoose that includes the construction of a new Cascade Tissue conversion plant and the Boeing Research facility being built in partnership with Portland Community College. Johnson also questioned Measure 99, that would send all school students to outdoor school, and asked voters to look closely at this measure before voting for it.

Following the conducting of all business, door prizes were awarded and the members enjoyed a BBQ lunch provided by Terrel's BBQ.

DID YOU KNOW?

Vernonia School District is asking for a YES VOTE for a bond measure of \$6.8 Million

The debt for the construction of our school has a balance of \$4.1 Million that needs to be paid

Our school district was chosen through a lottery system by the State of Oregon to get \$2.7 Million in a matching grant IF we pass the bond (We vote IN \$6.8 million and we will receive \$9.5 Million Total!)

If we pass the bond, not only will we refinance our debts, BUT will ALSO complete athletic fields and facilities on the campus, construct, furnish and equip new classrooms (including a dedicated art room and welding/metals shop), and upgrade Mist school

The cost to pass this bond is estimated at 24 cents per thousand of County assessed value of your property

If your property is assessed at \$100K, your cost is estimated at \$24.00 per year

If your property is assessed at \$200K, your cost is estimated at \$48.00 per year

If your property is assessed at \$300K, your cost is estimated at \$72.00 per year

If your property is assessed at \$400K, your cost is estimated at \$96.00 per year

PLEASE BE VERNONIA'S HERO, VOTE YES FOR BOND MEASURE 5-259

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