

## Bridge Street Bits

By Karen Miller

HI EVERYONE! I am happy to not have to type this underwater, and bet you are happy not to have to ready this underwater either. Thanks to WOEC for once again working round the clock to help bail many of us out of the cold with no lights and heat. Hang in there, sunny and warmer weather is just around the corner!

THE SENIOR CENTER BOARD was able to meet this month. Thank you to all my fellow members who work hard to come together and make some not-so-easy and time consuming decisions for the current and future Vernonia Senior Center. A SPECIAL thank you to board member Tobie Finzel for working so hard to put together a notebook with dividers for each of us to keep our information in one spot! Thanks Josette at City Hall for running off all the paperwork. Our teamwork is great!

TAKE NOTE: An AARP Safe Driving Class is scheduled for Monday, March 6 at 9 am at the American Legion Hall here in Vernonia. The cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non

members. Check with your insurance agent for reduced rates for taking this class. Please call me to reserve your spot: Karen at (503) 429-0273

NOMINATIONS for Columbia County My Fair Lady Court Vernonia representative are now being taken. Nomination forms available at the RSVP office in St. Helens or submit names and phone numbers at our office at the Learning Center.

A FREE MEAL will be served at the American Legion Hall Building on March 29 at 11:30 am. All are welcomed... Senior Center members or not. Sponsored by a private supporter of the Vernonia School Bond issue. See you there!

SEVERAL BIG THANK YOU's are in order in this issue:

KUDOS to Josh Johnston from Vernonia U.S. Bank for their kind and needed donation to our Support Our Seniors Program. Thank you to Harry Wilson for bringing this program to the attention of U.S. Bank.

These funds support our senior meal

program consisting of Meals on Wheels and Meal Vouchers. Donations to this program are tax deductible. Thank you for considering a donation to be sent to Vernonia Senior Center at 959 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

KUDOS also to the Black Iron Grill for braving the storm and preparing meals for those in need on that dark and stormy day when the electricity was out. And for the volunteer deliverers who got through the weather to deliver those days; you are appreciated.

Call me with any senior news or questions: (503) 429-0273.

SENIOR SIGN OFF: A person doesn't realize how much he has to be thankful for until he has to pay taxes on it. (P.S. Call for FREE tax help by AARP volunteers. To see if you qualify call the St. Helens Senior Center (503) 397-3377)

See ya' around town.

**Vernonia Senior Center • 939 Bridge Street • (503) 429-3912**

## Tall Wood Buildings Rise in the Northwest *continued from page 5*

size, including door and window openings, with state-of-the art CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) routers, capable of making complex cuts with high precision. Finished CLT panels are exceptionally stiff, strong, and stable, handling load transfer on all sides."

According to the Association, CLT is also lightweight, results in far less waste at the construction site, has lower construction costs than steel or concrete, makes on-site assembly and installation fast and easy, and improves thermal and acoustic performance while meeting or exceeding seismic and fire safety codes. **Mass timber construction could bolster jobs and economies in struggling rural communities**

Once the backbone of Northwest economies, timber towns have been struggling since the era of old-growth logging on federal lands came to a close and the network of smaller, community-based mills has shifted to consolidated, more modernized mills along the I-5 corridor. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) sees enormous potential for revitalizing rural economies by bolstering production of CLT, estimating that such "next-generation wood products" could create up to 85,000 jobs in struggling rural communities. Last year, along with the Softwood Lumber Board, they awarded \$3 million to incentivize tall wood building projects, including Lever's Framework building for Beneficial State Bank.

Not only could the growth of tall wood buildings boost job creation in the timber industry, but it could also be a boon to manufacturing. Of the approximately 26 CLT processing facilities worldwide, there are only three in North America. In order to keep up with demand for engineered wood, we have the opportunity to open new CLT manufacturing plants that could source lumber

from local mills and accommodate the growing need for CLT and related products.

Renewed and targeted investments in our timber and forest products industry could lead to a transformative opportunity for tall wood buildings to address growing wildfire and forest

The type of wood used to construct CLT can come from very small logs and a variety of species, which offers manufacturers the ability to make CLT out of restoration forest products — small logs from forest restoration thinning. Investments in new processing facilities to marry the growing demand for CLT with the ample supply of small logs from overly dense forests could reduce the risk of severe wildfires, improve habitat, water quality, and forest health, create local jobs and boost rural economies.

health threats facing our region's forests, restore jobs in rural timber communities, and improve the way we manage our forests with the urgency brought on by our changing climate.

**Tall wood buildings offer an unprecedented opportunity to change the way we manage our forests**

The inherent environmental benefits of wood are clear. Unlike steel or concrete, which have heavy carbon footprints, forests store carbon — both in the woods as well as in long-lived wood products including building materials. Since concrete is the second most highly utilized substance on the planet (besides water), accounting for up to eight percent of global CO2 emissions, shifting to wood from concrete in the building industry could have a significant impact on carbon sequestration.

But there is an even greater potential upside to CLT to consider: the opportunity to increase the pace and

scale of forest restoration across the West. There are currently an estimated nine million acres in Oregon and Washington alone at a high risk of fire on the east side of the Cascades and thousands of acres of overly dense forests on the west side of the mountains in need of thinning. While naturally-occurring

wildfires are an important component to forest health, especially in the drier forests on the east side of the Cascades and in Southern Oregon, prescribed burns and forest thinning can mimic natural fires and support forest health and watershed restoration goals. However, with local milling capacity in our dry forest regions at a lower level than nearly any time in the last century, forest health and restoration projects in these areas often struggle to pencil out. They can be expensive to plan and implement and often lack operational mills within a reasonable hauling distance that also accept the size and type of trees being harvested.

Where does CLT come in? The type of wood used to construct CLT can come from very small logs and a variety of species, which offers manufacturers the ability to make CLT out of restoration forest products — small logs from forest restoration thinning. Investments in new processing facilities to marry the

growing demand for CLT with the ample supply of small logs from overly dense forests could reduce the risk of severe wildfires, improve habitat, water quality, and forest health, create local jobs and boost rural economies.

The growing interest in mass timber buildings could create markets for restoration forestry, but it could also reinforce business as usual — intensive, industrial forestry that has degraded native fish and wildlife habitat, contributed to serious water quality problems around the region, consolidated milling infrastructure, and promoted a boom-and-bust economic cycle for many rural communities.

To better understand the exciting opportunities that the growth of CLT provides, Ecotrust is working to help answer a few questions particularly relevant to our region:

- How can the growing mass timber market help increase the pace and scale of restoration forestry in the Pacific Northwest?
- How much timber of what species and size could we harvest in Oregon and Washington's dry forests over the next 20 years under carefully-planned restoration forest harvests? And how much of this supply would be suited for CLT production?
- Where are the hot spots for restoration forestry and potential CLT facilities?

*To hear more about the opportunities, challenges and potential climate change benefits presented by good wood in building projects, join Brent Davies at the Mass Timber Conference, hosted in Portland on March 30.*

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