

Continued from Page 6

North America has 16 mass timber manufacturing facilities, including a cluster in the Northwest, which together have a capacity to generate 56.5 million cubic feet of wood products a year, said Roy Anderson, vice president of the Beck Group, a forest products consulting firm.

Not all structural components require the full capacity of presses that glue the lumber or plywood together, which reduces the optimization of this equipment, Anderson said. As a result, manufacturing facilities are collectively operating at about half to two-thirds of their capacity.

Machining is needed to shape mass timber panels to the specific parameters needed for structural components, which currently serves as a constraint on the industry, he said. However, it's possible that ancillary businesses located near manufacturers will begin fulfilling this machining role over time.

Experts say the sweet spot for mass timber is in structures between six and 12 stories tall, though builders must have a strong incentive to use the materials — for example, enthusiasm for the carbon-storing properties of wood.

"You have to have a very strong 'why,'" Parsons said.

A study by researchers at Oregon State University determined last year that mass timber buildings cost nearly 6.5% more to construct than comparable concrete buildings.

A building's developer must have a greater vision for using mass timber, rather than being driven purely by financial considerations, said Chris Roberts, associate principal at Opsi Architecture in Portland.

"That's when it falls off," he said.

One of the main barriers to mass timber's use is achieving buy-in from all the decision-makers involved in a project, from the owners to the design team, Roberts said.

Since it's a relatively new building method in North America, not many people have experience taking mass timber projects from design to installation, he said.

Many designers and developers were taught to use steel and concrete in constructing large buildings, so they must still become familiar with mass timber and its properties, said Ryan Flom, chief marketing officer of the Softwood Lumber Board, an industry-funded organization that promotes softwood lumber.

"A lot of it is comfortability," Flom said. "All those paradigm changes take time."

Education about mass timber's ability to resist



MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI/CAPITAL PRESS

Participants in a timber industry tour observe a new mass timber building under construction on Oregon State University's campus in Corvallis in 2018.

fire, for example, can help overcome hesitation by financing and insurance companies, Parsons said.

According to Woodworks, the thickness of mass timber panels allows them to withstand fire better than traditional lumber. During a fire, a char layer forms on the panels that insulates their interior from damage, keeping them structurally sound.

"It is a whole new contingent of people to educate," Parsons said.

EXPERTS SAY THE SWEET SPOT FOR MASS TIMBER IS IN STRUCTURES BETWEEN SIX AND 12 STORIES TALL, THOUGH BUILDERS MUST HAVE A STRONG INCENTIVE TO USE THE MATERIALS — FOR EXAMPLE, ENTHUSIASM FOR THE CARBON-STORING PROPERTIES OF WOOD.

Taking care of your business... Just Got Easier!



Mike Wallis, CPA



Suzanne Corliss

- Income Tax Preparation & Planning
- Accounting Services & Financial Statements
- Elder Accounting
- Consulting Services for New & Existing Businesses
- Payroll Services



WWC Business Solutions, Inc.

1024 MARINE DRIVE • ASTORIA • 503.325.2200