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CROWN Z TO GP

Products evolve with mill



A forklift operator moves packages of Brawny paper towels.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

By MIKE WILLIAMS
EO Media Group

WAUNA — When Crown Zellerbach opened the mill at Wauna in 1965 it manufactured Chiffon, Marina and Nice N Soft bath tissue; the No. 3 paper machine started making newsprint in 1967.

The brands have changed since then, and the plant, now owned by Georgia Pacific, no longer manufactures newsprint. The mill is ever evolving, adapting to corporate branding, product trends and economic realities.

Now the Wauna Mill is known for MD and Angel Soft toilet tissue and Brawny paper towels.

Clatsop County's largest private employer also produces Vanity Fair, GP's top-selling table napkins.

In addition, the mill manufactures private-label products. The company declines to discuss its private contracts in deference to its clients.

No. 6 and Brawny

The No. 6 paper machine, one of the latest additions to the mill, cranks out Brawny paper towels at a staggering rate. Large rolls are stored in a cavernous warehouse before moving on to the next step, known as converting.

Specifications of the machine, such as capacity, roll width and other details, are trade secrets the company is unwilling to share; the information could help competitors.

Every hour technicians sample the product to ensure it measures up to specifications. It's placed on a machine and tugged in multiple directions until it tears. Then another sample is tested wet.

"Obviously with towel or tissue, those products people use when they get wet, especially towels, ... we actually test the strength when it's wet as well as (when it's dry)," said Craig



Jim O'Brien tests the tensile strength of samples of Brawny paper towels. The strength is measured both while the paper towels are dry and wet. The samples are also tested for absorbency.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian



Bundler operator Craig Zacher inspects a freshly wrapped package of Brawny paper towels at the Wauna converting plant.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Puzey, mill quality manager.

The towels are tested for absor-

bency and other criteria. It's all part of making customers happy, said

Kristi Ward, public affairs manager for the Wauna Mill.

"That's why we do this," she said. "We want our customers happy with the product when they open it. We want it consistent every time they buy it, performing the way they want it to."

If a batch fails to meet minimum standards, it does not go on to the next stage. Instead it gets re-pulped and becomes another batch of paper. That doesn't happen often.

"We're testing every hour, and we're on top if it pretty good," Puzey said. "It's not very often you'd see something spike, because if that were to happen they'd see an indication in their process control parameters."

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Sardine fishery nixed

West Coast season called off amid drop in numbers

By JEFF BARNARD
Associated Press

Fisheries managers have decided to call off the West Coast sardine fishing season that starts in July because of rapidly dwindling numbers, hoping to save an iconic industry from the kind of collapse that hit in the 1940s and lasted 50 years.

Meeting outside Santa Rosa, California, the Pacific Fishery Management Council voted Sunday to close the season starting July 1.

It had little choice. Estimates of sardine abundance have fallen below the level for a mandatory fishing shutdown.

"We know boats will be tied up, but the goal here is to return this to a productive fishery," David Crabbe, a council member and commercial fishing boat owner, said in a statement.

The council next will decide whether overfishing has been a factor in the latest collapse, which could trigger an emergency shutdown of the current season, which runs through June. It votes Wednesday.

Made famous by John Steinbeck's novel "Cannery Row," the once-thriving sardine industry crashed in the 1940s.

It revived in the 1990s when fisheries developed in Oregon and Washington waters, but population estimates have been declining since 2006, and catch values since 2012.

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Oregon under fire

State mulls higher wildfire premiums and deductible

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Officials at the Oregon Department of Forestry are getting anxious, as the Oregon heads into fire season without the wildfire insurance policy the state has traditionally purchased.

Forest landowners, lawmakers and other state officials are mulling over a proposal that would more than double Oregon's wildfire insurance deductible, from \$20 million to \$50 million.

"As far as the Department of Forestry is concerned, if there's going to be a policy, we'd like to see it in place as soon as possible because the last two years we've seen fires early in the season," said Rod Nichols, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Forestry. "Because of the dry, warm conditions, we could see fires early on be substantial. This is the fifth year now of drought in the Northwest and Oregon."

The state usually has a policy in place by April, but the past two costly wildfire seasons caused insurers to reconsider whether to issue coverage to the state. The state "sent a contingent to London" earlier this year to present a case for Lloyd's to continue insuring the state, said Tim Keith, administrator of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee that oversees money raised through fees paid by forest landowners. Oregon State Forester Doug Decker is currently discussing the proposal with lawmakers and the other officials who will decide whether to purchase a policy this year.

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One Washington, two sides

Washington's east-west divide predates statehood

By DON JENKINS
EO Media Group

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Residents of Eastern Washington are frustrated with the more populous Westside of the state. And nowhere was that frustration more prominent than one day last month in the Capitol. On the docket were cougars and wolves, two hot-button issues that split the state right down the center of the Cascade Range.

In one hearing, Eastside ranchers were asking senators to loosen the state's law against using hounds to chase cougars and keep the predators away from livestock.

In another hearing, an Eastside

county commissioner told legislators that his constituents were fed up with wolves.

They continue to attack cattle and sheep, costing ranchers tens of thousands of dollars. All the while wolves remain protected under state and federal endangered species laws that draw most of their support from Westside groups and individuals.

In the weeks since, lawmakers have agreed to take a close look at the wolf problem. The hounds, however, will remain on the leash.

For the day, Eastern Washington was 1 for 2. Not bad, considering the Westside's population — and representation in the Capitol — is more than three times as large as the Eastside's.

The state's longstanding east-west divide has popped up several times this legislative session, and it usually involved agriculture. Divisive issues such as wolves, cougars, trails and even honeybees have all surfaced this session in the state Capitol.

It's not surprising, or new. The issues change, but the division between Eastern and Western Washington — sometimes called the Cascade Curtain — predates statehood. As the pioneers debated how best to divvy up the Oregon Territory into states, they argued about East versus West.

More than 125 years later, some Eastside lawmakers want a re-do.

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