

Why is there a lumber shortage in the U.S.?

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

SALEM — Many parts of the U.S. are facing lumber shortages — and experts say the problem is acute in the West after 2020's devastating wildfires.

Industry experts say several events led to the lumber shortage: lockdown orders and closures, new safety protocols that slowed production at mills, and a spike in home remodeling while Americans were quarantined followed by a massive wildfire season.

"The industry is normally like this fine-tuned machine. A lot of events (in 2020) disrupted it," said Cindy Mitchell, senior director of public affairs at the Washington Forest Protection Association, or WFPA.

Cumming Corp., an international cost consulting firm, said wildfires along the West Coast "have led to a significant spike in certain material prices."

According to the Oregon Forest and Industries Council, or OFIC, a trade group representing forestland owners and wood product manufacturers, last year's fires in Oregon alone may have killed 15 billion board-feet of timber, enough to



Ryan Brennecke/EO Media Group, File

Experts say several factors contributed to the lumber shortage: lockdown orders, new safety protocols, a spike in home remodeling and a massive wildfire season.

build 1 million homes.

The National Association of Home Builders, or NAHB, reports that between mid-April and mid-September 2020, lumber prices soared more than 170%, adding \$16,148 to the price of a typical new single-family home. Prices drifted lower at the start of fall, but they're

on the rise again.

Mitchell of WFPA and Sara Duncan, spokeswoman for Oregon Forest and Industries Council, or OFIC, both said the lumber crisis was precipitated by several events.

Some Western states temporarily shut down construction work at the start

of COVID-19, which in turn meant some mills had to shut down, creating a backlog.

New safety protocols within mills slowed production.

With Americans stuck at home under shutdowns, remodeling boomed and people used up much of the existing lumber supply at a

time when mill production was curtailed.

Then wildfire season hit, wiping out millions of acres of timberland.

Now, demand for building materials is even higher from West Coast communities that are rebuilding after fires.

The lumber shortage has had a variety of impacts.

Construction associations have reported contractors are showing increased interest in alternative materials, such as metal framing.

Forestry leaders say higher lumber prices don't mean timberland managers are hitting it big. Instead, experts say, many timber companies are facing tight margins because they had equipment and trees destroyed in fires, higher input costs and expenses associated with labor and reforestation.

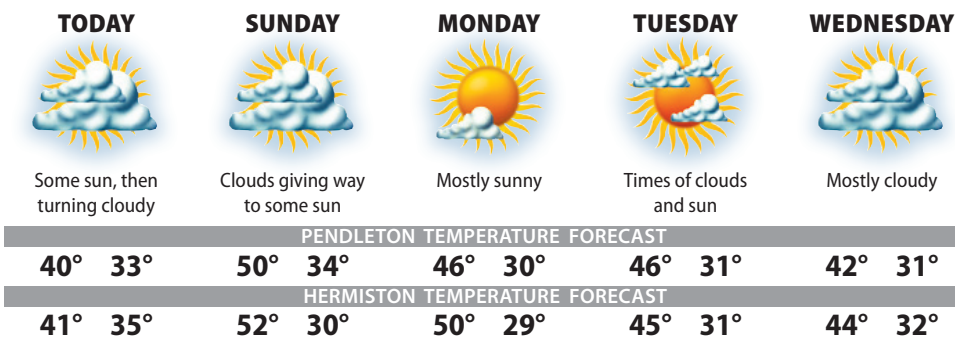
Lumber shortages also have economic consequences for fire victims.

Many U.S. insurance policies limit the time frame a person has to rebuild a home after a fire. With limited supplies of lumber and few contractors available, many survivors may not meet their insurance rebuilding deadlines.

Some state agencies are seeking to address this. In Oregon, for example, the state Division of Financial Regulation recently negotiated agreements with several insurance companies, pushing them to extend their timelines to at least two years after the date of loss.

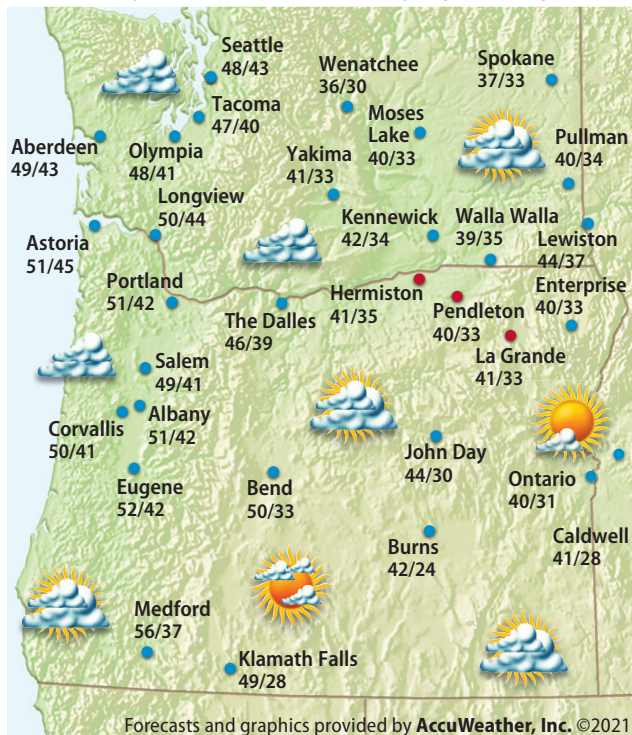
"The weirdness of (2020) backed up the whole forestry system," said Mitchell of WFPA.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	45°	27°
Normals	41°	27°
Records	68° (1974)	-8° (1907)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.01"
Month to date	0.44"
Normal month to date	0.81"
Year to date	0.44"
Last year to date	0.60"
Normal year to date	0.81"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	47°	28°
Normals	41°	28°
Records	63° (1961)	-10° (1950)

PRECIPITATION

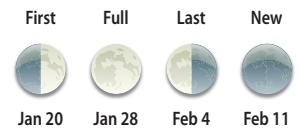
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace
Month to date	0.34"
Normal month to date	0.62"
Year to date	0.34"
Last year to date	0.13"
Normal year to date	0.62"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	NNE 3-6	WSW 7-14
Pendleton	NNW 4-8	WSW 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:31 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:39 p.m.
Moonrise today	9:58 a.m.
Moonset today	8:43 p.m.

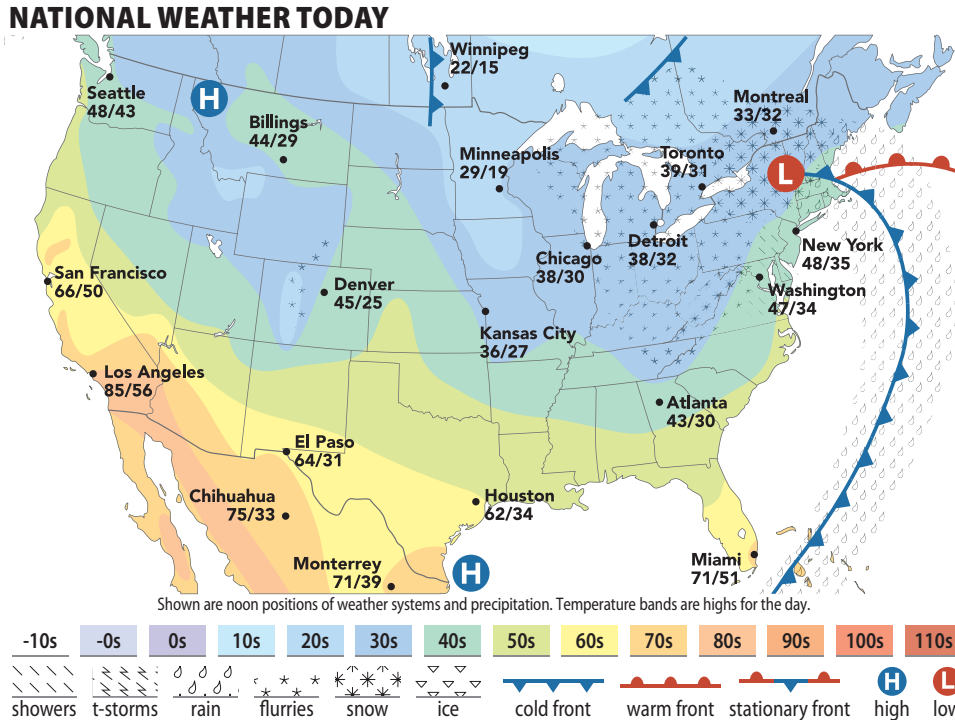


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 94° in Oceanside, Calif. Low -19° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



La Grande BLM billboard defaced

By KALEB LAY
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — A billboard in La Grande featuring a Black Lives Matter logo was defaced with white paint last weekend.

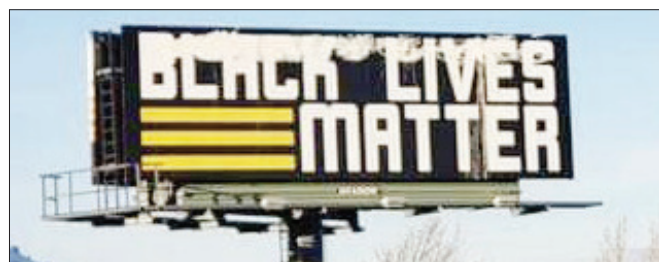
The sign was erected after a crowdfunding effort in August 2020 raised \$5,000. Maria Carmichael, who led that effort, said she'd expected the billboard to be vandalized sooner or later.

"I'm disappointed, but I'm not at all surprised," Carmichael said. "If anything, I'm surprised it didn't happen sooner given all of the vitriol that was spewed in response to the sign going up in the first place. There were threats to shoot it, to paintball it, to burn it down, and it wasn't just a few people saying that."

A tidal wave of social media engagement — much of it emotionally charged — also met the *La Grande Observer's* coverage of the then-incoming billboard.

The Black Lives Matter sign was initially slated to be put up in a different location, but it was moved to the billboard along Interstate 84 because it was "less accessible" and would be more difficult to vandalize, Carmichael said.

She indicated she would support reporting the vandalism to law enforcement, but



Maria Carmichael/Contributed Photo

A billboard in support of the Black Lives Matter movement stands defaced on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021, on Interstate 84 in La Grande.

the decision ultimately fell to Meadow Advertising, the company based in The Dalles that owns the billboard.

"If they are OK with me making a report, I would like to do that," she said.

Carmichael is wasting no time, however, in trying to find out who is responsible.

"I am actively seeking information from people, if they happened to see anything posted on social media, hear of anything about the vandalism," she said. "It is a small town, but it's also located right on the freeway."

The vandalism of the Black Lives Matter billboard follows the insurrection at the United States Capitol building on Jan. 6. Five people died as a result of the riot, including one United States Capitol Police officer whom the mob dragged and beat.

Conspiracy theories circulating on social media are that some accused Black Lives

Matter and Antifa supporters posed as supporters of President Donald Trump during the riot. Myriad outlets, among them the Associated Press, Politifact, Reuters and USA Today, quickly debunked those claims. Fox News also acknowledged there is no evidence to support those conspiracy theories.

Carmichael said the insurrection may have contributed to the vandal's motivation, but the hate for the Black Lives Matter symbol was in place long before the events of Jan. 6.

"I would say that (the U.S. Capitol riot) probably emboldened whoever did it, but again, there were hundreds of terrible remarks on social media," Carmichael said.

The defaced vinyl on the billboard has been taken down and will be replaced in the coming weeks, Carmichael said, as soon as replacement vinyl can be produced and arrives in La Grande.

IN BRIEF

Oregon Association of Nurseries to host virtual marketplace

PORTLAND — Oregon Association of Nurseries, which represents nearly 700 wholesale growers, retailers, landscapers and suppliers statewide, announced Wednesday, Jan. 13, it will host a virtual marketplace event in February.

The event, called Nursery Guide LIVE, will take place online Feb. 17-18.

"Nursery Guide LIVE is designed to provide nursery industry professionals with sales and buying opportunities just as the spring shipping season kicks off," Allan Niemi, the association's director of events, said in a statement.

The virtual event, Niemi said, is intended

to complement rather than replace the annual in-person Farwest Show, which is still tentatively planned for Aug. 18-20 if the pandemic is under control by then.

At the Nursery Guide LIVE event, association member exhibitors will have the opportunity to showcase their plant offerings, services and supplies.

Many nursery owners are already part of a printed guide published annually called the Nursery Guide book, which typically has 300 pages of listings and content about Oregon nurseries. February's virtual event was inspired by the Nursery Guide, but will push the concept further by giving customers the opportunity to interact in the virtual marketplace rather than simply read listings in a catalog.

—Associated Press

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

In the App Store:

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
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Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
52 weeks	\$135	42 percent
26 weeks	\$71	39 percent
13 weeks	\$37	36 percent

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

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