

# Growing demand driving force behind Woodgrain expansion

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

ISLAND CITY — A major Union County employer is set to expand its local workforce substantially.

Woodgrain Lumber & Composites has announced it will be adding 35 positions at its particleboard plant in Island City over the next six months. This will boost the number of employees Woodgrain has at the plant to about 153, an increase of almost 30%.

“We are excited to continue to invest in our particleboard facility, as well as our local community. This is also an opportunity to expand in the markets we serve,” said Tracy Hayes, the human resources manager for Woodgrain’s Lumber and Composites Division.

Woodgrain also employs 90 people at its lumber mill in La Grande, bringing the total number of people on its Union County payroll, counting administrative staff, to 218.

Applications for the positions now are being taken and hiring will begin soon. The 35 new employees will be added in phases through March 2022, Hayes said.

Woodgrain is expanding its staff at the Island City plant because home construction is increasing in the West,



A forklift operator moves finished plywood product on Sept. 29, 2021, on the shipping floor of Woodgrain Lumber & Composites in Island City. The business is adding 35 positions at its particleboard plant.

which is creating a growing demand for particleboard products needed for homes, including furniture and cabinets, Hayes said.

The particleboard the Island City plant produces is tailor made for specific uses such as airport jet bridges and tables for table tennis.

The plant was built in 1966 and was owned by Boise Cascade throughout its history before it was acquired by Woodgrain in 2018. Woodgrain also acquired Boise Cascade’s La Grande lumber mill at the same time. Tom Lovlien, vice presi-

dent of Woodgrain’s Lumber and Composites Division, said he is optimistic and excited about this hiring initiative.

“It is an exciting time to be a part of Woodgrain,” Lovlien said in a press release. “Our company has continued to invest in its facilities here in Northeast Oregon, and our leadership has complete confidence that the particleboard team will meet this new demand, while maintaining both customer and employee satisfaction. This is a place people want to be and we want them here.”

Hiring for the particleboard plant positions will be conducted for entry level and supervisory positions. No manufacturing experience is needed for the entry level positions, for Woodgrain will provide all the training needed. Wages for entry level positions will start at \$18.31 an hour.

“All of our positions provide long-term family-wage careers,” Hayes said.

Island City Mayor Dave Comfort said Woodgrain’s announcement is most welcome.

“I think it is great news,



Scrap wood and recycling products sit outside Sept. 29, 2021, at Woodgrain Lumber & Composites in Island City. The business is adding 35 positions at its particleboard plant.

not only for Island City but for Union County in general,” he said. “I know of people who will benefit from this expansion.”

The mayor said there is some concern about how McAlister Road in Island City will hold up under the heavier traffic load it will shoulder as the 35 employees are added. Comfort said he will work to make sure steps are taken to keep McAlister Road strong enough to handle the added traffic volume.

Suzzannah Moore-Hemann, executive director of the Union County Chamber of Commerce, also is encouraged by Woodgrain’s announcement.

“We are always very excited when any of our

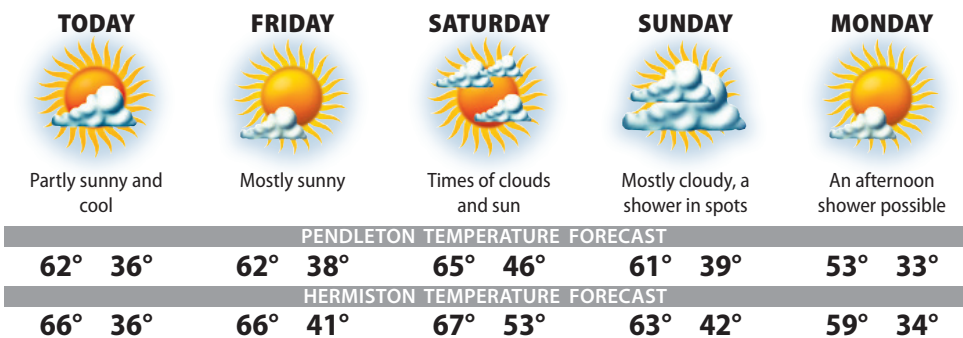
local businesses are able to broaden their workforce and provide good family-wage jobs that continue to add vitality and vibrancy to our community,” Moore-Hemann said.

Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage echoed this sentiment.

“This will be a big boast for Northeast Oregon,” she said. “An expansion like this is exciting.”

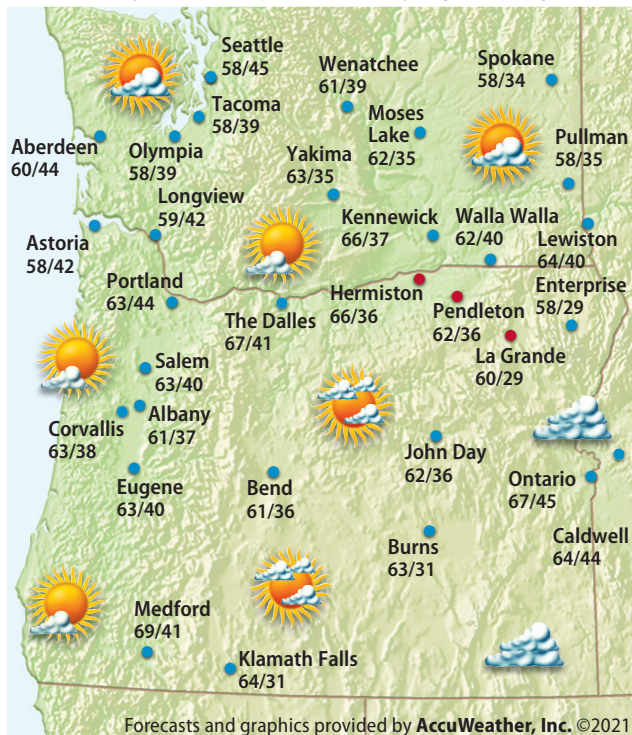
Woodgrain, with corporate offices in Fruitland, Idaho, is a family-owned company founded 65 years ago. Island City and La Grande are among more than 20 cities it has plants and centers in throughout the United States, including Pilot Rock, where Woodgrain also owns a sawmill.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



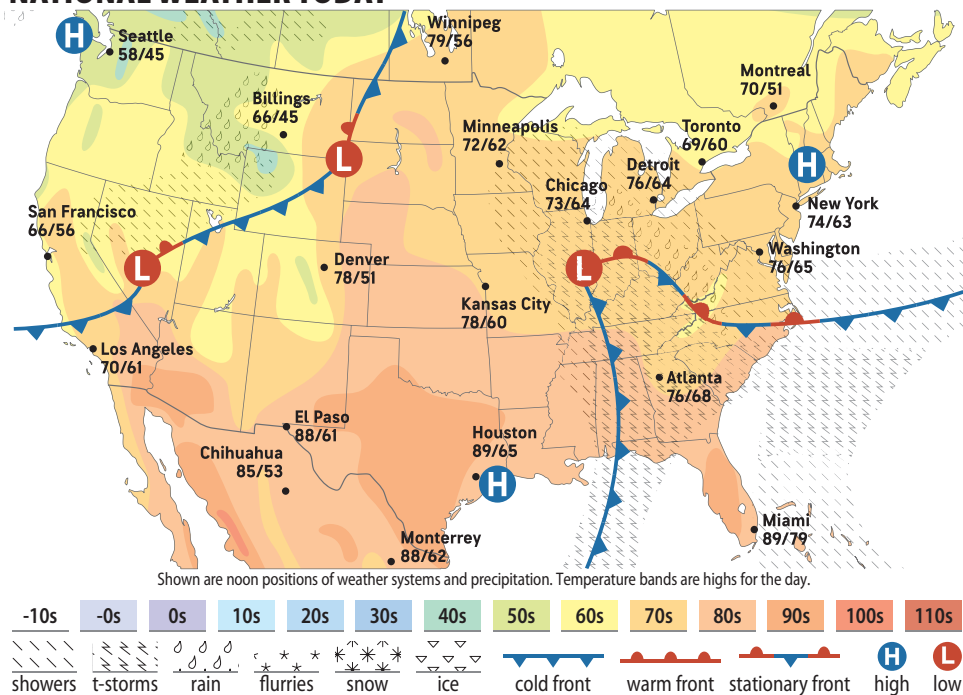
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	61°	47°
Normals	70°	44°
Records	89° (1933)	24° (1916)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.02"	
Month to date	0.02"	
Normal month to date	0.18"	
Year to date	5.02"	
Last year to date	8.82"	
Normal year to date	9.39"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	65°	52°
Normals	72°	42°
Records	88° (2014)	23° (2012)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.00"	
Normal month to date	0.12"	
Year to date	2.67"	
Last year to date	1.73"	
Normal year to date	5.79"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Fri.	
Boardman	WSW 3-6	WSW 3-6
Pendleton	WNW 4-8	NW 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:01 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	6:24 p.m.	
Moonrise today	8:25 a.m.	
Moonset today	7:19 p.m.	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 97° in Zapata, Texas Low 21° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Ruling blocks 900-acre logging project

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

ASHLAND — A 900-acre logging project in Southern Oregon must be enjoined because its impact on great gray owls wasn't properly evaluated, according to a federal judge.

U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken has ruled the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's approval of the Griffin Half Moon project was "arbitrary and capricious," which means logging cannot proceed until the plan is revised.

Aiken has adopted a federal magistrate judge's recommendation to block the project for violating the National Environmental Policy Act, dismissing the BLM's objections that the case was analyzed under the wrong legal standards.

In 2018, the federal government authorized the vegetation management project, which is east of Ashland, to generate timber while

creating young forest stands and reducing the forest's vulnerability to wildfire, disease and insects.

The Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council filed a lawsuit the following year, claiming the project would harm the Pacific fisher, which requires dense canopy closure, and the great gray owl, which relies on older forest stands.

Earlier this year, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Clarke in Medford agreed with the environmental plaintiffs regarding the great gray owl but rejected their arguments about the Pacific fisher, a carnivore in the same family as the weasel.

A broader "resource management plan" for 1.2 million acres of BLM property in the region dedicates "a large network of reserve lands for great gray owls" and expects their habitat to improve, but the agency

didn't analyze the project's particular effects on the species, Clarke said.

The agency's decision record "contains no meeting notes, memos, reports or other documentation" that it specifically considered site-specific impacts on the owls, he said.

"Because the BLM failed to consider an important aspect of the problem of threats to great gray owls, its approval of the project was arbitrary and capricious," the judge said.

As for the Pacific fisher, the magistrate judge determined that BLM's "consideration of impacts" to the species was "clearly and separately identified" in the agency's environmental assessment of the project, the judge said.

The BLM's analysis of the project's impacts on the Northern spotted owl, a threatened species, also "properly functions as a proxy" for the effects on the Pacific fisher, he said.

## IN BRIEF

### Wolf pack kills 12 ewe sheep

LA GRANDE — A wolf pack in Union County north of Elgin has killed 12 ewe sheep and injured two guard dogs protecting sheep during the past week or so, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The attacks are attributed to the Balloon Tree Pack, according to ODFW investigations.

That pack's breeding pair produced pups for the first time in 2020, with at least three surviving through the end of that year.

### Attack on sheep

An employee of a sheep rancher found three dead adult ewes on Sept. 29 on a private, timbered pasture, according to ODFW.

Officials from ODFW and from the federal USDA Wildlife Service agency arrived on Sept. 30 and found four more dead ewes. Wildlife Service employees then found three more dead ewes on Oct. 1, and one dead and one injured ewe on Oct. 1. Workers euthanized the injured ewe that day.

All the sheep were in the same pasture.

Officials estimated the sheep were attacked the night of Sept. 28.

ODFW employees examined seven sheep carcasses on Sept. 30, three on Oct. 1 and two on Oct. 4. All had pre-mortem wounds, with tissue trauma up to two inches deep and tooth scrapes consistent with wolf attacks on sheep, according to ODFW reports.

### Attack on guard dogs

On the morning of Oct. 1, a sheep herder found two injured Kangal guard dogs on an industrial timberland grazing allotment. The herder told ODFW employees that at about 2 a.m. on Oct. 1 he heard an apparent fight between his guard dog and an unknown predator, with barking and growling.

Biologists examined both guard dogs. One had a 6-inch-long area of matted blood on its throat and the left side of its neck that was dripping blood. The dog was agitated and could not be held for further examination, according to an ODFW report.

— EO Media Group

**CORRECTIONS:** The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

**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:  
**EO** **EO**  
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.  
Copyright © 2021, EO Media Group

**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

**ADVERTISING**  
**Regional Sales Director (Eastside) EO Media Group:**  
• Karrine Brogotti  
541-963-3161 • kbrogotti@eomediagroup.com  
**Multimedia Consultants:**  
541-564-4531  
• Melissa Barnes  
541-966-0827 mbarnes@eastoregonina.com  
• Audra Workman  
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com  
**Business Office**  
• Dayle Stinson  
541-966-0824 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

**Classified & Legal Advertising**  
Classified advertising: 541-564-4538  
Legal advertising: 541-966-0824  
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

**NEWS**  
• To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com  
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Rachael Plunkett at 541-966-0818.  
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rplunkett@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements  
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips, email sports@eastoregonian.com.

**COMMERCIAL PRINTING**  
**Commercial Print Manager:** Holly Rouska  
541-617-7839 • hrouska@eomediagroup.com