

Saginaw mill meets with city, plans to rebuild

By Caitlyn May
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On May 27, the Whitsell Manufacturing mill burned to the ground. Five months later, something is rising from the ashes.

According to Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers, city administration met with employees from the Lane County Department of Taxation and Assessment and Whitsell owner Walter Whitsell to explore future options for the company surrounding Enterprise Zone credits. Traditionally, enterprise zone credits exempt businesses from property taxes for a specific amount of time. According to an update posted by the city manager's office, the Cottage Grove/Creswell Enterprise Zone allows three years of property tax exemption if, "new qualifying investments providing the business increases their employment by a minimum of 10 percent."

At the time of the fire this past

spring, Whitsell employed an estimated 100 workers. The fire, which destroyed the 180,000 square-foot mill was ruled an accident but was described by South Lane County Fire and Rescue Chief John Wooten as "the fastest growing fire" he had seen during his career.

According to the city manager's office release, the meeting was centered on discussing the Enterprise Zone credits available to Whitsell to rebuild. The release also noted that Whitsell has started purchasing equipment and hoped to be back in business by June of next year.

And while a new building is a little less than a year away, Whitsell has continued operating. Four months ago, the company was granted use of a space in Cottage Grove to continue managing its business after Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce Director Travis Palmer made a phone call.

"I gave them a few days to get their heads to stop spinning," he

said previously. But once they had, he reached out and asked what the chamber could do to help.

"One of the owners, he mentioned they're currently trying to maintain some sort of business out of his living room and it wasn't working well because it wasn't set up for business with faxes and phone lines," Palmer said.

So, he made another call.

Paktech, a manufacturing company that provides handles and application equipment to food and beverage companies, expanded its business to Cottage Grove last year after it moved into the former Kwikiee building on Davidson Ave.

The company originally brought approximately 35 jobs to the area using its in-line automated application that provided a 100 percent recyclable product.

And while the factory space at the new Paktech building is in full



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

The scene on May 27 as emergency personnel responded to the fire at Whitsell Manufacturing.

swing, the office spaces were empty. Until owner Scott Diehl received a phone call from Palmer.

"I think there's 10,000 or 12,000 feet of office space up there and they were operating out of dining rooms and things like that so I offered them the space to see if that would help them get started," Diehl said at the

time.

While the exact location of Whitsell's grand rebuilding was not announced, the city manager's release noted that the company was hoping to re-establish its presence in Saginaw--the area the mill was built 40 years ago.

Training meeting to be held for Beds for Freezing Nights volunteers

Beds for Freezing Nights (BFN) opens a shelter at the First Presbyterian Church when the average overnight temperature is 29 degrees or below from Nov. 15 through March 31. Two-plus volun-

teers are needed to staff the shelter during each of the following shifts: 6 to 11 p.m., 10:50 p.m. to 4 a.m., and 3:50 to 8 a.m. ' Responsibilities include setting up/taking down shel-

ter supplies; checking guests in and out; and super-ising the shelter. Volunteers are required to undergo a \$10 background check and attend the training meeting on Saturday, Nov 3, from 10

a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Presbyterian church 216 S Thirrd St. Volunteers will be assigned a shift according to their availability when the shelter is activated. To vol-

unteer, or for more information, contact Christine Moats at 541-521-8816 or visit www.freezingnights.com for volunteer applications, a policy manual and more information.

Tax deductible cash donations may be sent to BFN (checks made out to Beds for Freezing Nights) at P.O. Box 1110, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Mark Simonsen has the honor of playing Taps at all three memorials on Saturday, Nov. 10. In that light, the drawing for the guitar with hard case is on Halloween. Proceeds go to help the band with travel expenses.

LORANE NEWS

• Today, Oct. 31, as we go about our day, let's watch out for all the little ghosts and goblins moving around, especially at dusk and later.

It could be dark tonight.

• Lorane Christian Church is hosting a Trunk'n' Treat in

its parking lot from 4 to 7 p.m. Come, decorate your trunk and hand out treats.

There will be soup and cider for people to enjoy while there.

• Thursday, Nov. 1, Lorane Grange meets at 7 p.m. for

its regular monthly meeting. The next spaghetti dinner and bingo at the grange is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 16, starting with dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Maybe you'll even win the large progressive blackout

amount!

• The next Rural Art movie night is Saturday, Nov. 10.

• This coming Sunday, Nov. 4, it's time to set your clocks back, so remember to "fall back" to standard time.

• A special "Thank You" to all who worked on and came to the Fundraiser at Crow Grange, to help Cody

Tripp beat his cancer.

By all accounts, it was a great turnout with lots of love for Cody and family.

Anyone still interested in donating to help, contact Angela Tripp.

• Our Crow High School Band leaves on Nov. 8 to March at the Parade of Hero's in Washington, D.C.

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Fill out the form below to have your organization's holiday bazaar included in the bazaar listing in the Cottage Grove Sentinel each Wednesday during the holidays. Cost for this service is \$45.00 for a 1x3 advertisement, 50 words or less. Please enclose check or money order if mailing in this listing.

Call us at 541-942-3325 for more information.

Deadline is NOON, Thursday for the following week's publication.

Must be pre-paid to be accepted.

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DATE OF EVENT: _____

LOCATION: _____

TIME: _____

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