

Paul Barnum Remarks  
to the Oregon Board of Forestry

July 23, 2015

Board Chair Imeson, State Forester Decker, Board Members - My name is Paul Barnum and I am executive director of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. With me today is OFRI's newest employee, Timm Locke, director of forest products. We're here today to introduce Timm and a new educational program that we are beginning - a program to acquaint Oregonians with the environmental benefits of using wood building products in residential and commercial structures.

As the Board of Forestry, you are dealing with tough forest management issues. Perhaps lost in the discussions, or at least set on a back burner, is the fact that Oregon is providing what I believe to be the most remarkable building material on the planet.

Human civilization is facing incredible challenges. World population is growing at the rate of 200,000 people every day. At current rates, in just 35 years, world population will increase by another two billion to more than nine billion people. The questions of our time is how will we feed, clothe and shelter these new people? Where will the energy come from to power their cities, plants and vehicles? Where will we find the water to meet all of their needs? And how will we keep the planet from over-heating?

Wood products are not THE answer to these questions, but they are AN answer.

Wood products are remarkable. Reusable. Recyclable. Renewable. They require far less fossil fuels than other building products to manufacture. Trees suck up atmospheric carbon, a greenhouse gas linked to global warming and climate change, convert it to wood through photosynthesis and unlike other manufactured products, continue to store that carbon for their useful life - which can be for centuries.

As we face the twin challenges of a growing population and a changing climate, wood products are becoming part of a new national and international discussion - a new buzz. Oregon has the opportunity to be in the vanguard of that discussion. We have incredible advantages. A perfect climate for growing wood; a workforce second to none; nationally recognized colleges of architecture, engineering and forestry; a regulatory climate that despite our periodic disagreements encourages forest management for wood production while protecting the environment and everything we love about our state.

OFRI's enabling legislation called us to advance public understanding of Oregon's forests, forest management and wood products. Since 1991, we've been focused on the first two - forests and forest management - but we haven't emphasized wood products much. With this new national discussion, we felt it was time to refocus our efforts slightly and spend a little more time, money and effort to talk about wood products.

This past year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture took a grant program that had historically been focused on woody biomass and opened it up to innovative wood use. OFRI applied and was one of

several programs in the Pacific Northwest to receive an award. Copies of the Region 6 news release and descriptions of the award winners were included in your pre-meeting packets.

OFRI received a two-year, \$250,000 grant to develop a statewide wood products education program - not to sell sticks and boards, but to help architects, engineers and building professionals understand the environmental benefits of using wood products in residential and multi-story commercial buildings. It is our belief that through education, we can create and strengthen markets for the timber anticipated to come from federal forests as a result of the collaborative efforts to restore forest health and fire resiliency.

There are many new engineered wood products coming out, and state funding of the new National Center for Advanced Wood Products Manufacturing and Design - a collaboration among the UO School of Architecture and the OSU Colleges of Forestry and Engineering - will discover even more products and more uses for them. Timm's job for the next two years, and we hope longer, will be to share the vision for wood use and facilitate the transfer of knowledge. We want the building community to know that wood products are good for the environment, and that wood products grown in Oregon are done so sustainably and with protections for the environmental resources we value.

At this point, I'll stop preaching and give Timm a few minutes to talk about his background.

Chairman Imeson, State Forester Decker, Board Members, I want to express my sincere thanks to the Department for its support in the grant process.

To conclude, we are on the threshold of the Wood Century. In Canada, Europe and Australia, we're already seeing construction of tall wood buildings of 10 stories and higher. Here in Oregon, we can lead this movement for wood use in the United States by becoming the intellectual center of increased and responsible wood use - benefitting our rural economies, restoring forest health and fire resiliency to our federal forests, and helping provide solutions to the problems vexing our planet.

Thank you for your time this afternoon.