



## In the News

### **\$5 Million for Forest Lab**

A new science research lab located in Juneau, Alaska, will be receiving \$5 million in stimulus money.

The Juneau Forestry Sciences Laboratory researchers and staff study fish, water, soil, and vegetation for the U.S. Forest Service. Much of the research involves climate change and its impacts on Alaska's natural resources.

There are three Forest Service research labs in Alaska: a small lab in Sitka that studies the economics of timber production; one in Anchorage for forest inventory and analysis; and another in Fairbanks where scientists study the Interior's boreal forests.

### **Federal Money to Montana's Landowners**

Each year, the federal government provides approximately \$3 million to individual landowners to care for their forests.

Unfortunately, the money comes through a complicated, bureaucratic process, which includes federal, state, and local agencies. In November, the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and Montana State University's Extension Service met with state and federal agencies to develop a better way of getting funds to landowners. The new process should be ready to implement in May 2010.

"We want to make sure the person who owns forest land and needs help has the most efficient way of getting that," said Joyce Swartzendruber, Montana state conservationist for the federal NRCS in Bozeman. "We've already got all these programs in place and everything's running now. This helps us work more closely and strategically with private forest owners."

WCFP Relocates Mill

West Coast Forest Products of Arlington, Wash., has announced that it is relocating a state-of-the-art, high production sawmill to the White Mountain region.

President Steve Shriver worked in the area over ten years ago and has wanted to bring modern sawmilling equipment to his former home. He believes that West Coast Forest Products can contribute to the forest restoration in the region.

"The expansion of thinning projects in the region has created an opportunity for a firm such as ours to provide an economic engine that will allow more thinning, at a reduced cost for the federal and state governments. Thinning the forests and utilizing the wood has a huge community benefit: reduced slash burning, controlled burns, protection of communities from wildfire, air and water quality improvement, and adding high paying jobs for the area," he said.

### **Luxury Home Surge**

The housing market is still in a slump, but there are signs of recovery. Toll Brothers Inc., the largest U.S. luxury homebuilder, says they've seen the biggest growth in orders since 1992.

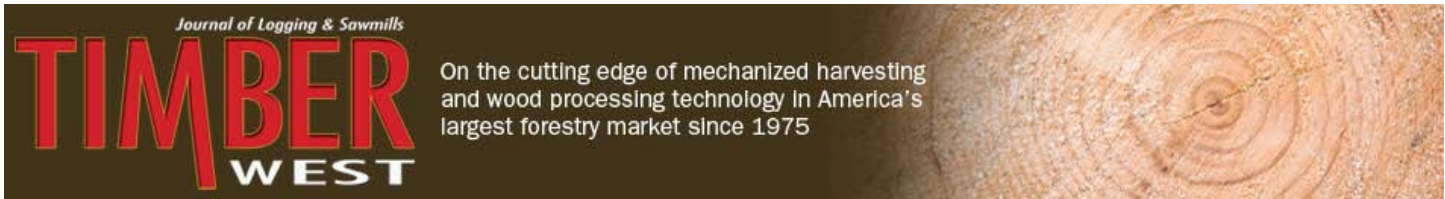
They believe the reason for the growth is a combination of improved consumer confidence, stabilized home prices, and a drop in unsold home inventories.

The company said that its net contracts climbed to 765 in the three months through October from 539 a year earlier, and the cancellation rate dropped to 6.9 percent from 30.2 percent.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Robert Toll said the housing recovery "will come in fits and starts" and be "through choppy waters."

### **Tax Credits May Improve Housing Market**

In November, President Barack Obama signed the "Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009" into law, which extends the \$8,000 tax credit for first-time buyers until May. Mr. Obama also extended the income caps of those eligible for the credit to \$125,000 and introduced a tax credit of \$6,500 for existing homeowners who have lived in their home for five years and are buying a new home.



It is estimated that the extension and expansion of the first homebuyer tax credit and the introduction of a credit for homeowners could improve housing sales by a further 10 percent over the next six months.  
Prepare for Economic Rebound with FSC Certification

True North Certified Forest Products Network and the True North Certified Forestland Network announced that the Networks and their members had received FSC Chain-of-Custody and/or Forest Management certification for an array of products manufactured from wood originating in well-managed FSC certified forests or from reclaimed/recycled sources. The "great recession" may have dented the sales of wood products, but wood product manufacturers and forestland owners are preparing for the economic rebound with the awarding of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. Persons interested in more information about finding FSC certified suppliers, or manufacturers and forestland owners inquiring about becoming FSC certified, may contact the Network at 1-888-223-5629, e-mail [Info@TrueNorthCertified.com](mailto:Info@TrueNorthCertified.com), or visit the Network's website at [www.TrueNorthCertified.com](http://www.TrueNorthCertified.com).

### **Salazar's Timber Plan**

In October, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced a Western Oregon timber plan that would yield 230 million board feet of timber over the next year.

Forty-six sales that would yield 199 million board feet have been approved. Another 16 sales have been identified, but environmental impact statements need to be completed.

"It will provide economic certainty for local mills, jobs, and communities while protecting endangered species," Salazar said during a conference call with reporters.

The plan, which involves the 2.5 million acres of Oregon & California Railroad trust lands, is meant as a short-term answer to the July withdrawal of the Western Oregon Plan Revisions.

Last year, sawmills in Oregon processed 4.7 billion board feet of timber, 23.5 percent less than in 2007, according to the Western Wood Products Association. The wholesale value of the state's lumber, at \$1.26 billion, was nearly 43 percent lower than the year before.