

January 14, 2006

Executive Summary

To: Eugene Sustainable Business Initiative
From: Mike Barnes, Cascadia Forest Goods, LLC
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Re: Eugene Sustainable Forest Products and Eco-Building Depot

Vision

The vision is to make Eugene a center for the sale, value-added remanufacturing, and distribution of “sustainable” wood products.

Introduction and Background

Eugene is located desirably in the center of the largest temperate rainforest in the world, and historically has been and continues to be a center for secondary forest product remanufacturing and distribution. Every day and night trucks and trains leave Eugene loaded with wood products heading East to supply much of the country with dimensional lumber, laminated beams, plywood, and other wood products. The challenge we face is to make a transition to a forest-sector economy based on “sustainable” forestry management.

Markets

“Green” building projects seeking awards from the prestigious LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program of the U.S. Green Building Council (www.usgbc.org) have become a major local and national market for “sustainable” forest products. The USGBC recognizes the credibility of wood products which come from forests which are independently (third-party) certified as meeting the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

At the local level, many of Eugene’s citizens share a commitment to the sustainability of our forests, and some have demonstrated their willingness to purchase “sustainable” wood products. With more leadership and education, local demand could increase significantly, thereby increasing supply and lowering prices.

Supply

We are fortunate to have a number of suppliers of FSC-certified wood products in and near Eugene: Warm Springs Forest Products, a supplier of FSC Doug fir and Hem-Fir dimensional lumber; Roseburg Forest Products, a supplier of FSC plywood; CollinsWood, a supplier of FSC Hem-Fir and Pine dimensional lumber, and particleboard; States Industries, a supplier of FSC Hardwood Panel Products; Western Panel, a manufacturer of FSC veneer panels.

There is already a strong core of companies in Eugene who are FSC-certified for Chain-of-Custody, including: Cascadia Forest Goods, Western Panel, Lumber Products, North American Wood Products, Keith Brown Building Supplies, Kelly-Goodwin, Neil Kelly, States Industries, and West Wind Forest Products. In addition, Eugene is also home to a substantial number of local wood remanufacturing

companies with the capabilities to manufacture all kinds of products using “sustainable” wood.

Opportunities

This proposed strategy could help revitalize the local economy by moving certified wood from “sustainably-managed” forests and mills to local value-added manufacturing facilities, and then on into local, regional and national markets. Given current recognition of “peak oil” concerns, re-localizing Eugene’s economy makes good sense. Re-developing “brownfield” land with access to railways and warehouse facilities will facilitate this transition.

An Eco-building Materials Retail and Wholesale facility could offer a range of “sustainable” wood products across the region and the country, as well as to local consumers. Such a facility could also sell and distribute other “green” building products, in addition to “sustainable” wood products.

Jobs could be created in brokering, expanding capabilities and capturing value in secondary-wood remanufacturing (e.g., milling, re-sawing, molding, etc.), and distribution of “sustainable” wood products.

The success of third-party certified wood products and the economic viability of these companies which supply them depends on consumer demand. The City of Eugene could provide needed leadership in specifying and purchasing “sustainable” wood products for City projects, and could assist in consumer education about the opportunities and significance of choosing environmentally responsible wood products.

Conclusion

The recent advent of third-party certification of sustainably-managed forests and “chain-of-custody” companies for the remanufacturing and distribution of these wood products (similar to the “organic” label for food products), along with Eugene’s history and geographical location, gives Eugene unique advantages to develop a “sustainable” wood products sector. It is reasonable to expect to see continued, solid growth in demand for third-party certified wood products locally, regionally and nationally, resulting in local job growth for many companies as this emerging industry develops. Such a bold development can help move our economy and civilization toward true sustainability.