

# Far Reaching. Locally Rooted.



Photo by David Gibb

MEDFORD, OR - A devastating fire in 1998 didn't stop Boise Cascade from regaining its footing as the region's economic engine. The fire damaged much of Boise's Medford Plywood facility, and the company's 450 workers wondered about their future and whether the company that had a long history in the valley would move its operations elsewhere.

The fire is now in the rear-view mirror, and the company has shown its deep commitment to remaining in Southern Oregon. "Boise has a very long history here, and we have dedicated, skilled employees and very good facilities," White said. "Despite the challenges, we're a successful business. We're here for the long haul."

Looking back, the effort has paid off for both the community and for Boise Cascade. Boise is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (BCC) and is based in Boise, Idaho, has five plants in the region and well over 800 employees. Boise has numerous operations all over the U.S.

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MEDFORD, OR - With an international reach and a strong local presence, Boise Cascade literally rose from the ashes in 1998 and regained its footing as the region's economic engine.

A devastating fire in 1998 damaged much of Boise's Medford Plywood facility, and the company's 450 workers wondered about their future and whether the company that had a long history in the valley would move its operations elsewhere.

Jackson County, SOREDI and other partners worked tirelessly with Boise to establish an enterprise zone that helped remove many bureaucratic hurdles for the rebuilding effort. The Boise Cascade Recruitment Task Force was formed by local officials to work closely with the company to address its concerns and to make sure it remained in Jackson County.

Boise assessed its needs, and with the support of the community, began to rise from the ashes. "Certain parts of the facility survived the fire," said John White, regional manager for Boise. "New equipment was built and some of the existing equipment was rebuilt."

Looking back, the effort has paid off for both the community and for Boise.

Innovative, the company continues to expand well beyond its strong roots in the wood products industry. White said Boise is focusing on more creative ways of producing its wide array of wood products. "We're focused on optimizing our facilities and maximizing recovery of the logs that we purchase," he said.

Today, Boise continues to make investments in equipment and training to improve its efficiency and meet its customers' needs. The company is able to crank out millions of feet of I-joists and laminated veneer lumber every year with sophisticated equipment at one of its plants in White City. This plant is one of the largest of its kind in North America, second only to the Boise plant in Lena, LA. Locally, the company has five plants with well over 800 employees, and has numerous facilities all over the U.S.

A skilled workforce is needed to handle the highly technical operations at a Boise facility. The company is concerned about the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Boise has an in-house apprenticeship program to develop millwrights, electricians and programmers, and has an active recruitment program to hire these skills. "Skilled tradespeople are very difficult to find in Southern Oregon," White said. "We are challenged with replacing retiring employees. There is a lot of pride with our employees in Western Oregon, many of them work their whole career at Boise."

Wood supply is a constant challenge in this region. Another issue is that major markets for its products are located in other parts of the country. "When you look at where people are building houses, it's not in the Pacific Northwest," White said. "We have to ship our products a long way to market."

Despite these considerations, Boise will continue to invest in Southern Oregon. "Boise has a very long history here, and we have dedicated, skilled employees and very good facilities," White said. "Despite the challenges, we're a successful business. We're here for the long haul."



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Boise Cascade's engineered wood products are used primarily in new home construction



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