Eastern Washington Sawmill Statistics for Calendar Year 2001

Produced by

The Inland Northwest Forest Products Research Consortium, a research cooperative centered at the Forest Products Department at the University of Idaho, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana-Missoula, and the Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory at Washington State University

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The Inland Northwest Forest Products Research Consortium, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University, has undertaken to work closely with the forest products industry of the state of Washington to collect important economic and production information related to the Eastern Washington Forest Products Industry. Started in 1999, this effort has received strong support from the wood products industry of the region. This annual report provides a summary of monthly production, shipments, raw log acquisition, employment, and payroll data for all twelve months of calendar 2001. Subsequent interim reports will be provided semi-annually as data are collected.

Data presented are based on a census of primary processors located in eastern Washington. For purposes of this report, eastern Washington includes all of the sawmills located east of the Cascade Mountains within the state of Washington.

The intended readers of this information include the Washington State Governor's Office, the Washington State Legislature, industry members, state, federal, and tribal land management agencies, the media, and other parties interested in this very important sector of the state.

Results

During 2001, 14 primary lumber processors of eastern Washington produced 849.8 million board feet of lumber, lumber tally, down 1.7% from 2000. Average monthly production of all mills combined was approximately 70.8 million board feet, lumber tally, ranging from 62.2 million board feet (February) to 80.8 million board feet (October). Shipments by these mills during the year totaled 854.8 million board feet of lumber, lumber tally (Figure 1), up only 0.2% from 2000. Average monthly shipments for all mills equaled approximately 71.2 million board feet of lumber.

Shipments of lumber during the period remained within a range of ±9.4% of the volume of monthly production, while actual production averaged 0.70% less than shipments from month to month.

### Figure 1.

Acquisition of logs in the region was approximately 592.6 million board feet during the year for all mills combined, up 9.5% from the previous year. On a volume basis, 33.9% of the volume was acquired from industrial forest lands, 30.2% was acquired from private nonindustrial forest land owners, 23.9% from tribal forest lands, 6.3% from U.S. Forest Service lands in Washington State, 3.3% from Washington State Department of Natural Resource lands, and 1.3% from other public lands. Other sources totaled less than 1% each, on average.

Monthly employment during the year was fairly constant at 1,356 employees each month (down 3.3% from 2000), and ranged from 1,319 (April) to 1,398 (August) employees during this period (Figure 2). This estimate includes only employees involved directly in lumber production such as sawyers, millwrights, and associated personnel. Total monthly payroll for these positions averaged $3.5 million (down from $3.6 million in 2000) and was in the range of $3.2 million (December) to $3.9 million (May) monthly (Figure 2). Total payroll to production employees was approximately $42.0 million during 2001 in eastern Washington, down from $42.9 million in 2000.

The number of hours worked by each production employee averaged 41.0 hours each week during 2001, down from 41.8 hours a week in 2000. May represented the highest average number of hours worked per week at 43.1 hours, while February was the lowest at 38.9 hours. Employee productivity, measured in thousands of board feet produced by each employee, averaged 2.43 MBF per worker day during 2001, which is up 6.1% from the 2000 average of 2.29 MBF per worker day. Worker productivity for the region reached its peak during October at 2.69 MBF per worker day and fell to its lowest level during December at 2.21 MBF per worker day (Figure 3).

Wages paid to production employees averaged $13.73 per hour during 2001, based on the total number of hours worked in each month and monthly production employee payroll. This is down from the $13.84 average per hour in 2000. The lowest average cost per hour was observed in October, at $13.34, while June had the highest at $19.58 per hour. The variability was affected greatly by changes in the amount of overtime paid at each mill from month to month.

Eastern Washington mills produced 849.8 million board feet of lumber in 2001, which is 5.0 million board feet, lumber tally, less than they shipped during the same period (Figure 1). This production level is down 1.7% from 2000. Shipments during the year exceeded production by only 0.58%, using lumber produced during the previous year and

**Figure 2.**

*Monthly employment and payroll. Mill production employees (left hand axis) and the corresponding level of monetary compensation (right hand axis) in eastern Washington during 2001.*
Eastern Washington sawmills shipped approximately $335.3 million of processed wood products during the year. This value of shipments is up considerably (14.2%) from the value of shipments in 2000, which was $293.9 million.

**End Note**

Washington State University and the consortium members wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to the members of the forest products industry of eastern Washington for their support of this work and their assistance by providing the base data used in this analysis.