

## **A Model of Efficiency in Southwestern Washington**

State-of-the-art mill technology allows modern sawmills to make the most of the region's timber resources by improving the efficiency of mill operations and optimizing the milling process so that more of each log is used. Sierra Pacific Industries' high-speed stud mill near Centralia, Washington, is a good example of such innovation. Recently built by the Centralia Sawmill Company, the mill was purchased in the spring of 2007 by Sierra Pacific, based in Redding, California. The new mill can process logs up to 19" in diameter, but for greatest efficiency, the optimal range is 7" to 12." Combining the latest equipment with a highly efficient mill design, it produces high value 2x4 and 2x6 studs, primarily from Douglas fir grown in southwestern Washington. At the same time, the mill ensures that nothing is wasted by using the remaining parts of the log to create other wood products, including chips, sawdust, and bark.

Sierra Pacific is currently in the permitting process to install a new boiler, which will further enhance the efficiency of the mill by allowing a large proportion of the lumber to be dried on site. Since purchasing the mill, Sierra Pacific has also added a third 40-hour per week shift, thus increasing the number of the mill's fulltime employees to approximately 90 crewmembers.

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