



## County completes sale of former Lyons mill site

LYONS — A land transaction between Linn County and Sierra Cascade Forest Products that began in May 2020, was completed Tuesday morning during the Board of Commissioners’ weekly meeting.

On August 11, the county approved giving Sierra Cascade Forest Products time to complete a Phase I environmental assessment and has been completed.

Sierra Cascade, which produces scented cones and holiday home décor, paid the county \$525,000 for the 68-acre former timber mill in Lyons.

The county had foreclosed on the property in 2018 in lieu of \$60,000 in back taxes. The property has a market value of \$1.1 million. The county accepted bids, with another offer of \$200,000.

At the time of the auction, Sierra Cascade officials said they would employ about 100 people to start with and could grow to as many as 300 employees.

The company plans to diversify its product offerings with firelogs, starters, colourflames and bundled firewood.

The company has a commanding national market share in bundled firewood and holiday cone products. It has seen its business grow substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic, because families took on home improvement projects.

The county will transfer the property deed on Friday.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Were informed by Juvenile Director Torri Lynn that in there are 173 youth in the probation unit, either on probation or pending a court hearing. Of those, 59 are assessed as high-risk. In July, there were 13 Linn County youth held for 181 days; two Lincoln County youth held for seven days; and three Benton County youth held for six days. There are 54 young people in the Community Programs Unit and the Intervention Specialist is working with 42 young people, of which 32 have not had involvement with law enforcement.
- Were told by Fair & Expo Center Director Randy Porter that although business had begun to tick up,



*Sierra Cascade Forest Products has paid Linn County \$525,000 for a 68-acre former mill site in Lyons. It plans to employ 100 to 300 people, producing scented holiday cones and holiday home décor.*

the recent reinstatement of mask mandates statewide has caused a downturn. He said shows have cancelled, although the annual ag show is still on schedule. Food and beverage contracts will soon be up and Porter is working on those issues.

- Approved acceptance of a \$4,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs to assist Linn County Veterans Services in developing printed materials for a suicide prevention program.
- Were impressed by the recent news that employment in Linn County is rebounding. Commissioner Will Tucker said the county’s stance of

providing funds to local small businesses had a positive effect. He thanked Board Chairman Nyquist for spearheading the program and also thanked the Albany and Lebanon chambers of commerce for being partners in identifying businesses and getting much-needed funds to them.

- Approved First-Time Youth Wage Grants with Wirth Farms, Berkey’s Blueberries, Dairy Queen of Albany, Koos Seed Co., Third Knight Farms, Spurlin Farm Inc., and the city of Mill City. Employers who hire young people for their first job can receive a stipend of \$4 per hour for up to three youth, with a maximum of \$2,000 per employee.