

# Treemen felled by economy

United Press International  
PORTLAND, Ore. — There are thousands of lumberjacks and woodworkers on unemployment compensation in the nation's northwest timber belt.

Until inflation and high interest rates subside, they're not likely to be back in the tall timber. Those two economic factors have crippled the timber and housing industry. They have brought unemployment to about 20,000 woodworkers in northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, these states' employment security divisions report.

The recession in timber and wood products hit last spring. It improved slightly in the summer with declining interest rates. It started worsening again in the fall as interest rates went up again. Inflation, industry people say, still is nowhere near control.

The western lumber industry, providing more than half the nation's wood products, may be unable to fill 1981 lumber demand in an orderly manner, says H. A. Roberts.

"The present economic conditions that have crippled homebuilding in 1980 have forced western softwood lumber producers to slice their inventories to very low levels," said Roberts, executive vice president for the Western Wood Products Association.

"Some mills are not building log decks for normal winter production schedules," he told the association's fall meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz. "If a strong demand develops early in 1981, producers may not be able to fill it."

But, said Roberts, "compared to 1980, next year should be a year to rejoice for our industry." He expects it to be a transition year to anticipated high demand in the mid-'80s.

The association forecasts 1.6 million housing units will be built in the United States. If that happens, Roberts says, "Lumber demand will be up 12 percent; nearly 4 billion board feet, with

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western lumber mills producing 17.1 billion feet; 1.7 billion feet more than in 1980."

He expects interest rates will increase further, but then drop in 1981.

"We've had lots of fellows laid off," said Tony McCann, spokesman for the California Forest Protective Association in Sacramento, which represents 38 major industrial timber companies.

"The long-term problem is the availability of timber supplies," he said. "The major immediate problem has been higher prime interest rates which aggravates an already miserable situation."

"Effects of the layoffs are great because they occur in small rural northern California communities that depend on the industry. We're talking about people who have two or three dependents and they may choose to go elsewhere or if they stay they go into the unemployment line."

"The situation probably won't change until after the election, where there's some effect on the prime interest rate. And then there's still the larger problem of timber supply. That won't be resolved until we resolve the wilderness issue so we know how much timber we have to harvest. There's enough, if we are able to harvest more from public lands."

Congress recently expanded the Redwood National Park by 48,000 acres, taking more land out of commercial timber production. "That knocked a lot of people out of the box," said McCann, "because they were depending on that timber in the years ahead."

Employment figures in the California Labor Market Bulletin showed the number of timber workers declined from 70,600 in July 1979 to 60,800 at the same point this year. The California Finance Department said that housing construction fell 14.6 percent in May, leading the slow-down among the state's economic indicators.

However, Bank of America said California's housing construction industry is expected to recover because of a need for new and existing housing with a potential demand for 300,000 homes. Normally demand runs around 260,000 new dwellings a year, but it has been around 150,000 this year.

"Sooner or later," says Brian Barrette, a California state forestry official, "people have to build homes to meet the high demands so the timber industry's situation has got to improve."

# Former farm bureau leader still serving, speaking out

United Press International  
MACKINAW, Ill. — Bill Kuhfuss is retired now but his passions for a free market and saving the soil burn no less fiercely.

Days on his 1,000-acre farm near Mackinaw in central Illinois are spent doing odd jobs and fixing broken items for his son and nephew who run the farming operation and raise Angus cattle.

But Kuhfuss — once president of the powerful American Farm Bureau Federation — says he still has a hard time saying no when asked to serve.

As a result, he is currently on the Illinois Judiciary Inquiry Board, a bank board, a church board, and the Illinois State University Foundation Board. He also is a director of an advocate group for retired senior citizens.

"It's a delightful arrangement," Kuhfuss, 68, said of his retirement. "I'm still no good at turning down a job."

As president of the AFBF for five years, Kuhfuss was one of the leading proponents of a market system free of government regulation and politicians. He met frequently with presidents Nixon and Ford on farm policy and traveled thousands of miles promoting international trade for American farm products.

Now as one of the Farm Bureau's elder statesmen, Kuhfuss still speaks his mind.

"But I try to discipline myself and not say too much," Kuhfuss said with a laugh.

"I do have the opportunity to comment now and then, though," he

said, taking his cue to talk Farm Bureau philosophy.

"You have to remember, the guiding light and basic philosophy does not delegate the responsibility of directing agriculture to the politicians. I've been to too many places where politicians direct and control the farmer's product."

"And every place that is done, farmers are peasants. Farmers don't need to be peasants. The market economy must be retained. It's not only important to the farmer but also to the consumer."

"We haven't even begun to produce the maximum amount of foodstuffs in the United States that we have the potential to produce."

Before taking the national position in December 1970, Kuhfuss served as president of the Illinois Farm Bureau for 12 years and also as president of many of Farm Bureau's numerous business affiliates. He directed the move from Chicago to Bloomington of Farm Bureau's headquarters in 1961.

Before his long association with Farm Bureau began, Kuhfuss said, he had no intention of being anything but a farmer. He was graduated from Illinois State University in 1934 and had excelled in sports.

But he fought a stuttering problem.

"If anybody had told me then I would be up before 8,000 to 10,000 people speaking, I would have told them 'you're crazy,'" Kuhfuss said.

He overcame the speech problem and one job led to another.

"I had no real ambitions in the beginning," he said. "I just decided

if there was a place where I could be helpful or I could render service, I would do it."

In addition to helping develop farm policy, he also has been a leader in using conservation practices to protect the soil on the farm. Now all he has been in his family since 1934.

"The philosophy I've always promoted is, 'If you take good care of the soil — the soil will take good care of you,'" he said.

When most farmers were working their land until it was smooth, Kuhfuss used a chisel plow and left sufficient cover on the soil to protect it during hard winters.

In the late 1950s, Kuhfuss and his brother, Al, developed a minimum tillage system that also used the herd to protect the soil from erosion.

A two-wheeled wagon was towed to the back of the combine. It was full, the cracked kernels and other debris were dumped into the fields and the combine turned out into the fields to provide feed for the cattle. The manure provided fertilizer in the soil for the land, he said.

The Kuhfuss family also uses touring and terracing on rolling hillsides. But Kuhfuss is adamant that a farmer must voluntarily assume a responsibility for the care of his land.

"Regulations on farming imposed by a government agency are not anything American as far as I have ever conceived in the history of the United States," he

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# Study shows efficiency of new 'heatless' homes

United Press International  
NEW YORK — A San Francisco architect says it is no longer necessary to heat homes in the conventional sense.

Lee Porter Butler's heatless designs have been incorporated in 50 houses already. Several hundred others are under construction around the country.

All these houses have been designed from the ground up on Butler's heatless principle and have been oriented to face to the south. But he says many existing homes and buildings can be remodeled to be made heatless and that southern exposure is not really necessary. The homes using the Butler principle so far include one six-family condominium.

The Brookhaven National Laboratory has just completed the first phase of a study for the Federal Department of Energy of one his homes near Newport, R.I., a latitude that gets plenty of cold weather. The report showed the house exceeded Butler's claims and maintained temperatures close to 65 degrees in January with a daily variation of only two degrees while the outdoors temperatures ranged from 18 to 42 degrees and winds ranged up to 30 mph.

If Butler should prove his case conclusively, it will mean that, by the end of this century, the country could be saving practically all the energy now used in home heating, an amount that's almost half the current level of all petroleum imports. Butler calls it the Ekose's house, a

classical Greek word meaning "heatless."

He says that, until Brookhaven Laboratory reported "nothing but option" from government officials, conventional solar engineering, although banks and other lending institutions have been willing to write mortgage loans on houses without heating plants.

# Bus strike over?

United Press International  
DALLAS — City officials say more than 100 striking Dallas Transit System workers have withdrawn their pickets and asked to return to work, effectively ending a month-long walkout and allowing the city to restore full bus service.

However, a board member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1338 said the union had taken no official action to end the walkout.

DTS board chairman Ken Milligan said the workers signed up as a group to return to work late Monday, which would allow the system to restore full service within two weeks. Milligan said the mass pickup indicated to him that the strike was over.

"It appears it is because they did remove their pickets and they indicated they wanted to come back," Milligan said.

But Local 1338 board member Oscar Flores said today the union's

position had not changed, and as he was concerned the strike still on.

"We've heard some rumors about a return to work, but that's all heard, Flores said. We're still going to see what happens. We're budgeting."

Milligan said the DTS had tended a moratorium on hiring one but former employees past day. The DTS board last ordered a freeze on hiring employees to give striking employees a chance to return to work. Milligan said returning employees would retain seniority among themselves if they came back to work, but would have less seniority than employees who sat out the job.

The walkout began Oct. 1 and involved about 400 workers — low wages, poor benefits or poor pay, working conditions and treatment by supervisors.

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