

Rebuilding of the Murphy Mill – On July 5, 2005, Murphy Company’s plywood plant in Sutherlin burned to the ground, leaving many out of work in the small town. A year later Murphy announced plans to rebuild in Sutherlin and on March 17, 2008, the City joined Murphy in a grand-opening celebration at the new 200,000 square foot laminated veneer lumber plant.

Members of the State Economic Revitalization Team offered to assist with rebuilding within days of the fire. According to John Murphy, owner of the company, the collaborative state/local assistance facilitated by the ERT and the support from the Governor’s office was critical in his decision to build a new \$52 million LVL facility on the same site rather than relocating.

ERT agency assistance for the new manufacturing plant included expedited permitting for wetlands and air emissions as well as \$100,000 from the Strategic Reserve Fund. In addition, Sutherlin, Oakland and Douglas County approved a 15-year local property tax exemption as part of the Rural Enterprise program in exchange for annual payments of \$150,000 to Sutherlin. The agreement also requires wages at least 50 percent above the average Douglas County industrial wage. The Coos, Curry, Douglas Regional Investment Board provided close to \$100,000 for worker training.

City Manager Bud Schmidt said Murphy Co.'s return to Sutherlin is a good sign of the city's health. "This is an important indicator that Sutherlin will continue to grow, that we will have a job base here and that we will be more than a suburban residential-based community," said Schmidt.



July 5th, 2005 fire burns Murphy Mill to the ground in Sutherlin. Photo from *The News Review*.