

Woodworking Network

Freres Lumber installs first horizontal plywood press in U.S.

By Karen M. Koenig

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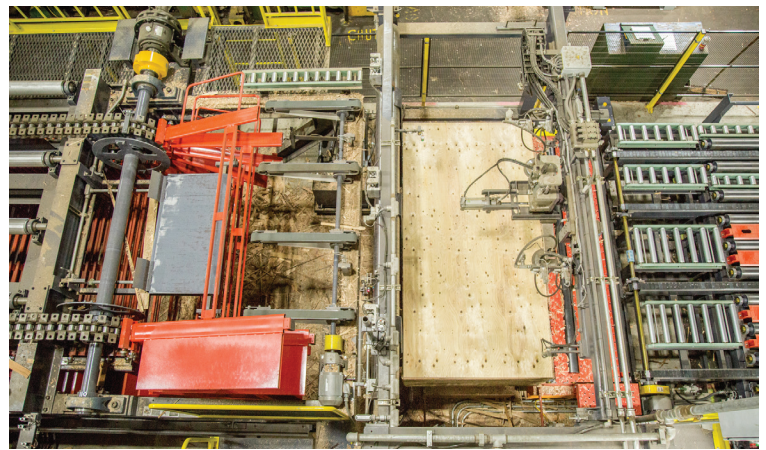
LYONS, OR - Freres Lumber Co. Inc. said it is the first U.S. manufacturer to install and operate the Taihei Horizontal Press Model P25-AB, a horizontal hot press for laminating plywood after the gluing and prepressing processes. The press was installed between Thanksgiving and Christmas and was fully operational on Dec. 17.

Freres said it is already reaping benefits from the horizontal press technology. According to the company, the horizontal press differs from conventional vertical presses in that the heat plates are installed vertically and apply pressure to the plywood horizontally. Production efficiency is increased, and the horizontal format maximizes the uniformity of contact pressure, is easier to install and maintain, is safer and is more energy-efficient than conventional U.S. vertical presses, the company said. The horizontal press also has an automatic feed system and does not require a dedicated operator.

The horizontal press is designed to produce 10-foot plywood, which will provide the opportunity to produce long length panels in the future, though the company said it has no plans to do so at this time. Additionally, the new system has a small footprint in relation to the number of platens, allowing Freres to install the 60-opening press, where previously there had been a 24-opening press.

“We are committed to investing in advanced technology to keep Freres current and competitive, and have always

looked to the future when making equipment and product decisions,” said Kyle Freres, vice president of operations for Freres Lumber. “This new horizontal press will broaden the range of products we can offer, by freeing up two other presses to accept additional production from our spreader and our PLV (parallel-laminated veneer) line.”



Taihei, based out of Aichi, Japan, designed and produced the press. Installation crews were sourced locally, but Taihei supervised the installation. Taihei has a local shop in Eugene, Oregon, and makes other products including knife grinders, knife honers and veneer dryers.

Established in 1922, Freres Lumber manufactures finished plywood products, lumber, veneers and structural composite lumber, including Mass Plywood Panel (MPP). The company operates six wood products facilities, including a cogeneration facility.

