



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Dianira Piceno

Phone: 503-951-2145

Email: dianira@wordsoutpr.com

Freres Awarded USDA Wood Innovation Grant to Expand Biochar Market

Federal support spotlights Freres' leadership in sustainable forest management and carbon-conscious innovation

LYONS, Ore., July 22, 2025 – [Freres Engineered Wood](#), a leading Oregon manufacturer of sustainable and innovative engineered wood products, has been awarded a \$229,199 Wood Innovation Grant from the [U.S. Forest Service](#). The funding will support the expansion of Freres' biochar production, a carbon-rich byproduct of wood waste, and help grow emerging markets for carbon-sequestering materials.

"We still have so much to learn about biochar, but this versatile, carbon-rich product is already a powerful tool for tackling complex challenges like responsible forest management and climate change," says Rob Freres, president of Freres Engineered Wood. "This federal grant will help our team continue developing and producing innovative, sustainable materials like biochar — for the health of our forests and the benefit of our country."

A [landmark study](#) published in May 2025 called biochar "one of the most promising carbon-negative technologies available today." Freres Wood began producing its own biochar from forestry residuals in 2021 as part of a broader commitment to minimize waste and use every portion of a log. In addition to generating carbon credits, the company has also partnered with local farmers and researchers to explore new potential applications for biochar, such as filtering microplastics from water and soil.

The grant is part of an [\\$80 million investment announced by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins](#) on July 17 to advance wood products manufacturing, expand active forest management and accelerate energy innovation. [More than 100 projects were awarded](#), including Freres Wood's biochar-focused initiative.

"The United States is blessed with a bounty of natural resources that we must properly manage to sustain our future economy and boost rural communities," Rollins said. "We're investing in innovation that ensures a steady, sustainable supply of American wood that not only supports jobs and fuels economies, it protects the people and communities we serve, as well as the forest resources they depend on to survive and thrive."

Freres plans to use the grant to expand its biochar production, support wildfire risk reduction in Oregon's forests and explore new carbon-smart products and processes.

For more information about Freres and their biochar products, visit www.frereswood.com.

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About Freres Engineered Wood Products

Freres Lumber Co., Inc., DBA [Freres Engineered Wood](http://www.frereswood.com), has a 100-year history of innovation in the wood products industry, beginning in 1922 when T.G. Freres started a small sawmill in Oregon's Santiam Canyon. Today, Freres' operations include finished plywood, lumber, veneer and structural composite lumber, Mass Ply products, biochar, and a cogeneration facility that supplies renewable power for the local area. Known for being traditionally innovative, Freres is deeply committed to its community and to sustainable forest management practices. The company uses 100 percent of the wood it processes throughout its three operations—Freres Engineered Wood Products, Freres Timber and Evergreen BioPower LLC—and six wood products facilities. Freres provides family wage jobs to nearly 500 employees. For more information, visit www.frereswood.com or call 503-859-2121.