SDMS Document ID
2032416

LIBBY — Officials at the Stimson Lumber Co. mill in Libby say the mill may close because of 19 workers compensation claims this year over asbestos.

The company's premiums have jumped to $600,000 annually, said chief operating officer Andrew Miller, and may exceed $1 million a year if the company can even get insurance.

Asbestos-contaminated vermiculite from the W.R. Grace mill in Libby was used to insulate the buildings at the Stimson mill when they were built. Mr. Miller also acknowledged that the mill hasn't been making much money and that Stimson is nearing the end of its 10-year contract for logs from Plum Creek Timber Co.

Closing the Stimson mill would idle 320 employees at Libby's last remaining major industrial employer.

MONTANA [illegible] 7-14-02