

[21779001]

Georgia-Pacific Corp. , exceeding some analysts' expectations , said third-quarter earnings rose 56 % to \$ 178 million , or \$ 2.03 a share , from \$ 114 million , or \$ 1.19 a share , in the year-earlier period .

[21779002]

Sales increased 10 % to \$ 2.65 billion from \$ 2.41 billion .

[21779003]

Per-share earnings were enhanced by the company's share buy-back program , which reduced the average shares outstanding to 87.5 million in the quarter from 95.8 million in the same quarter of 1988 .

[21779004]

With strong prices in the company's two major areas - building products as well as pulp and paper - analysts had expected a roaring quarter .

[21779005]

But the performance exceeded some estimates of around \$ 1.90 a share .

[21779007]

One reason : efforts to protect the spotted owl led to restrictions on logging in the Pacific Northwest , constricting supply and forcing prices up .

[21779008]

Another reason : strikes , both at Georgia-Pacific and other lumber companies also cut supplies and raised prices , analysts said .

[21779009]

For the nine months , Georgia-Pacific's earnings increased 49 % to \$ 504 million , or \$ 5.58 a share , from \$ 338 million , or \$ 3.41 a share .

[21779010]

Sales rose 11 % to \$ 7.73 billion from \$ 6.94 billion .