

The logo consists of the letters 'L' and 'C' in a light blue, sans-serif font, set against a black square background.

LUMBER CO-OPERATOR

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The background image shows a busy port scene. In the foreground, a white truck with a red container is driving on a road. Behind it, a large cargo ship is docked at a pier, with numerous colorful shipping containers (red, blue, green) stacked on its deck. The sky is clear and blue.

NRLA & ABMA Top Priorities:
**DELIVERING
SOLUTIONS**

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUE

JULY 2022

NRLA
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association

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Lumber Co-operator Mission Statement:

The Lumber Co-operator is committed to broadening awareness of critical issues shaping the lumber and building material industry. We promise to equip our readers with the necessary tools to compete in an ever-changing business environment.

Contact the *Lumber Co-operator* at 800-292-6752 or 518-286-1010.



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If you would like more information on how to become part of the Lumber Co-operator’s Editorial Advisory Board, contact publications at 800-292-6752 or publications@nrla.org.



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Rita Ferris
NRLA President

In this legislative issue of the LC, you will get a view of some of the issues our state and federal committees have been focusing on to improve your business environment. One of the things that may not be obvious is how NRLA's work in one state helps many other states. For example, precedents in workforce development programs, lien laws, and bills to improve air quality tend to impact multiple states.

As you know, NRLA supports legislation and opposes legislation. If a bill becomes law despite our opposition, your legislative team of NRLA members, staff, and our lobbyists seeks a seat at the table to make the enactment of the bill more manageable for you. Such is the case with legislation known as the Connecticut Clean Air Act. This legislation is a new law in Connecticut aiming to improve air quality. Due to the fact that there is a multi-state task force collaborating on it, Connecticut's work will impact our members in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Jersey.

The Connecticut Clean Air Act will require the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to adopt California's medium- and heavy-duty motor vehicle standards to improve air quality standards. This will be achieved by requiring manufacturers to produce cleaner, more efficient vehicles.

Once the Connecticut law was passed, the members of the Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut's

(LDAC) Legislative Committee, chaired by Joe Cecarelli, requested a meeting with the CT DEEP. Partnering with the Connecticut Motor Transport Association, we met with the regulatory agency regarding the adoption and potential implementation of the air quality standards for our industry.

We offered our support and shared some concerns, including:

- Supply chain issues with the availability of DEF, which is used to help diesel vehicles run cleaner,
- The availability of electric vehicle charging stations,
- Utility companies' ability to provide enough energy to charge medium- and heavy-duty vehicles,
- The impact that the time it takes to charge a vehicle has on the number of hours a CDL driver can be on the road,
- The cost of modernizing vehicles (we asked for federal transportation funds and tax credits to assist with conversions), and
- The timeline to implement the regulatory changes.

Our meeting, which will be the first of many with DEEP and other regulatory agencies working on the bill, will lead to regulations that improve air quality standards, and it will be achieved in a way that addresses the practical implications the bill will have on our industry.

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Nick Kuiken
NRLA Chair, Kuiken Bros., Inc.

As Chair, I have been focused on continuing to ensure the NRLA remains relevant to all members, regardless of size. One of the many valuable benefits that we provide as an association is the government affairs department, which monitors all state and federal legislation impacting our membership, providing the knowledge and network needed to advocate and make sure your legislative interests are taken into consideration and protected.

Historically, each spring I would find myself, like many of you, heading to Washington, D.C., to join other lumber dealers from areas around the country to help educate legislators on the issues that impact our industry and livelihood. It's common for owners and managers to feel they have no influence over changes to external regulations or public policy. While in some cases that may be true, there's also a lot that individuals can do to advocate and generate influence for an industry. And when an industry benefits, the organizations and businesses operating in that industry also benefit—meaning everyone wins.

Navigating D.C.'s political sphere can be daunting, to say the very least, with a multitude of bills, laws, and regulations being introduced affecting our individual businesses and the entire LBM industry. One cannot afford to stand idle while legislation is passed, regulations are changed, and executive orders are issued, often with detrimental effects to the types of businesses that make up the LBM industry and the NRLA. What happens in Washington's world of politics and the policies they enact have a direct impact on our industry every day. Although the last several years we have been limited to meeting virtually, we continue to have strong participation

and have been able to accomplish what I believe is one of the more rewarding aspects of being part of an industry association: the purpose of advocacy is to achieve change—and more specifically, change for the better. By becoming involved, each of us can help make a difference. It doesn't matter how humble your position is, if you are an owner or a manager, you have some influence somewhere.

In August 2021, understanding there is strength in numbers, the NRLA and the Construction Suppliers Association (CSA) joined forces to form and create the American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA), an organization whose sole purpose is to advocate on behalf of its members at the federal level in Washington, D.C. ABMA currently represents LBM dealers and associated businesses in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, D.C. The mission of the ABMA is to advance, shape, and influence policy in all branches of government. They work directly with members of Congress, the White House, and federal agencies to impact the legislative and regulatory process as it affects the LBM industry.

The NRLA continues to look for members to participate in your state lobby days, yard tours for your local legislators, and at a federal level with ABMA. These types of collaborative activities give us all a platform with a longer reach than any singular voice might have on its own. Remember, a win for the industry is a win for all!

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Storing millwork can be tough. Size variation, custom orders, temperature sensitivity—all can add to the challenges suppliers face as they seek efficient onsite storage solutions. **That's why Greg Zuern decided to try something completely different.** Together with CT Darnell and Sunbelt Rack, Zuern Building Products consolidated all their millwork into one reimagined building for maximum efficiency. The results speak for themselves. Thanks to this change, they saw:

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Matt Medoff
NYLE President, Russin

Well folks, it is officially summertime. The days are longer, yet for some reason they seem to go by in the blink of an eye. Jobsites are rocking and rolling, and we find ourselves working our tails off while doing our best to service our customer base to the best of our abilities. I speak with customers and other vendors, getting their two cents on what kind of summer we should expect in our industry. It's mostly positive feedback, but I think we all have this sense of caution. Is this ride we've had these past few years finally coming to an end? The stock market doesn't look so hot, and some reports question if we are heading into a mini recession. But will it affect our industry? These are all viable questions, yet none of these questions changes the fact that, on a day-to-day assessment, we all seem to have a ton on our plate. My feeling is that a lot of this pressure is mainly caused by one of the largest issues that has plagued our industry since the last recession: labor shortages.

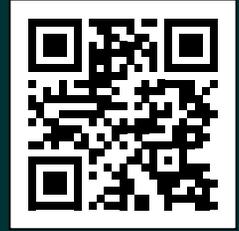
Labor shortages are affecting us at every level of the building materials industry; they are affecting us all in one way or another. Contractors can't find enough guys to run a full crew. Retail yards can't find handlers or forklift drivers; wholesale distributors can't find truck drivers; mills and manufacturers can't find factory workers. The labor shortage is real; it's here, it's impacting our output, and it's affecting the consumer market, slowly driving down demand. So, what do we do?

As the saying goes, we could say, every man for themselves. Each company has their own way of recruiting new people, all working hard at it and hoping for good results. Maybe that's a short-term fix for one business to the next. Or maybe we raise our wages again and hope for the best. What I do know are two things: One, I don't have the answers, because if I did, I wouldn't be here. I'd be an adjunct professor of Labor Relations at Cornell University and living on Cayuga Lake sipping margaritas on a Tuesday afternoon. Two, if we are going to help fix this labor shortage affecting our industry, it is only going to get done by collectively working together. Working as one.

The NRLA and its state and local associations give us that avenue to put our minds together, collectively piecing our resources and strategizing our next best steps. The NRLA's government affairs department has a mission statement to proactively promote and protect the interests of the building material suppliers in the federal and state legislative and regulatory processes. Fixing or alleviating the labor shortage at our hands can most definitely be characterized as in our interests. A collaborative effort with participation from the NRLA membership is the best effort to improve our workforce and allow our industry the growth it deserves.



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NRLA Welcomes Associate Members!



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Buildxact does business in Australia, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Buildxact ranks among the fastest growing companies in Australia as recognized by The Australian Financial Review's 2021 Fast 100 and is recognized as a top employer in the U.S. by Great Place to Work.

To learn more about Buildxact, go to buildxact.com.



LOOK AT THESE RISING STARS! Nominate Your Star Employees or Co-workers



If you are an NRLA retail or associate member with an employee or co-worker 40 years old or younger who goes the extra mile as they actively and proudly work in the LBM industry, why not nominate them to be highlighted in the LC?

To nominate your Rising Star employee or co-worker, scan the QR code above with your smartphone!

Go to page 76 to see who this issue's Rising Star is.



Envision Outdoor Living Products Mount Joy, PA

Envision Outdoor Living Products provides beautiful, high-quality products to create the exact outdoor space homeowner's desire. Envision's wide range of decking, railing, and accessories—including Distinction, Inspiration, Expression, Ridge Premium, and EverGrain composite decking; Fairway aluminum, steel, vinyl/PVC, and composite railing solutions; and LED lighting, fencing, pergolas, and more—come together in a total outdoor living solution.

Behind the scenes, Envision offers a range of support services to help dealer customers navigate today's challenges. Envision's reliable, domestic manufacturing helps dealers keep up with demand while allowing customers to fulfill all their outdoor living needs from one place. A comprehensive product selection combines with the team's collective expertise to ensure dealers and their customers find the ideal solution for every project no matter the size, style, or budget.

From its earliest days, Envision was born from the idea that there was a better way to do things. A better way to make things. And the company still has that same spirit today—inspired to help dealers transform their customers' vision into reality.

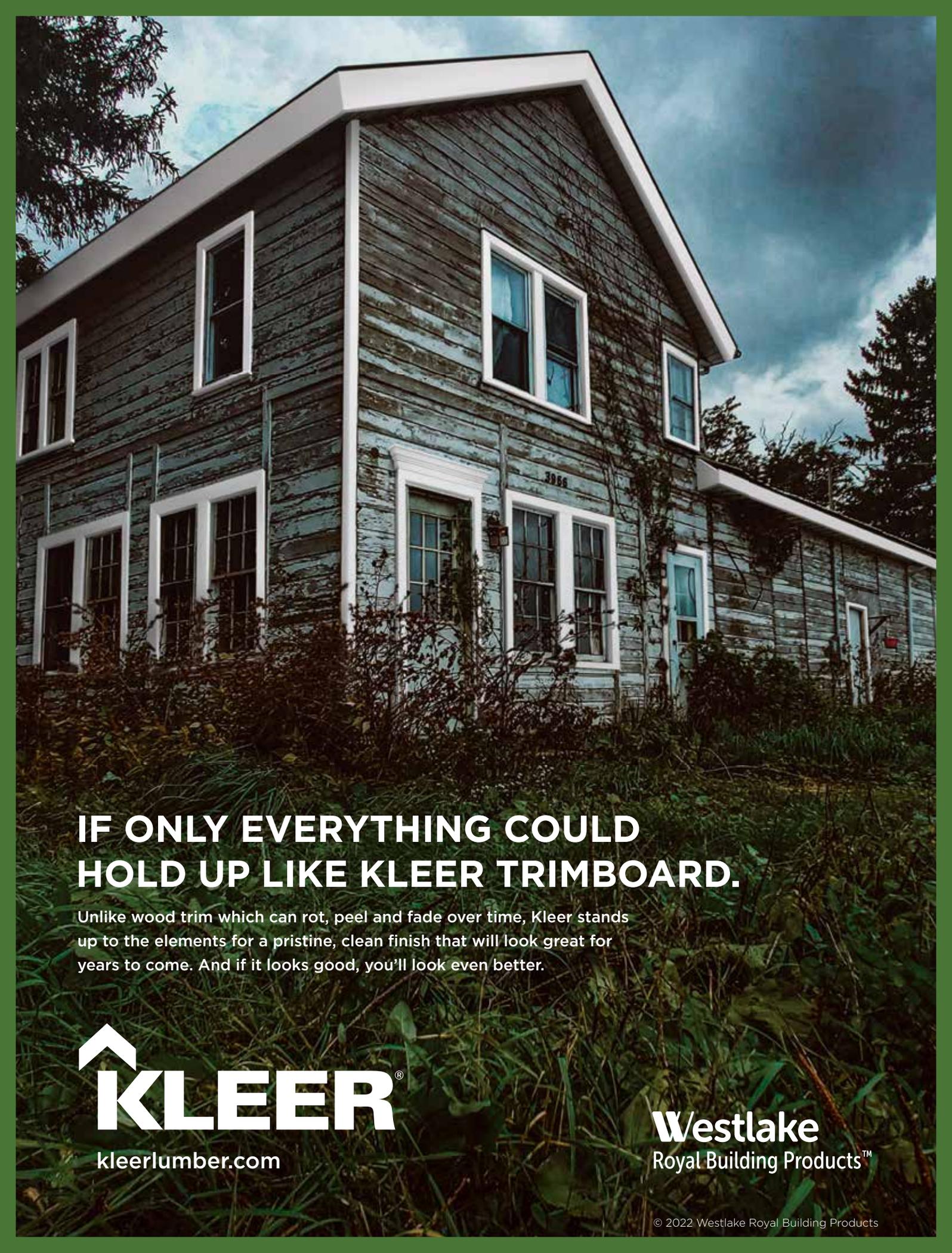
Learn more at envisionoutdoorliving.com.

Scams are on the Rise— Protect Your Yard!



The busy season combined with new employees that may be unaware of the scams going on are creating vulnerabilities. Learn potential signs to minimize fraud in

NRLA's YouTube webinar: **Best Practices For Credit Card Acceptance To Minimize Fraud**. To watch the webinar, go to <http://ow.ly/apal50JjFXV>, or scan the QR code above.



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Mid-Cape Unveiled Two New Trucks-for-a-Cause During Mental Health Awareness Month

Mid-Cape Home Centers, a division of US LBM, recently added two newly-wrapped Trucks-for-a-Cause to their ever growing 'Fleet of Hope.' One is a truck wrapped for Big Brothers Big Sisters and one for mental health awareness, which hit the street in May during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mid-Cape recognizes the need to promote the well-being and mental and social health of our local children. That is why every year they partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters, a local chapter of a nationwide organization dedicated to fostering one-on-one mentoring relationships, through both annual and event sponsorships.

Mid-Cape also wants to help offer hope for those who suffer from depression, anxiety, and the toll trauma takes on the mind. Mental health *is* health. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, about 1 in 4 American adults struggles with a diagnosable mental health disorder each year.

To learn more, visit midcape.com.



WOLF HOME PRODUCTS

Wolf Home Products Partners with Key-Link Fencing & Railing

Wolf Home Products announced a partnership with Key-Link Fencing & Railing, a leading manufacturer of aluminum rail and fence systems for residential and commercial installations. Wolf Home Products will offer the full line of Key-Link's high-end aluminum and cable railings, including the American, Chesapeake, and Outlook Series, as well as ADA handrails and caps, and stair lighting. All of Key-Link's products are engineered to meet the highest standards and are backed with a strong warranty. For more information, please visit wolfhomeproducts.com.

Stec Presents Ward Lumber with Official State Historic Business Preservation Registry Certificate



Senator Dan Stec (R,C-Queensbury) presented Jay Ward and the workers of Ward Lumber with the official state certificate honoring the company for its addition to the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. Ward Lumber is one of the first 100 businesses selected for this honor.

"I'd like to congratulate Ward Lumber on being added to the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry," said Stec. "Since its start in the AuSable Valley in 1890 through the present day, Ward Lumber has become a cornerstone of this region."

Curtis Lumber Partners with Area Construction Companies to Help Graduating Students



In partnership with several local companies, Curtis Lumber has spearheaded an effort to provide over 250 tool bags filled with some starter items in support of graduating seniors at WSWHE BOCES and Questar III BOCES entering the workforce in the areas of construction, heavy equipment, HVAC, and welding.

"The trades are in desperate need of labor," stated Doug Ford, vice president at Curtis Lumber. "We wanted to do something to show our support and appreciation for students embarking on a career in the trades."

The multi-company partnership is a continuation of a workforce development task force that spawned out of the Saratoga Builders Association. The group has grown in breadth and depth and now includes more than 50 companies around the state.

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PrimeSource Acquires Axxis

PrimeSource Brands announced it has acquired Axxis, LLC, a provider of fastening tools and collated fasteners. The transaction is PrimeSource's fourth acquisition during Clearlake's ownership. The combination with Axxis further enhance PrimeSource's portfolio of branded fasteners and related fastening tools. Carl Schneider, CEO of Axxis, will remain involved as part of the PrimeSource team focused on accelerating Axxis' growth. For more information, please visit psbrands.com.



Simpson Strong-Tie Celebrates Construction Trades Support Program with Habitat for Humanity

Simpson Strong-Tie held its second annual Trades Support Program with Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley. The goal of the program is to promote interest in the trades as a viable and rewarding career path for youth and for individuals who have recently been out of the workforce. The event included a total of 32 students from Making Waves Academy, a charter school in Richmond, Calif., who attended a half-day workshop to learn more about what a typical workday in various trades careers might look like.



Boise Cascade®

Boise Cascade Reaches Agreement to Acquire Coastal Plywood Operations

Boise Cascade Company announced that it has reached an agreement to acquire Coastal Plywood Company, including its two manufacturing locations, from Coastal Forest Resources Company for \$512 million, subject to certain closing adjustments. The Company currently plans to fund the transaction and closing-related expenses from its existing cash balances.



LP Building Solutions Honored as Forest Conservationist of the Year by Tennessee Wildlife Federation

LP Building Solutions (LP) was honored as the Forest Conservationist of the Year at the Tennessee Wildlife Federation's 57th Annual Conservation Achievement Awards. Established by one of the largest and oldest nonprofits dedicated to conserving the state's wildlife and natural resources, the Tennessee Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Awards initiative is the state's longest standing and most inclusive conservation-recognition program. Each year, the awards honor organizations and individuals who are making outstanding contributions to Tennessee's wildlife and natural resources.

For more information, visit lpcorp.com.



MRLDA Board Votes to Join Coalition to Stop the Tax Hike Amendment

On June 1, the MRLDA Board of Directors voted to join the Coalition to Stop the Tax Hike Amendment after their Legislative Chair, John Mahoney, presented the legislative committee's recommendation. Passage would amend the Massachusetts Constitution and add an additional 4% surtax on income over \$1 million. The additional revenue raised would be used for education and transportation. Enactment would harm small businesses and retirees selling long held assets, as well as cause wealth migration to more tax friendly states. Independent lumber dealers would be negatively impacted. Also, there are no guarantees that the revenue raised will increase spending on education and transportation, where it is "subject to appropriation." This would be an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution, meaning reversal would likely never happen.

Building a coalition is a great tool for bringing individuals and groups together to fight for common goals. Work with your state lobbyist to explore how this can help you achieve your legislative goals.

For more information on the Tax Hike Amendment, please reach out to Harvey Hurvitz at hhurvitz@cclco.com.

ON THE MOVE

Boise Cascade Announces Executive Leadership Promotions



Boise Cascade announced the promotion of **Joanna Barney** to vice president, Western operations, building materials distribution division. Barney began her career at Boise Cascade in 2005 as an admin manager at the Salt Lake BMD branch. She was promoted to senior location controller in 2012, to branch manager in 2015, and to general manager of BMD Western operations in 2021. She is a member of Leading Women Executives (LWE) and serves on Boise Cascade's diversity, equity, and inclusion steering committee.



Troy Little has been promoted to vice president, finance and commodity sales, wood products division. Little joined Boise Cascade in 1990 as an internal auditor. He has a broad range of experience on both the financial side and the operational side,

including serving as regional manager for six manufacturing facilities in Oregon. Little became wood products division controller in 2016, division financial manager in 2018, and added commodity sales to his responsibilities in 2021. He currently serves on the board of the Western Wood Products Association (WWPA).

JELD-WEN Appoints John T. Krause to SVP & General Manager North America



JELD-WEN Holding, Inc., recently announced the promotion of **John T. Krause** to senior vice president and general manager, North America. He joined JELD-WEN in 2018 and held leadership roles in North America windows and doors.

Krause is a seasoned leader with more than 25 years of general management, marketing, finance, and operations experience. He served eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps and graduated with a bachelor's degree in corporate finance from Georgia State University.

NRLA New Hire and Promotion

Katherine Slye-Hernandez, Ph.D., Hired as New Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs



NRLA is happy to announce that **Katherine E. Slye-Hernandez, Ph.D.**, has joined the NRLA as its director of legislative and regulatory affairs.

Slye-Hernandez brings 10 years of public policy and legislative experience, with her most recent four years being with the Professional Insurance Agents Association (PIA), where she served as their government and industry affairs specialist, and PAC coordinator and public policy analyst. Prior to working at PIA, she served as a senate legislative fellow in the New York State Legislature, has been a public policy instructor at the University at Albany, and has worked in the NYS Office of the State Comptroller.

Slye-Hernandez grew up in southern Maine and has legislative experience in more than half of NRLA's membership states.

Pam McHale Promoted to Event Coordinator



NRLA is pleased to announce the promotion of **Pam McHale** from education coordinator to event coordinator. McHale will be the key liaison for NRLA's state and local associations. She will be responsible for handling board and annual

meetings, awards, scholarships, and events, as well as managing membership records and event financials.

McHale joined the NRLA in August 2014 as an event coordinator to help support the NJBMDA chapter, then moved to the education department as its education coordinator. In her previous role, McHale was responsible for coordinating and managing registrations and the department's Learning Management System (LMS), catering arrangements, and fees associated with all NRLA educational programs and meetings throughout the northeast, as well as preparing marketing and course materials for both in-person and virtual courses.

IN MEMORIAM

Richard "Dick" Baker Nichols, 81, of Andover, Mass., passed away on June 7. His career started at Peabody Lumber and Reading Lumber, and retired in 2006 with 37 years at BROSCO. Nichols was a member of the NRLA, Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA), and was active with the Lumber and Building Material Dealers Foundation (LBMDF). Nichols volunteered on NRLA's Convention Committee, the Wood Certification Committee, and was an associate director of the MRLDA.

Robert J. "Bobby" Vasquezi 76, of Waltham, Mass., passed away on June 5, at Lahey Clinic Hospital & Medical Center in Burlington with his loving family by his side.

June Bohannon, 95, of Orleans, Mass., passed away on April 15. She was the mother of Doug Bohannon, past president of the Mid-Cape Home Centers and past president of the Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA).



Benjamin Obdyke Adds 10-Ounce Cartridges to HydroFlash LA Liquid-Applied Flashing Lineup

Benjamin Obdyke recently introduced a 10-ounce cartridge for its popular HydroFlash LA, meeting demand from customers looking for a smaller alternative to the original 20-ounce sausage-style tubes. Like the original HydroFlash LA, the liquid-applied flashing easily conforms around corners, curves, and other awkward shapes, simplifying the process of flashing rough openings compared to the cutting and bending required of flashing tapes.

Learn more at benjaminobdyke.com.

MoistureShield's New Joist Tape to Protect Deck Substructures

MoistureShield Joist Tape is a protective adhesive designed to increase deck lifespans by protecting their substructures from the elements by forming a tight seal over joists and screws. The patented acrylic adhesive and woven cloth substrate forms a tight seal over joists and deck screws to prevent moisture infiltration, enhancing the longevity of any deck frame and adding up to 10 years* to the life of wood and metal-framed decks.

To learn more, visit moistureshield.com.

*based on aging simulations testing under laboratory conditions



Simpson Strong-Tie Introduces Angle Bracket for Mass Timber

Simpson Strong-Tie has introduced the E20/3 angle bracket as a versatile, off-the-shelf, pre-engineered and tested option for base-of-wall connections in mass timber applications where a gap is desired between the wall and slab to accommodate a sill plate or grout pad. The new E20/3 angle bracket is designed for efficiency and versatility and eliminates the need for custom fabrication of steel connectors on the jobsite.

To learn more, visit go.strongtie.com/masstimber.

CAMO Stainless Steel Fastening Solutions for Deck Building and Exterior Projects ▶

National Nail's CAMO recently introduced its CAMO stainless steel fasteners to help contractors, remodelers, and DIYers build better in every environment. Perfect for building wood or composite decks and other exterior projects, CAMO's new line of stainless steel fasteners includes hand-drive deck, composite, and trim screws that come with a 2-in. (50.8mm) power bit for jobsite convenience.

To learn more, visit camofasteners.com.



◀ Atlantis Rail Adds a Top Rail to its Cable Railing System

Atlantis Rail Systems has launched a new aluminum Top Rail to its popular Spectrum cable railing system. The simple design of the Top Rail System allows installers to handle a variety of rail transitions using a small set of components and common installation tools. The top rail and associated fittings are made of aluminum and powder coated in the standard and special Spectrum colors.

To learn more, visit atlantisrail.com.

AZEK Exteriors and Russin ▶ Introduce Captivate

The AZEK Company, Inc. recently announced the launch of Captivate, a new line of prefinished siding and trim developed in collaboration with Russin. The Captivate line will include a range of siding and trim profiles complementary to a variety of architectural design styles. Captivate is developed using Russin's high-tech machinery to apply quality-tested paints in a consistent and controlled manner, as opposed to field finishing, which can be inconsistent due to variations in paint lots and the quality and workmanship of a local paint crew.

To learn more, visit azekexteriors.com/captivate.





◀ Lock Out Moisture with New Trex Seal Ledger Tape

Ask any contractor where a deck is most likely to fail and, chances are, they'll point to the ledger board. If not correctly installed and protected, this single element can be the downfall of a deck's structure. With this in mind, the makers of Trex RainEscape have introduced Trex Seal Ledger Tape, an 11"-wide aluminum-lined butyl tape specifically engineered for use on the ledger board of a deck and is AAMA 711-13 compliant.

For more information, visit trexseal.com.

▶ Beach House Shake Launches New Website

Beach House Shake, the leading brand of composite shingle in North America, has launched a new design-inspired website at beachhouseshake.com.

The new website is designed to showcase Beach House Shake's great looks and long-term durability through a scenic user journey. Evoking an emotional connection, the site transports visitors to shorelines, tall grasses, and even lush forests to feel the inspiration behind the four product colorways—Sandcastle, Atlantica, Hatteras, and Pacifica.



◀ Epicor Speeds Digital Transformation with New Automation Studio

Epicor Automation Studio provides self-service access to a marketplace of connectors and tools, including more than 400,000 published "recipes"—or pre-built workflow automations—giving users a head start to adapt and develop their own Epicor automations and integrations across CRM, Sales, Finance, Production, Marketing, HR, IT, and other applications.

To learn more, visit epicor.com.

Owens Corning ProPink Complete Blown-in Wall System ▶

ProPink Complete Blown-in wall system from Owens Corning is custom fit for high performance walls with six-sided contact. Installing quickly and cleanly, the system is the easiest way to achieve a Grade-1 install and pass inspection the first time.

For more information, visit owenscorning.com.



◀ Masonite's Performance Door System

Masonite has announced its latest innovation in exterior door systems that is 64% better at keeping air and water out than the leading competitor, based on certified third-party testing. The Masonite Performance Door System features the company's industry-leading 4-point performance seal, which includes premium square edge fiberglass doors, Endura Products' Z- Articulating Cap Sill, PE650 weatherstripping, Simple Solution corner pads and FrameSaver rot-proof door frame.

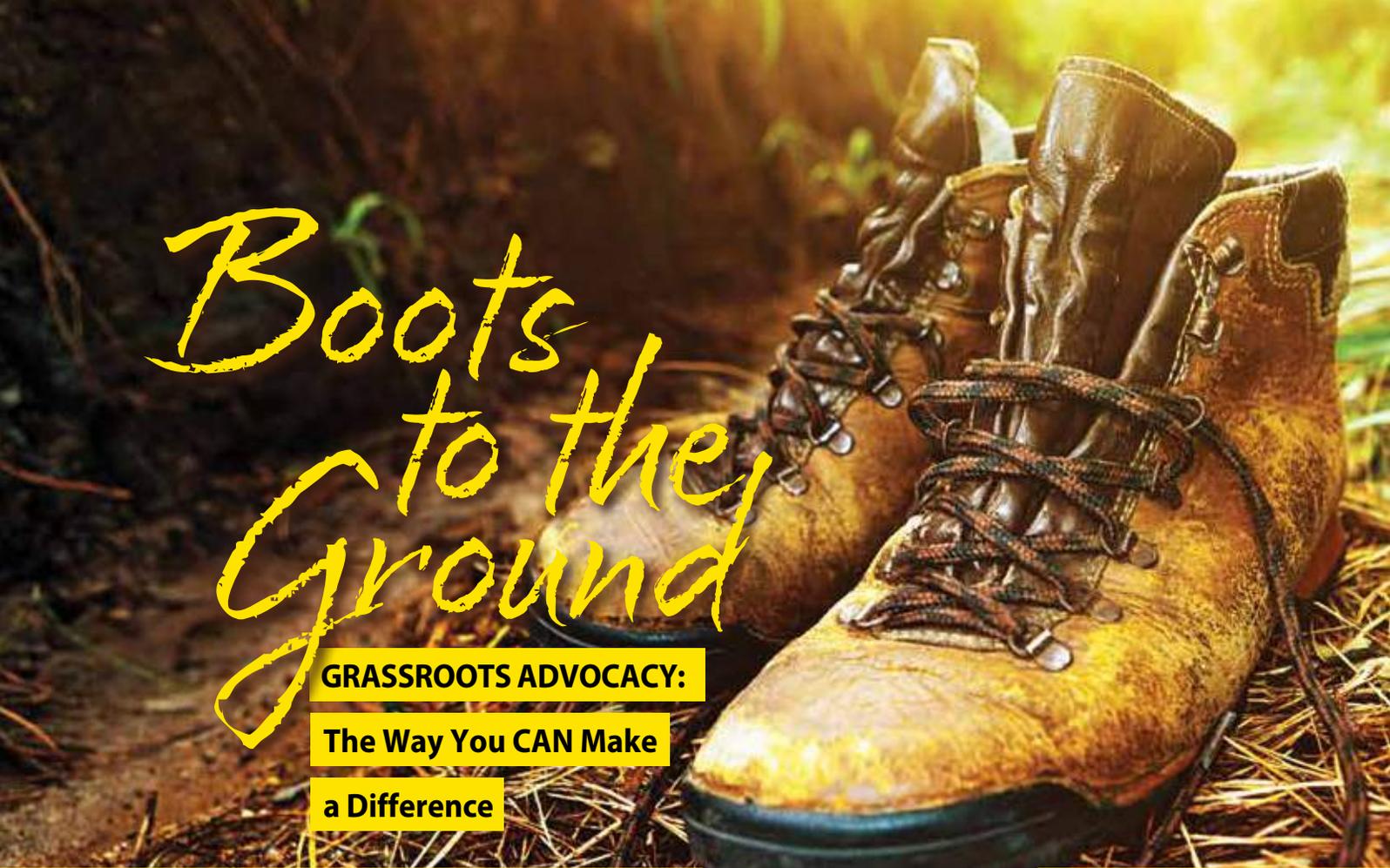
For more information, visit masonite.com/mpds.

INTEX Millwork Updates Lighted Newel Caps ▶

INTEX Millwork is excited to launch its updated Lighted Newel Caps. The lighted cap system turns a deck into a day and night outdoor living and entertaining space, while the round black aluminum baluster infill provides a sleek, modern, clean sight line to enjoy your own beautiful vista. The new LED system allows for easier installation of wire both under the deck space and through the rail system, and the updated connector system requires no wire stripping to connect additional lights, and snap connectors create and seal the connection.

For more information, visit intexmillwork.com.





Boots to the Ground

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY:

The Way You CAN Make

a Difference

By Julianna Rauf

Have you ever heard someone say,

“I hate politics—my voice doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things, so why should I bother?” Maybe you are one of those people. I know I used to be! But here I am, working in government affairs, because I realized not all politicians are bad. In fact, most of them are in office because they do care about you, your experiences, and your voice. But they can’t do that if you don’t speak up.

NRLA’s legislative and regulatory affairs department handles that for you on many fronts. But it’s more meaningful to your legislators when they hear it directly from you. People often say, “Life is about networking, and opportunity is about who you know.” Now, whether that’s entirely true or not is up to you. But it can’t hurt to act as though it is. NRLA offers its members the opportunity to network with and get to know their legislators via yard tours, lobby days, and district office visits.

Yard Tours

Yard tours are events where companies invite legislators to their yard to show them what day-to-day business operations look like, get them in front of their employees, and share their company story. On average, yard tours last no more than 30 minutes to an hour and require little planning on your end. Since NRLA is represented federally by the American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA), you now have the opportunity to also host federal yard tours in addition to traditional state yard

tours. Although the online link to sign up for yard tours has expired, you can still host one! As it’s an election year, now is the perfect time to do so. If you’re interested in hosting a legislator at your yard, just reach out to NRLA’s legislative and regulatory affairs department. We will work with your state lobbyist and/or ABMA’s lobbyist to get you in touch with the right legislators. You may even want to consider hosting both state and federal legislators at the same time.

Thank you to the following NRLA members for their interest in hosting a yard tour:

Belletetes Inc., Pembroke, NH
Britton Lumber Company, Fairlee, VT
Concord Lumber and Building Center, Littleton, MA
Hood Distribution, Durham, CT
Koopman Lumber, Andover, MA
Mid-Cape Lumber, Orleans, MA
National Lumber, Mansfield, MA

Northeast Building Supply, Bridgeport, CT
Prehung Doors LLC, Auburn, ME
Reeb Millwork Corporation, Bethlehem, PA
rk MILES, Inc., Manchester, VT and West Hatfield, MA
Shepley Wood Products, Hyannis, MA
Ward Lumber, Jay, NY
Woodhaven Lumber & Millwork, Lakewood, NJ

Lobby Days

Lobby days occur at the state level and are an opportunity to get you in front of multiple legislators in one shot! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend—the more voices representing the industry, the greater the impact. Before your state's lobby day, your state and local's legislative committee decides on priority issues to present to the legislators. These issues revolve around bills that your legislative committee feels affect the LBM industry in your state, and they can either be supported or opposed. Once the committee decides on

which bills to focus on, NRLA's legislative and regulatory affairs department creates a handout and does a briefing to help all attendees understand the bills and your state and local's position on them. Then, you simply attend the event!

Since the onset of COVID-19, some lobby days have entered the virtual realm or transitioned to other events instead, while others have kept the traditional format of visiting their state house or capitol.

Here are what some state and locals have done, or plan to do, for a lobby day this year:

Maine (RLDAM): Plans to do a traditional in-person lobby day in the fall.

Massachusetts (MRLDA): Has chosen to do targeted yard tours throughout the summer and fall, in lieu of a traditional lobby day.

New Hampshire (NHRLA): Did a virtual lobby day for the 2022 legislative session in December 2021.

New York (NRLA-NY): Plans to do a virtual lobby day series, hosting six separate virtual meetings with six different legislators from each of New York's state and local regions.

Rhode Island (RILBMDA): Held a traditional in-person lobby day on May 18, at the Rhode Island State House in Providence.

Vermont (VRLDA): Planned an in-person career and technical education (CTE) job fair on April 12, where they invited legislators to Vermont Technical College, in lieu of a traditional lobby day.

District Office Visits

If you, as an individual NRLA member, are passionate about the federal priority issues set by the ABMA, we are offering you the opportunity to visit your local district office and discuss these issues with your local legislators and their staff. As a first-hand source regarding the way these bills affect your business and the LBM industry at large, you have the power to make a difference. You're not blindly discussing in-depth issues, and you don't have to be a bill expert. All you're doing is having a personal conversation with key legislators about what you see

in your business every day—challenges regarding workforce development, supply chain disruptions, and inflation. And the best part? All you have to do is shoot us an email. Once we know you're interested, we'll handle the rest—from scheduling and planning to drafting documents and helping prepare you for your visit. As always, we'll be at your disposal throughout the entire process. A visit to your district office will be what you make of it, but it will likely last anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour.

When it comes to grassroots advocacy, NRLA and its federal representative, ABMA, have your back. We will continue to fight for the LBM industry and its small businesses behind the scenes, but we hope you will take advantage of the opportunities we offer that get you in front of your legislators. Hearing your story from you directly is not only more meaningful to legislators, but it is also better for your business. So, send us an email at govtaffairs@nrla.org if you're interested, have ideas, or simply want to learn more. After all, we're here for you! 

American Building Materials Alliance

Your Federal Advocacy Committee

By Julianna Rauf

It has been nearly a year since NRLA partnered with the Construction Suppliers Association (CSA) to form the federal lumber and building materials (LBM) legislative committee American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA). Below, please find a brief synopsis of what ABMA has been up to.

Advocacy Week

ABMA concluded its inaugural Advocacy Week on April 8. Over the course of the weeklong event, over 100 ABMA members met virtually with over 40 legislators to highlight our three priority issues of workforce development (HR6255), supply chain delays (HR 6567/S.3556), and inflation (HR 6629). Legislator appearances were made by Rep. Mo Brooks (AL-5), Sen. Susan Collins (ME), Rep. Chris Pappas (NH-1), Rep. Elise Stefanik (NY-22), Sen. Jack Reed (RI), Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1), and more. Since the event, multiple legislators have already signed or agreed to sign on to our three bills, including Representative Andrew Garbarino (R-NY), who signed on to all three. ABMA has been following up on these productive legislative meetings with congressional district office visits and yard tour invitations for federal legislators to visit with our members in their home regions.

"Inside the Capitol"

"Inside the Capitol" was established to introduce members of Congress from across the country to our ABMA membership. In these virtual meetings, legislators share their insight into the latest issues dominating Washington, D.C., discuss how federal policy impacts the LBM industry, and take questions from the audience. These meetings offer behind-the-scenes access to the halls of the Capitol from respected and influential policy makers from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. To date, we have had meetings with Oregon Congressman Kurt Schrader and Arkansas Congressman Bruce Westerman. ABMA is currently scheduling a third "Inside the Capitol" event and will communicate those details with you as soon as possible.

Government Agency Meetings

One of the most popular opportunities offered by the ABMA is its meetings with government agencies and their departmental heads. While some meetings are kept to just the legislative committee, others are open to the public. We highly encourage participation in the public meetings. While these are informational



opportunities for you, they are also an opportunity for those agencies to hear the voices representing the LBM industry. As always, the more voices, the stronger our message. Some government agency meetings we have had to date include:

- A discussion on workforce development resources with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.
- A conversation with the International Trade Administration regarding the status of a new Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA).
- A meeting with the U.S. Trade Representative to develop a better understanding of and form a plan of action for establishing a new SLA.

The Advocate

Lastly, one benefit of being an ABMA member is access to its weekly e-newsletter, the Advocate. Our newsletter keeps you up to date on all committee activities, LBM legislative and regulatory news, and grassroots activities. It also highlights media moves, events and webinars, and general news stories related to the industry, economy, supply chain, small businesses, or more that you might find interesting. You can subscribe to The Advocate directly on the home page of ABMAAlliance.org. We are committed to keeping your e-mail address confidential. We do not sell, rent, or lease our contact data or lists to third parties, and we will not provide

MEET THE COMMITTEE

The legislative committee is currently made up of eight LBM representatives, four from NRLA and four from CSA. The job of the committee is to decide on priority issues to advocate for on your behalf. The committee meets monthly to receive a congressional update from its lobbyist, establish action plans, and brainstorm new opportunities. The outcome of these meetings is then published on ABMAAlliance.org. ABMA's legislative committee is listed below, but you can also meet them on ABMA's YouTube or Instagram in the video series "Meet the ABMA Legislative Committee."



Chair
JOE CECARELLI
(NRLA)
HOOD Distribution



Vice-Chair
IDA ROSS HICKS
(CSA)
Swift Supply



SARA BELLETETE
(NRLA)
Belletete's Inc.



PHIL KENNEDY
(CSA)
Comanche Home Center



MATT SEMONIK
(NRLA)
Arnold Lumber



ANDREW BROWN
(CSA)
Brown Lumber Co.



BOB MAGBEE
(CSA)
Magbee Contractors Supply



ROD WILES
(NRLA)
Hammond Lumber

your personal information to any third-party individual, government agency, or company at any time unless compelled to do so by law.

It has been a very busy and successful year for ABMA. However, what's listed is not all that we do. We also continue to write testimony and letters to Capitol Hill, issue action alerts, have staff meet with legislators and government agencies on your behalf, and much more. While we are excited for what the next year has in store for you and will work to expand these opportunities, we will continue to follow up on the progress we have already made and keep you informed. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you—we look forward to your continued support. 

About ABMA

ABMA is a committee of unified voices advocating on behalf of the LBM industry at the federal level. ABMA currently represents LBM dealers and associated businesses in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, D.C. The mission of the ABMA is to advance, shape, and influence policy in all branches of government. We work directly with members of Congress, the White House, and federal agencies to impact the legislative and regulatory process as it affects the LBM industry.

Where to find us:



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ABMAAlliance.org



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Federal Efforts to Confront **SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES**

By ABMA Lobbyist, Pat Rita

I think I can safely say that we are all tired of hearing about the “supply chain” and the many challenges that disruptions in the established channels for getting raw materials and finished products to end users in the marketplace have caused. It is long overdue for the federal government to start moving on policy solutions that will help fix the parts of the supply chain that are now broken and prevent these disruptions from happening again.

Thankfully, there have been some recent enactments of legislation at the federal level as well as some bills in the queue that hopefully will make a difference. There is no “silver bullet” for addressing what ails our current system. However, a collection of policy actions promises to deliver needed relief for congestion at the ports, poor service from the freight rail

sector, and a lack of truck drivers to move goods and raw materials over the roads.

The first to become law is a pilot program enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that was signed last year, allowing young drivers (between 18 and 21 years old) to operate trucks interstate after completing rigorous operational and safety training. Currently, young drivers may drive all day every day within a state’s borders but may not cross state lines. For the last few years, the provision, known as the DRIVE Safe Act, has been a priority of truck-dependent industries as a way of attracting younger drivers to the profession. With the median age of truck drivers currently estimated to be 52, an infusion of younger truckers is critical. This three-year pilot program is now up and running and is administered by the



Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. While enactment of this program was significant, there are ongoing efforts on Capitol Hill to pass the DRIVE Safe Act so that this young driver apprenticeship program will have permanence.

A bill that was introduced this spring to try to help get more drivers on the road is the Strengthening Supply Chains Through Truck Driver Incentives Act (H.R. 7348). This bipartisan, innovative legislation would establish a refundable income tax credit for qualified commercial truck drivers. Specifically, the measure would create a two-year refundable tax credit of up to \$7,500 for truck drivers holding a valid Class A commercial driver's license who drive at least 1,900 hours in a year. Additionally, it would establish a new refundable tax credit of up to \$10,000 for new truck drivers or individuals enrolled in a registered trucking apprenticeship. This tax credit would also last for two years. So, if it were to be enacted this year, the credit would apply to 2022 and 2023.

On the port front, legislation known as the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, or OSRA, is in conference committee. Among the key components of OSRA are provisions that:

- Require ocean carriers to certify that late fees—known in maritime parlance as “detention and demurrage” charges—comply with federal regulations or face penalties.
- Shift burden of proof regarding the reasonableness of “detention or demurrage” charges from the invoiced party to the ocean carrier.
- Prohibit ocean carriers from unreasonably declining shipping opportunities for U.S. exports.

We expect the final enactment of this legislation later this year. And finally, on the freight rail front, the Surface Transportation Board (STB)—which, among other things, maintains regulatory oversight of the freight rail sector—has held hearings this spring to explore deficient service being provided by the Class 1 railroads. Numerous sectors testified before the board in late April about declining service levels that are threatening their businesses. Agriculture, energy, retail, and manufacturing representatives painted a dire picture at these hearings. The STB chairman had this to say about the current situation:

“Railroads’ longstanding practice of reducing operating ratios by cutting employment levels, mothballing locomotives, and eliminating other essential resources is the central reason why farmers have been hours away from depopulating herds, manufacturing facilities have reduced operating hours, and shippers cannot get their products to market on time or receive essential raw materials for their companies.” These failures are harming the nation’s economy and, in my view, are contributing to the inflationary forces affecting food and fuel in particular.

The STB appears poised to require railroads to submit service recovery plans as well as provide additional data and progress reports on rail service, operations, and employment. The American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA) has been monitoring the situation with the expectation that the board will take meaningful action to improve rail service across the board. We will keep you apprised of developments. 

For more information on ABMA’s support of federal advocacy issues that affect you, visit ABMAlliance.org.

This article was written for the LC on May 24, 2022.



SOARING LUMBER COSTS

WERE DECADES IN THE MAKING

By House Committee on Natural Resources Ranking Member
Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.)

This article was written for the LC on May 11, 2022.



When COVID-19 kept millions of Americans home, many of us spent our free time checking off home improvement projects that had been on our lists for years. Updated shelves, a new garden shed, maybe even an addition to the kitchen—there was more time than ever to do it yourself. It wasn't just homeowners, either, as many restaurants constructed covered outdoor dining areas. On top of all the do-it-yourself and commercial construction, U.S. housing new starts increased more than 30% from early 2020 to early 2021. This surge in usage, coupled with a lack of processing

infrastructure, culminated the perfect storm: skyrocketing wood costs.

Wood product prices are setting new records almost daily, and lumber prices were up 67% in 2021 and up 340% from a year ago, according to wood products industry tracking firm Random Lengths. This surge, along with increased prices for other home building components, has caused increased prices for new construction as a pent-up housing market struggles to expand. While several factors play into this dynamic, one in particular has not received nearly enough attention: a decrease in timber coming out of our national forests, particularly those out west. U.S. Forest Service data shows just 2.5 billion board feet (BBF) were harvested in fiscal year 2020, down from 10.5 BBF just 30 years ago, all while we watch catastrophic wildfires scorch our Western forests at an exponential pace.

I witnessed this problem in March when I traveled to South Dakota and visited Mount Rushmore Forest Products. The owners had recently made the decision to shutter one of their mills due to the lack of supply coming from the Black Hills National Forest. Congressman Dusty Johnson and I met with two of the mill's employees, who each talked about the central role the mill had played both in their families' lives and their community's economy. Near tears, a 20-year mill veteran told us about how the job had afforded him the opportunity to send his children to college; another talked about the mill's contributions to the local high school and sports teams. One of the men told us, "There is nothing you can do to save this mill." But for the sake of our community and the sake of the [Black Hills National] forest, please do everything you can to try and make sure the Forest Service allows us to continue to manage and harvest out here.

Unfortunately, these employees are not alone. A lack of supply from national forests has had ripple effects across the country and our economy, forcing sawmills, plywood plants, and papermills to shutter. This lack of harvesting, coupled with the 2008 recession, decimated our mill infrastructure. From 2004 to 2018, 991 mills closed or curtailed their operations due to a combination of economic conditions and lower supply. When they close, it's almost always permanent. Yet mill construction and expansion are happening in the South, where mills rely on private, not public, forests for the bulk of their supply. In fact, it feels like we hear almost daily reports of new investments being made to expand mill capacity in the South. Industry reports say the demand for new mill equipment has created deliveries as far as three years out, but replacing decades of lost infrastructure can't happen overnight.

So why are we opening sawmills in the South but closing them in the West? Because litigious environmental groups continue

hamstringing sustainable harvesting on our national forests, while the South has a vast cache of timber on private working forests. The supply is so great that while wood product prices have more than tripled, log prices in the South have hardly budged, which creates heartburn for some forestland owners. Even a reduction in the Canadian lumber tariffs from more than 25% to below 10% has done little to ease the demand and price increases.

A lack of supply from national forests has had ripple effects across the country and our economy, forcing sawmills, plywood plants, and papermills to shutter.

Scientific forest management on public lands must be our answer. Before you conjure up images of a clear-cut Sequoia National Park, that couldn't be further from what needs to happen. Timber manufacturers actually stand to gain the most from properly managed land, so they replant more than they log, often at a rate of more than four replanted trees for every one logged. Look no further than one of the oldest managed forests in the U.S., that of my forestry school alma mater, Yale University, where the trees grow old, tall, and resilient because of the management being conducted. This is what should be happening in national forests across America.

Not only does management bring myriad environmental benefits—from pure air to clean water to healthy wildlife habitats and increased biodiversity—but it also mitigates the risk of catastrophic wildfires. Forests that are managed and thinned regularly are much less susceptible to fires that turn into raging infernos. The evidence of this is clear in areas like California, where fires will tear across thousands of acres of unmanaged public land and then abruptly stop upon reaching managed private land. It's why I'll continue introducing legislation like the Resilient Federal Forests Act, because I believe we have a responsibility to make our forests just that: resilient.

We have the supply; we simply need to access it to meet the demand. By opening consistent, reliable access to national forests that need long-term, sustainable management, we can equip both existing and new facilities to ramp up production and lower wood product prices. This means the average American can go to their neighborhood hardware store and not have to pay exorbitant costs to build a new deck, and new homes can be affordably constructed to meet the market's demands. It's time for the U.S. Forest Service to grant access to more national forest lands, making them healthier for years to come and providing price stability for future construction. 



Short- and Long-Term Efforts
Required to Address the

LABOR SHORTAGE

By Dr. Denise Fernandez-Palozzi, Ed.D.

“How many students can you send me?”

This is the pervasive question repeated to my staff and I almost daily, in a quest to secure recent high school graduates coming from our trade programs. In any given week, our staff fields on average 50 requests for meetings, guest speaker engagements, field trips, and interviews from local employers, all so that they can be the first to get in front of our students before they graduate. Students coming out of our welding; construction trades; heating, and air conditioning (HVAC); and heavy equipment operations programs are all in high demand to fill these highly skilled and high-wage jobs. And we cannot produce graduates fast enough to keep up with this demand.



The trades are suffering, like so many other industries, from a shortage of workers, and frequently, the conversation around this shortage leads to another conversation around workforce development. Yet the term “workforce development” seems elusive and ill-defined. To get a sense of what workforce development really means and how this translates into real jobs, it is important to have a foundational understanding of this terminology, how we arrived at this labor shortage, and the steps we can take to get out of it. There are efforts nationwide that are creating extraordinary results by utilizing very ordinary concepts. More importantly, workforce development is a national imperative to keep our economy thriving, and there is so much we can do to address this labor market deficit.

Workforce Development Ecosystem Defined

In its simplest form, workforce development is a combination of all the systems that help put people to work (LaRose, 2014). These systems may not be the first things that come to mind when one thinks about filling vacancies, but they are all considerations in addressing the barriers that people face when pursuing jobs.

State governments may offer tax incentives to employers to hire and train targeted demographic subgroups in a trade. Those subgroups need to obtain skills training, for which a high school diploma may be a pre-requisite. To attend these types of training programs, offering childcare and transportation vouchers will remove the most common barriers to getting these folks to participate in and complete their training so that they may enter the workforce. This is a very rudimentary and common accounting of how the workforce development ecosystem operates to produce a developed workforce.

How Did We Get Here?

While workforce development has been in conversations dating as far back as the F.D. Roosevelt administration (PWDA, 2022), the labor shortages we are seeing today are unprecedented. The confluence of several factors brought us to this point in history.

The Baby Boomer population is retiring at a more rapid pace than the Gen Z population entering the job market. This silver tsunami of retirees amounts to approximately 10,000 retirees each day, 70,000 each week, and 3,640,000 each year (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2019). This is due to multiple factors, including the post-pandemic work-from-home flexibility that many contemporary jobs can now afford, while more traditional trades require on-the-job attendance. This imbalance of workers in the workforce has created a skills shortage that is being felt in all business and industry sectors.

In addition, generations of high school graduates have been brainwashed into believing that they must attend college. Personally, I am a victim of this mindset and have then perpetuated this propaganda by insisting that my own children go to college. When we reflect on our own personal journeys in our careers, it is remarkable to hear the stories of non-college graduates that are earning as much, if not more, than college-graduate professionals. It is also a sad account to hear acquaintances speak of their children who are college graduates saddled with debt, working in dead-end jobs, and living in their parents’ basement. We did not offer enough hands-on training in our schools that was related to a trade—once known as vocational education—that could have inspired youth to learn a new skill that could lead them to a rewarding career. This lack of skills training has been coined as the skills gap (Capelli, 2015).

Steps You Can Take Toward Workforce Development

There are several things that we can do to address the skills gap and skills shortage for both short-term gain and as a long-term investment. It all starts with a working partnership between businesses and education. This can take many forms. Some school districts invite business partners in to be guest speakers, which is a good start. An even better approach is for the speaker to make the connection between what the students are learning in the classroom and how it is used on the job. For example, Curtis Lumber, located in the Capital Region of New York state, is distributing kits to elementary-aged children so that they can build their own wooden toolbox. School improvement partners at Questar III BOCES are developing a math lesson on the calculation of the angles and the various geometric shapes used in building the toolbox so that students can make a direct correlation on how the math they are learning applies to the building trades. This very simple lesson yet very direct school and business partnership fulfills multiple objectives, including brand awareness and good will for Curtis Lumber, student engagement in applied math, and career awareness of the building trades. While this



may seem like a long-term investment, it certainly helps students explore a career that they had never otherwise considered, and it helps parents understand that these types of trades require talent and can be very rewarding for their children.

A more direct approach for short-term gain is models of businesses bringing students into the workplace to either shadow employees or get to work on the job. The Questar III Youth Apprenticeship Program is the first of its kind in New York State that allows students in high school to work a minimum of 200 hours in a paid apprenticeship, leading to meaningful employment. Students in this program are juniors and seniors in high school and complete their construction math and technical writing classes through Hudson Valley Community College, simultaneously satisfying their high school graduation requirements and earning college credit. In addition, the hours worked in the summer apprenticeship are all captured in the NYS Department of Labor Apprenticeship

Blue Book so that students can bring this to a labor union for preferred entry. Those who do not enter the union have been offered full-time employment upon graduation with the companies that hosted their apprenticeship.

It will be at least a decade before our economy recovers from the labor shortages created by the multiple factors that contributed to the skills gap and skills shortages being felt nationwide. Addressing the workforce development pipeline is a direct effort between business and education partners to spur interest amongst youth and to provide a feeder system into trade-related careers (Fernandez-Palozzi, 2020). This needs to take place at all levels between kindergarten and beyond high school so that awareness of the trades starts early, piques interests, and creates a demand for career and technical education. The value of these partnerships should not be underestimated as the models of best practices are already yielding young workers to fill the jobs of today's trades. **LE**

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Strengthening, Supporting, and Encouraging

the Next Generation of Employees

By Congressman Glenn Thompson



The COVID-19 pandemic created lasting challenges for our society. More than 33 million Americans have been infected, but everyone has felt the impact as our economy came to a halt.

Through Operation Warp Speed, the federal government developed, distributed, and administered COVID-19 vaccines that put America on track to regaining normalcy.

As business operations begin to return to pre-pandemic levels, employers are again faced with a pre-pandemic problem: finding employees with the skills necessary to remain competitive in a rapidly changing environment. In 2019, an American Action Forum research paper estimated this skills gap is expected to cost the U.S. economy \$1.2 trillion in GDP over the next decade. This was before anyone ever heard of COVID-19. Today, there are 8.12 million job openings in the United States. To say the least, these figures keep any employer concerned about the future of their operations.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Education and Labor and co-chair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus, I share these concerns. The bipartisan nature of the caucus allows for open communication and the development of policies that are aimed at better preparing students and jobseekers for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs.

In 2018, we were able to modernize the federal role in career and technical education programs and provide significant new investments to restore the rungs on the ladder of opportunity. To address the post-COVID workforce challenge, I have introduced the bipartisan Skills Renewal Act with my colleague, Congressman Derek Kilmer (D-WA). The bill will create a \$4,000 flexible, fully refundable, skills training credit to support CTE opportunities such as apprenticeships and

certificate programs. The Skills Renewal Act will go a long way to benefit those who have found themselves unemployed during the pandemic through no fault of their own.

In addition to providing opportunities to develop new skills, we must consider how best to strengthen, support, and encourage the next generation of employees.

Many students head into the workforce or post-secondary education settings not fully aware of their career options.

That is why earlier this year, I, along with my friend Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI), introduced the Counseling for Career Choice Act.

The bill will provide grants to help support school counselors to be effective resources to ensure that every student, parent, and family can be exposed to the option and benefits of skills-based education.

These options exist right here, through Butler County Community College. BC3, as it is known, provides students of all ages the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. With six locations throughout western Pennsylvania, students can jumpstart their college education and their careers. Opportunities range from two-year degree programs, one-year certifications, or building credits to transfer to a four-year university.

By providing students with a clearer picture of the workforce opportunities available, we can help individuals realize their true potential and align them with the skills necessary to take on fulfilling and family-sustaining careers. In turn, this will lead to more productive and competitive communities throughout our region. 

Congressman Glenn "GT" Thompson represents Pennsylvania's 15th District and is co-chair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education Caucus.

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Addressing Business Tax Responsibilities from Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund Loans

By Carrie Rand-Anastasiades

As the COVID pandemic reached its pinnacle in 2020, more than 285,000 jobs in Connecticut were lost, and employees found themselves seeking assistance from the state of Connecticut and the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund. Because these were not normal circumstances, the Connecticut Department of Labor (CT DOL) was forced to borrow \$888 million from the federal government to meet the demand. Now, as the pandemic has morphed into its endemic state and we face labor shortages, Connecticut businesses are responsible for paying back the money that they borrowed. It is a daunting responsibility for employers to pay when many are struggling in a post-COVID world.

In 2021, the legislature allocated \$155 million from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to pay down the interest on the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund Loan. The CT DOL used \$125 million of that disbursement toward the loan principal and used the balance to cover interest payments. This payment prevents employers from receiving special assessments in 2021. However, Connecticut employers are still responsible for paying back \$773 million to the Feds over the next five years. This is equivalent to \$467 per employee. These additional tax responsibilities really undermine the state's economic recovery and long-term growth. For these reasons, the Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut (LDAC) made it a priority for the 2022 session to lobby for additional funds to be allocated to this fund.

As the session opened in February, several factions supported issuing additional funds to support Connecticut employers. House Republican Leader Vincent Candelora (North Branford) and the House Republican Caucus highlighted the issue and their specific concern for small businesses. In addition, the 25-member Moderate Democratic Blue Dog Caucus, modeled after its federal counterpart, the Blue Dog Coalition, also supported the cause. Individual senators, such as Cathy Osten (D-Sprague/Norwich), were also incredibly supportive.

To highlight the issue even further, LDAC Legislative Committee Chair Joe Ceccarelli participated in a press conference calling attention to the matter, specifically asking the governor and legislature to help small businesses. He



was joined by counterparts from the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, the Connecticut Food Association, the Connecticut Restaurant Association, and the Connecticut chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, as well as several small manufacturing companies. During the press event, it was noted that Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont fully repaid their federal loans.

As the session progressed, Governor Lamont's office stated they were opposed to additional unemployment compensation funding, and they cited the low interest on the federal loan. Their opposition grew more intense as negotiations on a final budget document began and other tax-saving measures were on the table. Those other measures include a gas tax cut, a car tax cut, and a child tax credit.

In the end, the legislature only allocated \$40 million toward the state's outstanding unemployment loan debt. Unfortunately, employers will see unemployment taxes increase this September. Osten (D-Sprague/Norwich), who is chair of the Appropriations Committee, has pledged to keep fighting for additional funds to help reduce the debt employers will be forced to pay for the next several years. The Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut and our coalition members will also be advocating for additional funds during our yard tours and campaign initiatives this fall in hopes of a better result in 2023. [LC](#)

This article was written for the LC on May 20, 2022.



Massachusetts' Proposed Data Privacy Law Could Impact Retailers

By Patrick Huntington

The Massachusetts Legislature's Committee on Advanced Information Technology and Cybersecurity recently approved draft legislation that is designed to give consumers greater control of how businesses in Massachusetts collect and manage their personal and financial information data.

The bill focuses primarily on increasing protections relating to the sale of customer data, but it also seeks to ensure that businesses maintain the appropriate security procedures during the process of using and storing their customers' data. Companies would be required to conduct risk assessments of their data storage systems to detect security incidents, and their system's ability to resist deceptive, fraudulent, or illegal actions by third parties. There is concern that businesses may also be held responsible for deficiencies in the data systems of their partner vendors and service providers.

Retailers will be required to provide consumers with more thorough and easy-to-understand right-to-privacy notices that detail how the consumer's data is used and whether the information is sold to third parties or used for targeted advertising. Of particular interest, and possibly problematic, is the provision that would allow customers the right to request that data from their commercial transactions be removed from company databases. They would also be allowed to opt out of the sale of their personal information or use for targeted advertising.

The proposal would also limit the duration of time that a company can maintain a customer's personal information. Companies could only hold the data for a period of time that is no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which the information was collected. This could adversely impact businesses that have long-term customers with whom they engage in periodic business transactions over an extended period of time. This could force retailers to continuously collect the same set of data from repeat customers. An exemption is provided if the data is needed to service the contract or ensure that the agreed financing terms are fulfilled. Businesses would require affirmative consent to use customer data beyond the time limits.



Enforcement of the proposed law would be delegated to the Attorney General and the proposed new Massachusetts Information Privacy Commission. The Attorney General could impose penalties of up to \$7,500 per violation and would be authorized to increase the penalties based on the entity's size, scope, and duration of conduct.

The bill would also create a private right of action that would allow any affected consumer to file a claim directly against a business. As drafted, the bill would not require a consumer to demonstrate how they have suffered harm from a security breach in order to commence litigation. As a result, a business could ultimately face claims from three different entities, which could result in frivolous and costly litigation. The only defense to these actions will be proof that the company can demonstrate they have installed the most up-to-date security protocols. This could very well be a difficult standard to prove in the face of a data security breach.

There are two months remaining in the current formal legislative session, and it is uncertain if this bill will be voted on this year. The Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA) will continue to engage with the House and Senate to ensure that any new laws that are designed to address the privacy violations of large national companies and data aggregators do not impose undue burdens that will adversely impact the daily operations of our local businesses. **LC**

This article was written for the LC on May 18, 2022.



An Act to Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers

By Dan Riley

In February 2021, during the first regular session of Maine's 130th Legislature, Representative Rachel Talbot Ross (D-Portland) introduced LD 607, An Act to Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers.

As originally drafted, the bill would have required annual raises of the minimum salary that an employee who works in an executive, administrative, or professional capacity must earn to be exempt from the laws governing minimum wage and overtime pay to \$55,224 beginning in 2024.

The bill's public hearing was held on March 22, 2021, before the Labor and Housing Committee. At the hearing, the testimony was overwhelmingly negative. Only a few labor groups spoke in support while dozens of small business owners and industry groups—ranging from health care to tourism to manufacturing, including the Retail Lumber Dealers Association of Maine (RLDAM)—spoke in forceful opposition to the bill.

At an April 2021 work session, the Labor and Housing Committee tabled LD 607. The bill was not addressed again before adjournment, so it was carried over to the second regular session.

The Labor and Housing Committee held another work session on LD 607 on January 19, 2022. At this work session, the committee voted along party lines to support an amendment that would have significantly increased the salary threshold. Under current law, the overtime payment threshold is 3,000 times the minimum wage. Maine's minimum wage is currently \$12.75, so the threshold is \$38,250. The proposal would have increased the threshold to 3,500 times the minimum wage in 2023, 4,000 times the minimum wage in 2024, and 4,500 times the minimum wage in 2025.

Maine's minimum wage is indexed annually but, assuming that it stayed at \$12.75, the threshold in 2023 would be \$44,625, in 2024 it would be \$51,000, and in 2025 it would be \$57,375. With just modest minimum wage increases, the overtime salary threshold would likely be over \$60,000 in 2025.

However, during a March 2 work session, the Labor and Housing Committee reconsidered its previous vote. Representative

Talbot Ross offered an amendment that transformed the bill. The amendment directs the Maine Department of Labor (DOL) to conduct a comprehensive educational campaign focused to ensure that Maine's regulated community fully understands the laws regarding payment of overtime to Maine workers.

The amendment specifically calls for the Maine DOL to:

- Provide targeted training to employers on the requirements of Maine's statutes regarding overtime, including a review of Maine's minimum wage, the determination of its salary threshold, and the three-pronged duties test to determine whether an employee is exempt from the overtime provisions of the law
- Create and distribute to employers compliance toolkits covering the requirements of Maine's statutes regarding overtime
- Offer employers the opportunity to review, with bureau staff, the employers' classification of employees regarding eligibility for, or exemption from, overtime pay
- Launch a social media campaign focusing on overtime requirements and connecting employers and workers with resources to determine the pertinent salary threshold and whether employees are eligible for or exempt from overtime provisions
- Finally, submit an annual report describing the department's educational campaign, including data on complaints, violations, and enforcement, to the Labor and Housing Committee

This new amendment was a significant victory for the business community, which formed a large and effective coalition, including the RLDAM, to oppose the original intent of the bill and, with the assistance of the Mills Administration, forced the sponsor to agree to amend her bill.

The new amendment gained the full support of the committee and was reported out unanimously "ought to pass as amended" on March 29, 2022. LD 607 was enacted under the hammer in both chambers. Governor Mills signed the legislation into law on April 7, 2022. 

This article was written for the LC on May 11, 2022.



New Hampshire's "Live Free or Die" Motto is Reflected in its Legislative Process

By Curtis J. Barry

New Hampshire's mindset is reflected in the motto "Live Free or Die." It's not just marketing. New Hampshire famously does not require seat belts in automobiles or helmets for motorcycle riders if over 18 years of age. Over the years, the state has also enacted numerous privacy protections for residents, most of which are unknown to the average person. These privacy protections culminated in the 2018 election, when more than 80% of those voting voted "yes" to amend the state constitution to state that "an individual's right to live free from governmental intrusion in private or personal information is natural, essential, and inherent." New Hampshire is also the selected congregation state of the Free State Movement, a plan that is unfolding where libertarian-minded folks are moving to New Hampshire en masse because of its small-government mindset and the state being small enough to affect the political process (rather than libertarians being spread throughout the country and being too thinly spread to affect the political process or policy).

The mindset of New Hampshire's legislature was illustrated when considering how to manage the COVID-19 crisis. The state's legislative process is open and transparent, likely more so than any other state. And that's a good thing. What that means, however, is that each bill must have a public hearing, and with each hearing, when it comes to bills, the legislature experienced people who feel passionately about their bodily autonomy, on the one hand, and healthcare facilities that were at risk of losing federal funding, and in some cases, employers who are responsible for the health and safety of employees and customers alike.

As an example, two of the bills that originated in the Senate were SB 347, which would have prohibited an employer from inquiring, either verbally or in writing, about an employee's protected health information as a requirement for initial or continued employment.

SB 374, which would have prohibited an employer from requiring that an individual who had COVID-19 or who is under the age of 18 receive a vaccination against the virus as a condition for employment or access to businesses or entities open to the public.



What Survived

Three bills passed both bodies in agreed-upon form and are on their way to the governor's desk as I write this report:

HB 1455: would prohibit state enforcement of any federal law, order, or rule that requires an individual, as a condition of employment or any other activity, to provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or to submit more than once per month to COVID-19 testing.

HB 1604: would require state hospitals and medical facilities to grant religious and medical exemptions from vaccination requirements, provided that any request for a medical exemption shall include the supporting documentation required by federal regulation. The bill also includes case management agencies in the definition of home healthcare providers licensed as health facilities.

HB 1003: provides that a patient shall not be denied admission, care, or services based solely on the patient's vaccination status.

This is likely not the last of the subject. 

This article was written for the LC on May 23, 2022.



What's the Best Way to Use a Surplus?

By Scot Mackey

New Jersey this year is facing a different type of challenge during its budget process—what to do with all the extra funds! As most people know, all states received an infusion of cash from the federal government in the form of American Recovery Funds. There is roughly \$3 billion in these funds that New Jersey can spend. However, there is still some disagreement on who has the authority to decide how the funds get spent. The governor's office has its plans, but so too does the legislative branch, and the process for who ultimately decides is still being negotiated.

Additionally, New Jersey officials, the nonpartisan Office of Legislative Services (OLS), and the state Department of the Treasury, are forecasting billions of dollars more in revenue, primarily driven by a spike in income tax filings. The Treasury's combined two-year forecasts are \$7.8 billion higher than its initial forecasts in March. For fiscal year 2022, Treasury officials are projecting \$4.5 billion more, for a total of \$51.4 billion. For fiscal year 2023, which begins July 1, they are projecting \$3.3 billion more, or \$50.6 billion in all.

Meanwhile, OLS increased its revenue forecast by \$3.6 billion over the same two years. If those estimates are correct, the state would have some \$6.9 billion more in tax revenue than what the Murphy Administration initially estimated in March. The big forecast upgrade comes on the heels of a record-setting month for income-tax collections just recorded by the Department of Treasury, with more than \$5 billion flowing into the state's coffers during the month of April.

Given the collections record and increasing forecasts for several other tax sources, the size of the state's budget reserves has increased to a projected \$10.7 billion, according to budget documents, a substantial sum for a state that until recently struggled to cover all its bills, including public-worker pension obligations.

Meanwhile, the administration has also adjusted its revenue forecast for the new fiscal year that will begin July 1, adding more than \$3 billion to the bottom line. And the Murphy Administration, at least for now, is proposing to maintain the size of the state's expanding budget reserves, citing fears of a possible recession, among other concerns. There will be more than \$5 billion sitting in the state's "rainy day" fund, which is another form of budget reserve, by the time the



2023 fiscal year closes, according to the administration's latest projections.

Earlier this year, the governor called on lawmakers to put another \$1.3 billion into a special fund that was created last year for the purpose of paying down bonded debt and funding new capital projects on a pay-as-you-go basis to avoid the need to issue more long-term debt. And his original budget proposed an expansion and rebranding of the state's popular Homestead property-tax relief program that would allow homeowners making up to \$250,000 annually to qualify for direct property-tax relief benefits averaging roughly \$680. The current total for the Homestead program's direct benefits is closer to \$630, with those benefits only provided to senior and disabled homeowners earning up to \$150,000 annually, and all other homeowners earning up to \$75,000 annually.

Meanwhile, for renters, Murphy is seeking to restore rebate checks suspended after the 2007–2009 Great Recession ravaged the state budget. Using a \$100,000 income limit, most seniors would get checks or a direct deposit totaling \$250. Other qualified renters would receive \$150 via check or direct deposit, according to the governor's proposal.

For their part, Republicans on the budget committee embraced the Murphy Administration's call for additional property-tax relief, but suggested more should be done in the area of tax relief in general, given the scope of the surge in revenue. **LC**

This article was written for the LC on May 20, 2022.



Efforts on Workforce Development in the Skilled Trades

By Todd Vandervort

Throughout the many years that my firm has represented the NRLA, I can honestly say that the issue area of education and the associated lobbying has never been something that I have been asked to focus on. That is until last year when the legislative committee, through one of its members, Doug Ford, vice president of sales and purchasing at Curtis Lumber, brought workforce development in the construction trades to everyone's attention.

Curtis Lumber's main store is located in Ballston Spa (Saratoga County), and Ford is very active with the Saratoga Builder's Association (SBA). For many years, many of the members of the SBA have shared frustration and difficulties around the need and very short supply of workers willing to enter into the construction trades. To address this growing need, the SBA formed a Construction Trades Workforce Development Coalition/Committee that I became a part of in fall 2021.

The Coalition is comprised of builders and remodelers; general contractors; educators; school superintendents; economic developers; and BOCES in and around the Saratoga region. I was asked to serve as chair of the legislative, lobbying, and coalition committee, which I was happy to do. We set out to define our mission and develop a legislative strategy. Heading into the 2022 session, we wanted to come up with a legislative ask that was reasonable and attainable. After extensive outreach and conversations with the likes of many, especially in the education space, it was decided that we strongly support legislation that increases the current reimbursement for BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers from the current \$30,000 per teacher to \$60,000 over the next three years. There was a stand-alone bill that was in play, but since there would be a fiscal impact because of the salary increase, we quickly joined an effort already underway as part of this year's budget negotiations. The construction industry, along with many stakeholders in the education space, including but not limited to BOCES, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), New York State School Boards, and the PTA, was part of a joint effort that included close to 450 businesses and groups that were advocating for the salary increase.



Unfortunately, our budget request did not make it into the final budget. The CTE salary conversation became part of the broader "school aid" conversation, which goes well beyond our interests, and the legislature and governor weren't willing to fund the additional costs associated with our request.

I am happy to report, though, that our construction workforce development issue has and will continue to forge ahead. We are in the process of putting together an event planned for late June that will bring all of the stakeholders together. The purpose of that meeting will be to bring together legislative representatives, various trades and construction businesses, along with those involved in all aspects of the education community. Timing is excellent because we hope to capture everyone's attention before summer kicks in.

One goal going forward will be to make sure the construction trades and our need for a network of students, educators, and policymakers completely understand the opportunities and careers that the collective has to offer. The other goal will be to make sure that the legislature and governor understand that the economic development projects on the books or recently included as part of this year's budget (Buffalo Bills Stadium and so much more in every region of the state) will be best served if there is a thriving and growing pipeline to support all of the economic development goals and opportunities.

Please consider joining us in our efforts going forward. There is a tremendous opportunity before us, and we are definitely poised to be part of something meaningful and important to the construction industries that the NRLA members are part of. **LC**

This article was written for the LC on May 20, 2022.



Recreational Marijuana Legalization

By Terry Martiesian

The original legislation, entitled “The Rhode Island Cannabis Act,” was first introduced in both the House of Representatives and Senate on March 1, 2022. It proposed to legalize the adult (age 21 and over) personal use of cannabis (not more than 10 ounces) and provide for the licensing of cultivation, manufacturing, and related sales of cannabis. Since that date, there have been ongoing negotiations between all interested parties, including the business sector, lawmakers, license applicants for 33 initial retail pot shops, and others. This includes the nine medical marijuana stores that are presently licensed and will sell to recreational users under a hybrid model.

The results of the lengthy negotiations are H-7593 Substitute A and S-2430 Substitute A (identical bills). Both bills are expected to become law, with minor changes only. It was finally decided, after lengthy negotiations, to create a three-member Cannabis Control Commission (appointed by the governor) to be responsible for the rules, licensing, and regulation of both recreational and medical marijuana. The commission will decide on the 24 remaining licenses, which will be spread across six designated zones. A certain number of licenses will be reserved for both co-op and social equity applicants.

The legislation calls for an advisory panel with both political representation and cannabis industry experts to offer ongoing recommendations to the commission. A governor-appointed administrator will head the state cannabis office. The administrator will report directly to the commission. This resolved a separation of powers concern raised by Governor McKee.

Sales of recreational cannabis will be subject to a 20% tax as follows:

1. 10% state cannabis excise tax
2. 7% sales tax
3. 3% local and municipality tax

Cities and towns will have local control over license holders and the option of opting out as a host retail seller community via a local municipal ordinance and ballot referendum on November 8, 2022. This excludes the three communities presently hosting medical marijuana. The act would also provide for the automatic expungement of prior cannabis possession convictions that have been decriminalized.



Revenue (application and license fees) primarily shall be used to create a social justice fund to benefit those negatively impacted by the criminalization of cannabis.

The legislation does include greater employer protection, but concerns remain. The amended legislation does allow employers to enforce their own drug policies without having to accommodate medical use of marijuana in the workplace or perform remote work. Employers can refuse to hire, discipline, or discharge an employee due to working under the influence or being in violation of a workplace drug policy.

However, the law would not allow random drug testing. Testing would be permissible only if an employer “has reasonable grounds” to believe that an employee appears to be impaired and under the influence. Another major employer concern is employees getting a “free pass” after a first positive drug test. Employees testing positive cannot be terminated but shall be referred to a substance abuse professional. Unfortunately, there is no scientifically validated test for cannabis impairment at this time, i.e., consuming gummies, soda, and other edibles, i.e., no smell. The legislation appears to set up conditions when an employee has a hazardous work position, but this remains conditional on a credible test. **LC**

This article was written for the LC on May 20, 2022.



Vermont Workforce Development Bill Passes; Will Help the Building Trades

By William S. Smith, Esq.



Throughout the 2022 Vermont legislative session, a bill (H.703) to develop a better workforce in Vermont has been front and center. In the second week of May, the bill (now part of S.11) finally passed the legislature and is currently waiting for the governor's signature.

As it relates to the building trades, the legislation provides money to modernize Career Technical Education (CTE). It provides \$15 million to fund loans for a new Tech Center-based construction and rehabilitation experiential learning program. This program will allow local technical centers, with their students doing the work, to collaborate with private businesses and other community partners to rehabilitate housing and build new housing and commercial projects with "a substantial community benefit." CTE students in construction, electrical, plumbing, design, and business management programs can participate. This is the first time this level of funding and guidance has been provided to our tech centers and their students.

Other relevant funding in the bill will go to providing a pilot project in the Department of Labor to train CTE students in key "credentials" in various industries (including the building trades). At the end of session this was scaled back to a pilot

program, as the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation did not want to run or monitor the program. Okay, that happens, particularly at the end of a legislative session, but I am confident that having students gain key credentials before seeking employment will be viable over time. We will ensure that Vermont Retail Lumber Dealers Association (VRLDA) members will be able to ask that certified building materials specialists and crane operators be included in this credential program. We can demonstrate the value of including this type of training in the tech centers so that students show up with the certifications they need when they come to work.

I have to note that this type of legislation is only one piece of the puzzle. Our members have been working with the Tech Centers and Vermont Technical College for a long time. That effort is being welcomed in a new way and is appreciated by Governor Scott's administration. They recognize that your businesses work with your local tech centers to provide training, materials, and jobs. With a new statewide emphasis on this and the COVID money to fund it, we may soon see a much-needed increase in the employment pool. **LC**

This article was written for the LC on May 11, 2022.

— *Legislatively Speaking, State-by-State* —

A Q&A with NRLA's Legislative Chairs on Top Priorities

Question 1: What is your legislative committee's No. 1 priority for your state and why?

Question 2: What priority issue do you personally wish to see tackled at the federal level and why?



Connecticut—Joe Cecarelli
Hood Distribution

Answer 1: Continuing to rally for the state of Connecticut to help pay down the unemployment fund for small businesses is paramount.

At the start of the pandemic, we were fortunate to be deemed essential without any long-term disruption to our operations, but not all small businesses in other industries were as lucky. Some have never reopened, but some are making the effort to rebound and start to rebuild.

The repayment of this unemployment fund by the state would be a huge help to many of the small privately owned businesses. We need to ask our legislators and our governor to use more of their revenue surplus in a very positive way.

Answer 2: One that seems to be at the top of the list is workplace development. This issue is one that has the potential to be a direct reward to not only our industry but the trades that support us daily.

We need to continue to work with our representatives on HR 6225 and let them help us become a working partner on this through the American Building Material Alliance (ABMA).

Many of our members have embarked on job fairs and mentoring programs in conjunction with local trade and high schools, promoting both the building materials and the trade groups that support us with great results.

The writing of a bill is one thing, but being able to become a contributing resource on this issue shows our commitment to the future of both these industries that move the needle in our economy for our country and our communities daily.

I know that many of our yard tours this year will combine invitations to both federal and state legislators, which is a win-win for us. If you haven't considered a yard tour, I urge you to do so, as it is a very rewarding event for us all.



Maine—Rod Wiles
Hammond Lumber Company

Answer 1: Our goal is to continually work to protect the interests of our members, by monitoring legislation that affects their businesses both directly and indirectly. From the onset of bill introduction, we get involved to try and pass legislation that we support and would be beneficial to our members or work to defeat legislation that would be detrimental to our businesses. One such priority that we would like to see tackled is the establishment of a workplace training and development

program. With a shortage of qualified employees entering the workforce, we need programs that can offer the necessary training, and our hope is to work with the next legislature to introduce a bill that addresses this issue and then help to move it forward.

Answer 2: The lack of a current Softwood Lumber Agreement between the U.S. and Canada is something that needs to be addressed immediately. With inflation at a 40-year high and our nation in the middle of a housing affordability crisis, the lack of an agreement since 2015 has contributed significantly to the overall price of a new home. This issue has a huge impact on our industry and is affecting customers on a daily basis.



**Massachusetts—
John Mahoney**

Fairview Millwork, Inc.

Answer 1: Massachusetts in the last 30 years has almost exclusively had Republican governors, which has balanced out the Democratic super majority in the legislature. It's projected that we will have a Democratic governor in place following this year's election. This will likely result in some significant changes to how business is done on Beacon Hill.

More than any one particular issue, it is key for us to maintain strong ties with business-savvy members of the House and Senate to ensure we still have a voice in bills and processes of the state's governance.

Answer 2: We need to tackle the costs and inflation that have hit our industry. Gas prices, labor, materials, etc. We can only pass so much on to the customer before they stop buying our products and our ability to sell suffers. Economics needs to be at the forefront of any federal agenda.



**New Hampshire—
Bob Jackman**

LaValley Building Supply

Answer 1: Although we have not discussed this as an NHRLA board, I believe our main issue has to revolve around workforce. This would be a two-pronged effort, including trying to invite people into our workforce and providing them with the housing they need to stay in our areas.

- We need to make every effort to engage and build career and technical education (CTE) and to support legislation that puts education on an equal footing with traditional college.

- We need to support housing options financially and refine the process for approval of projects that supply workforce housing.

Answer 2: I, personally, think we need to push for separation of our workforce from the national scene as we deal locally and many of the regulations we see are directed at nationwide businesses. This issue deals with drivers and the ability to train our own workforce. Legislators must realize that any EXTRA cost we incur must be passed on to the consumer—and that brings us to the core issue—INFLATION! We must control inflation as it disproportionately affects those least able to afford it.



New Jersey—Steve Gerard

Reeb Millwork

Answer 1: One bipartisan topic that we all recognize as a solution to a better New Jersey is workforce development. Most New Jersey businesses are reporting that they have available job openings but are unable to fill them with qualified applicants. The New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) has identified this void in all business positions, from entry level to management. Having a degree is no longer an assured gateway to employment as more employers are looking at an applicant's specific skills and qualifications. New Jersey has instituted one program (NJ Pathways) that is attempting to bridge the gap between an applicant's skills and the employer's needs. The development of a qualified workforce that makes New Jersey a productive and economically strong state is the answer to many of the other challenges that we will face.

Answer 2: Of all the issues that face New Jersey, the environment is the one that needs to be addressed at the federal level. New Jersey currently has 114 Superfund sites, seven of which have been identified as sites to be cleaned under President Biden's infrastructure law. If we want New Jersey to continue to be recognized as a national economic engine where companies want to locate, we need to clean up all Superfund sites.

Providing clean energy for business and residential use requires the cooperation of all states. As it may be difficult for all 50 states to come up with compatible plans, addressing the environment and future energy needs has become a national concern, requiring at least some federal oversight. As sufficient and reliable energy supply is essential to all businesses we all recognize the need to supply this energy in a way that is clean and sustainable. Interstate natural gas pipelines, fracking, and nuclear power plants all create adversarial sides. We need a master plan that all states can live and grow with.



New York—Dana Schnipper

JC Ryan EBCO/H&G, LLC

Answer 1: The No. 1 priority for us in New York state is legislation that funds workforce development programs that support the need for people to work both in our businesses and in our customers' businesses.

Through the combined efforts of lobbying by the NRLA-NY legislative committee and individual NRLA members such as Curtis Lumber, we are making the issue very visible to our governor, assemblymen, assemblywomen, and senators. We ask that our members organize yard tours and talk about workforce development.

Answer 2: We are also lobbying for workforce development programs at the federal level through the American Building Material Alliance (ABMA). Recently, ABMA sponsored a Zoom call with representatives of the U.S. Dept. of Labor to review the training programs sponsored by the federal government. In addition to lobbying for workforce development, we continue to work on getting legislation passed in New York state that would exempt material suppliers from retention on both private and public projects.

My personal goal, at the federal level, is to continue to work on funding workforce development programs that will help our industry find the talent we need to successfully operate our businesses.



Rhode Island—Mike McDole

Sales Consultant for LBM Industry and retired Senior VP of Sales at National Lumber Co.

Answer 1: Rhode Island Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association (RILBMDA) opposes RI HB-7677 "Labor & Labor Relations—Payments of Wages." While well intended, this bill does not have clarity for "any employer who knowingly or willfully violates to comply ...," which means violations caused by honest mistakes will be open to interpretation. There is no provision for honest mistakes and technical errors.

In an economic climate where staffing is a huge challenge, especially in the building materials and construction industries, vacancies are plaguing all businesses. The current lack of employees also includes payroll and human resource professionals. Therefore, it's quite possible that payroll could be left to those who are doing other job functions, and they may not necessarily know all the details to properly fulfill payroll processing.

In this bill, there are sections that state it will be a misdemeanor charge against the employer for any wage mistake under \$1,500 and will include a fine. A wage mistake over \$1,500 will be a felony charge against the employer and could include imprisonment of up to three years. For a wage mistake over \$5,000, it could include imprisonment for up to six years.

RILBMDA does not condone any payroll mistakes that are made knowingly or willfully, as it is unethical and should be

punishable. However, if the payroll error was made as an honest mistake or technical error, and the employer corrects it in a timely manner, we do not think the employer should be punished.

Answer 2: RILBMDA supports the U.S. House of Representatives' HR-6255, "Employer-Directed Skills Act." With the number of help wanted signs and ads out there by building material dealers and construction companies, there is no doubt the U.S. desperately needs more skilled workers. While college is great for some people, it is certainly not the answer for everyone.

Anyone who has worked in our industry knows the pay is good and the benefits are strong, including medical insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, etc. This is also true for many of the trades, such as construction workers, electricians, plumbers, etc. It's important that the word gets out, letting the U.S. population know that one can earn a good living working in our industry or the various trades.

This bill helps fill the gap between employers and employees, as it will help streamline the process of a skills development program. The existing bill is geared toward very large companies. We need a bill that will also include small- to medium-sized businesses.

Specifically, this legislation would allow employers to identify prospective workers to participate in a skills development program. It will also expand eligible programs to include work-based learning provided by the employer. In addition, this bill will provide partial reimbursement for the cost of upskilling programs.



Vermont—Jeremy Baker

rk MILES

Answer 1: VRLDA’s legislative committee has made workforce development a priority in 2022. They have, in conjunction with the VRLDA board, created a workforce development committee, identifying opportunities to become engaged in the lobbying process. The Vermont Legislature has also identified workforce development as an important issue to tackle. We positioned ourselves strategically between the Legislature and the career technical centers, creating a conduit for communication between these essential groups.

Rather than engage in our typical legislative breakfast/ lobby day at the statehouse, we promoted and produced a “Building Bright Futures” industry awareness and recruitment day on the campus of Vermont Technical College on April 12. We successfully hosted 150 high school students and administrators, the House Commerce Committee, the Senate Education Committee, the secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the president of Vermont Technical College, and, of course, the VRLDA board. Legislators were directly connected to school administrators. Students were connected to LBM industry leaders. Tours of the VTC campus were scheduled throughout the day with prospective students. Presentations intended to introduce the audience to the LBM industry were made prior to lunch, and the day wrapped up with a career fair involving the VRLDA member companies and vendors.

A bill addressing workforce development was passed nearly one month later, and the Legislature adjourned. Efforts like these are necessary and must continue as we address the ongoing workforce development issue.

Answer 2: Personally, I am optimistic that we can promote and support workforce development at the federal level. Workforce development means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. I personally like the following definition: “Workforce development is considered an interconnected set of solutions to meet employment needs. It can include changes to culture, changes to attitudes, and changes to people’s potential that help to positively influence a business’ future success. Workforce development is also sometimes referred to as employee development and is considered an important aspect of business success.” The sooner we expose students to the opportunities available related to our industry, the better our chances are to change the culture, attitude, and each individual’s potential. 

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PEELING AWAY THE LAYERS OF **DOOR TRENDS**

TO CREATE CONFIDENT INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR DOOR SALES

By Selene Byron

I NEVER PAID MUCH MIND TO DOORS. Then we moved into our new (100-year-old) home, and our front door was pink. The first thing my husband did (OK, second to ordering cable to watch the Patriots) was paint our front door. "Why is it so important?" I inquired. He replied, "I don't want to be defined as the 'new neighbors with the pink door.'"

As I started to peel away the layers of door trends, they began to reveal many questions I didn't even know I had.

The front door is the focal point of a home and speaks volumes about who lives there. A person can't "just pick a door," they need to understand the nuances of their home, mixed with aesthetics, aka, the layers...

QUESTIONS HOMEOWNERS SHOULD ANSWER BEFORE ORDERING DOORS

It's important for you, their salesperson, to understand what homeowners want and why. Determining the answers to these questions can help reveal their needs and preferences.

- Is it security, performance, and/or style/aesthetics?
- Do they want wood, steel, or fiberglass? What are the pros and cons of each?
- How much maintenance are they willing to take on?
- Do they want their doors painted or stained?
- Privacy or decorative glass? If an entry door, do they want sidelites?
- Which way does the door swing?
- What are the dimensions of the door opening?
- What kind of hardware do they want and how much does it add to the overall cost?
- What is the architectural style of their home and neighborhood?

That is a lot to grasp! Having the answers to these simple questions will lead to more satisfied customers in the end.

LET'S TALK TRENDS

In the past 10 years, there have been more changes in door trends than in the previous 20-30 years. What's changed?

- Traditional door designs have come back with simplistic plain and clean lines.
- Adding a pop of the "Color of the Year" to interior doors:
 - 2020 introduced darker trending tones, from gray to black and cranberry.
 - In 2021, Periwinkle lightened up the color palette with purples, sea foam green, and blues.
 - 2022's Evergreen Fog brings neutral and natural elements to door styles.
 - Exterior door colors tend to stay classic in black, red, and white.
- Simultaneously, trends are moving back to stain for a natural look, which the market hasn't seen in years.
- The architectural community falls in love with a trend and then makes the standards for specification.
- People can enhance their space by adding natural light to their exterior doors—one-panel glass, three-lite with frosted glass, French doors, and more.
- The hardware dynamics shift every few years. 2022's trends include rustic and minimalistic hardware with geometric shapes, natural and matte finishes, and crystal knobs.

The most interesting door trend is that kitchen cabinet design and color dictate what's hot and what's not.

LUCKILY, WE HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA TO HELP!

Visibility on social media platforms drives door styles and designs!

Nearly every homeowner has a basic idea of their aesthetic preferences when they start their sales process. They watch HGTV, scroll through Houzz, and pin their favorites. Door manufacturers do an excellent job of communicating through their websites and spotlighting current projects on all the latest and greatest platforms.

More dynamic is the user-generated content, created by individuals not part of the brand or business, and the "social proof" on social media, with people copying the current trends and posting them, validating their authenticity.

WE UPSSELL THROUGH EDUCATION

People are afraid to lose a sale when communicating options, but it is our responsibility to understand the layers, communicate clearly, and let customers make their own choices.

Our job is to sell confidently through education.

Manufacturers educate distributors; together they educate dealer sales teams and, collectively, we educate the consumer. We learn through product knowledge training, talking to one another, and feeling comfortable with our vendor partners to be able to ask questions. We learn by working together to understand the features and benefits of the different product styles, manufacturers, substrates, glass options, hardware, pre-finishing, and warranties.

When we are confident with our product knowledge and the people we work with, it is easier to have conversations with homeowners to educate them on the layers of door trends, leading to increased order values.

LET'S GET TOGETHER

There have been changes in every manufacturer's product line. Bring your vendors in to talk with your team. Invite your contractors. Invite the homeowners.

Let's utilize our channel support network to identify the layers, boosting confidence in product knowledge and education to enhance the sales process. 

Photos courtesy of Huttig Building Products.

About the author: Selene Byron, director of regional marketing for Huttig Building Products. Huttig is a market leader in door distribution, offering Therma-Tru exterior doors, Masonite interior doors, Woodgrain interior doors, and Standard patio doors. Huttig's services include truckload order capabilities, Huttig Doorway Configurator, the Express Ship Entry Door Systems Program, and full-service door shops where we supply a selection of everything from slabs to custom entry systems, featuring our own Huttig Finish Line PrismaGuard finishing system. For more information, contact sbyron@huttig.com or 401-489-5014.



The Key Benefits of **ELECTRONIC ACCESS CONTROL**

By Elton Mayfield

DO YOU NEED A SAFER, MORE EFFICIENT WAY TO CONTROL YOUR FACILITY?

Electronic access control (EAC) is becoming an essential part of overall security systems at commercial, industrial, and educational facilities. By replacing physical keys and using biometric or card-based systems to control access, you can remotely manage your facility from a single location. This reduces costs and makes security more efficient than ever before.

EAC systems help you protect your data, your people, and your facility. With an access control system, you can manage door privileges, set unique schedules for each employee, and monitor personnel via the web—all without dealing with pesky keys any longer.

Employees can also use their badge to determine if their area is clear before entering hazardous areas.

Where the traditional key system offers low security, EAC systems offer high security for your employees and your valuable materials with fingerprint scanners, barcode scanners, card readers, and biometric devices.

Do you have complicated key control issues for your company? Don't waste hours enlisting every employee to carry a copy of their own key, or risk having rooms left unlocked if no one is available to distribute keys. Your staff will love you for it!



EFFORTLESSLY MANAGE YOUR EAC SYSTEM ACROSS MULTIPLE SITES THROUGH CLOUD-MANAGED PLATFORMS.

Scale your system with ease to fit your budget and organize the systems appropriately, from manual to automated. Keep track of all activity that occurs in and around your facility, including who comes and goes. Monitor activity levels for doors or set up your own custom alerts based on rules you determine. With online reporting capabilities to keep track of all activity, you can manage all activity for your facility from multiple locations, regardless of whether you're on the property or 1,000 miles away.

The days of fumbling with a keyring are over thanks to advances in technology over the last few decades. Traditional EAC systems involved having a dedicated server on site that an administrator would have to access to do things such as manage users, credentials, or schedules. Today, most manufacturers are moving to cloud-based platforms, meaning administrators can access their system and manage multiple sites from any web-enabled device. Rather than having an engineer on site to manage an appliance, reliable and scalable software gets automatic updates in an easy-to-use platform right on a web browser. These platforms allow administrators to issue credentials, revoke access, and customize entries, with all sites, users, and locations managed from a single interface.

REDUCE COSTS ON LOCKS AND SECURITY PERSONNEL.

Modern access control systems can verify a person's identity without the need for a security guard on site. While an unauthorized person could use someone's stolen credentials, the move to using your phone as a credential further reduces this risk.

With modern access control systems, you no longer have to regularly replace locks or rekey doors. EAC platforms allow administrators to revoke and nullify a user's credentials easily. When an employee loses a key, you would have to issue them a new key and, in some instances, even replace the locks of the doors if the key was for a high-security area. With modern EAC solutions, all an administrator needs to do is deactivate the employee's old card and issue a new one.

THE LATEST TRENDS IN SMART DOOR TECHNOLOGY.

In 2021, the first residential smart door was introduced. It was the first exterior door to integrate power, lights, sensors, a video doorbell, and a smart lock into the door system.

The traditional EAC system consists of three major components:

1. Electric Strike

The strike is installed in the door frame and is triggered to lock or unlock upon the valid reading of a credential or token.

2. Card Reader

The card reader is typically installed near the door and will pass commands to tell the electric strike to open when a valid read is recognized.

3. Access Control Panel

The access control panel is typically installed in an IT room or utility closet. All hardware is connected to this panel via wiring.

Some smart doors combine all three components into one frame, which opens the possibilities for use-cases. With the smartphone app, administrators can manage their smart door from any location.

This latest trend in door technology only paves the way for even more innovations and improvements in the industry, and the future is looking safer and more secure.

INCREASE THE OVERALL SAFETY AND SECURITY OF EMPLOYEES, VISITORS, AND ASSETS.

A popular trend when it comes to security of late is integration. Let's say you want to secure a facility with video surveillance, access control, and alarms. Integrating all three into one streamlined system makes it easier to protect and secure your property. For example, you can set up your cameras so that upon recognizing a trespasser via facial recognition, all doors will lock and the alarms will sound—informing staff and law enforcement of the threat.

Integrating your access control system into other security devices will help to keep your employees and assets safe. With most access control systems, you can integrate up to three different devices (video surveillance, alarms, and intercoms, for example) so that upon detecting an intruder, the appropriate measures are taken immediately.

Modern day technological integration allows EAC products to not just be simple, but incredibly effective. Video surveillance systems are vital to monitoring the security of your institution, but if you don't have the proper security system in place with EAC, unauthorized individuals can still enter your restricted areas. Video surveillance and electronic access control systems can operate together seamlessly.

Each lockable door for security or non-security areas may be set up to operate independently by key, code, or remote control. For example, a door opening into an alarm area opens only if the alarm has been deactivated from the central station console. The device is also equipped to accept a variety of remote controls, including hand-held buttons and foot switches.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to an access control system's role in security, and as more industry players innovate and develop newer technologies, things are only getting safer and safer. Now more than ever is the best time to upgrade your system and to provide a safer and easier security solution for your facility. 

About the author: Elton Mayfield is the co-founder of ER Marketing, a B2B marketing agency with a special love for the building industry—quite possibly, because they've been building clients themselves. For more than 18 years, ER Marketing has been dedicated to improving the marketing channel for all things building.

DOOR PRODUCT SHOWCASE



Photo Credit: Cleary Millwork / Wholesale Doors



Cleary Millwork / Wholesale Doors

Contact: Erik Jellinek **Email:** ejellinek@clearymillwork.com

Phone: 800-899-4533 **Website:** clearymillwork.com

What Door product do you sell?

Masonite Interior, Exterior, and Architectural, Rogue Valley, Captiva Custom, DeLa Fontaine, and Five Lakes.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Masonite's VistaGrande flush-glazed doors instantly brighten any space, featuring up to 18% more visible glass area. Available in fir or smooth texture with various glass and numerous grid options, this collection is perfect for front and patio applications. Many sizes in stock with short lead times at Cleary Millwork, including 8'0" sizes. Prefinishing available.



PARTICIPANTS

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BWI Distribution by Masonite

Contact: Doug Helmacy

Email: dhelmacy@bwi-distribution.com

Phone: 908-500-3463 **Website:** bwi-distribution.com



What Door product do you sell?

BWI is a distributor of Masonite interior and exterior doors, including solid wood, fiberglass, steel, hollow core, and solid core.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

DuraStyle solid wood exterior doors from Masonite feature AquaSeal technology, a factory-applied sealant that is paintable/stainable right from the factory. Torrefied species include a 20-year warranty with no overhang!



Kohltech Windows and Entrance Systems

Website: kohltech.com



What Door products do you sell?

The home's entrance is where first impressions are made. Our entrance systems are custom-made, offering an outstanding choice of distinctive colors, decorative glass, transoms, and shapes to enhance the character of the home. Every one of our entrance systems is manufactured to ISO 9001 standards, guaranteeing the highest degree of quality and craftsmanship. To us, choice matters just as much as durability.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The Select Patio Door offers the practicality and convenience of virtually maintenance-free vinyl to brighten the inside of the home all year long. Every patio door comes standard with popular features, including a pocket sill, a sliding screen door with non-corroding adjustable roller wheels, and a positive interlock for less air infiltration. And, of course, you can add a number of options, including decorative grilles, internal blinds, and energy-efficient glass choices. Regardless of which patio door system you choose, they're all backed by a comprehensive guarantee. Custom sizes are also available.



Boise Cascade®

Boise Cascade Company

Contact: Westfield, MA: Dan Morgado,
Greenland, NH: Chip Wood
Email: danmorgado@bc.com; chipwood@bc.com
Phone: Westfield: 877-462-6473, Greenland: 800-962-9961
Website: bc.com/distribution



What Door products do you sell?

GCP Vycor Plus & Vycor Pro Flashing Tapes, ZIP System Stretch Tape and Flashing Tape, and Klear trimboards.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Vycor Plus self-adhered flashing for doors, windows, and details is a high-performance self-adhered flashing membrane that provides premium protection against water and air infiltration in all critical non-roof detail areas. When properly installed, it can reduce the risk of rot and mold development, often associated with costly callbacks. The RIPCORD split release offers the flexibility to install half the membrane before and the other half after the other building envelope components are installed. The membrane creates a strong bond to the substrate for long-lasting waterproofing protection. The membrane surface is clearly marked at 6- and 12-inch intervals.



R. A. Graham Co. Inc.

Contact: George Graham **Email:** georgeg@ragraham.com
Phone: 800-333-3933 **Website:** ragraham.com



CURVED COLLECTION



METRO COLLECTION



What Door products do you sell?

R. A. Graham offers a huge selection of door hardware brands, paired with friendly customer service. Our customers sell lots of categories of products and come to us as their hardware experts. We're New England's local and independent choice for Rocky Mountain Hardware, Emtek, Baldwin, Schlage, Kwikset, Omnia, Ashley Norton, and Hamilton Sinkler. Acorn, and commercial brands like Schlage, Falcon, Ives, Von Duprin, LCN, and plenty more. Give us a call and see why you should choose a growing family business with six full-time outside sales reps covering New England.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

RMH Express from Rocky Mountain Hardware is a select offering that ships within 10 business days of order acknowledgement. Made in USA and a three-week ETA—does it get any better than that? Solid, art-grade bronze is used in their Idaho plants.



National Vinyl LLC

Contact: Scott Channell **Email:** schannell@nvpwindows.com
Phone: 413-420-0548 **Website:** nationalvinyl.com



EnduraView Door Systems



What Door products do you sell?

We offer our EnduraView patio door system.

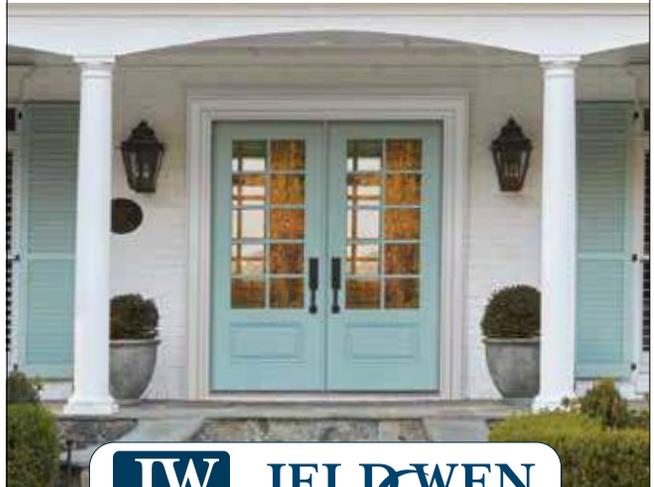
What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The EnduraView is a direct glazed patio door that allows for the interlock to go full length, providing a greater seal from the elements. Easily reversed in the field prior to installation, this makes for greater flexibility.



BROSCO

Contact: Tim Curran **Email:** tcurran@broSCO.com
Phone: 978-475-7100 **Website:** broSCO.com



What Door products do you sell?

BROSCO offers interior and exterior doors in traditional to contemporary designs. The growing, popular trend of interior primed flat panels, along with the new primed raised panel doors, are in stock. Additionally, we stock JELD-WEN molded doors. The exterior offering has a wide selection of wood, fiberglass, and steel doors. The Simpson Wood Door selection includes Nantucket and WaterBarrier doors to fit any project's needs. The JELD-WEN Fiberglass Collection offers Smooth Pro, Design Pro Mahogany, Fir, and Oak along with the premium Architectural Collection with NVD technology. Prefinishing for fiberglass and interior primed and moulded doors is available.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The JELD-WEN Fiberglass Door Collection has the designs and styles needed for all projects. From the rustic charm of a farmhouse to the relaxed vibe of a coastal cottage or the refreshed look of an updated traditional to a simply modern design, JELD-WEN Fiberglass provides a quality door with the right look. The numerous options available include the latest trends in flat panels, textured glass, SDL bars, the contemporary Spotlights Collection, 13 decorative glass families, and an expanded 8'-0" offering. The many designs, from the popular Craftsman style with SDL to a ¾ light with decorative glass, create curb appeal!



Andersen

Contact: James Degnan
Email: james.degnan@andersencorp.com
Phone: 844-623-0796 **Website:** andersenwindows.com



What Door products do you sell?

Bring us your ideas, inspirations and budget and we'll match you with the perfect solution for your project. Whether your project is residential or commercial, new construction or replacement, Andersen doors are available in the sizes, styles, and quality materials you want. Bring modern designs to life with options like dark colors, dramatic sizes, narrow profiles and sleek hardware. Andersen offers a vast portfolio of patio doors, storm doors, entry doors, and big doors including Liftslide, MultiGlide, Folding and Pivot options.

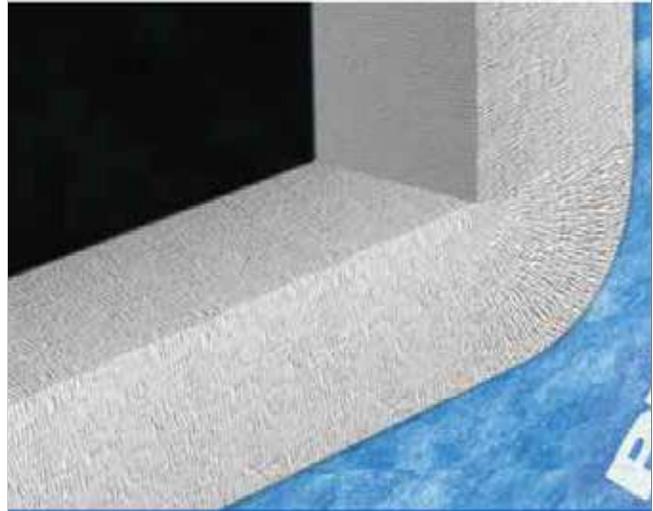
What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Adding between the glass blinds or shades to your windows and patio doors is a convenient way to control the amount of light and privacy you want for your home. Plus it means minimal cleaning and no worries about damage. A modern alternative to conventional blinds and drapes. Andersen offers blinds between the glass in select 200 Series, 400 Series, A Series and E Series Doors. Have a project with sleek, contemporary dark interiors? Blinds between the glass are now available in slate gray for select A-Series patio doors, shown here.



Holden Humphrey Co

Contact: Lance Humphrey **Email:** lance@holdenhumphrey.com
Phone: 800-777-1053 **Website:** holdenhumphrey.com



What Door products do you sell?

We sell Henry caulking and flashings including Henry Butyl Flash and flexible butyl flash, and Titebond caulking.



LUMBER CO-OPERATOR

COMING UP IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE...

Flooring and Engineered Wood Products



Reeb Millwork

Contact: Nell Flowers **Email:** nflowers@reeb.com
Website: reeb.com



What Door products do you sell?

We are one of the top distributors of Therma-Tru fiberglass and steel doors. In addition, we offer wood stile and rail doors from Simpson and Woodgrain. We carry MDF doors from Millennium and molded doors from Steves. We distribute our products from Maine to the Carolinas.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Therma-Tru Fiberglass doors combine the best characteristics of wood and steel with the latest technology to create a premium entryway that is secure, weather-resistant, energy-efficient and stylish. Fiberglass doors won't warp, rot, dent, or rust. In fact, they only need a fraction of the maintenance of wood or steel doors. For more than 20 years, Therma-Tru has been recognized as the Brand Used Most by more building professionals than any other entry door brand. As a distributor of Therma-Tru doors, Reeb stocks more top-selling Therma-Tru products than anyone in the country.



Huttig Building Products

Contact: Selene Byron **Email:** sbyron@huttig.com
Phone: 401-489-5014 **Website:** huttig.com



What Door products do you sell?

Huttig Building Products is a market leader in door distribution, offering Therma-Tru exterior doors, Masonite Interior Doors, Woodgrain Stile & Rail Doors, Standard patio doors, Larson Storm Doors and the new Therma-Tru Impressions Storm door.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Therma-Tru Exterior Doors. New in 2022 is the Impressions Integrated Storm & Entry Door System in partnership with LARSON. Impressions, the first of its kind, has the storm door integrated flush with the brickmould portion of the door frame, creating a cohesive unit and seamless look.

Huttig Northeast has increased our stocking program of Woodgrain's Primed MDF Stile and Rail Doors to include 10 styles in-stock at our Taunton, Saco and Newington locations. New stocking profiles include 3 Equal Flat Panel, 5 Flat Panel Ovolo Sticking, 6 Raised Panel Ovolo Sticking, Shaker 1 Flat Panel Square Sticking and 1 Flat Panel Ovolo Sticking. MDF Primed Stile & Rail Interior Doors offer superior paintability, sound reduction, durable for decades and sustainably-made all at a lower price point than wood.

*"Your customers
have great
expectations for
their homes these
days—perhaps
greater than
ever before."*



1411



2022 Home Design Trends

By James Degnan

It's that time of year again when home building and remodeling is ramping up, and we're noticing some new trends. Find out what materials are trending, how a connection with nature is being cultivated, and so much more.

Your customers have great expectations for their homes these days—perhaps greater than ever before. Beauty, comfort, and functionality are non-negotiable, but so is a connection with nature and a feeling of well-being. See what we mean by exploring the six home design trends we're seeing come to life this year.

Natural Wood: The New Neutral

Bare wood is setting a new standard. Its warm color and clean look creates a cozy feeling that works with styles ranging from minimalist to boho to modern. Adding to its appeal is the fact that it comes from the forest. People are searching for natural materials, making wood a perfect choice.

Solid Stone: Timeless Charm

Earthy and enduring stone is adding old-world charm to people's homes. Its rustic and refined look is both timeless and timely. A stone-accented home feels solid, like a place that will last for generations, and the natural origins of this material put our health-conscious minds at ease.

Arched & Circle Windows: Delightfully Unexpected

Distinctive and versatile circle and arched windows are giving homes more character. They're a welcome contrast to the

straight lines and right angles that make up most houses, and their organic shape fits in with a design ethos that's grounded in nature.

Floor-to-Ceiling Windows: Emphasize the Outdoors

Windows whose frames begin at our feet and extend far above eye level are no longer just reserved for two-story rooms with sweeping views. As sustainable design principles focus on optimizing daylight and our appreciation of its health benefits increase, everyone is looking for bigger windows.

Window Walls: Expand Square Footage

Sliding glass walls and folding doors are being used to carve out new spaces melding indoors and outdoors. Replacing blank walls with views of nature, abundant sunlight, and fresh breezes delivers on the desire for healthier homes while also creating ideal entertaining spaces.

A-frame Cabins: They're Back!

The iconic cabin design is reviving our dreams of leisure and allowing us to escape to the woods once again. With a renewed interest in nature sweeping through contemporary culture, plus an abiding taste for Mid-Century design, it was really only a matter of time before these cabins came back in style. **LC**

For more information about Andersen Windows & Doors, contact Market Development Manager James Degnan at james.degnan@andersencorp.com. For more than 115 years, Andersen's drive to make windows and doors that are different and better has been at the heart of its company. To learn more, visit andersenwindows.com.

Photos courtesy of Andersen Windows & Doors. Pictured page left: This newly built A-frame in Tahoe, Calif. features a full wall of Andersen E-Series windows in the front, plus a variety of creative takes on dormer windows on either side (Photo by Vance Fox). Pictured above, left to right: This Andersen E-Series circle window adds just the right touch to an otherwise understated lake home. Its grilles were chosen to match the clerestory windows above (Photo by Gravitae Interiors + Design). Plant enthusiast and interior stylist Hilton Carter uses his floor-to-ceiling Andersen E-Series window to full advantage by growing a citrus tree from an in-floor planter (Photo by Hilton Carter). Michelle Adams' renovated ranch features Andersen A-Series Folding Outswing Doors, which provide a seamless connection between her living room and deck (Photo by Michelle Adams).



WINDOW PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Photo Credit: Kohltech Windows and Entrance Systems



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Website: kohltech.com

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National Vinyl LLC

Contact: Scott Channell **Email:** schannell@nvpwindows.com
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Contact: James Degnan

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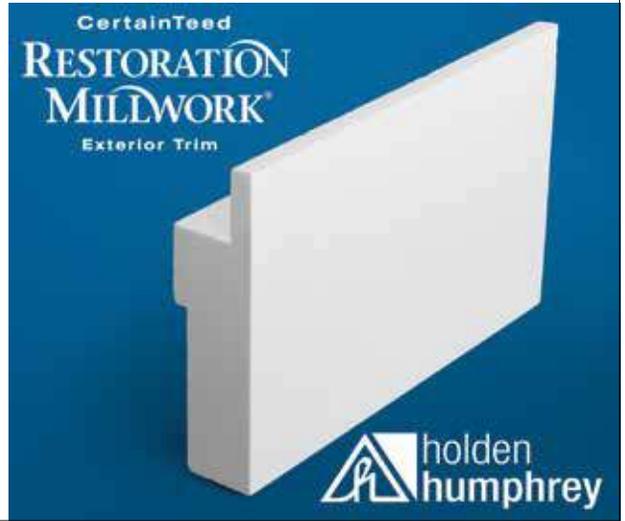
What Window products do you sell?

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What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Restoration Millwork PVC by CertainTeed offers a number of trims and mouldings for window applications, including j-pockets, nail hems with flanges, and starter flanges.



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SAFETY FIRST:

How to Protect Fleets in an Era of Labor Shortages

By Mike Zdrojewski



Good labor is hard to find, and attracting professional drivers is among the most difficult barriers lumber and building material dealers must overcome today. Doing so is mission-critical for your business. The volume of commercial auto claims remains high, and the cost of just one serious accident can be enormous.

For one, auto accidents take a terrible human toll. Nearly 1,800 fatal crashes occurred in 2020, accounting for almost 40% of all work-related fatalities, according to the most recent U.S. Department of Labor Statistics data available.

Accidents also create multiple downstream costs. These include vehicle repair and replacement expenses, productivity losses, and costs associated with the damage of millwork or other cargo involved in the crash. Businesses also must consider the unfortunate reality that other drivers involved in the accident may suffer serious injuries or vehicle damage, and that your driver—and therefore your company—may be liable.

EXAMINING THE CURRENT COMMERCIAL AUTO LANDSCAPE

Our claims data at Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Corporation (PLM) mirrors national trends. Rear-end collisions rank No. 1 in severity, comprising roughly 30% of all the cost of claims filed. Improper lane changes/side swipes and right-of-way violations rank No. 2 and No. 3.

These types of crashes typically happen when drivers fail to maintain a proper following distance or when they practice distracted driving, which can include phone use, eating, drinking,

smoking, changing radio stations, or anything else that takes their attention off of the road.

Another leading cause of commercial vehicle accidents is unqualified and untrained drivers. The labor shortage means that some companies—facing tight delivery deadlines and shrinking in-house staff—may ask a yard worker or front desk employee to jump in a van or smaller truck and make a delivery. When that happens, it could have regrettable consequences if that driver is improperly trained and gets into an accident.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR FLEET MOVING SAFELY

The best way for companies to keep their trucks on the road is to retain the drivers they have. Offering rewards for safe driving behaviors can help incentivize your current drivers to stay. Maintaining a safe and pleasant work environment, providing opportunities for career advancement, and providing scheduling flexibility can all help drivers achieve a better work-life balance.

If you do all of these things and a driver still chooses to leave your organization, don't panic. Instead, conduct a

thorough exit interview so you can better understand their reasons for leaving.

Then, to fill the position, look at your current staff first. You already know the character and work ethic of your current employees and the value they bring to your business. So, while there's no guarantee a yard worker who gets a CDL will become an exemplary driver, if that worker is already a high-performing employee in his or her current role, they will likely continue to be a major asset to your business in a new role.

PROVEN AND EMERGING RISK-REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Once you have the right drivers on your team, keeping them safe means investing in proper policies, procedures, and technologies. Here are three smart steps:

1. Implement thorough safety and training programs

Teaching defensive driving basics remains the most powerful thing a business can do to ensure its drivers' safety. Be sure that you—or the insurer you choose—offer proven programs that teach drivers the importance of maintaining a proper following distance, anticipating what will happen in front of them, and other essential items.

Also, teach drivers how to properly secure loads, and make sure they follow best practices for loading and unloading freight. We also recommend creating a fleet management policy that includes roles and responsibilities, outlines vehicle use guidelines, and explains the steps drivers should take when reporting an accident.

2. Use telematics and collision-mitigation technologies

Technologies such as GPS tracking and vehicle monitoring give fleets real-time data about hard acceleration or harsh braking incidents. On-board cameras,



both driver-facing and outward-facing, let fleet managers investigate risky driving behaviors and use the recordings as teaching tools for drivers who need improvement. They also allow a company to establish incentives for the safest drivers.

The impact of dashcams on traffic safety is already seen in the UK, where about 1 in 5 motorists use them. In just one year of use, the UK has seen nearly 400 fewer collisions per month year-over-year, with traffic offenses down 30%, according to data from Azuga. These technologies work because people tend to alter their behavior when they know they're being watched.

Another technology that holds great promise for fleet safety is automatic emergency braking (AEB). These brake systems use LIDAR, radar, or cameras to detect an object ahead, then either slow a vehicle's speed or cause it to stop completely. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety research, front-crash prevention systems, including both AEB and those that only warn of an impending collision, could address as many as 70% of rear-end crashes.

3. Look for key partnerships that can keep your drivers safe

Many P&C insurance carriers today

partner with leading tech solution providers to bring the benefits of driver monitoring technology to their commercial clients. For example, our team at PLM partners with Azuga for Telematics and Lifesaver Mobile to offer our insureds a tool in the fight against phone-related distracted driving.

The Lifesaver app runs silently in the background on a driver's smartphone and automatically presents a visual block to avoid using the phone while the car is in motion. It also logs drivers' attempts to access their phones and scores them based on their behavior.

While it won't get any easier to find qualified drivers for your fleet anytime soon, combining tried-and-true driver education with the newest in telematics and safety mitigation technology can help you create more robust training programs, incentivize your drivers for safe driving, and build a culture that will make your drivers want to stay with your company over the long haul. 

Mike Zdrojewski is a loss control consultant with Pennsylvania Lumbermen Mutual Insurance Company. He can be reached at 267-825-9152 or mzdrowski@plmins.com.

NYLE Spring Leadership Conference



After a three-year hiatus due to COVID, it was great to be back together again for the NYLE Spring Leadership Conference, which was held on April 27-28 at the AutoCamp in Falmouth, Mass. The conference kicked off with a tour of Falmouth Lumber in Falmouth. Owner Scott Augusta greeted the group and led the group on a tour of the yard, situated on more than 20 acres. The site is home to both their retail yard and their kitchen design center. Falmouth Lumber is family owned and operated and has been serving the Cape and southeastern New England for more than 70 years. A big thank-you to Augusta and the entire Falmouth team for opening their doors and hosting NYLE.

Next, attendees converged on our base camp for the next 36 hours: Auto-Camp Cape Cod, where our accommodations were luxury Airstream trailers. An NYLE board orientation was followed by a board of directors meeting and a wonderful reception and group dinner.

The following morning, Zach Williams, founder and chairman of Venveo, presented a daylong seminar on "How to Integrate Your Digital Presence with Your Team." Zach started the session with something affecting everyone, the state of the industry. He then covered building your company's presence online. Attendees broke up into groups to come up with strategies to promote their respective companies. After covering building your personal brand, attendees worked on their own LinkedIn profiles with templates and tips provided by Williams. Attendees left with beefed-up profiles and the knowledge of the importance of not only sharing and creating posts, but the proper way in which to do so. 📱



NYLE would like to thank the following event sponsors for their support:

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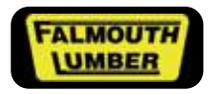
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LDAC Past Presidents Dinner

The **Lumber Dealers of Connecticut (LDAC)** past presidents and spouses gathered together on Wednesday, May 18. They enjoyed dinner at Shell & Bones in New Haven. Memories and stories were shared amongst the group. Everyone commented that it was good to get back together. The past presidents were joined by members of the LDAC board for a delightful evening. 🍷



Pictured above (L to R): Dave and Lorraine Miner, Peter Rogers, Bruce McCrary, Dave Bitso, Greg Branecky, Ken Roos, and Bob Sanford.



NJBMDA Golf Outing

The New Jersey Building Material Dealers Association (NJBMDA) held its annual golf outing on Monday, May 16. The outing took place at the Trump National Golf Course in Pine Hill. Attendees enjoyed the challenging course and views. The golf outing was well received for an earlier season start; the event is normally held in August.

Inclement weather was predicted for the day, and the outing was moved to an earlier start. Despite the last-minute change, the day was a huge success. In addition to some fabulous food, prize giveaways were held during the dinner.

NJBMDA wishes to thank its 2022 Sponsors for their support and contributions. In addition, NJBMDA thanks Wolf Home Products for its beverage sponsorship as well as US Lumber for the lunch sponsorship. 



WINNERS:

Closest to the Pin:

Bob Evans (Reeb) 17'11"

Longest Drive:

Ed Roper (Birch Lumber Co.)

Straightest Drive:

Tucker Ford (Culpeper Wood Preserves)



GROSS:

First Place: Jim Kreston

(Andersen Windows) (79)

Second Place: Sandy Deckman (79)

Third Place: Bob Evans (Reeb) (79)

NET:

First Place: Rob Reber

(James Hardie) (70)

Second Place: Bud Martucci (71)

Third Place: Keith Coleman

(Duration Moulding & Millwork) (73)



EBMDA Clay Shoot at Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays

The Eastern Building Material Dealers Association (EBMDA) hosted a daylong event in May at Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays. The day began with a board meeting where EBMDA Chair Brent Hankins announced new members for the first quarter: Wehrung's Lumber & Home Center, Ottsville, Pa.; and Delaware County Supply Company, Inc., Boothwyn, Pa.

An education panel titled "Supply Chain Issues and Projections" followed the board meeting. Dave Rutherford of Reeb moderated the panel, which included Bob Long of Garden State Lumber Products, Joe Middleton of Culpeper Wood Preservers, Mike Pursell of Sherwood Lumber, John Redding of PRSCO, and Bill Schellhorn of Boise Cascade. A lunch was served, and the day ended with attendees networking while demonstrating their shooting skills. 🏹



1. Education panel pictured L to R: Mike Purcell (Sherwood Lumber), Bill Shellhorn (Boise Cascade), Bob Long (Garden State Lumber), EBMDA Chair Brent Hankins (H.H. Hankins & Bro.), John Redding (PRSCO), and Joe Middleton (Culpeper Wood Preservers). 2. Brett Musser, Jay Provanzo, Corrine Frymyer, and Nikki Webb. 3. Ryan Lanier (L) and Stephanie Fromm (R) (Federated Insurance) with NRLA Regional Director Philip Jagiela (center). 4. Group of PRSCO invited guests. 5. Event day volunteers: Lilly Tucker, Jess Tucker, and Linda Jagiela.





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MRLDA Western Golf Outing



The Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA) held its Western Golf Outing on its traditional date of May 9 at the Ranch Golf Club in Southwick, Mass. Running away from the field with a scorching 13-under-par 59 was the team of Heath Samuelson of Hood Distribution, with Grant Straton, Adam Izbicki, and Bryan Lang, all of Koopman Lumber. Placing second with an 8-under-par 64 was the team of Brett DiClementi of Holden Humphrey, along with Mike Kinna, Adam Martin, and Joe Michael, all of Herrington's. Straton also launched the Men's Longest Drive on #1, while Renee Menard of Boise Cascade took the Women's Longest Drive. Rich Fontaine of Huttig Building Products, and Andy Haase of Cowl's Building Supply claimed Closest to the Pin prizes. Craig Brayton of Craig Brayton Construction nestled one up tight to the rope to win Straightest Drive. Mulligan sales generated \$340 for the NYLE Scott Robert Vasquez Scholarship Fund. **LG**

1. The winning team of Paul Green, Adam Izbicki, and Grant Straton (all of Koopman Lumber), with Master of Ceremonies Paul Tarca (Concord Building Design Center), and Heath Samuelson (Hood Distribution). **2.** Renee Menard (Boise Cascade), claimed Women's Longest Drive. **3.** Grant Straton (Koopman Lumber) collects his Longest Drive prize from Paul Tarca. **4.** Bob Lattanzi (US Lumber), Rich Fontaine (Huttig), Dave Gluck (NRLA), and Ryan Foye (USI Futurecomp, SILBA). **5.** Closest to the Pin recipient Andy Haase (Cowl's Building Supply).

MRLDA Continues Tradition of Honoring Past Presidents

After pausing in 2020, and combining with the golf outing in 2021, the Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA) Past Presidents and Friends Luncheon was once again held as a stand-alone event on April 26, at the M.I.T. Endicott House in Dedham, Mass. Thirty-two attendees, including 11 past presidents, enjoyed this event as old friends reunited and new friendships were formed. Joe Cusack presided over the luncheon as master of ceremonies. 



MRLDA Past Presidents in attendance along with NRLA President, Rita Ferris



THE PAST PRESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE INCLUDED:

Burt Mullen, 1974,
Mullen Lumber

Joe Cusack, 1978,
president while with
Weymouth Lumber

Tony Shepley, 1997,
Shepley Wood Products

Harvey Hurvitz, 1999,
Cape Cod Lumber

Jay Torrisi, 2002,
Jackson Lumber & Millwork

Matt Shea, 2008,
Belletetes Inc.

Jack Connors, Honorary 2013,
BROSCO

Scott Norrie, 2013-2014,
Howe Lumber

Paul Tarca, 2015-2016,
Concord Building & Design

Leah Fennell, 2017-2018,
president while with Shepley Wood
Products, now with Mid-Cape
Home Centers

Tom McManus, 2020-2021,
Cape Cod Lumber



Matt Shea, Belletetes Inc. (L), with Scott Norrie, Howe Lumber (R).



The longest tenured MRLDA Past President, Burt Mullen, president in 1974, addresses attendees.



Joe Cusack served as Master of Ceremonies.



Jack Connors, retired of BROSCO (L), with Tony Shepley, Shepley Wood Products (R).



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Ian Girdwood

Location: Fairlee, VT

Position: Sales/Product Manager • Britton Lumber Company



HOW DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CAREER IN THE LBM INDUSTRY?

To be honest, I more or less fell into the LBM industry. My background was in archeology, of all things, and at the time, I thought I would try out the working world for a year before going back to grad school. The important thing is why I stayed, and that's because of the career advancement opportunities, awesome coworkers, engaging customers, and great work-life balance.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR POSITION?

My title is sales/product manager, but I like to think of myself as a customer service specialist. I handle roofing and accessories for Britton, and it's my job to be a resource to customers as well as coordinate with vendors to keep products flowing to all the lumberyards and hardware stores across New England.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN YOUR CAREER?

When I first started at Britton Lumber, shingle manufacturers were shipping full truck loads within two weeks of placing an order, and freight costs on shipping containers out of the Pacific were \$3,000/can. Today, three- to six-month lead times are normal and that same shipping container is quoting at \$24,000. Effectively managing inventory and pricing through these supply chain disruptions and volatile freight costs are the biggest challenges I face day to day.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SINCE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY?

I like to think that a lot of my job is just problem solving, and I've learned that there's almost no problem that can't be brought to an agreeable resolution. Setting reasonable expectations, following up often, and treating people fairly are three key strategies that help me avoid problems altogether.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE NEW TO THE INDUSTRY?

Don't be discouraged by a lack of industry knowledge. If you don't know something, the answer is usually just a quick phone call, email, or Google search away. The average age in the LBM industry is over 50, and it shows in the wealth of knowledge possessed by your coworkers, customers, and vendors. Focus on building relationships with people who do have the answers, and knowledge will come with time.

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE?

Ask me about my archeological field experiences! While I may have traded in the shovel and trowel for a mouse and a keyboard, I still like to keep up on all the latest archeological and historical developments. Outside of work, I coach for the local high school rowing team as well as volunteer for the local Housing Authority. I also enjoy good food, love going to new restaurants, and enjoy hiking, snowboarding, and mountain biking. 

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Incredible strength and conformability. That's what you need for complete sealing around curved windows, window flanges, sill plates, corners, and joints. That's exactly what you get in this quick-to-apply, peel-and-stick flashing. Thanks to a two-ply oriented, high-density polyethylene film mated to a premium butyl rubber adhesive and release sheet, it's a highly durable solution for blocking air and moisture.



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