



**Workforce Development:
Led by Members, Driven by Action 24**

NYLE: Where Growth Takes Root 26

**Bridging the Labor Gap,
Building the Future 36**

**Window & Door
Product Showcases 48 / 52**

FRAMING THE FUTURE

A SPECIAL EDITION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MAY/JUNE 2025

NRLA
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association

New!



IN STOCK BROSCO FIBERGLASS ENTRY DOORS

Designed with deliberate attention to detail, BROSCO Fiberglass Doors offer a fresh, new take on exterior doors that refuses the status quo in favor of our commitment to excellent service, innovation, and a selection that can't be beat. BROSCO Boise Cascade offers a robust door offering that matches any style and solves problems for entryways. Let us show you the difference.

- Satin Smooth Paintable Surface
- Rift Cut Stainable Surface
- LVL Stiles with Composite PVC Cap
- Composite Top and Bottom Rails
- Polyurethane Foam Filled
- Shaker Flat Panels
- Square Edge Design
- Panel Doors, Doors with Glass, Direct Glaze
- Matching Sidelights available
- Available with applied SDL's
- Optional Prefinishing
- Lifetime Limited Warranty



SATIN SMOOTH

You can be sure to find any door in this dependable texture. The Satin Smooth finish features a unique fine brush stroke surface that's ideal for finishing applications.



RIFT CUT

The process begins by constructing an actual wood door and transferring the authentic graining to our unique line of Rift Cut doors. The natural wood graining enables versatility to showcase any stain.



Contact your BROSCO Boise Cascade Account Manager to learn more!



1. Blueskin® VP100 Water Resistive Air Barrier



2. Blueskin ZeroFlash™



3. Moistop® Sealant

Use Henry® Blueskin® VP100 and the 1-2-3 Warranty System™ for best-in-class weatherization and air and moisture protection on your projects.

Use the complete system to qualify for a 15-year material PLUS labor warranty for product defects.



VP100 in stock at these Boise Cascade locations:



Boise Cascade®

Boise Cascade, Westfield
33 Fowler St. Extension
Westfield, MA
877-462-6473

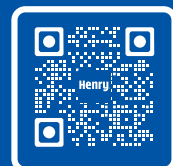
Boise Cascade, Greenland
270 Ocean Rd.
Greenland, NH
800-962-9961

Henry®
A CARLISLE COMPANY

Building Envelope Systems®

henry.com | 800.486.1278 | ProductSupport@henry.com

SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE



©2025 Henry, a Carlisle Company

DEPARTMENTS



13



15



16



60



62



64

TAKING STOCK

- 6 **From the President**
Rita Ferris
- 8 **From the NRLA Chair**
Doug Ford
- 10 **From the NYLE President**
Jon Baker

WOODSHED

- 12 **LC Games**
- 13 **Industry News**
- 16 **New Products**

MILESTONES

- 18 **Associate Member Profile**
Weyerhaeuser

TOOL BOX

- 58 **Marketing**
Jack Leary
- 60 **Insurance Matters**
Stephen Hicks

MILLING ABOUT

- 62 **State & Local Happenings**

SOURCE

- 63 **Advertising Index**

RISEING STAR

- 64 **Austin Connelly**
National Nail



Lumber Co-operator Mission Statement:

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.



Architectural Concepts

When it comes to selecting the right door for a project, Architectural Concepts is with you every step of the way. They take pride in creating doors that align with your design vision, meet functional needs, and stay within budget.



Premium Paint-Grade Stile & Rail and Flush Doors

- NAF/MR30 MDF Standard on all doors
- 69% solid high grade primer
- No orange peel
- Bonded wood edge with no gaps for superior structural integrity
- Extra Heavy Duty (742 lb) in screw pull strength

Scan the QR code to explore the
Architectural Concepts Door Catalog –
featuring panel doors, glass panel doors,
flush styles, and more.



Discover exceptional craftsmanship and
versatile designs all in one collection.

ARCHCONCEPTSLLC.COM



Cleary
WHOLESALE

2049 Silas Deane Hwy, Ste 1A, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 | 800.486.7600
1255B Grand Army Hwy, Somerset, MA 02726 | 800.899.4533
120 Defreest Drive, Suite 19, Troy, NY 12180 | 800.350.0448
220 Forbes Road, Suite 403, Braintree, MA 02184 | 800.225.4252
CLEARYWHOLESALE.COM

FEATURES



Framing the Future: Workforce Development

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>21 LBM WORKFORCE:
BY THE NUMBERS</p> <p>24 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:
Led by Members, Driven by Action
Francis Palasieski</p> <p>26 NYLE Q&A:
WHERE GROWTH TAKES ROOT
Melissa Stankovich</p> <p>30 BEST PRACTICES FOR
INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES
Tom Ford</p> <p>32 ENGAGING GENERATION Z
NRLA Connect</p> <p>34 ONBOARDING: THE FIRST 90 DAYS
How to set up new employees
for success
NRLA Connect</p> | <p>36 BRIDGING THE LABOR GAP,
BUILDING THE FUTURE
Doug Ford & Pam Stott</p> <p>40 VRLDA'S 4TH ANNUAL
BRIGHT FUTURES JOB FAIR
MAKES STATEWIDE IMPACT
Steve Ciccone</p> <p>42 PREPARING A SKILLED
WORKFORCE
Brent McCartney</p> <p>44 WINDOWS OF IMPACT 101
Scott Channell</p> <p>48 WINDOW PRODUCT SHOWCASE</p> <p>52 DOOR PRODUCT SHOWCASE</p> |
|---|--|

Lumber Co-operator - Editorial Advisory Board

Greg Branecky, Miner's Inc., Canton, Conn.
Tom Glauber, Sherwood Lumber Corp.,
Islandia, N.Y.
Lee Slomkowski, Kamco Supply Corp.
of New England, Wallingford, Conn.

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.



STAFF

EXECUTIVE

Rita Ferris • rferris@nrla.org
president
Kimberlee Freer • kfrees@nrla.org
executive assistant

COMMUNICATIONS & PR

Melissa Stankovich • melissa@nrla.org
art director / publisher
Jacob LaChapelle • jlachapelle@nrla.org
sales & marketing specialist

CONVENTION & MEETINGS

Donna Berger • dberger@nrla.org
director
Anne Cunic • acunic@nrla.org
trade show manager

EDUCATION

Erin O'Connor • eoconnor@nrla.org
director
Rebecca Vanderhoef • rvanderhoef@nrla.org
education and events coordinator

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Francis Palasieski • fpalasieski@nrla.org
director
Nicolina Benoit • nbenoit@nrla.org
government affairs coordinator

MEMBER SERVICES

Steve Ciccone • sciccone@nrla.org
regional director
Dave Gluck • dgluck@nrla.org
regional director
Philip Jagiela • pjagiela@nrla.org
regional director
Tammy Wandler-Ginexi • tammy@nrla.org
regional director
Pamela McHale • pmchale@nrla.org
event coordinator
Kimberlee Freer • kfrees@nrla.org
event coordinator

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Donna Berger • dberger@nrla.org
director

Periodicals postage paid at Rensselaer, N.Y. and
additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2025 by the
Northeastern Retail Lumber Association, Inc. Materials
may not be reproduced without written permission.
Lumber Co-operator (ISSN-0024-7294) is published
five times per year by NRLA Enterprises, Inc., 585
North Greenbush Road, Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144-9453.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Lumber Co-
operator, 585 North Greenbush Road, Rensselaer, N.Y.
12144-9453 or email publications@nrla.org.



HONORING THE PAST. BUILDING A FUTURE.

After 75 years in the same location—providing quality lumber, building materials, and expert advice to Cheyenne contractors and do-it-yourselfers, it was time to grow, and for the old site to go. Learn how CT-Darnell and Sunbelt Rack helped employee-owned Mead Lumber design and build a brand-new yard with more covered space, more SKUs, and maximized efficiency for an onsite experience that proves there's no place like (a new) home.



Read about all of our projects at
sunbelt-rack.com/stories/ or scan this code.



CT-Darnell.com
Sunbelt-Rack.com
800-353-0892





Rita Ferris
NRLA President

As a member of the NRLA, participating in the NY Group 531 Workers' Compensation Program means more than just competitive pricing—it means you have a voice.

This program is designed exclusively for NRLA members, and its strength lies in how it's governed: NRLA members and staff are directly involved in discount and dividend decisions. That means real people who understand your business are working to ensure the program serves both your interests and the long-term health of the group.

Adding even more value, our third-party partner, Lovell Safety Management, delivers outstanding claims management and serves as a dedicated advocate on your behalf to the New York State Insurance Fund. Their role goes far beyond paperwork—they are your frontline defense when it comes to minimizing claims costs and protecting your operations.

What does strong claims management look like? Lovell's proactive support includes:

- Early intervention after a workplace injury to assess the situation and ensure proper care is given.
- Working directly with medical providers to control costs and ensure appropriate treatment.
- Coordinating modified duty programs to help employees return to work safely and quickly.
- Handling complex claims with expert oversight to avoid unnecessary delays or inflated expenses.
- Regular communication with employers, helping you understand your rights and responsibilities every step of the way.
- Advocating on your behalf with the State Insurance Fund to resolve issues, challenge inaccurate charges, and push for fair outcomes.
- Helping you to prepare for and address OSHA visits when they occur.

Group 531 was recently expanded to include New York-based businesses that also operate in other states, making the program more accessible to growing and multi-state members. Additionally, the program is now available to certain associate members, broadening the opportunity for savings and support.

Due to the outstanding performance of the NRLA's program, the Group 531 Executive Committee has submitted a request to the state for an impressive 47.5% pricing reduction for qualified members. If approved, this would provide:

- A 12.5% upfront discount on premiums, and
- A 35% dividend return—a powerful financial benefit for your business.

Even with these generous returns, the program continues to build financial reserves for future claims, with current reserves standing at an exceptional 589% premium, demonstrating the program's long-term strength and reliability.

We are pleased to announce that Michael Beckerle has been welcomed as the new Group 531 Chair. His leadership and insight will help guide the continued success and evolution of this vital program.

If you're not already enrolled, now is the time to take a closer look. Group 531 isn't just a policy, it's a partnership backed by advocacy, value, and results. For more information about the program or to check eligibility, please contact me at rferris@nrla.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,



Sylvanix Signature Series Soar Cladding

Features & Benefits

Install Vertically and Horizontally

Sleek and modern appearance

Moisture and rot resistant

No splinters, cracks or warping

No painting, sanding or staining

Long lasting, fade resistant color

Highly resistant to scuffs and scratches

Non toxic and formeldahyde-free

Made with 90% recycled content



Holbrooklumber.com

(800) 833-3383



Doug Ford
NRLA Chair, Curtis Lumber Company

As winter recedes and longer days return, a renewed sense of energy begins to ripple through the building materials industry. For lumberyards, home centers, and hardware stores across the country, spring isn't just a change in weather; it's the start of their busiest season. But beneath the seasonal surge lies a deeper concern: the steady decline of younger workers entering the trades and retail roles that sustain this vital sector.

Spring is often considered the building material industry's unofficial New Year. Homeowners emerge from hibernation with fresh plans for renovations, landscaping, and outdoor projects. Contractors gear up for jam-packed schedules. DIYers return to stores armed with to-do lists, sketches, and inspiration drawn from YouTube tutorials.

In this high-demand season, relationships matter more than ever. Contractors often stick with the same yards year after year, drawn not only by competitive pricing and material quality but also by dependable service and trusted partnerships. In an industry where trust is currency, well-managed yards staffed by knowledgeable and reliable teams can earn lasting loyalty.

Yet even as spring brings opportunity, the sector faces a growing challenge: a shrinking talent pipeline. Fewer young people are pursuing careers in the trades or retail roles tied to building materials—from forklift operators and yard associates to carpenters, electricians, and plumbing apprentices.

Some companies and organizations are stepping up. Partnerships with trade schools and vocational programs are increasing. Apprenticeships and scholarship opportunities are being promoted more vigorously. Social media campaigns are

reshaping perceptions of trade work, showcasing its creativity, stability, and real-world impact.

Forward-looking lumberyards and home centers are also embracing technology to attract younger, digitally savvy talent—mobile apps for inventory and delivery, digital scheduling tools, online training modules, and automated order systems. These innovations not only streamline operations but also speak the language of a new generation.

Mentorship programs are gaining traction too, pairing seasoned professionals with younger hires to foster community and pass on hard-earned knowledge. These efforts take time, but they are essential steps in rebuilding the workforce pipeline.

Spring represents renewal—and in the building materials industry, it reflects the very best of what the sector has to offer: energy, ingenuity, productivity, and economic growth. But without a strong, sustainable workforce to support that momentum, the industry's future could be at risk.

That's why organizations like the NRLA, in partnership with the Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition (www.nctwc.org), are working hard to raise awareness of career opportunities in the trades and building materials sector—starting with students as early as second grade. Meanwhile, the ABMA is actively engaging with legislators to highlight the workforce challenges the industry is facing.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, please don't hesitate to reach out.

EXCEPTIONALLY BEAUTIFUL. **AMAZINGLY DURABLE**

WOLF PORTRAIT™ SIDING

HIGH-DENSITY CELLULAR™ TECHNOLOGY



KITCHEN & BATH | OUTDOOR LIVING | BUILDING PRODUCTS

© 2024 Wolf Home Products. All Rights Reserved.



WOLF HOME PRODUCTS®



Jon Baker
NYLE President, Mid-Cape Home Centers

This week I celebrated my 15-year anniversary with Mid-Cape Home Centers, meaning I've now been in this industry for 20 years. As I sit here and reflect on my time in the industry, I can't help but be thankful for how the North American Young Lumber Employees (NYLE) has helped shape my career. NYLE has been very important to me since the day I joined. It has helped me make new friends and business associates and provided me with more useful and successful sales knowledge. From the spring leadership conferences to the Timber Tours—it has filled me with product knowledge that I never would have dreamed of.

There is so much value associated with NYLE. In this industry, you don't learn from sitting behind a desk or chatting with your co-workers. You must attend events and trainings to gain the vast knowledge of this business. NYLE offers four different events each year, which are targeted at just that. We try to help provide the young people of this industry with tools to help them build a long-term career in LBM. We sit with peers our own age for a full day of learning best practices of sales and marketing. We spend four days exploring different parts of the country learning about the products we sell—how they are made and what the harvesting of raw materials looks like. On Timber Tour, much like our other events, there is a great deal of networking that happens as well. Meeting people from different parts of the Northeast and learning of their business and their sales or marketing techniques is a great way to help you learn how to better yourself.

Joining the NYLE board of directors offers a unique experience, as it often marks the first time many participants make executive-level decisions for

a company. NYLE board service offers real-world business decision-making experience. My motivation for serving on the board was to give back to NYLE and our industry. I learned that the board provides strategic oversight and guides the organization's direction, ensuring that NYLE's mission is fulfilled through its activities and communications. Participating in the long-term planning process was a valuable experience that continues to shape my career today. I have benefited from working for companies that are dedicated to the NRLA and recognize the importance of leadership growth, networking, and retention within the LBM industry that NYLE fosters.

I encourage anyone interested in getting involved to express their interest within their company. I don't know of any organization that has fully trained and developed employees to the point where they can overlook the need to cultivate future leaders. Don't let other industries distract you from the LBM sector. In my experience, the LBM industry offers growth opportunities, diverse career paths, a positive impact on communities, innovation and technology, and job stability. Overall, joining the building material industry can lead to a rewarding career that combines personal growth, community impact, and the chance to work in a dynamic and evolving field. We are literally building America and providing rewarding careers at the same time.

Want to know more? Explore how NYLE supports growth, leadership, and connection—told by other members who've experienced it firsthand—by turning to page 26.

Jonathan W. Baker



Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

- The Auto-Stak System
- Cantilever Rack Systems
- Metal Buildings
- Drive-Thru Systems
- Millwork Storage Systems
- Pallet Rack Systems
- A-Frame Systems



Cantilever Drive-Thru System



Bulk Shed



Auto-Stak System



Cantilever L-Shed

Portable A-Frame & Stackable Millwork Rack - In Stock!



Contact Mark Ritz Today!

Toll Free: 800-992-2824 ext. 114

Visit us online at:
www.ks-ka.com
mark@ks-ka.com

HAVE YOU HEARD?

BUILDERS ARE QUIETLY MAKING MORE MONEY.

Not with new tools.

Not with more crew.

Not by working longer hours.

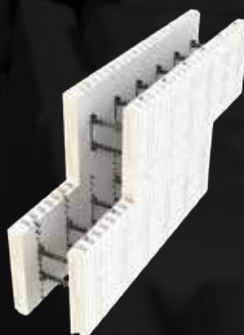
WITH A BLOCK — A better block.

Not with zipties. Not with hooks.

And not with sealants.

Just a smarter, faster, cleaner way to build—with Element ICF.

ELEMENTICF
LOGIX BRANDS



ElementICF.com

INSTALLING RADIANT FLOOR TUBING HAS NEVER BEEN SO QUICK AND EASY!

WITH THE ADVANCED RADIANT FLOOR PANEL



HEAT-SHEET
Heat-Sheet.com

BOOK A TEST DRIVE TODAY! 1-888-706-7709

FORM SOLUTIONS



USE YOUR BRAIN POWER AND WIN!

Found in all LC Publications—a variety of fun, industry-inspired games.

How To Play

Complete both puzzles below and submit your answers to publications@nrla.org by **June 27** for a chance to win a fantastic prize pack* of unique industry items from your favorite brands—plus bragging rights! Whether you submit a screenshot from your mobile device or a picture of your handwritten entry from the LC itself, make sure your submission lands in our inbox by the deadline!

*We encourage everyone to play in print or online, but note that the prize packs are intended for retail lumber dealers.

Your Name

Company Name

Valid Email Address (to notify you if you win)

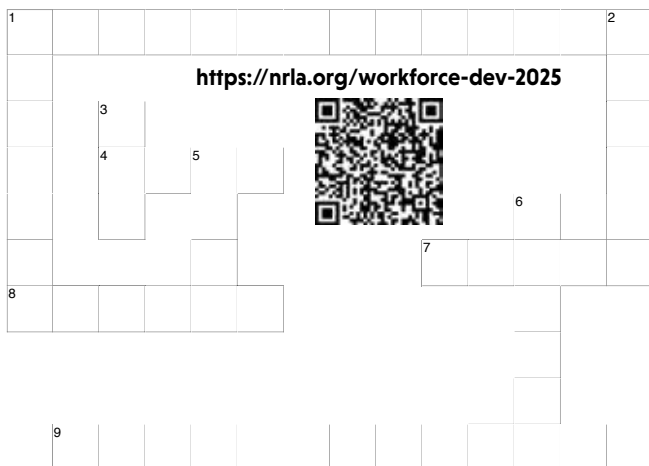
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ACROSS:

- Misinformation and Stereotypes
- Young workers who seek meaningful roles
- Group focusing on industry partnerships, abbr.
- NYLE's July Seasonal Outing
- Making Statewide Impact

DOWN:

- They know the industry best
- Focus of ability-first hiring
- 41.6 is the average
- Group of industry leaders, abbr.
- Arrange TERM ON someone who helps a newcomer (6)



<https://nrla.org/workforce-dev-2025>

(All answers can be found within this issue.)

WINDOWS & DOORS

Words can be found in any direction.

ALUMINUM	HURRICANE	SCREEN
ENTRY	PATIO	STEEL
FLASHING	REPLACEMENT	STORM
FRENCH	SASH	VINYL

E N G N I H S A L F C S
M H U R R I C A N E R E
R G P E E S E E L E H A
O E N N N S L Y N I V P
T C R T C H H R S N A M
S L V R I C S C T T E U
H L T Y N S R A I H C N
L M E E E E E O S O C I
N L R E E A R E G U V M
F F N N T L L C O E L U
M N I O U S N A E N R L
R E P L A C E M E N T A



<https://nrla.org/window-door-wordsearch-2025>

March's Winner!



Congratulations to Olivia Zapustas of Hingham Lumber, for being the winner of the LC Games Prize Pack, which was featured in the March issue.

Each LC publication has games you can play:



LC Wired:

Get your mind buzzing with WordroW, the LC's word/phrase guessing game just like NYT's Wordle. Check each week for a link to play!

SUBSCRIBE TO LC WIRED:

<https://nrla.org/lc-wired-subscribe>



LC SupplySide:

Test your knowledge of all things NRLA with the LC's NRLA Trivia Game. Check every other week for a link to play!

SUBSCRIBE TO LCSS:

<https://nrla.org/lc-supplyside-subscribe>

NRLA Welcomes New Associate Members!



Tando Composites
Quebec, Canada

Contact: 418-878-6161 • www.tandocomposites.com

Products: Composite Cladding



SalesJack
Chicago, Illinois

Contact: 630-725-8866 • www.salesjack.com

Products: Software: Modern suite of CRM, marketing, and analytics tools that are tailor made for the building materials industry.



Interstate Lumber Rebrands as Interstate

Founded in 1922 as a small coal and lumber yard in Greenwich, Conn., Interstate has grown into a premier supplier of building materials, millwork, windows and doors, decking, moulding, and architectural hardware.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/interstate-rebrands>



Tando Composites Partners with Snavey Forest Products

Tando Composites, a division of Derby Building Products and distributor of composite exterior cladding, is proud to announce its partnership with Snavey Forest Products to cover the Colorado market.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/tando-snavey-partnership>



East Islip Lumber Completes Renovation & Expansion

East Islip Lumber, a member of the Trade Supply Group family, recently completed a renovation and expansion. The expansion includes a new showroom featuring AZEK, TimberTech, and Fiberon decking and railing. The store interior has been totally renovated with expanded merchandise, customer counter, and office space.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/east-islip-reno-expansion>



Ghent Wood Products Opens New Showroom

Meltz Lumber, a third-generation company based in Mellenville, N.Y., started Ghent Wood Products in 2003. They currently produce more than 2 million board feet of soft woods, pine and hemlock per year.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/ghent-new-showroom>



ECi Software Solutions Acquires Davisware

ECi Software Solutions (ECi), a global provider of cloud-based business management software and services, announced the acquisition of Davisware LLC, a premier provider of all-in-one business management solutions built for field service organizations. The acquisition extends ECi's footprint throughout North America. Through this strategic acquisition, Davisware's suite of software solutions, including Vision, GlobalEdge, and GlobalWarranty, will now be part of ECi's offerings.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/eci-davisware-acquisition>

ECi Software Solutions Named a Certified 2025 'Great Place to Work' in Seven Countries

ECi Software Solutions (ECi) announced it has been certified as a 2025 "Great Place to Work" in seven countries. This marks the seventh consecutive year of recognition in the U.S.; the fourth straight year in Canada, the U.K., Belgium, and Australia; the third straight year in the Netherlands; and a first-time certification in Portugal.

The Great Place to Work certification is based on independently administered anonymous employee survey responses.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/eci-great-place-to-work-2025>



Metrie Expands Product Lineup, Adding Interior Doors to Key Markets

Metrie has expanded its offerings to include interior doors in the Midwest and Florida regions. Metrie is leveraging its category knowledge and strong supplier partnerships to bring an expanded selection to more of its customers and will be carrying an extensive, stocked assortment of high-quality interior doors, available in various styles and sizes.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/metrie-expands-midwest-fla>



Kodiak Building Partners Acquires New River Building Supply & Lumber Company



Kodiak Building Partners announced the acquisition of New River Building Supply & Lumber Company, a well-respected provider of high-quality building materials serving North Carolina since 1973. This strategic acquisition strengthens Kodiak's presence in the developing Southeast market while preserving New River's long-standing tradition of exceptional service and expertise in the region's High Country, including Boone and Banner Elk. Following the acquisition, New River Building Supply & Lumber Company will maintain its commitment to building strong customer relationships with backing from Kodiak's resources, expertise, and national network that will support strategic growth to meet the increasing demand for building materials in the region. This acquisition marks another step forward in Kodiak's expansion efforts, reinforcing its dedication to empowering local businesses and enhancing customer experience in key markets.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/kodiak-new-river-bldg-supply>

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Email it to us at:
publications@nrla.org

Westlake

Royal Building Products™

Westlake Included in *Forbes'* America's Best Employers 2025 List

Westlake Corporation has announced that it has been named on the Forbes list of "America's Best Employers 2025." Forbes selected the "America's Best Employers 2025" through an independent survey of more than 217,000 U.S. employees working for companies employing at least 1,000 people within the United States.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/westlake-forbes-best-employers>



DSI Partners with Britton Lumber Company to Expand Service Across New England and the Northeast



Digger Specialties Inc. (DSI), a North American manufacturer of aluminum railing, is pleased to announce the expansion of its distribution network through a partnership with Britton Lumber Company. Headquartered in Fairlee, Vt., Britton Lumber has been an established distributor of building products to lumberyards located in various New England and Northeast markets since 1946.

Read More: <https://nrla.org/britton-dsi-partnership>



MITER Brands Diamond Glass Named Among *Green Builder's* 2025 Sustainable Products



MITER Brands, a residential window and door manufacturer, is proud to announce that its innovative Diamond Glass has been named a 2025 Sustainable Product of the Year by Green Builder magazine. This prestigious recognition highlights cutting-edge products that make homes more efficient, resilient, healthy, and safe.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/miter-sustainable-product-winner>



PPG Recognized on Fortune Magazine's 'America's Most Innovative Companies' List

PPG announced that it was recognized on Fortune magazine's "America's Most Innovative Companies" list. PPG ranked No. 194 overall and No. 49 in the product category. Product innovation includes the evaluation of a company's products and services, covering attractiveness, design to usability, and uniqueness. The total score was derived from an analysis of the company's intellectual property portfolio and the opinion of experts, customers, and potential customers.

Read more: <https://nrla.org/ppg-most-innovative-list>



◀ FastenMaster's New HeadLOK Structural Wood Screws with New TORX ttap Drive Technology

This innovative design provides superior bit engagement for a stable, wobble-free installation, while preventing fastener strip-out during installation.

Learn more: <https://nrla.org/fm-torx-ttap-may-25>

LP Building Solutions ▶ Unveils Naturals Collection in LP SmartSide ExpertFinish Portfolio

The Naturals Collection offers six versatile prefinished siding colors designed to capture the look of stained wood, available in both cedar and brushed smooth finishes.

Learn more: <https://nrla.org/lp-naturals-may-25>



◀ Innovative IG Switch Frameless Glass Railing

IG Railing continues to revolutionize outdoor living with its cutting-edge smart glass railing, IG Switch. Designed to seamlessly transition between privacy and transparency at the touch of a button, IG Switch is redefining what's possible for modern decks and outdoor spaces.

Learn more: <https://nrla.org/ig-railing-switch-may-25>

NRLA/LBMDF TRAINING & EDUCATION

The Most Affordable and Valuable Education Offerings
Tailored Directly for LBM Professionals—Online and In-Person



VIEW OR
REGISTER



SCAN ME

www.nrla.org/go/education

Keep checking www.nrla.org/go/education for the latest course offerings throughout the year!

CHECK OUT THESE COURSE OPTIONS:

How Smart Businesses Navigate Economic & Regulatory Challenges

May 12

Introduction to Building Materials

May 20 & 22

Basic/Beginner Blueprint Reading & Estimating

June 3, 5, 10, 12

Intermediate Blueprint Reading & Estimating

June 17 & 19

Advanced Blueprint Reading & Estimating

June 24 & 26

Introduction to Building Materials

September 10 & 12

Basic/Beginner Blueprint Reading & Estimating

October 1, 3, 8, & 10

Intermediate Blueprint Reading & Estimating

October 22 & 24

Advanced Blueprint Reading & Estimating

November 5 & 7



Estimating,
Framing, Math,
Structure & Design



Building, Specialized
Tools & Applications,
Yard Basics & Safety



Computer and Selling
Skills, and
Customer Service



Business Administration,
Management, HR
& Supervisory Skills

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of NRLA's State & Local Associations offer funds
to help subsidize training. Contact us for more info.

>>> Contact Erin O'Connor at 518-880-6348, or eoconnor@nrla.org with questions or to learn more. <<<



800-292-6752 | nrla.org | Follow us:





Weyerhaeuser at 125

Still guided by the vision and values of its founder, Weyerhaeuser celebrates more than a century of sustainable forestry.



On Jan. 18, 1900, Frederick Weyerhaeuser and 15 associates purchased 900,000 acres of Washington state timberlands from the Northern Pacific Railway—a bold venture that would in time reshape the nation’s timber industry and usher in a new era of sustainable forest management. In establishing the company that would bear his name, Frederick said: “This is not for us, nor for our children, but for our grandchildren.” Today, 125 years after its founding, Weyerhaeuser stands as one of the world’s largest private owners of timberlands and one of the largest wood products manufacturers in North America. The company’s history reflects the strong values of its founder, a relentless pursuit of innovation and operational excellence, and a deep commitment to sustainability. Revisit some of the key moments and milestones that defined Weyerhaeuser over the decades in the timeline shown here.

Photos courtesy of the Forest History Society.

1915 — First All-Electric Sawmill



The company began operations at Mill B in Everett, Wash.—the nation’s first all-electric sawmill and the first mill built entirely by Weyerhaeuser.

1921 — Expanding Distribution

Weyerhaeuser opened its first distribution center in Baltimore, Md.

1928 — Advancing Lumber Quality



Weyerhaeuser launched 4-Square brand lumber, which combined the company’s reputation for “square dealing” with select grades of product cut to exact dimensions, precisely squared and neatly wrapped.

1937 — “Timber Is a Crop”



The company debuted a national ad campaign aimed to reshape prevailing opinions about managing commercial forests. It signified a major shift in how wood products companies managed their lands.

1941 — Clemons Tree Farm



The company established the nation’s first certified tree farm on 200,000 acres of harvested and fire-burned land in Washington state. This launched the American Tree Farm movement, which by the end of the century covered 95 million acres and included more than 70,000 members in all 50 states.

1956-57 — Growth in the South

Weyerhaeuser purchased timberland in Alabama, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as manufacturing facilities in 19 states, bringing the company into the packaging, milk carton, and folding-box businesses. Today, the company owns or manages 6.8 million acres in the southern U.S.

“Weyerhaeuser will have some advantage, in that it will insure [sic] a knowledge in the public mind that they are to be treated as Weyerhaeuser customers, or in other words fairly.”

— W. L. McCormick, secretary, on choosing a name for the new company

1960 — Weyerhaeuser Canada



The company began acquiring licensing rights to serve as managers and custodians of Canadian forestlands. Today, Weyerhaeuser manages long-term licenses covering 14 million acres of Canadian timberlands.

1967 — High Yield Forestry



Born from three decades of forestry research, Weyerhaeuser's new approach called for planting seedlings within a year of harvest, soil fertilization, thinning, brushland rehabilitation, and tree improvement through selective breeding. These methods doubled the annual growth per acre on Weyerhaeuser-managed forestlands in the West and quadrupled yields in the South.

1978 — Technology Center Opens



The Weyerhaeuser Technology Center opened on 40 acres near the company's former headquarters in Federal Way, Wash. The 450,000-square-foot center contained 115 labs, where scientists, engineers, and technicians conducted leading-edge work in forestry, pollution control, and wood-products research.

1980 — Mount St. Helens Eruption



Mount St. Helens' eruption on May 18, 1980, in southwest Washington devastated 68,000 acres of Weyerhaeuser land and destroyed logging camps and equipment, 650 miles of road, 19 bridges, and 16 miles of railroad track. The company spent the next seven years replanting the blast zone with more than 18.4 million seedlings from its nurseries.

1986 — 2-Billionth Seedling Planted

CEO George Weyerhaeuser planted the company's 2-billionth seedling. The company continues to plant more than 100 million trees a year.

1990-2000 — Environmental Awareness

Weyerhaeuser grew its environmental awareness with ecologically based forestry practices, pollution reduction and prevention, and increased conservation and recycling. The company also began to conduct environmental audits on all its operations and made annual environmental reports available to the public.

2000 — Embracing Engineered Lumber



Weyerhaeuser acquired Trus Joist International. The acquisition added innovative products such as TJ Joists, Parallam, TimberStrand, and Microllam.

2005 — Sustainability Recognition

Weyerhaeuser was first listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability North American Index.

2008 — Safety Focus

Weyerhaeuser achieved a long-held safety goal of a recordable incident rate of less than one.

2016 — New Headquarters

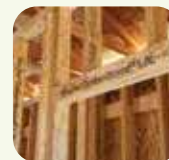


Weyerhaeuser opened the doors to its new corporate headquarters in Seattle.

2020 — Sustainability Strategy

The company launched an ambitious 10-year sustainability strategy to maintain its strong ESG foundation, strengthen the integration of sustainability into key business priorities, and demonstrate its positive impact in climate change solutions, sustainable homes, and rural operating communities.

2024 — New TimberStrand LSL Plant



Weyerhaeuser announced plans for a new, state-of-the-art TimberStrand facility near Monticello, Ark., set to open in 2027. [LC](#)



FRAMING THE FUTURE

A SPECIAL SECTION DEDICATED TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVES IN THE LUMBER AND BUILDING MATERIALS INDUSTRY

LBM WORKFORCE: BY THE NUMBERS

The following pages provide a snapshot of the national workforce within the building material and supply industry, drawing from 2022 data compiled by Data USA. This overview captures key trends related to employment roles, gender and racial demographics, educational attainment, and wage distribution across the industry. Whether you're looking to understand the makeup of the workforce or track shifts in compensation and occupational roles, this data offers valuable insights into the state of the industry.

WORKFORCE POPULATION

1.1M

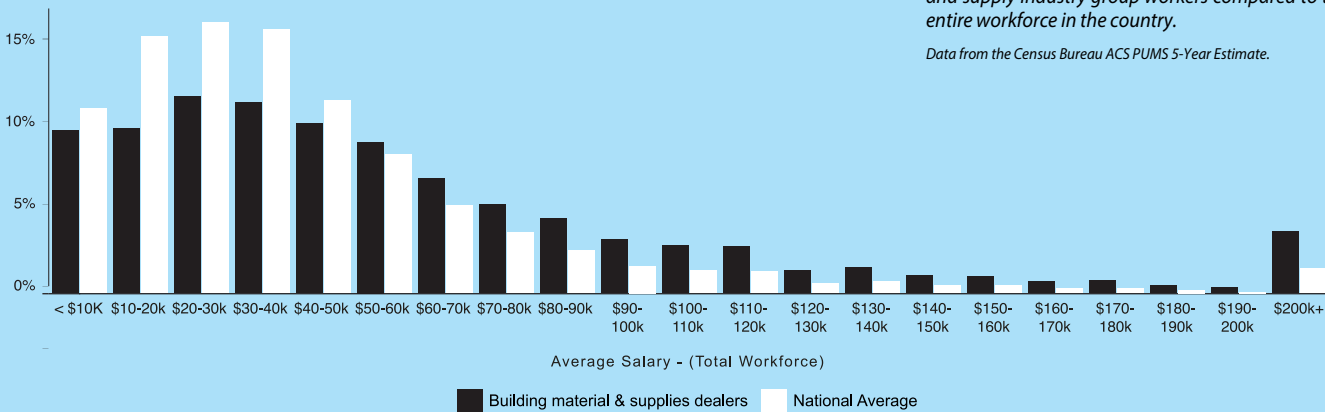
AVG. EMPLOYEE AGE

41.6

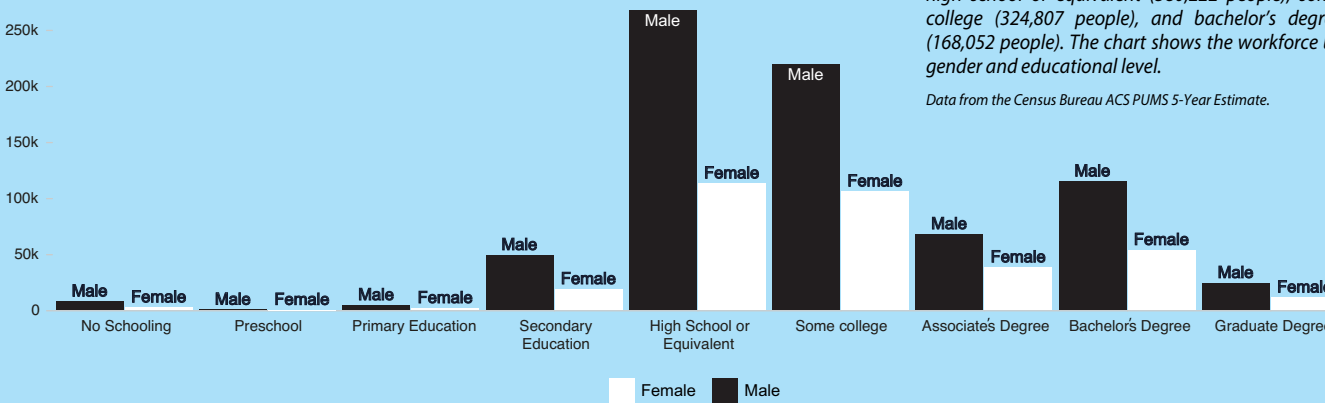
AVG. SALARY

\$45k

WAGE DISTRIBUTION



EDUCATIONAL LEVELS



RACES

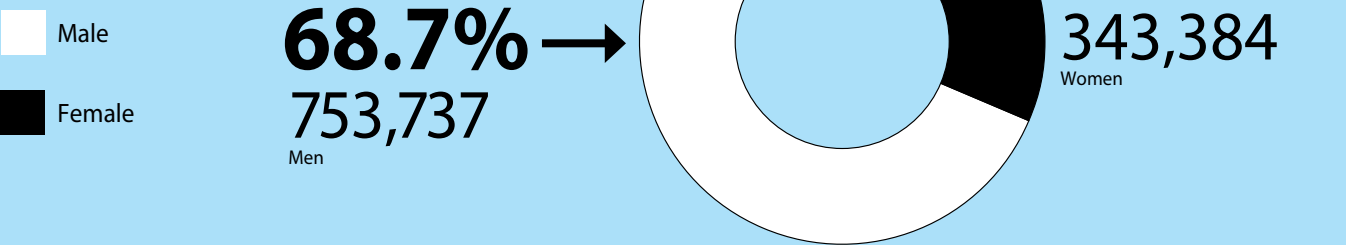
In 2022, 72.4% of the workforce in the industry was white (794,596 people), of which 30.7% were women and 69.3% were men. Other races that concentrated a significant number of workers were Black and two or more races.

Data from the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 5-Year Estimate.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The workforce within the building material and supply industry in 2022 was 1,097,121 people, with 31.3% women and 68.7% men.

Data from the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 5-Year Estimate.



GENDER DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUP

Distribution of the workforce in 2022 by gender and age within the building material and supply industry.

Data from the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 5-Year Estimate.

20-24 (Male/Female)	40-44 (Male/Female)
69.7% / 30.3%	69.5% / 30.5%
25-29 (Male/Female)	45-49 (Male/Female)
68.5% / 31.5%	67.9% / 32.1%
30-34 (Male/Female)	50-54 (Male/Female)
67.4% / 32.6%	67.2% / 32.8%
35-39 (Male/Female)	55-59 (Male/Female)
68.4% / 31.6%	66% / 34%

OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION

In 2022, the occupations that concentrated the largest number of employees in this industry were retail salespersons (284,331 people), firstline supervisors of retail sales workers (138,927 people), and customer service representatives (92,961 people).

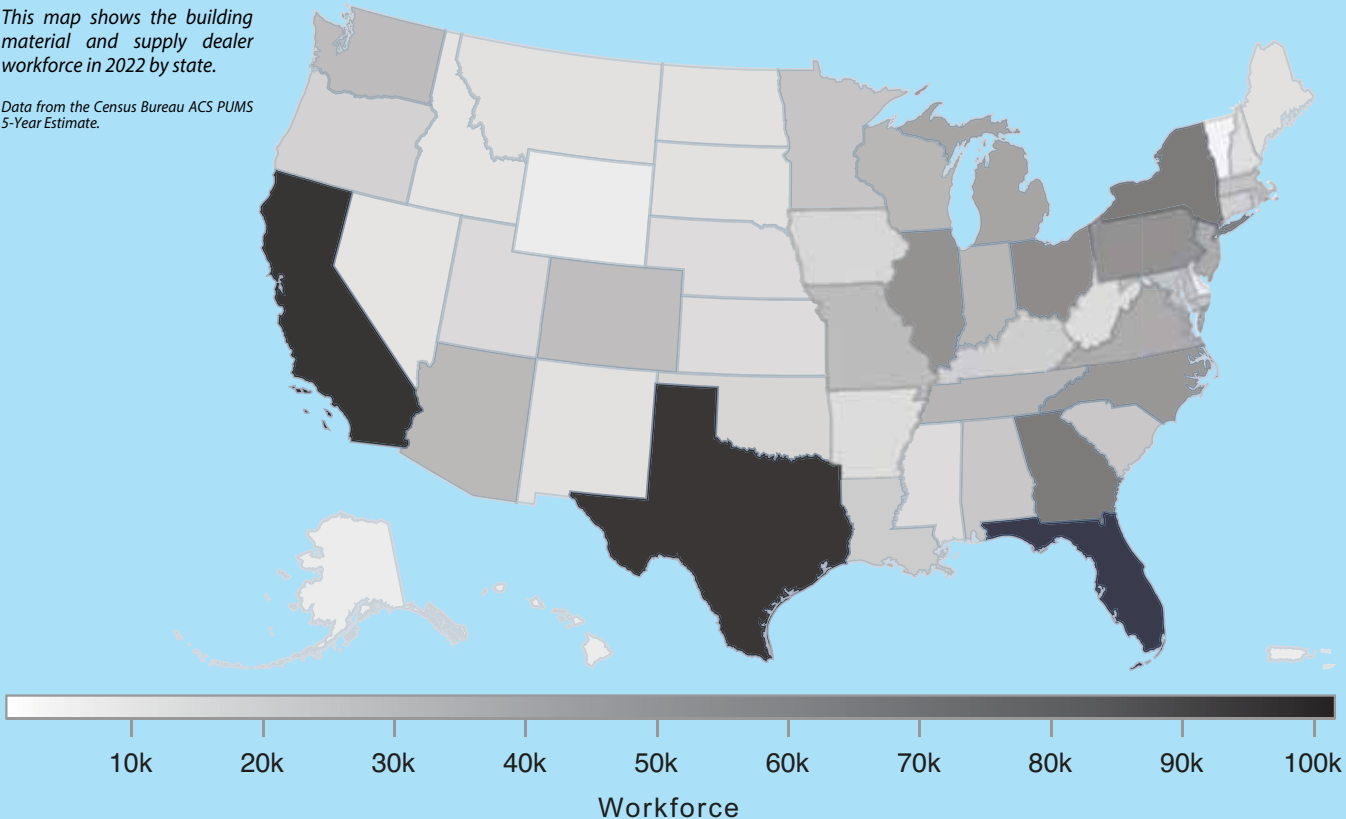
Data from the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 5-Year Estimate.

RETAIL SALESPERSONS 26% 284,331 People; \$45,780 Avg. Salary	FIRSTLINE SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS 12.7% 138,927 People; \$70,549 Avg. Salary	CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES 8.5% 92,961 People; \$27,330 Avg. Salary
CASHIERS 8.19% 89,392 People; \$19,620 Avg. Salary	STOCKERS AND ORDER FILLERS 6.66% 72,701 People; \$24,126 Avg. Salary	LABORERS & FREIGHT, MATERIAL MOVERS 5.69% 62,099 People; \$28,001 Avg. Salary

EMPLOYMENT BY LOCATION

This map shows the building material and supply dealer workforce in 2022 by state.

Data from the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 5-Year Estimate.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Led by Members,
Driven by Action

By Francis Palasieski



At the American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA), we often say we're member-driven—but nowhere is that more evident than in our work to improve workforce development across the industry.

This isn't a campaign built on theory or headlines—it's grounded in what our members are already doing. Every day, ABMA members are building partnerships, opening doors, and investing in the next generation of talent. We're not asking the government to solve this for us—we're asking them to support what we're already doing so we can do it even better.

ABMA's Chair Leads by Example

ABMA Chair Rod Wiles (Hammond Lumber Company) talks about workforce development everywhere he goes. Whether it's meeting with Senator Susan Collins and her staff in Maine, preparing to speak during our Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., or sharing his thoughts with the Boston Globe, Wiles keeps one message front and center: the current training requirements for CDL and crane certification don't reflect the real work being done in our industry. They're one-size-fits-all programs designed for long-haul trucking and high-rise construction—not short-haul deliveries and boom trucks in lumberyards.

What we need are training pathways that actually work for our businesses and our people—pathways that lead to real careers in a wide range of roles, from delivery and operations to sales, kitchen design, and management.

Members Doing the Work

The push for workforce development is being led by the people who know the industry best—our members:

Eric Murphy (East Coast Lumber Products) and Bob Jackman (LaValley Building Supply) have built lasting relationships with every member of their congressional delegations. They've made workforce development an ongoing discussion—meeting regularly and keeping the issue front and center.

Matt Semonik (Arnold Lumber) continues to raise this issue directly with Rhode Island Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse every chance he gets, ensuring that the workforce needs of our industry are understood at the federal level.

In Vermont, Jeremy Baker (rk MILES) and Claudia Homan (Bethel Mills, Inc.) work as a team—talking with lawmakers, educating state officials, and promoting the Vermont Retail Lumber Dealers Association's (VRLDA) Building Bright Futures program (see page 40). This initiative introduces students to the broad opportunities available in our industry—from logistics to design—and shows them it's more than just a job. It's a path to a lifelong career.

NRLA Chair Doug Ford (Curtis Lumber) has gone even further, helping form the Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition (NCTWC). Through this partnership, Ford and others are bringing the industry directly into schools—meeting with guidance counselors, organizing "Girls in the Trades" summer camps, and creating meaningful ways for students to engage with building material careers early. Ford is also a vital part of ABMA's government affairs team, helping bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Associations Opening Doors


The work doesn't stop at the member level. ABMA's state and regional associations are opening doors for students to see the industry firsthand. Both the NRLA and EBMDA host high school and tech students from across the region at NRLA's trade shows—LBM Expo and the IDEAS Show. Students receive free admission, lunch, and a full program of panels and guest speakers who share how they got their start and built a successful future in the industry.

These events aren't just about exposure—they're about creating that moment where a student realizes, "This could be a path for me."

Investing in the Next Generation

The average age in our industry is now over 40. That's not just a number—it's a sign. The members leading ABMA's workforce efforts aren't just looking to fill openings—they're working to build a future. One where the next generation not only finds their way into the industry but sees a place to grow and build a career for life.

From individual companies and local dealers to state associations and federal outreach, the work is already happening. ABMA's role is to elevate and support it—to make sure lawmakers, regulators, and stakeholders understand what we're doing and why it matters.

Because at the end of the day, we're not asking for help. We're asking for the tools and flexibility to do what we already do—develop our workforce—the way we know works best. 



WHERE GROWTH TAKES ROOT

A behind-the-scenes Q&A with NYLE leaders past and present, highlighting growth, leadership, and legacy.

By Melissa Stankovich

In an industry that values tradition while constantly adapting to meet the needs of a new generation, the North American Young Lumber Employees (NYLE) continues to be a vital force in developing the next wave of LBM leaders. As NYLE celebrates its 38th year in 2025, the organization remains true to its original goal—providing young professionals with the tools, training, and connections they need to thrive in their careers and help shape the future of the industry.

Founded in 1987 as the Northeastern Young Lumber Execs Club, NYLE was created to serve a growing population of younger industry professionals who were eager to take on leadership roles in their companies and communities. Over the years, the program has evolved in name and scope, but its core purpose has remained the same: to educate, develop, empower, and engage the LBM industry's rising stars.

With membership open to professionals 40 and under, NYLE offers emerging leaders a platform to grow their skills, broaden their industry knowledge, and form lasting connections. From the annual Timber Tour and dynamic roundtable discussions to hands-on committee involvement and high-impact conferences, NYLE creates meaningful opportunities that support both personal and professional development.

In today's workforce, where Millennials and Gen Zers are expected to make up nearly 70% of the global labor pool by 2030, groups like NYLE have never been more relevant. These generations prioritize purpose, professional development, and work-life balance—traits that align directly with NYLE's mission and values. According to Gallup, 87% of Millennials rank career growth as a top priority, while a McKinsey report found that 77% of Gen Z views work-life balance as essential when evaluating job opportunities.

What sets NYLE apart is that it not only caters to these priorities but also fosters a supportive, multigenerational environment. While the spotlight is on young professionals, NYLE thrives because of the seasoned leaders who mentor, support, and guide them. That synergy is what makes the organization so impactful—and so enduring.

On the pages that follow, you'll hear directly from six NYLE leaders, past and present, who have served and grown into respected leaders across the LBM landscape. Their stories are a testament to what happens when you invest in people early—and give them the space to lead.



NYLE
Past
President

GENN HOWLEY

Owner
GNH Lumber, Inc.

NRLA
Incoming
Chair

**What do you see
as the biggest value
in being an
active member
of NYLE?**

When I entered the LBM industry, I came directly out of college and had little experience. One day, Scott Vasquezi from Boston Cedar (now U.S. Lumber) entered my office and asked if I would entertain joining NYLE. I attended my first meeting and quickly found a tribe. I became wrapped up with a group of individuals my age that had various roles throughout our industry. I created friendships that I value today; individuals whom I've called to ask questions and get opinions, and often their insight has helped me to define my role in my own company. This industry is a relationship business, and I've learned so much and grown professionally due to NYLE and the contacts I've made and the mentors I've gained.



NYLE
1st VP

KYLIE HOLLAND

Executive Vice President
Curtis Lumber Company

**What motivated you to take on
a leadership role with NYLE,
and what lessons have been
most valuable to you and
your career by doing so?**

I wanted to work with NYLE and others within the organization to have a greater impact. It was a great opportunity to influence the industry while under the guidance and leadership of others. I think it's a really great opportunity for anyone looking to experience leadership and to learn what responsibilities come along with it. It's a safe and supported environment for individuals to learn if leadership is truly a path they are interested in.

*"It's a great opportunity
to influence the industry
while under the guidance
and leadership of others."*



NYLE
Ex
Officio

CORBIN RINEHART

Technical Sales Director
WindsorONE

**How do you balance the
demands of your role within
your company, NYLE and
industry involvement,
and your personal life?**

I believe this balance is something I will always be working on and will most likely never perfect. It's not easy, but it is very doable if approached strategically. Being flexible and having a backup plan in place are key components to success. I also believe that having a strong, communicative leadership team around you is part of the solution. Being able to call on other leadership members when a scheduling challenge arises or when you need assistance helps maintain scheduling balance.

For full responses to all
six questions asked
to each individual,
scan the QR code.



Turn the page to read more from NYLE's leaders.

"I don't know of any organization that has fully trained and developed employees to the point where they can overlook the need to cultivate future leaders."



NYLE
Past
President

MICHAEL DUVAL

National Account Manager
Huber Engineered Woods

What would you say to someone considering getting involved in NYLE but is hesitant to take that first step?

I encourage anyone interested in getting involved to express their interest within their company. I don't know of any organization that has fully trained and developed employees to the point where they can overlook the need to cultivate future leaders. When I first started, I shared with my manager my desire to participate in the career development training offered at an NYLE Spring Conference. The worst a manager can say is no. Remember, the company is investing in you, and you should strive to be an employee worth that investment.



NYLE
2nd VP

SADIE HAMMOND

Director of Organizational Development
Hammond Lumber Company

If you could give one piece of advice to a young professional entering the industry today, what would it be?

Surround yourself with people who challenge and support you. Don't be afraid to ask questions, seek feedback, and take on new challenges. Every experience—big or small—teaches you something valuable. The LBM industry offers so much opportunity if you're willing to invest the time and energy to grow within it.




NYLE
Past
President

MIKE MILLER

President
Warren Trask Company

Are there any specific NYLE initiatives you've been a part of that you're particularly proud of, and why?

I was heavily involved in the project to bring the NYLE children's book to life. It was an idea proposed by Scott Norrie of Howe Lumber, based on a book that he had found at his grandparents' house called, "Our Daddy Is a Lumberman." Being written in the '50s, there was some updating that needed to happen, and after some creative work, "Chip and Emily's Magic Flume Ride" became a reality. The book was created so individuals in the lumber industry with young children or grandchildren could sit down and share with them what they did for a living and bring awareness to the next generation. 

For full responses to all six questions asked to each individual, scan the QR code.



"This industry is a relationship business, and I've learned so much and grown professionally due to NYLE and the contacts I've made and the mentors I've gained."

BE THE NEXT INDUSTRY LEADER; JOIN NYLE TODAY!



Benefits of joining NYLE:

Educational conferences jam-packed with professional guest speakers associated with the three facets of our industry: retail, manufacturing, and wholesale operations.

Panel and roundtable discussions, which allow members to brainstorm on common challenges and opportunities pertinent to the industry today.

Local tours of associate/retail members' stores, yards, and/or plants.

Discounted rates on all NYLE and NRLA programs, including NYLE's annual Spring and Summer Outings and the fall Timber Tour.

A complimentary subscription to The Lumber Co-operator (LC) magazine, our industry's premier publication.

Complimentary monthly e-newsletters to LC Wired and LC SupplySide, which will keep you abreast of the latest industry issues, products, and trends.

To join NYLE scan the QR code above or feel free to reach out to Erin O'Connor to learn more at 518-880-6348 or eoconnor@nrla.org.

Upcoming NYLE Events:

Summer Outing

July 31, 2025 • Worcester, MA
(Includes board meeting, afternoon of training, dinner, and a Worcester Red Sox, aka "Woo Socks" game in the evening.)

Timber Tour

November 3-7, 2025 • Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX

NYLE Annual Meeting

December 10, 2025 at LBM Expo Uncasville, CT



design | 3D | materials lists



houses

pole barns

kitchens

baths

decks

MiTék® export

Javelin® export

Join the nearly 1500 yards that selected SoftPlan as their design & estimating tool.



SoftPlan 2026 available now

SOFTPLAN
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SOFTWARE

free trial: www.softplan.com or 1-800-248-0164

Best Practices for INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES in Building Material-Related Businesses

By Tom Ford



The hiring environment in 2025 has evolved significantly, and businesses in the building materials sector are no exception. To attract and retain top talent, it is crucial to adopt best practices that align with current trends and candidate expectations.

Here are some key strategies to consider:

1. Be clear about your position on remote and hybrid work options.

Ever since Covid, some candidates have strongly desired the freedom to work from home, at least part of the time. Be clear about your company's work policy and offer flexibility to appeal to a diverse range of candidates. This will give you a competitive edge in the job market. More and more, I see dealers allowing outside sales reps, estimators, kitchen designers, and others to work in a hybrid situation. But whatever your policy is, make it clear to all—include it in your job descriptions and any job postings, ads, notices to recruiters, etc.

2. Clearly explain your hiring process to the candidate so they know what to expect.

Too many candidates walk out of the first interview with nothing more than a “we will be in touch soon.” That is not enough, and it will not help protect you when that candidate is given the opportunity to interview with a competitor.

Whatever your hiring process is, be sure to spell it out clearly to the candidate before ending the initial interview.

For example: “Our process goes like this. This is step one. If after this interview, we feel that there is a likelihood of you being a good fit for the position, and if, after you have liked what I have

said about the job, company culture, and benefits, you wish to move forward, we will schedule you for another interview. At that interview, you will speak with three employees, and they will ask more in-depth questions about your experience and skill set. They may ask you to demonstrate some of your skills. Assuming that goes well, an offer of employment will be initiated. That offer would spell out your compensation, employee benefits, and our basic work rules. We try to accomplish the first two steps within a 10-day period, or even less. If an offer is made and you accept our offer to join our company, we will then schedule you for a work physical and a drug screen, and have a criminal background check completed. Once those things are satisfied, if you haven't already done so, now is the time to give your notice to your current employer. Bear in mind that the first 90 days of employment with us is considered a probationary period."

3. Enhance Candidate Experience

In a candidate-driven market, providing an exceptional hiring experience is paramount. Remember, a suitable candidate is interviewing you to see if your company is a good fit for them, as much as you are interviewing them. Ensure your hiring process is transparent, efficient, and engaging. Keep candidates or the recruiter they are working with updated at every stage and provide clear, timely feedback. Understand that applicants are candidates because they want or need a new job. Once the candidate leaves the interview, you are on the clock.

The more time that goes by without any sort of communication, the more convinced the candidate becomes that you are not interested! They resume their efforts to find a job, and while you are busy doing "things," you run the risk of losing the candidate. Hiring good people is a lot like fishing; when you get a bite, it's time to drop what else you are doing, get the hook set, and get that fish on your boat!

If after the first interview you decide the candidate is not a good fit for the position, it is a good practice to inform them of that—ghosting a candidate after an interview is unprofessional. The candidate would rather be told that they are no longer being considered than be left to assume it after not hearing back from you for weeks.


4. Determine why they are looking for a new job.

This is an area that many interviewers gloss over because it makes them uncomfortable. Big mistake. There are two types of candidates: those who are currently employed and those

who aren't. Most lumber dealers stay away from poaching employees from their competitors, so chances are you are interviewing people who are between jobs. Starting with the most recent employer, ask the candidate to explain why they are no longer working there. Candidates are prepared to answer this question; they have a credible story to share. What we have learned is the follow-up questions are key. Ask at least two. Then move on to the next employer and repeat the process. And then the third. A pattern will emerge. We can all agree that there are many valid reasons for termination; not all of them are negative. It's easy to tell when someone is stretching the truth, painting a better picture than reality. The last thing you want to do is add someone to your team who is "constantly looking for a better situation." If you do, it won't be long before they are back on the job boards, hoping to move on.

5. Focus on skills over degrees.

Prioritize practical skills and real-world experience over traditional degrees. Assess candidates through practical tests, portfolios, or hands-on evaluations. If you're hiring a driver, take the candidate outside and have them sit in a truck—getting them in their element will help relax them and lead to a better interview. I would ask the candidate to imagine I'm a new driver and kindly share some of the key things they believe are important for me to know. Then, let's do a safety check on this truck. For a salesperson: have a pre-written sales order ready—have the candidate go through it with you line by line, telling you what they know about each product, any suggestions they would make to improve the sale, substitute different items, etc. We provide these concepts free to our LCI Hiring Club Members. This sort of approach is far superior to asking where they see themselves in five years or what they see as their greatest strength or weakness. This method reveals what skills they actually possess, not just claim to possess, and helps you set your expectations properly. Finding someone who has all the skills to be productive on day one is quite rare—but you will have a clearer picture of what training they will require.

By adopting these best practices, building material businesses can create a more efficient and effective hiring process, ultimately leading to a stronger and more capable workforce.. 

Tom Ford has 40+ years of lumber & building materials industry experience in key leadership roles, helping companies of all sizes. As president of Lumber Contacts Recruiting, he understands the qualifications needed to find and place successful candidates in LBM businesses. He can be reached at 508-472-3404 or ford.tom@lumbercontacts.com.



ENGAGING GENERATION Z

IN THE WORKPLACE

By NRLA Connect

Generation Z (Gen Z) accounts for a growing percentage of the global workforce. In the second quarter of 2024, this group comprised 18% of the U.S. labor force, and this rate will only continue to grow. These individuals, born between 1997 and 2012, range from 13- to 28-years-old, making up nearly all of the current as well as next wave of young professionals. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by 2030, Gen Z will constitute 30% of the workforce.

However, many individuals in this demographic feel disengaged or disempowered in the workplace. Research by analytics and advisory firm Gallup found that disengagement affected Gen Z more than other generations in 2024, as they were five percentage points less engaged than in 2023. Employers who take measures to engage with Gen Z workers and adapt to their needs may experience increased productivity and heightened retention and attraction of these workers.

This article explains how engaging Gen Z is important for organizations, outlines challenges employers face in these efforts, and provides tips on engaging this demographic in the workplace.

WHO ARE GEN Z, AND WHY ENGAGE THEM?

Gen Zers are often socially conscious, digitally savvy, and invested in career development. They are passionate about social causes and may choose to work for organizations with similar values

over higher-paying positions. According to a survey conducted by Deloitte, 75% of Gen Z and Millennial workers factor in an employer's community engagement and societal impact when searching for employment.

This generation of workers tends to value honesty and transparency from employers, prioritize mental health and job flexibility, and seek opportunities for career growth. They are also more willing than previous generations to leave their jobs if they don't offer what they desire. As such, they will likely remain loyal to employers offering development opportunities and internal support.

With Gen Z comprising almost a third of the global workforce by 2030, it's clear that engaging this demographic is crucial for employee attraction and retention. It's also essential for organizational productivity. Gen Z workers can bring fresh ideas and creativity to an organization; as digital natives, Gen Z can bring new talent and in-demand skills into the workplace, driving innovation and efficiency. Therefore, harnessing this potential can keep organizations ahead in a competitive market. Engaging this generation can help maintain a productive workforce and drive long-term organizational success.

EMPLOYER CHALLENGES TO ENGAGING GEN Z

Even though engaging Gen Z in the workplace provides attraction, retention, and productivity benefits, this effort is not

without challenges. **The following are obstacles employers may encounter when engaging Gen Z:**

- **Changing needs.** Gen Z's needs and desires differ from those of previous generations, putting pressure on employers to close the gap. Gen Zers have new expectations at work, such as up-to-date technology, work-life balance, mental health support, and career development.
- **Increased desire for feedback.** Many managers report that Gen Z wants more feedback, often at least once a week. Without it, these employees may feel disengaged and stuck. By focusing on meaningful feedback and direction while offering flexibility and autonomy, employers can help these employees thrive in their jobs.
- **Lack of soft skills.** Although they possess strong technical skills, Gen Z employees may widely lack soft skills, such as communication, time management, and teamwork. This is likely due to many of this generation entering the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic when remote work was the norm. With the lack of in-person work, many didn't gain practical interpersonal communication experience through traditional work environments. By providing guidance and training, employers can help employees develop soft skills to complement their technical abilities.

Employers might encounter challenges when appealing to Gen Z, but implementing the right strategies can allow these employees to succeed and foster a productive, engaged workforce.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN ENGAGE GEN Z


Employers can engage Gen Z employees and improve attraction and retention rates among young workers by proactively responding to Gen Z's wants and needs. **Here are strategies for employers to engage Gen Z in the workplace:**

- **Make work meaningful.** According to the Deloitte survey, 86% of Gen Zers said a sense of purpose was important to their job satisfaction. They want to feel that their work is meaningful and contributes to the success of the organization by being able to employ their skill sets. Employers should emphasize the significance of employees' jobs and create a work environment where they can see the impact of their work. These efforts can help attract as well as motivate employees.
- **Enhance onboarding.** Employers shouldn't rush Gen Z employees through onboarding; experts recommend this process last 12 to 18 months. Onboarding should include teaching new employees how to develop both hard and soft skills to enhance their performance and satisfaction. This process also allows employers to highlight the impact of employees' roles, thus demonstrating that their work is meaningful.
- **Utilize the latest technology.** Technology company Dell reported that almost all Gen Zers (91%) say technology

influences their employment decisions. Generally, these workers have little patience for outdated systems. Additionally, up-to-date devices and systems tend to improve efficiency and productivity.

- **Prioritize mental health.** Gen Z workers say mental health benefits are a key consideration when choosing an employer. Organizations can create a positive mental health culture by making mental health resources and programs readily available, training managers to be empathetic, and encouraging employees to take vacation time. This can reduce employee burnout and stress, increasing productivity and engagement. Putting mental health first may also include offering competitive compensation, expanded family leave policies, and child care subsidies.
- **Allow flexibility and autonomy.** Gen Z tends to look for jobs that fit their life, not the other way around. They seek jobs that focus on employees as people, allowing them autonomy to work when and how they please, and promote a work-life balance.
- **Provide career development opportunities.** Younger workers highly value professional growth and learning opportunities. Employers can remove stress and guesswork by providing career ladders that outline an employee's potential path for growth. Organizations can also prioritize internal promotions and create mentorship programs to foster interpersonal relationships and development opportunities among employees.
- **Commit to societal issues.** According to Mercer, 80% of Gen Z employees are likely to be disengaged at work when their organization's values do not align with their own. Employers who show they are involved in and concerned with societal concerns, such as environmental sustainability, may experience improved attraction and retention of Gen Z workers.
- **Gauge employee feedback.** It's essential to survey Gen Z employees regularly. Listening and responding to their feedback can help these workers feel empowered, boosting engagement and morale. Further, adapting based on this feedback fosters a culture of trust and collaboration. This process also benefits organizations by identifying areas for improvement.

CONCLUSION

Gen Z individuals are a growing percentage of the global talent pool. However, like every new demographic entering the workforce, these employees have unique needs and priorities. Employers who actively engage Gen Z may experience a competitive advantage when hiring and retaining these workers. These initiatives may also contribute to increased satisfaction and productivity. 

This article was provided by Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, LLC. Are you looking for more HR support? NRLA Connect is a free NRLA member benefit. To join, visit www.nrla.org/member-benefits/nrla-connect. NRLA Connect is your lumberyard's online resource for Property & Casualty, OSHA, and Employee Benefits and grants you access to HR professionals via phone or email.

ONBOARDING: THE FIRST 90 DAYS

How to set up new employees for success

By NRLA Connect



The term “onboarding” is often tossed around in the HR world, but not everyone knows what it is or how to do it. In basic terms, onboarding is the process of getting new hires acclimated to their new roles. It includes setting clear guidelines for performance and company culture and sharing the knowledge necessary for success within an organization.

Onboarding takes training and orientation to the next level. Unlike traditional employee orientation, onboarding is a systematic process that extends well beyond the first day of employment. The goal of the process is to cultivate a long-term relationship between the employer and the employee while fostering a feeling of belonging and of making the right career choice.

Every business is different, so there is no universal way to handle the onboarding process of new hires. However, we are sharing some tips for the first 90 days that can help you improve your onboarding process.

HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF THE FIRST 90 DAYS:

START HERE: PRE-HIRE

- Before the first day, extend a genuine welcome via email. Include helpful information, such as a map of the building, a schedule for the first week, and his or her manager's contact information. You may also want to request that he or she complete required HR paperwork, such as IRS Forms W-4 and I-9.
- Set up the workstation and any required software.
- Consider a formal onboarding process with scheduled informational sessions to share information about the company, its goals, traditions, insurance, and culture. Try to accommodate multiple new hires in shared onboarding sessions.

FIRST DAY

- Make the receptionist or relevant staff aware that a new hire is arriving.
- Arrange a workplace tour.
- Coordinate lunch for the manager and employee, paid for by the company.
- Introduce the rest of the company to the new hire. If not in person, use company email or intranet, accompanied by a photo and a brief bio.
- Coordinate a mentor.
- Give an overview of where the new hire can find the employee handbook, staff directory, and important company information.

15 DAYS

- Ask the manager to check on the new hire's progress and make sure he or she has everything they need.
- Answer any questions the new hire may have and use this time to solve any concerns so they don't escalate and go ignored.

SECOND WEEK

- Make a timetable for setting and reaching goals. Discuss career pathing with the new hire and his or her manager.

30 DAYS

- Ask the new hire to complete a survey about your onboarding program.
- Make sure the new hire is involved in both short- and long-term projects so that he or she feels a sense of accomplishment and a sense of contribution to the company.


45 DAYS

- Schedule a meeting with the employee to simply touch base and make sure he or she feels comfortable with his or her role and happy with his or her work. This is a crucial time since approximately 20% of turnover occurs before 45 days.

90 DAYS

- This is a good time to have another meeting to make sure that both the employer and employee are on the same page and that it is a mutually good fit.
- Ask the new hire if he or she has any ideas for improvements that could benefit the company.
- Discuss whether there is any reason he or she would want to leave the company.

Onboarding employees the right way can improve retention and save money while building upon your company's culture and brand. Use the information provided here to begin thinking about how you onboard and if there is room for improvement.

To access the complete HR onboarding toolkit—including supporting documents for onboarding new employees—simply sign up for NRLA Connect, NRLA's free HR program exclusively for members. 

The tips provided here are intended for onboarding advice only and do not cover compliance or legal obligations that might be specific to your company. For more information on the compliance side of onboarding, contact Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, LLC. If you are an NRLA member and wish to join NRLA Connect, visit www.nrla.org/member-benefits/nrla-connect. NRLA Connect is your lumberyard's online resource for Property & Casualty, OSHA, and Employee Benefits and grants you access to HR professionals via phone or email.

BRIDGING THE LABOR GAP, **BUILDING THE FUTURE**

By Doug Ford and Pam Stott

The construction industry is the backbone of modern society, responsible for building and maintaining homes, roads, schools, and the infrastructure that keeps our economy moving. Yet a significant crisis looms over this essential industry: a severe shortage of skilled labor. With an aging workforce and fewer young people entering the trades, construction companies—and the lumber dealers that supply them—are struggling to meet demand. While this presents a major challenge, it also creates enormous career opportunities for those willing to step into the field. According to the Associated General Contractors of America, the industry needs hundreds of thousands of workers to keep up with demand. For lumber dealers, this labor gap directly impacts business, as fewer contractors mean fewer material purchases and slower project timelines.





BRIDGING THE LABOR GAP

The Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition, Inc. (NCTWC) began as a task force under the Saratoga Builders Association (SBA) to explore why young people were not considering the trades as a career choice. Doug Ford and Pam Stott, long-term employees of Curtis Lumber, accepted the challenge and have dedicated years to collaborating with schools, industry professionals, and local communities to address this labor deficit. Their work is helping create a new generation of skilled professionals—directly benefiting lumber dealers by ensuring a steady demand for building materials in the years to come.

KEY INITIATIVES TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

Hands-On Learning Experiences

NCTWC offers hands-on educational programs for students from second grade through high school, introducing them to construction activities led by industry professionals. These programs highlight the connection between classroom learning and real-world trade skills.

It starts with planting the seed as second graders build a toolbox, measuring with the tape measure, working with their hands, and being a carpenter for one hour. Middle school students build a 12-sided geometric shape that requires strong teamwork, planning, economics, and assembly technique. Meet the Builder presentations provide students with an opportunity to engage with field professionals who share their experiences and discuss the various career opportunities and skills involved in home and commercial building. Visits to active construction sites and tours of local businesses offer students hands-on field exposure to careers in the trades. Job shadowing gives students valuable one-on-one time with a

professional to explore a career of their interest more in-depth. These hands-on experiences not only spark curiosity but also equip students with the foundational skills and knowledge to explore fulfilling careers in the trades as well as those that support the trades. By connecting education with real-world applications, NCTWC is shaping the next generation of skilled professionals and innovators in the construction industry.

Dispelling Misconceptions

One of the biggest barriers to entering the trades is misinformation. Outdated stereotypes still paint the trades as low-paying and physically grueling with limited career advancement, deterring students from considering them as viable careers. NCTWC actively counters these misconceptions by providing data and success stories that highlight the financial and career growth opportunities in the trades. Their programs demonstrate how skilled workers can earn salaries comparable to or exceeding those of college graduates, without student loan debt. College and the trades should not be viewed as mutually exclusive but as different paths to success. Trades are a respected, tech-driven field with room for advancement—benefiting both workers and the industries that rely on them.

Connecting Academics to Real-World Applications

Students often struggle to see the relevance of subjects they study in school to a career in today's trades. NCTWC bridges this gap between academics and practical skills. Geometry, science, math, technology, and design come alive through the construction-related activities they offer. For example, carpentry and masonry illustrate geometric principles.

(Continued on page 38)



(Continued from page 37)

Structural engineering demonstrates applied physics. 3D modeling and drone surveying introduce students to the tech-savvy side of modern construction. The increased use of technology in construction requires more technical expertise alongside hands-on craftsmanship. By making these connections, NCTWC helps students see how academic skills are directly relevant to rewarding trade careers—making them more likely to consider pursuing vocational paths.

Promoting Gender Diversity in the Trades

The construction industry has historically been male-dominated, but NCTWC is actively promoting gender diversity. By highlighting the achievements of women in the field and conducting female-specific programs and outreach efforts, the coalition encourages more women to consider construction as an inclusive industry with viable opportunities. Increasing gender diversity broadens the talent pool, helping the industry address its labor shortage.

BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE

By reshaping the conversation around vocational careers and investing in workforce development, the construction industry can bridge the labor gap and ensure a strong future for skilled trades. NCTWC is playing a vital role in shaping the future of the construction workforce by actively engaging with students, addressing misconceptions, and providing meaningful exposure to the trades. The trades should not be viewed as a fallback option but rather as a strategic, rewarding career choice that offers stability, financial independence, and opportunities for lifelong growth. [nctwc.org](https://www.nctwc.org)

The Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization with a mission “to educate, inspire, and connect people in pursuit of rewarding careers in the trades, driving economic growth while building and sustaining our communities.” With more than 80 member organizations, the coalition is committed to ensuring the construction sector remains strong, innovative, and well-staffed with skilled professionals ready to build the world of tomorrow. To learn more, visit www.nctwc.org.



Learn more:
nctwc.org



NRLA CONNECT YOUR COMPLETE HUMAN RESOURCE TOOLBOX

**ENROLL
TODAY!**

NRLA CONNECT— KEEPING YOUR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS RUNNING SMOOTH & EFFICIENTLY.

YOUR ONLINE RESOURCE FOR STATE & FEDERAL REGULATORY COMPLIANCE,
OSHA, AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

Below is a small sampling of FREE services available in the NRLA Connect Toolbox for NRLA members :

Compliance:

- OSHA Log
- Multi-State Laws Comparison Tool
- FMLA Advisor
- Federal Poster Advisor
- And more!

Human Resources:

- HR Hotline
- Employee Handbook Builder
- Custom Job Description Builder
- In-person Interview Question Builder
- Performance Review Builder
- And more!

Learning Management System:

- Safety Training
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
- Active Shooter Attack Survival Training
- Adjusting Workstations & Postures
- And more!

Learn more or sign up for this free service: nrla.org/member-benefits/nrla-connect

NRLA Connect is free for all NRLA members to participate in.

NRLA Connect is brought to you by:



800-292-6752

nrla.org





VRLDA's 4th Annual Bright Futures Job Fair Makes Statewide Impact

By Steve Ciccone

The Vermont Retail Lumber Dealers Association (VRLDA) hosted its fourth annual "Building Bright Futures" industry awareness and recruitment fair on April 4 at Vermont State University's Randolph Center campus. The event drew more than 200 high school students from across the state and made headlines with coverage by local media—and even a visit from Governor Phil Scott.


This high-energy event offered students hands-on exposure to a wide range of careers in the lumber and building materials industry. With interactive stations spread throughout the campus, students rotated through engaging demonstrations in CAD design, heavy equipment operation, logistics, purchasing, sales, forestry management, and carpentry. The format brought industry careers to life in a way that resonated with students, educators, and employers alike.

Governor Scott's presence further highlighted the event's importance. Speaking directly to the students, he shared personal stories from his background in the trades and emphasized the value of the skills being demonstrated. "I've spent more time in machine shops, wood shops, and jobsites than in boardrooms or offices. I can tell you first-hand how important the things you learn today will be good for your future and the future of Vermont," he said. "Vermont needs your talent—we hope you'll stick around and help build our future."

Also addressing the crowd was Vermont Department of Labor Commissioner Michael Harrington, who praised the event's interactive format and the enthusiasm of the student participants. The fair drew support from NRLA leaders as well: NRLA Chair Doug Ford and NRLA President Rita Ferris.

Coverage of the job fair aired across Vermont news networks, further amplifying its message: The LBM industry is vibrant, essential, and full of opportunity for the next generation.

VRLDA President and Job Fair Chair Claudia Homan of Bethel Mills commented, "We're so proud to host this event. It's about showing kids the incredible opportunities right here in Vermont and welcoming them into a community that values hard work, innovation, and craftsmanship."

The success of the 2025 Bright Futures Job Fair reflects VRLDA's ongoing commitment to workforce development and keeping Vermont's youth engaged and employed in their home state. The energy, interest, and inspiration sparked at the event made it clear: The future of Vermont's LBM industry is in good hands. 



Bright Futures event makes Vermont news! Pictured in the article are the Shining Star Award winners with Vermont Governor Phil Scott, VRLDA President Claudia Homan, and VRLDA board member Tim Comes.



VRLDA President Claudia Homan, Bethel Mills, introduces Vermont Governor Phil Scott.



Special thanks to:

Andersen Windows, Britton Lumber, BROSCO, DeWalt, Holden Humphrey, Huber, PrimeSource, US Lumber, Weyerhaeuser, and Woodgrain for supporting the event.



Preparing a Skilled Workforce

How CTECS Combines Hands-On Training
with Industry Partnerships to Ready Students
for Skilled Careers in the Trades.

By Brent McCartney



The Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) provides students a unique opportunity to gain hands-on trade experience while completing their high school education. By blending rigorous academics with career and technical training, CTECS prepares students for success in today's workforce or postsecondary opportunities. Graduates earn a Connecticut high school diploma, a Career and Technical Education certificate, and industry-recognized credentials, giving them a competitive advantage. Thanks to strong industry partnerships and real-world learning, many students receive job offers before graduation.

Operating in 20 locations across the state, CTECS includes 17 comprehensive technical high schools, one technical education center, and two airframe mechanics and aircraft maintenance schools for adult learners. CTECS offers high school students, grades 9–12, 31 trade programs designed to meet the needs of Connecticut's industries. Specific to construction, programs include architecture, building and civil construction, carpentry, electrical, HVAC, landscaping, masonry, and plumbing and heating.

At CTECS, students are trained through a combination of foundational learning in state-of-the-art shops, hands-on production work, and real-world job placements. In their shop classes, students begin by developing core technical skills through theoretical learning and model projects led by industry professionals. Students work with professional-grade tools and materials to simulate industry settings. This immersive approach ensures students gain both technical expertise and confidence in their trade before moving on to real-world applications.


As their skills progress, students participate in the CTECS Student Workforce, a program that provides hands-on experience through two avenues: Production and Work-Based Learning (WBL). Through the production program, students complete construction projects that serve the community, both within their school and on-site at residential and commercial properties. Whether it's constructing homes, performing renovations, or crafting custom-built pieces, students work under the guidance of industry-experienced instructors to deliver high-quality craftsmanship while gaining practical experience.



WBL further enhances student training by allowing juniors and seniors to gain professional experience through internships and job shadowing with local employers. Through this program, students can work part-time while earning school credit and apply their knowledge in real-world settings. Juniors typically enter WBL with at least 700 hours of hands-on experience, while seniors have over 1,000 hours, making them valuable assets to employers. By the second semester of their senior year, students can work full-time, providing companies with a steady pipeline of skilled, job-ready workers. Many graduates transition directly into full-time roles with their WBL employers, benefiting both students and industry partners alike.

CTECS thrives on strong industry connections, and there are many ways for businesses to engage with and support the program. Employers who invest in CTECS students not only help shape the future workforce but also gain access to highly trained, motivated individuals eager to enter the field. Opportunities to get involved include:


- **Program Advisory Committees (PACs):** Employers can join PACs to help guide curriculum development and ensure training aligns with industry needs.
- **Career Center Partnerships:** Businesses create a profile in the CTECS Career Center to post job opportunities, showcase their company to the next generation of workers, and receive notifications about upcoming events.
- **Field Trips and Guest Speaking:** Companies can invite students to visit their facilities or send representatives to speak about industry trends, career pathways, and best practices.
- **Donations and Equipment Sponsorships:** Employers can support the next generation by donating materials, tools, or equipment, helping to ensure students train with the latest industry-standard resources.

By partnering with CTECS, businesses help sustain a steady pipeline of skilled workers ready to contribute to Connecticut's workforce. With demand for qualified tradespeople on the rise, collaboration between education and industry is essential. To learn more about getting involved, visit cttech.org/about/getinvolved. 

A satellite view of Earth from space, showing a large, swirling hurricane over the ocean. The title "WINDOWS OF IMPACT 101" is overlaid in large white letters. The word "OF" is stylized with a speech bubble shape around the letter 'O'.

WINDOWS OF IMPACT 101

By Scott Channell



Well, here I go again, attempting to provide knowledge without getting too “window geekish.” This time, I will be imparting my insights and knowledge on hurricane impact windows.

I hope you find it insightful...

History

Regardless of whether you believe in climate change or not, one thing is for certain: Change is constant. Change in climates, change in weather patterns, change in windows. The testing for impact-rated products is not new and dates back to the 1930s; however, the discussion of hurricane impact windows burst onto the scene and into our lexicon with Hurricane Andrew, which hit Homestead, Fla., on August 24, 1992, decimating everything in its path. From that point forward, window and window testing changed forever, with Miami-Dade County being the first municipality to enact legislation for stricter code requirements. Since then, stricter codes have been adopted up and down the Eastern Seaboard as well as along the Gulf Coast.

What is a hurricane impact window?

Typically, a hurricane impact window frame is made of steel, aluminum, wood, or vinyl. Then the unit is enhanced with special hardware, reinforcements, and special insulated glass for the “main attraction.” Insulated glass is made up of one pane of regular annealed or tempered glass (typically referred to as the “sacrificial” layer) and the other pane is laminated glass, which is two pieces of 1/8”-1/4” glass sandwiching an inner layer of polyvinyl butyral (PVB) and is placed into a pressurized chamber to fuse the three parts as one. Then these two pieces of glass are separated by a spacer system of the manufacturer’s choice. Lastly, after the main window has been assembled, then special insulated laminated glass is inserted into the window. The key ingredient to success in building a hurricane impact window is to ensure the proper bonding of the insulated glass to the frame material. This is usually accomplished using a two-part sealant, which then needs upwards of 30 days to cure and set before installation.

How is a hurricane impact window tested?

First, the window must pass a standard Design Pressure (DP) test and meet a grade 50, or DP50, which means the window stays intact when hit with the equivalent of 75 pounds of force per square foot or 200 mph winds. Then a 2x4 is shot at 50 feet per second (small missile) or a 9-pound 2x4 (large missile) into three windows in three different locations, attempting to penetrate through the glass and then to break the hardware. Next, they cycle the air pressure back up to the levels of the first DP50 test to see if they can get the window to fail and collapse the glass panels or sashes into the home. If all stays intact, and depending upon the size and velocity of the 2x4, you have a hurricane impact window for specific regions.

Continued on page 46.



What would happen if a homeowner did not have proper coverage on their windows and doors during a hurricane event?

First, the reason for testing the way we do is to ensure the window can withstand the rigors of a hurricane and stay intact. This is important for the simple reason that once the window openings are compromised, the air rushes into the home and blows the roof off. Once this happens, the entire home and its contents become windborne debris. By improving testing, home destruction is minimized by reducing debris, in turn reducing more destruction.

How important is the installation and use?

It is everything! A product that is made correctly is only as good as its installation, and once installed properly, is only as good as the operator using the product. Let's take installation first. It is extremely important to review and adhere to the manufacturer's installation instructions. Failure to do so can lead to catastrophic failure in the field. Retailers should inform customers of how important it is to check the references of anyone who will do the work for them. They should be advised to hire only competent and professional installation installers. This is not the area to cut corners or have a DIY party with friends and family. As for operation, here too, read the manufacturer's instructions. Not all windows close and secure the same. Some have special clips, which must be engaged, where others do not. If the customer has a vacation home far from their main residence, then they should be sure to properly secure the windows and doors before heading home. You do not want them to be 1,000 miles away when a hurricane hits and have them wonder, "Did I properly secure my windows?"

Is it necessary to have hurricane impact windows installed to meet code?

Not always. Some elect other routes, such as:

Hurricane Shutters:

- **Accordion Shutters:** Easy to deploy, they fold back into a compact form when not in use.
- **Rolling Shutters:** Mounted above the window and roll down over it when needed.

- **Colonial Shutters:** Decorative shutters that provide impact protection, often used in more traditional or aesthetic designs.
- **Panel Shutters:** Made of metal or polycarbonate, they can be bolted over windows to protect from debris impact.


Hurricane Film/Window Tint: A laminated film applied to existing windows to help hold the glass together in case of impact. However, these films offer less protection than full impact-resistant windows.

Storm Panels: Usually made of aluminum, steel, or polycarbonate. These are placed over windows and doors to protect them from hurricane debris.

Although some of these are less expensive options, some do require someone of skill to deploy each time a hurricane approaches. In the case of a second home, it could pose a time and distance challenge.

Is the remainder of your customer's home ready?

When installing new hurricane impact windows, whether it be a retrofit or new construction project, completing one part and not all may prove catastrophic. If they do not also take into consideration the walls, roof, etc., the window, storm shutter, or storm panel investment may not be enough to protect the home. We have personally witnessed homes destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, with windows intact within the wall lying on the ground!

Hopefully I have been able to simplify "what is" a hurricane window for you. This is just the tip of the iceberg, and there is much more specific information regarding codes, impact wind zones, and specific testing criteria, as this was meant to provide an overview. All projects must be reviewed in detail with your local and state code officials as well as your supplier of choice to confirm the products used are compliant with your specific project location. 

Scott Channell is the general manager and managing partner of National Vinyl LLC, a manufacturer of vinyl windows and doors serving lumberyards throughout the greater Northeast. He can be reached by email at schannell@nvpwindows.com or by phone at 413-420-0548 for more information.

NRLA'S DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING PROGRAM

FAILURE TO COMPLY CAN PUT YOU IN PARK!

**ENROLL
TODAY!**

**WE HELP KEEP YOUR COMPANY DELIVERING—
ENROLL IN NRLA'S MEMBER-ONLY PROGRAM.
EASY TO MANAGE, QUICK RESPONSE TIMES, AND VERY AFFORDABLE!**

Don't take our word for it, see what NRLA members are saying about our Drug Testing Program:

"With 12 distribution locations, our alliance with the NRLA Drug & Alcohol Testing Program helps us remain consistently compliant. We are pleased with the complete services."

—Paul Kraus
LaValley Building Supply Inc.

"With NRLA's dedicated department that provides support and guidance, we highly recommend members who employ CDL drivers to utilize the Drug & Alcohol Testing Program."

—Dave Stellman
Genesee Reserve Supply

"We've been enrolled in NRLA's Drug & Alcohol Testing Program for many years. It is really easy to manage and they keep us in compliance."

—Robert Ashley
Triple A Building Center

Email drugtesting@nrla.org to learn more or to enroll.

Learn more at nrla.org/drugtesting-enroll.

NRLA approved testing facilities through:



NRLA
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association

800-292-6752
nrla.org





WINDOW PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Photo Credit: National Vinyl LLC



National Vinyl LLC

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

What window products do you sell?

We offer a full line of vinyl new construction and replacement windows. From our Destiny to our TrustGard, we offer everything needed from double-hung, sliders, picture windows, casements, awnings, hoppers, bays, and bows. We also manufacture our EnduraView patio door line, which we stock in standard sizes.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our Destiny double-hung window system features equal sight lines and an integral internal tilt mechanism, which allows for no unsightly external tilt latches on the bottom sash. Couple this with our plated hardware and interior staining of a vinyl window, and you now have no reason to lose a sale due to wood window sticker shock. All this and glass breakage to the end user—what more could you ask for!



PARTICIPANTS

All-Time Manufacturing Co Inc.. 50

Kasson & Keller 50

National Vinyl LLC 48

Steel and Wire 49

Trimline Custom Windows 49



Steel and Wire

Contact: Mike Hadyka
Email: mhadyka@steelandwireproducts.com
Phone: 860-884-9012
Website: www.steelandwireproducts.com



What window products do you sell?

We carry the full line of Protecto Wrap window and door flashing tapes, which includes the Super Stick, BT20XL, BT25XL, and PS-45 to fit any application. In addition, we carry Protecto Wrap's Sill Pan Flashing Tape and Dual Guard Threshold Tape to offer a professional solution for installing windows and doors.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Super Stick window and door tape is a high-tack, tenacious, durable, peel-and-stick air/vapor barrier tape system used for sealing PVC and aluminum fin windows and doors. It can be applied down to -20 degrees Fahrenheit as well as on damp surfaces, without the use of a primer. Super Stick's high-performance pressure-sensitive adhesive will self-seal around nails, screws, and staples, and having no VOCs provides a non-toxic, non-allergenic solution to those looking to build green.



Trimline Custom Windows

Contact: Jay DePue
Email: jdepue@trimlinewindows.com
Phone: 267-401-1325
Website: www.trimlinewindows.com



What window products do you sell?

Trimline Custom Windows manufactures custom aluminum-clad wood and all-wood windows for pocket insert installation, remodeling, certified historic rehabilitation, and new construction. The product line includes double-hung, casement, bay, bow, awning, picture, architectural shapes, and sash replacement kits. Trimline Custom Windows provides tailored solutions for both residential and commercial projects. Key product lines include Eclipse Premium Double Hung, Legends Clad, Liberty Wood, and Ultra-Fit Sash Replacement systems.

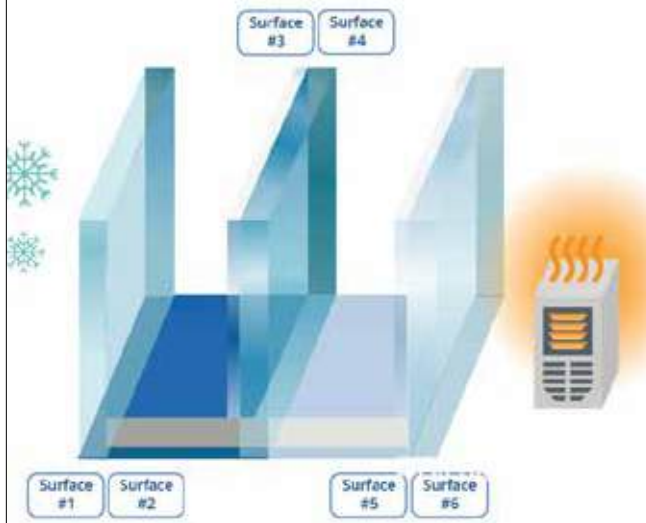
What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The Ultra-Fit Premium Sash Kit (SK150) is a traditional-style sash replacement kit designed for easy installation into typical wood window openings. It features clad or all-wood double-hung sashes, combination tilt-lock hardware, and smooth-operating block and tackle balances. The SK150 concealed jambliner blends seamlessly with the existing interior and exterior finishes for either clad or all wood. With customizable sill angles, jamb adjusters, radius sash, and optional half screens, it preserves the original charm of your home while improving functionality and energy efficiency.



All-Time Manufacturing Co. Inc.

Contact: Robert Brodie **Email:** sales@alltimemfg.com
Phone: 860-848-9258 **Website:** www.alltimemfg.com



What window products do you sell?

We manufacture and distribute a variety of PVC vinyl, thermal aluminum, and storm windows.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our triple-pane low-E glass units with krypton or argon gas get you superior insulation and sound dampening.

Attention Associate Members!

Participate for **free** in July's Showcases by scanning the QR codes below.

Do you sell **Moulding & Millwork?**



<https://nrla.org/2025-mmps>

Do you sell or provide **Tech Products or Services?**



<https://nrla.org/2025-tps>



Kasson & Keller

Contact: Mark Empie **Email:** mempie@kassonkeller.com
Phone: 518-332-2795 **Website:** www.kassonkeller.com



What window products do you sell?

High-performance, low-maintenance vinyl windows.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Combining classic farmhouse aesthetics with modern vinyl performance, our 300B series showcases a 2 3/4" brick mold design and enhanced sill nosing, bringing the warmth and character of wood to your project..

**TWO CAN'T MISS EVENTS.
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES.**

Registration
Opens in
Aug. 2025!

>>> LBM EXPO <<<

DECEMBER 10-11, 2025

Earth Expo & Convention Center
Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

LBMEXPO.COM

Registration
Opens in
Dec. 2025!



For the Lumber & Building Materials Industry **2026**

MARCH 11, 2026

Valley Forge Casino Resort
King of Prussia, PA

IDEASSHOW.NET

LBM Expo and IDEAS Show are brought to you by: **NRLA**
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association



Photo Credit: Woodgrain

DOOR PRODUCT SHOWCASE



Woodgrain

Contact: Chuck Cormier (North NE) | Selene Byron (South NE)
Email: ccormier@woodgrain.com | sbyron@woodgrain.com
Phone: 508-962-5604 | 401-489-5014
Website: www.woodgraindistribution.com | www.woodgrain.com

What Door products do you sell?

Woodgrain stands out among the rest with a deep history and unwavering focus on our customers. Woodgrain proudly offers a full array of Therma-Tru entry door systems with value-added services, including PrismaGuard—finished by Woodgrain paint and stain pre-finishing. Woodgrain offers a wide range of interior door options, including Woodgrain's stile-and-rail doors and the Woodgrain Molded & Flush Door Collection. We also stock and sell patio doors manufactured by Standard Doors. No matter your exterior or interior door needs, Woodgrain has you covered with trusted products and unrivaled service.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Backed by years of door expertise and craftsmanship, the Woodgrain Molded & Flush Door Collection offers a wide range of designs—including Shaker—and sizes to fit your style and space. Available in solid core, as well as 20-minute fire-rated add-on options, Woodgrain offers pre-hanging and other value-added services. Woodgrain molded and flush doors are designed to not shrink, swell, split, or crack, so you can rely upon the quality that Woodgrain doors are renowned for when selecting your perfect door.

PARTICIPANTS

BROSCO Boise Cascade 56

The Combination Door
Company - a division of
Paul Argoe Screens, Inc. 54

National Vinyl LLC 53

Reeb Millwork 54

Simpson Door Company 56

Therma-Tru Doors 53

Woodgrain 52



National Vinyl LLC

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

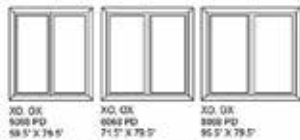


What door products do you sell?

We manufacture and offer a full line of patio doors. From our EnduraView patio door offered in standard and custom sizes to a full line of standard patio doors to French-style sliding doors with a multitude of sizes and options available.



Sizes & Operation



X - OPERATING PANEL O - FIXED PANEL
 NOTE: 2 panel doors consist of a door with mullied panels.
 All door operations are viewed outside looking in.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our EnduraView patio door is very well built and cost-effective. We offer multiple colors and options. We stock white 5', 6', and 8' wide by 79.5" height doors with and without grids for immediate shipment. The door is reversible in the field prior to installation.



Therma-Tru Doors

Contact: Rob Pantelone **Email:** rob.pantelone@fbn.com
Website: www.thermatru.com



What door products do you sell?

Fiberglass door collections (Classic-Craft, Fiber-Classic, Smooth-Star, Pulse) and steel door collections (Profiles and Traditions).

Veris[™]

COLLECTION

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The Veris collection brings together high-end style and unique functionality to create contemporary openings that become experiences. Engineered for easy, worry-free operation and designed with the highest quality aluminum, stainless steel, and polymer components, which provide long-lasting operation that's virtually maintenance-free.



CDC

The Combination Door Company
DOOR AND MILLWORK SOLUTIONS

The Combination Door Company,
a division of Paul Argoe Screens, Inc.

Email: pargoscreens@comporium.net

Phone: 803-568-2111

Website: www.paulargoescreens.com;
www.combinationdoor.com/index.php



What door products do you sell?

Screen doors, storm doors, combination doors, and shutters.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Traditional #11 easy change wood combination door.

REEB®
an S B P brand

Reeb Millwork

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

Website: www.reeb.com



What door products do you sell?

Reeb partners with some of the most recognized manufacturers in the industry, including Therma-Tru fiberglass doors, Simpson wood stile-and-rail exterior and interior doors, DoorMerica MDF doors, Steves moulded doors, and RSP primed doors.

THERMA-TRU®
DOORS

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Therma-Tru entry doors are the brand most builders prefer. Therma-Tru delivers uncompromising quality, inside and out, and provides inspired designs in virtually unlimited choices that complement architectural and homeowner styles.

Attention Associate Members!

Do you sell **Decking, Railing, or Deck Fasteners**? Showcase them for **free!**

DECKING



<https://nrla.org/2025-deckingsps>

RAILING



<https://nrla.org/2025-railingsps>

FASTENERS



<https://nrla.org/2025-fastenersps>

CDC

The Combination Door Company

a division of



Standard Louver
Shutters



Classic Louver
Shutters

- White Pine
- Pressure Treated
Screen Doors
- Combination Doors
- Raised Panel Doors &
Shutters
- Screen & Glass Inserts
- Copper Caps
- Custom Sizing
- And More!!

A Legacy of Excellence: Paul Argoe Screens & Combination Door Company – 200 Years of Craftsmanship

With a combined 200 years of experience, Paul Argoe Screens and Combination Door Company have built a strong reputation for quality, craftsmanship, and innovation in the door and shutter industry. Both companies have been a trusted name in durable, high-quality screen doors and led the way in expert woodworking and premium door manufacturing.

Now, as **Paul Argoe Screens acquires The Combination Door Company**, we are excited to expand our reach and enhance our offerings. This strategic move allows us to build upon our legacy, bringing customers even more high-quality products and services. As we move forward, our commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction remains stronger than ever, ensuring that the tradition of superior craftsmanship continues for generations to come.



The Combination
Door Company
EASY CHANGE LOCK



Contact us

pargoscreens@comporium.net
doors@combinationdoor.com

 **1(800) 203-5953**

 **(803) 568-2111**



**Scan with your phone
to visit our website!**

Made in the USA





Simpson Door Company

Email: SimpsonCustomerService@brandner.com

Phone: -800-SIMPSON **Website:** www.simpsondoor.com



What door products do you sell?

With more than a century of experience, product innovation, and industry-leading design, Simpson Door Company is the trusted source for impeccably crafted wood doors. Simpson's vast line of interior and exterior wood doors includes hundreds of standard options, from panel to French to decorative entry doors with matching sidelights and transoms. Available in virtually any wood species and size, and with dozens of glass options, Simpson provides customers with the personalized door they desire.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Paint your exterior door black or any dark color. Simpson Door Company's newest product performance solution makes it possible to paint an exterior door black or any on-trend dark color while keeping its full warranty intact. 1) Select a design from the Nantucket Collection (77000 series). 2) Select Accoya as the wood type, and Simpson will automatically prime the door at the factory. Also, the door will be made with mortise-and-tenon joinery with no face pin. 3) The door will carry a 10-year warranty with no overhang required.



BROSCO Boise Cascade

Contact: Patricia McGovern

Email: patriciamcgovern@bc.com

Phone: 978-315-1933 **Website:** www.brosco.com



What door products do you sell?

BROSCO Boise Cascade offers interior and exterior doors from traditional to contemporary designs. The new BROSCO fiberglass doors feature flat Shaker panels, available in smooth and stainable rift-cut designs. The Jeld-Wen Fiberglass collection offers Pro Series along with the premium Architectural Collection. Simpson Wood Door now has the Nantucket Paint It Black door to provide style and durability. The growing popular trend of interior primed flat panel doors are in stock. Additionally, we stock Jeld-Wen molded doors and pine doors from Rogue Valley. Prefinishing for fiberglass and interior primed and moulded doors are available.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

The new BROSCO Boise Cascade Fiberglass Shaker door has a clean look with crisp edges, a style that emerged from an Arts and Crafts movement celebrating the craftsmanship and designs that complement nature with simple lines. This style is also a perfect design for direct-glazed doors. That means we have an even greater selection to offer with our well-known insulated glass. It's a deft design approach that eliminates the door glass frame and provides a clean look with more viewing area. BROSCO stocks the smooth Shaker Craftsman, two-panel, three-panel, and direct glaze, and the stainable rift cut Craftsman doors.



Closer Coverage that Measures Up

We have over 15 years of experience and expertise serving NRLA members. During that time, **Acadia Insurance** has returned over **\$10 million** in policyholder dividends to qualifying members—a testament to the quality of the NRLA organization and its member community.

Contact your local Acadia agent for more information on our endorsed insurance program and for the opportunity to earn policyholder dividends.*



- ✓ GENERAL LIABILITY
- ✓ EQUIPMENT
- ✓ AUTO
- ✓ PROPERTY
- ✓ UMBRELLA
- ✓ WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Products and services are provided by one or more insurance company subsidiaries of W.R. Berkley Corporation. Not all products and services are available in every jurisdiction, and the precise coverage afforded by any insurer is subject to applicable underwriting guidelines and the actual terms and conditions of the policies as issued.

*Dividends are based upon experience, are subject to Board approval and the terms and conditions of the Program, and are not guaranteed. The amount of dividends paid in the past are not indicative of what may be payable in the future.



| a Berkley Company

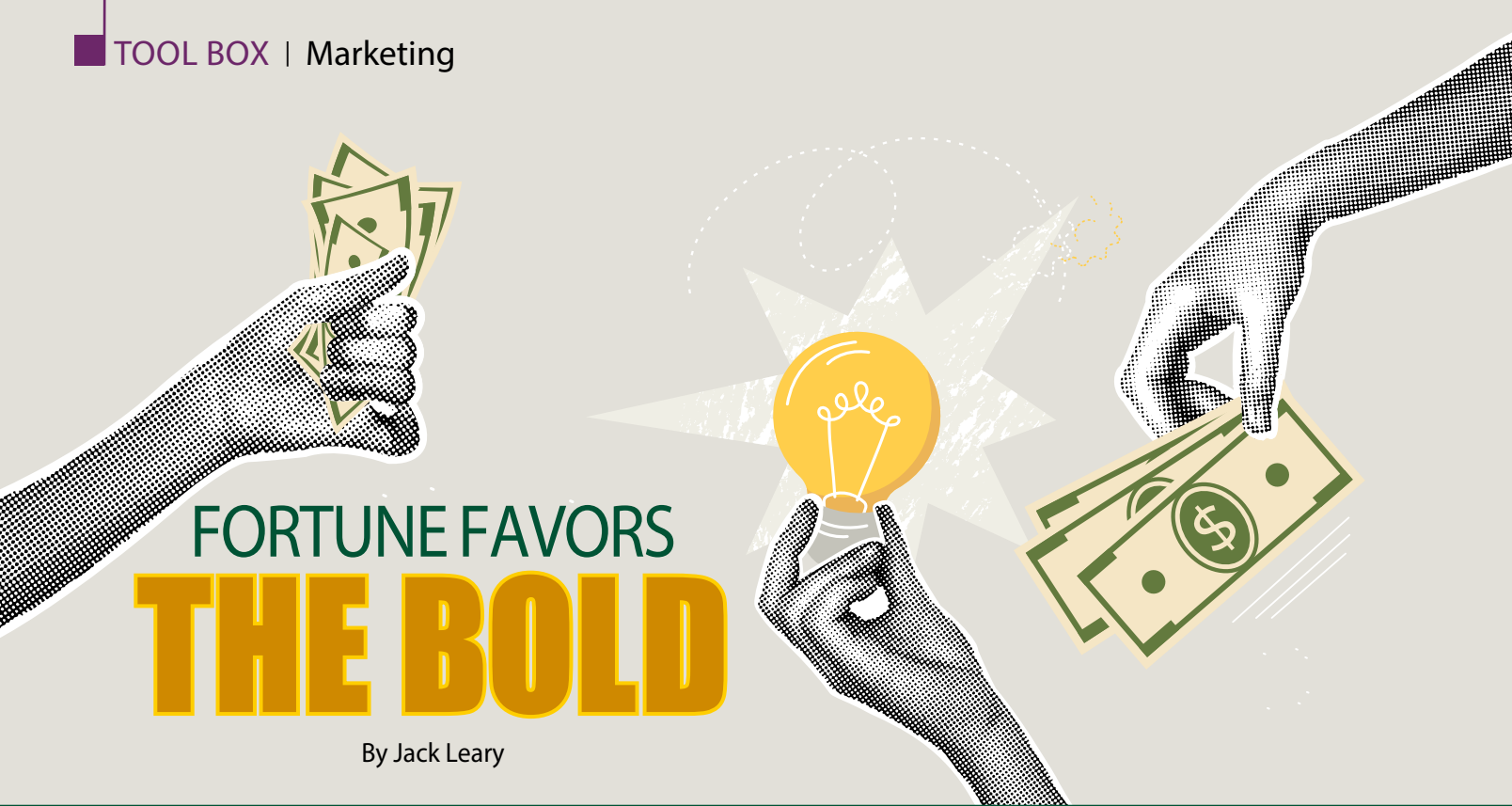
*Closer CoverageSM means
more value, delivered
with a personal touch.*



MAINE | CONNECTICUT | MASSACHUSETTS
NEW HAMPSHIRE | NEW YORK | VERMONT

ACADIAINSURANCE.COM
800.773.4300





FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD

By Jack Leary

Those of us that have been around for a while have seen the industry go through many cycles. Some years are good, some years are not so good! As I write this article on the 1st of April, the current situation and trend for this coming season does not look great.

Having been around for a while myself, I have observed over the years that economic uncertainty often brings a wave of cost-cutting measures as businesses scramble to maintain profitability. While it may seem logical to slash expenses during tough times, cutting marketing budgets is a strategic misstep that can have long-lasting repercussions.

Why is cutting marketing a big mistake? You may be creating opportunities for your competitors. I suggest when there is market uncertainty, great leaders see that as an opportunity. Warren Buffett has said, when people get nervous, "I get greedy; when people get greedy, I get nervous!"

Here is why keeping your marketing efforts intact—even in a downturn—is essential for your business's future success. When you totally cut your marketing, you are no longer creating awareness or stimulating demand to drive customers to your business. You may even be eliminating your business from the consideration process of potential customers.

Visibility Is Key

During a downturn, competition for customer attention becomes fiercer. Cutting your marketing budget means reducing your visibility in an already crowded market. Maintaining or even increasing marketing efforts helps ensure your brand remains at the forefront of customers' minds. As competitors pull back, your consistent presence can capture market share that would otherwise be lost.

Opportunity for Growth

Economic downturns create unique

opportunities for growth. While some competitors cut back on their marketing, your business can leverage this reduced noise to make a more significant impact. This is the perfect time to attract new customers and build loyalty with existing ones. By staying the course with your marketing, you are positioning your business to emerge stronger when the economy rebounds.

Brand Loyalty

Consistent marketing helps build and maintain trust and loyalty with your audience. During uncertain times,

customers are more likely to gravitate toward brands they know and trust. Cutting marketing efforts can create a perception of instability or decline, eroding the trust and loyalty you have worked hard to build. Keep your messaging consistent and reassuring, and your customers will continue to support you.

Short-Term Savings, Long-Term Losses

While cutting marketing spending might provide short-term financial relief, the long-term consequences can be detrimental. Reduced marketing

activity can lead to a decline in brand awareness, customer engagement, and, ultimately, sales. The cost of rebuilding your brand's presence and reconnecting with lost customers can far outweigh the temporary savings from cutting your marketing budget.

Innovation and Adaptation

Economic downturns often force businesses to innovate and adapt. Maintaining your marketing efforts can drive creativity and innovation within your marketing team. Finding new ways to engage with customers, leveraging digital platforms, and exploring cost-effective marketing strategies can lead to breakthroughs that benefit your business in the long run.

Data-Driven Decisions

Marketing provides valuable data and insights about customer behavior, preferences, and market trends. Cutting marketing efforts means losing access to this crucial information, making it harder to make informed business decisions. Continuously monitoring and analyzing marketing performance helps you stay agile and responsive to changing market conditions.

Shift Toward Digital Tactics

One of the most effective ways to maintain marketing efforts during a downturn without increasing costs is to shift toward digital marketing tactics. Digital marketing offers a cost-effective and highly measurable way to reach your target audience. Here are some strategies to consider:

- **Social Media Marketing:** Leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn can help you engage with your audience, build brand awareness, and drive traffic to your website.
- **Content Marketing:** Creating valuable, relevant content such as

blogs, videos, and infographics can attract and retain customers. Content marketing is an excellent way to showcase your expertise and provide value to your audience.


- **Email Marketing:** Maintaining regular communication with your customers through email campaigns can nurture relationships and drive sales. Personalized and targeted email marketing can yield high returns on investment.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Optimizing your website for search engines can increase organic traffic and improve your online visibility. SEO is a long-term strategy that can drive consistent, cost-effective traffic to your website.
- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising:** Running targeted PPC campaigns on platforms like Google Ads can deliver immediate results and drive qualified traffic to your website. With precise targeting and budget control, PPC advertising can be a cost-effective way to reach potential customers.
- **Geo-Fencing:** Geo-fencing is a location-based marketing strategy that allows you to target customers within a specific geographic area. By setting up virtual boundaries around a location, you can deliver targeted ads, promotions, and messages to potential customers when they enter or leave the designated area. This tactic is especially effective for local businesses looking to attract nearby customers and drive foot traffic.
- **Over-the-Top (OTT) Advertising:** Over-the-top (OTT) advertising refers to delivering video content directly to viewers over the internet, bypassing traditional cable and satellite television. Platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube are popular OTT channels. With OTT advertising, you

can reach a highly engaged audience with targeted, personalized ads based on viewers' interests, demographics, and viewing habits. This cost-effective approach allows you to connect with potential customers in a more meaningful way.

Co-op Funds

Most businesses have some type of co-op funds from their vendors. Co-op extends the amount of advertising dollars a dealer has to spend on promoting their brand, creating awareness for their products and services, and featuring specific vendor products for the growth of your mutual business. Co-op allows the dealer to reach your customers for a fraction of the budget you would need without those dollars. When I was on the other side of the desk, I was always amazed how many of our customers did not spend the money they earned each year.

In Conclusion

In the face of an economic downturn, it is natural to consider cost-cutting measures. Every business has budgets, and it is only prudent to be fiscally responsible and manage budgets to the circumstances. However, cutting marketing spending is a decision that can have far-reaching negative impacts on your business. By maintaining your marketing efforts and shifting toward digital tactics, you can capitalize on opportunities, build trust, drive innovation, and ultimately position your business for long-term success. Remember, visibility, growth, and adaptability are your allies in navigating challenging economic times. Fortune favors the bold.... Be Bold! 

Jack Leary of Impact 180 Consulting Group has 40+ years of industry experience in key leadership roles working in retail, manufacturing, and professional services. Jack can be reached at 216-408-9306 or leary.jack@impact180group.com.

Other Tariff Considerations:

ARE YOU COVERED AT TODAY'S ACTUAL VALUES?



By Stephen Hicks

Ask anyone in the lumber and building materials industry what's on their mind right now, and they'll almost certainly talk about near-term economic uncertainty. Yet while business owners are weighing the potential bottom-line impact of tariffs, they may be overlooking another critical question: Are their inventory, equipment, and property valuations accurate?

When building material costs rise—whether it's due to inflation, tariffs, supply chain disruptions, etc.—the cost of replacing damaged or stolen property rises, too. If your company's insurance coverage reflects outdated valuations, you could find yourself underinsured—sometimes woefully—following a major loss. And that's an outcome that does not benefit anyone.

Costly Assumptions

Unfortunately, it's not uncommon for some LBM business owners to underestimate their property and inventory values. Sometimes they are ill-advised, and values are deflated in an attempt to artificially impact insurance premiums. More frequently, we see property values become inadequate when folks only take time to consider their insurance program at renewal. While rates are subject to review and underwriting judgment, exposure should be non-negotiable. If your company isn't insured to value, it is likely that your policy may not fully cover the cost of rebuilding or restocking in the event of a claim.

Another misconception occurs when LBM dealers mistakenly believe they can rebuild at cost. This assumption fails to account for multiple other variables. For example, once you file a claim, you'll want to rebuild quickly to limit your business interruption. That compressed timeframe will escalate your building costs. Furthermore, if a weather event damaged multiple businesses in your region, intense competition for both materials and labor will drive costs up even further.

Sticker Shock

While these undervaluation examples may sound hypothetical, they play out in real life more often than you might think. Take the case of an LBM dealer that recently suffered the loss of a T-shed. The structure was insured for just over \$21,000. However, the actual rebuilding cost, influenced by many of the factors listed above, was a staggering \$320,000, creating hundreds of thousands of dollars in uncovered losses.

A similar situation can happen when thieves steal high-value inventory from a business. While bulk lumber or building materials may seem difficult

to swipe, criminals are becoming more creative amid challenging economic times. Recently, we saw an incident where thieves cut the power to a lumberyard and drove off with stock that was left out in the open.


Maximum Protection

By addressing property and inventory valuations proactively, LBM dealers can insure their businesses to their full value and reduce the risk of being dangerously underprotected. Here are some best practices to consider:

- **Review insurance values mid-term.** The days of only speaking with a carrier, agent, or broker at renewal time are long gone. Business owners should reach out to their insurer whenever a major change impacts their business. This can include everything from new equipment purchases to sizable inventory fluctuations and significant material price shifts due to tariffs or other market conditions.
- **Take stock of your stock.** Conduct monthly check-ins and provide insurers with updates on inventory levels. This step is especially beneficial for companies with inventory values that fluctuate by 10% or more from month to month. Carriers like Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM) offer a stock reporting option that allows businesses to adjust their premiums based on real-time inventory levels. This ensures companies pay only for the necessary coverage while protecting them against unforeseen losses.
- **Use the right tools.** Seek the highest level of accuracy possible for your valuations. Look for insurers that use online tools with real-time reporting options to develop estimated replacement costs based on current market conditions.

- **Prioritize safety.** Fires remain the leading cause of property and inventory damage for LBM dealers. Reduce your risk by installing fire mitigation systems and testing them regularly. Ban smoking in the lumberyard. Check for any faulty wiring. Clean and maintain your dust collection systems.
- **Deter criminals.** Install cameras and fences to protect your inventory from potential bad actors. Consider adding battery backup for alarm systems and cameras so they will continue working even if thieves cut the power supply. Further reduce your risk for substantial losses by storing high-value materials in several different places throughout the yard.
- **Partner with a specialty carrier.** An insurer that understands the unique risks of LBM companies will offer industry-specific tools and strategies. For example, a carrier specializing in covering building material dealers could recommend adding a limit on stock-in-the-open based on how they see inventory stored within your yard, giving your business an extra layer of protection.

Summing It Up

Tariffs and market volatility already cause enough disruption for LBM dealers. Don't let a set-it-and-forget-it attitude toward property and inventory valuations put your business in even greater peril. Ask your carrier to help you insure your business for its full value and avoid the pain of an uncovered or under-covered loss. 

Stephen Hicks is the vice president of underwriting at Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM). PLM is a nationally recognized property and casualty insurance carrier serving the lumber, woodworking, and building materials industries. Email Steve at shicks@plmins.com, or for more information on PLM, visit plmins.com.

LDAC Product Knowledge

The Lumber Dealers of Connecticut (LDAC) hosted a two-day Product Knowledge event on March 19-20 in Southington, Conn. Sponsors were invited to present to Connecticut dealers across the region. Retailers received training from 10 manufacturing companies. They learned about products, applications, installation, and best practices. Sponsors of the event included Boise Cascade, BROS-CO, Coastal, Culpeper, MDO, REEB, Rockwool, Westlake Royal Building Products, WOLF, and Woodgrain. The event was free to the retailers and included product demonstrations, samples, and materials.

LDAC wishes to thank its sponsors for their support and contributions. Please join us at our next event—a golf outing to be held on June 11 at the Golf Club at Oxford Greens. [LE](#)



Acadia	57
www.acadiainsurance.com	
BlueLinx	IBC
www.bluelinxco.com	
Boise Cascade	1
www.bc.com/distribution	
BROSCO	IFC
www.brosco.com	
Cleary Wholesale	3
www.clearywholesale.com	
CT Darnell - Sunbelt Rack	5
www.ct-darnell.com / sunbelt-rack.com	
Form Solutions	11
www.heat-sheet.com	
Holbrook Lumber	7
www.holbrooklumber.com	
IDEAS Show	51
www.ideasshow.net	
Krauter Auto-Stak	11
www.krauterautostak.com	
LBM Expo	51
www.lbmexpo.com	
NRLA: Payment Processing	63
www.nrla.org/member-benefits/business-services/payment-processing/	
NRLA: NRLA Connect	39
www.nrla.org/member-benefits/nrla-connect	
NRLA: Drug Testing Program	47
https://nrla.org/member-benefits/human-resources/drug-and-alcohol-testing/	
NRLA: Education and Training	17
www.nrla.org/go/education	
Paul Argoe Screens	55
www.pargoscreens@comporium.net	
www.doors@combinationdoor.com	
SoftPlan Systems	29
www.softplan.com	
US Lumber Group	OBC
www.uslumber.com	
Wolf Home Products	9
www.wolfhomeproducts.com	

STOP PAYING HIGH RATES!

**NRLA MEMBERS
SAVE
AN AVERAGE OF
\$5,140!**



NRLA CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? SEND US YOUR STATEMENT!

As your trusted agent we dictate the cost to provide our members with wholesale rates. Your statements will be easy to read, funds will be deposited next day, rates will be lowest possible (AND NEVER CHANGE), and you will have the full backing of the NRLA team overseeing the program.

"The transition went smoothly switching to Payment Processing Consultants. We had issues with our former company and representatives from PPC helped out to resolve—PPC is more efficient. The new machine seems to process faster as well."

—Tammy Hoehman, Mosher Lumber

Email your credit card statement to
memberprograms@nrla.org,
or call 800-292-6752 to receive a free quote.

NRLA
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association

800-292-6752
nrla.org



Austin Connelly

Location: Loudon, New Hampshire

Position: Market Development Manager • National Nail



HOW DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CAREER IN THE LBM INDUSTRY?

In 2021, I was approached about applying for my current position with National Nail. What I discovered was an employee-owned company whose mission and goals aligned with my own. The culture instilled in every employee-owner creates a sense of purpose and empowerment, allowing me to make a meaningful impact every day as I support my market.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR POSITION?

I am responsible for covering the New England market, representing and selling all three of our brands—Camo, Pro-Fit, and Stinger. My role involves managing and growing relationships with current customers as well as prospecting and identifying new business opportunities throughout the New England market.

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

Navigating generational differences within the LBM channel can be challenging at times, but my high energy and eagerness to learn have helped turn those moments into rewarding opportunities. It has been a chance to bridge perspectives, combining fresh ideas with decades of experience.


WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SINCE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY?

A lesson I have learned in this industry is the value of patience when building relationships. Even with a great product or service, trust must be earned over time, and that trust is the foundation of any successful partnership.

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

My advice to anyone new in this industry is to stay curious and maintain a positive mindset. Challenges and obstacles are inevitable, but they are also opportunities to grow. Build and lean on your connections—they can provide you with the guidance and support to navigate through them. Contractors and seasoned industry professionals are an incredible source of knowledge. Take the time to learn from their experience and insights.

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE?

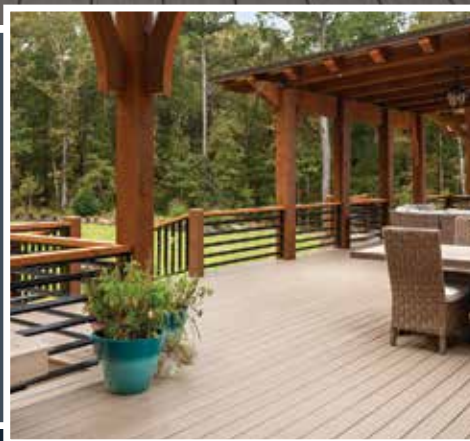
Outside of the office, I enjoy spending quality time with my fiancée and 1.5-year-old son. When I have free time, I like to go golfing and fishing as much as I can. 

Your Premier Destination for MoistureShield® Decking and Railing Solutions



Railing

- Solid Core™ Composite Railing
- Compass™ Aluminum Railing
- Lifetime Limited Warranty



Composite Decking

- No warping or rotting
- Virtually no moisture absorption
- Long lasting, low maintenance
- Available with CoolDeck® Technology

Available from



NUMBER ONE IN DECKING

Discover why Trex is #1 in Complete Decking Systems



Only Trex has a full suite of outdoor living products that gives builders and consumers everything they need to create low-maintenance, high-design spaces from top to bottom.



U.S. LUMBER
uslumber.com