

IBS Photos - Continued from page 12



Ray Sheepwash, Marwood Ltd., Montreal, Que.; and Blair MacLeod, Marwood Ltd., Halifax, N.S.



Lee Phillips, Milgard Windows & Doors, Chicago, Ill.; and George Guynes, Milgard Windows & Doors, Simi Valley, Calif.



(left) David Lewis, Norbord Industries Inc., Orlando, Fla.



Eddie Chavez, Overhead Door Corp., Lewisville, Texas



Stacy Einck, Andersen Windows Inc., Bayport, Minn.



Steve Voves, ProBuild, Anchorage, Alaska; and Cody Lee, Grayling Construction Corp., Anchorage, Alaska



Scott Aslinger, iLevel by Weyerhaeuser, Jacksonville, Fla.; and Kristen Bacorn, WSJ Enterprises, New York City, N.Y.



Pat Patranello and Marc Lishewski, Temple-Inland Forest Products, Diboll, Texas



(left) Tod Parmeter, Golden Eagle Log Homes Inc., Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.



Rich Castro, Vinotemp, Rancho Dominguez, Calif.



Pat Smith and Gary Moody, McCoy Sauna & Steam, Wixom, Mich.



Christy Lukemire, Wine Cellar Innovations, Cincinnati, Ohio



Chris Killwitz, Viance, Charlotte, N.C.; and Bob Edwards, Viance, Lancaster, N.Y.



Jim Krejci, 84 Lumber, Eighty Four, Pa.; and Steve Brooder, 84 Lumber, Ft. Myers, Fla.



Richard Lane, Viance, Charlotte, N.C.; Heather Skipper, Viance, Orlando, Fla.; and Don Danka, Viance, Santa Maria, Calif.



Craig Pariso, David Nicklaw and Wayne Cable, Harmony Timberworks, Boone, N.C.



Russell Richardson, Cathy Kaake and Richard Wallace, Southern Pine Council, Kenner, La.

RICHARDSON TIMBERS Provides Fresh Cut Appearance With Tru-Ruf

By Terry Miller



Richardson Timbers' General Manager Grant Vaughan.



Custom built Tru-Ruf equipment provides a fresh cut appearance to the timber once it is processed.



Mineral stains, banding marks and graying of timbers often come with the territory of carrying inventory. A timber is shown here before running through the Tru-Ruf machine.

Dallas, Texas—Mineral stains, banding marks and graying of timbers often come with the territory of carrying inventory. These common issues, due in part to natural elements are often unavoidable. Richardson Timbers has recently taken measures to defeat these concerns with the installation of the Tru-Ruf machine.

"With this machine we can run a timber through just one pass and it's a brand new, fresh timber," General Manager Grant Vaughan explained. "The Tru-Ruf brightens all four sides of the timber and the result is a completely different finish than the saw texture or the surfacing; it's more of a comb look."

Grant said the new machine has the ability to handle sizes from a 1x to a 12x20 "There are four chain saw blades that hit the timber all at once," he continued.

Originally intended for another operation, Grant said the machine is custom built. "Our mill manager Bruce Cole and I went to an auction in McMinnville, Oregon, and were lucky enough to purchase this machine." The finished product will be a custom item offered to our customers.

Richardson Timbers also offers custom patterns, rafter tails, trailer flooring, corbels, surfacing, resaw boards and dimension, rip board and dimension, most Southern Yellow Pine patterns, precision end trimming and saw texturing. Richardson stocks No. 1 and Better green Douglas Fir in sizes up to 20x20 and lengths up to 40-feet; No. 1 and Better Appearance Western Red Cedar in 16x16 and lengths up to 32- feet; No. 1 kiln-dried Fir in sizes up to 12x16 and lengths up to 24-feet (larger sizes available upon request); and D-Grade Fir in sizes 1x6 to 1x12 and 2x6 to 2x12 from 6 through 16-foot random length's only - board or pattern stock available; and mixed hardwood timbers up to 12x12 and in lengths up to 20 feet.

Grant explained that keeping inventory on the ground is important at Richardson Timbers so they are able to respond and expedite orders promptly. "We try very hard to keep our lead time to a minimum of two or three days," he said. "I don't believe in being over three days unless it's a custom order. All orders with Richardson Timbers ship complete."

Richardson Timbers has been serving the building industry for over 60 years, and is one of the leaders in custom millwork and manufacturing of customized timbers. "We're very unique and take pride in what we do," Grant said.



After the Tru-Ruf machine's four saw blades process the timber, the appearance is a fresh cut timber.



Brian Suggs is outside sales representative for Richardson Timbers' Austin and San Antonio, Texas markets.

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BAKER Introduces Notch Groovers



Banding Notch Groover



Baker's Banding Strap Machine

Ellington, Mo.—Baker Products, based here, recently announced the addition of the Baker Band Notch Groover I and II.

According to a company representative, Baker Banding Notch Groovers, also known as banding strap machines or military notch-

ers, create strips of wood with a groove notched out down the length of the strip for banding straps. These are used to protect

goods as well as the pallets on which they are packaged.

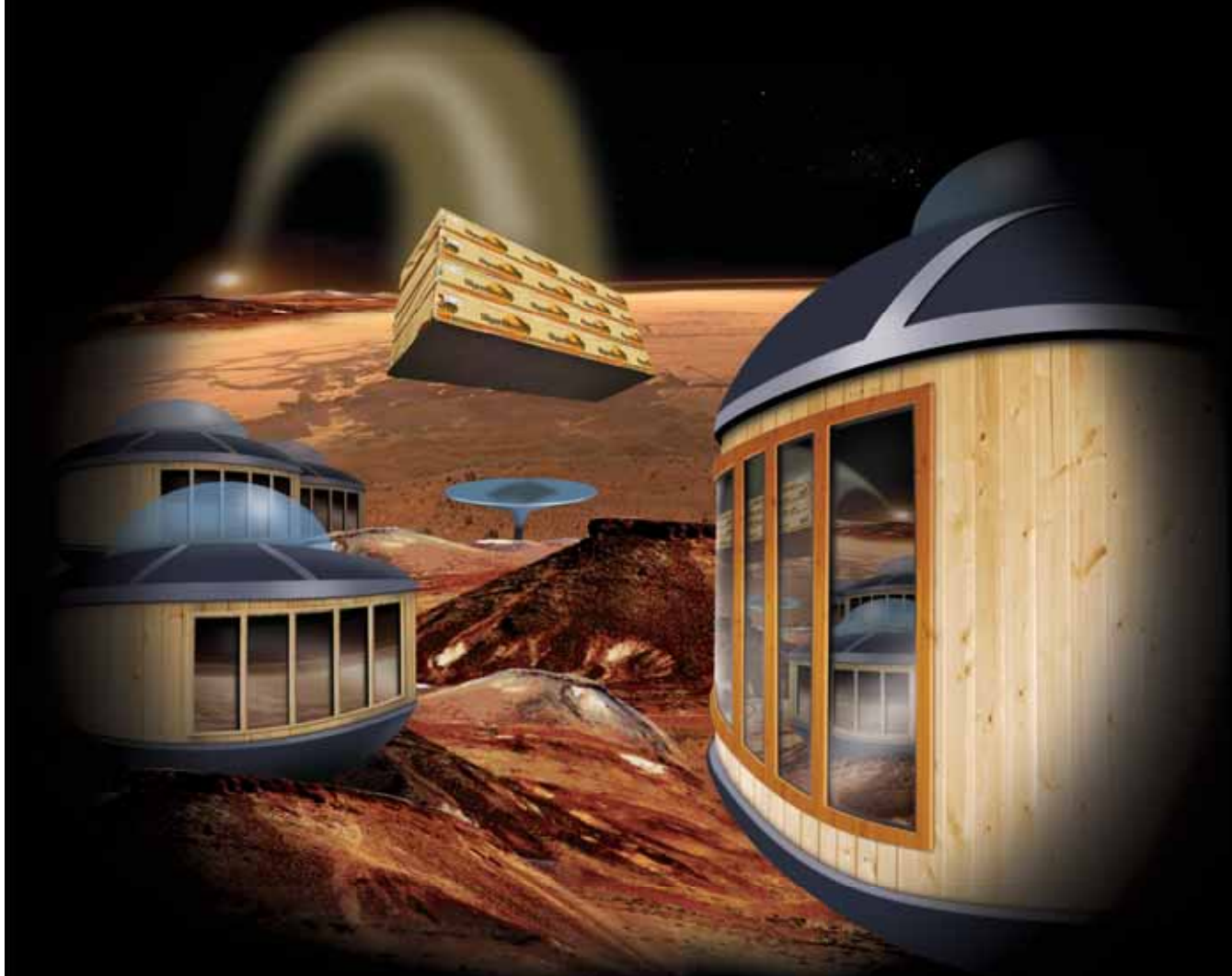
The Baker Band Notch Groover, Version I, will cut 2x6's (or up to 10"-wide material) into two 2"-wide banding strips with a 3/8"-deep groove down the middle of each.

The Banding Notch Groover I will cut the wood it receives into individual boards, the Baker Banding Notch Groover II will accept pre-cut boards up to 8 inches wide and notch a groove wherever necessary. The representative said the new Notch Groover I and II are fully adjustable to accommodate different board thicknesses and widths.

Baker Products manufactures a wide array of products including thin kerf band resaws, single and multi-head horizontal band resaws, portable and stationary band sawmills, single and double notchers, scragg mills, and portable and stationary edgers.

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WHO'S WHO - Dergousoff

Continued from page 2

est products company, producing approximately 600 million board feet annually of Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Sitka Spruce lumber.

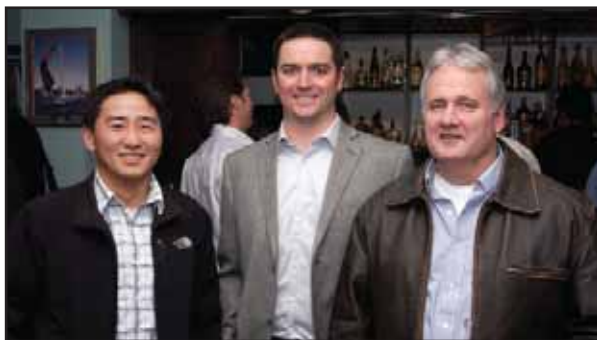
From eight sawmills and four remanufacturing plants, activities conducted at Western include timber-harvesting, reforestation, sawmilling logs into lumber and wood chips and value-added remanufacturing.

Dergousoff has 33 years experience in the forest products industry. He began his career on the green chain at Pope & Talbot, Grand Forks, B.C. and most recently was COO of Forest Grove Lumber Co., McMinnville, Ore.

He obtained a bachelor's degree

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BCWLA Welcomes Guests In Vancouver



Phil Hisieh, Westminster Industries, New Westminster, B.C.; Ken Beveridge, Skana Forest Products, Richmond, B.C.; and Mark Kenny, Double Tree Forest Products Ltd., Burnaby, B.C.



Jim Whiteside and Peter Barton, Marathon Forest Products Inc., North Vancouver, B.C.; Michael Rocksborough-Smith, Skana Forest Products Ltd., Richmond, B.C.



Chris Sainas, Dakeryn Industries Ltd., North Vancouver, B.C.; and Bill Barnett, Marathon Forest Products Inc., North Vancouver, B.C.



Will Trant and Jameson Craig, Skana Forest Products Ltd., Richmond, B.C.



Neil Billows, Millenium Lumber, Langley, B.C.; and Jeff Lalonde, Iron Mountain Trading Inc., Vernon, B.C.



Christine Harper and Jack Hetherington, Evergreen Empire Mills Inc., Burnaby, B.C.; and Dianne Hackman, Norman G. Jensen, Inc., Blaine, Wash.

Vancouver, B.C.—Members and guests of the British Columbia Wholesale Lumber Association (BCWLA) recently gathered at the Vancouver Rowing Club, located here, for its annual smoker.

Hank Ketcham, chairman, president and CEO of West Fraser Timber served as guest speaker for the event. With 25 years experience at the helm of one of the largest forest products companies

Continued on page 30



Graham Dalmore, Global Futures Corp., Vancouver, B.C.; and Vince Bulic, Yaletown Lumber, Vancouver, B.C.



Michael Rocksborough-Smith and Chris Beveridge, Skana Forest Products Ltd., Richmond, B.C.

Hank Ketcham Chairman, president and CEO of West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd., Quesnel, B.C.






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NRLA -
Continued from page 1

and building material dealers throughout the Northeastern United States. The NRLA is an industry leader in education, legislative and regulatory reform, and member programs and services. It also produces the industry's largest regional trade show, Lumber and Building Material Expo (www.lbmexpo.com)

While the world has changed dramatically since 1894, the mission of the NRLA has remained constant: "To unite, lead, represent, train, and provide a forum for the successful evolution of the independent lumber and building material dealers in the Northeast." For more information, go online to www.nrla.org.

IBS -
Continued from page 1

option of attending 190 educational sessions and dozens of pre-show education courses. Additionally, many social events were scheduled in conjunction with IBS, including the 2011 Spike Party & Director's Reception.

Topics covered in the educational sessions included green building, sustainability, sales, marketing, architectural design, community planning, business management and technology. Approximately 20,000 attendees took advantage of these informative sessions.

For more information about IBS, go online to www.builder-show.com.

WASHINGTON SCENE -
Continued from page 2

Ontario announced and implemented plans to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in grants, subsidized loans, and subsidized loan guarantees to lumber producers. The U.S. initiated dispute settlement proceedings under the SLA in 2008 with respect to the new subsidies.

"By providing new subsidies, Canada knowingly violated the terms of the lumber trade agreement to provide an unfair advantage to Canadian producers in this very challenging market," said Steve Swanson, chairman of the coalition and president of the family-operated Swanson Group in Oregon. "The remedy prescribed by the LCIA will help bring about a more level playing field for U.S. manufacturers, mill workers, and private forest landowners," he added.

The Softwood Forest Products Buyer

This decision is the second consecutive ruling by an LCIA Tribunal that Canada has violated the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement. In 2009, another LCIA Tribunal agreed with the U.S. that Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan had exceeded quota requirements and ordered a 10 percent penalty export tax on lumber shipments from those provinces until C\$68.26 million is collected. LCIA Tribunals are comprised of experienced international commercial arbitrators who may not be citizens or residents of the U.S. or Canada.

"The Coalition commends the U.S. Government team whose hard work made this successful outcome possible," Swanson concluded.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Implements New Regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is in the process of implementing its Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program. This program will affect trucking companies all over the country, both large and small, corporate carriers and business divisions. According to sources, lumber wholesale companies with trucking capacity may want to pay special attention.

CSA scores will be available soon and every company is encouraged to visit the FMCSA website to access the scores. The program and scores will likely influence the ability to get business and move freight in the upcoming years as it replaces the SafeStat system. Federal courts were asked by the National Association of Small Trucking Companies to stop CSA implementation.

For more information visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov.

WHO'S WHO - Dergousoff
Continued from page 16

of accounting at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Dergousoff and his wife of 29 years, Theresa, have one son and one daughter. In his spare time he enjoys skiing, golfing and is a student pilot.

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WHO'S WHO - Dunse

Continued from page 2

5/4x5, 5/4x6 S4S, 4x4, 4x6, 6x6 S4S, 2x4-2x12 rough, 4x4-4x12 rough, 6x6-6x12 rough, 8x8-8x12 rough, 10x10, 12x12 rough, 5/4x-5/4x12 SIS 2e, 2x4-2x12 SIS 2e, 1x6 kiln dried v-joint, 1x8 channel and 1x10 channel.

Mill & Timber Products is a member of the North American Wholesale Lumber Association (NAWLA).

It is adjusting to the economy by getting closer to its "program" customers to better facilitate their needs. This helps the company keep better controls on its inventory.

Dunse has held his present position 16 years, the entire time he has worked for Mill & Timber Products. He has worked in the industry for 33 years. His first job was doing cleanup at M.B. King in North Vancouver, B.C. Before taking on his current job, he also worked on production lines and green chain, he wholesaled lumber for several companies and sold for a remanufacturing company.

A graduate of Carson Graham High School, he went on to earn a Diploma of Technology in Business Administration from British Columbia Institute of Technology.

He and his wife of 33 years, Janice, have three sons.

In his free time, Dunse enjoys motorcycle riding.

WHO'S WHO - Wood

Continued from page 2

OSB and Cut Parts.

Wood has worked in sales for Mars Hill for 10 years, the entire time he has been with the company. Previously, he was a certified public accountant. He has served as mayor and alderman for the City of Waynesboro.

Wood has been president of the Mississippi Brahman Association, on the board of the Southeastern Brahman Breeders Association, on the board of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce and president and director of the

Waynesboro Rotary Club (where he is a Paul Harris Fellow).

He graduated from Baylor High School in Chattanooga, Tenn., and from the University of Southern Mississippi with both a bachelor's of science in business administration and a master's of professional accountancy.

He and his wife, Jeanne, have a son, Marshall Wood II, 22.

In his free time, he enjoys golf, fishing and hunting. He also is the play-by-play announcer for television rebroadcasts of Wayne County (Miss.) High School football games.

WHO'S WHO - Parmenter

Continued from page 2

markets Certi-Label Western Red Cedar shakes and shingles. The CSSB is the recognized authority

on Western Red Cedar shakes and shingles. It sets the grade. Its manuals are code and it enforces the code. The organization conducts two educational seminars for architects belonging to the American Institute of Architects that are worth two learning credits each.

The CSSB, headquartered in Mission, B.C., has adjusted to the economy by streamlining every aspect of the organization.

The CSSB is a member of the Roofing Industry Committee on Weather Issues.

Parmenter has worked for the CSSB for 10 years in his present position. He has worked in the forest products industry for 45 years. His first job in the industry was as a yard man for Geo. McQuesten Co. in 1965. He also has worked as fork truck operator, mill man, freight car unloader, telephone sales, road sales and buyer.

A graduate of Chelmsford (Mass.) High School, Parmenter went on

to attend Tufts University, class of 1969.

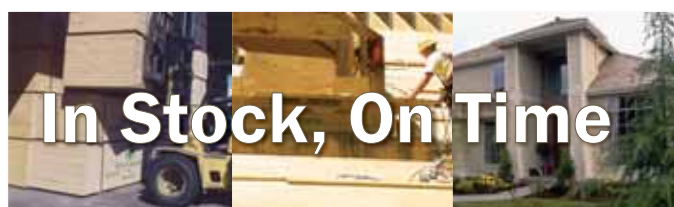
In his free time, Parmenter enjoys sports, music and gardening.

WHO'S WHO - Suggs

Continued from page 2

cutting and milling of wood timbers and the production of custom millwork products. The firm stocks and mills No. 1 & Btr. Green Doug-Fir timbers, 4x12 to 20x20, up to 40' in length, in KD Fir timbers 4x6 to 12x16 in 12, 16, 20 & 24 foot lengths. In Western Red Cedar sizes are available from 4x6 to 16x16 up to 32 feet. Now stocking D grade Douglas Fir in 1x6, 1x8, 2x6, and 2x8 in random lengths only. Richardson also supplies mixed hardwoods 8x8 and 12x12 in 12, 16 & 20 foot lengths. Larger

Continued on page 20



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WHO'S WHO - Suggs

Continued from page 19

size timbers in Fir and Western Red Cedar are available for special ordering.

Value-added products include finished timbers to particular order specifications and requirements. Custom millwork capabilities include the manufacturing of decorative brackets, corbels, and rafter tails. Richardson has the capability to produce standard and custom siding patterns, as well as provide rip, re-saw, and precision end trim services.

Suggs has approximately 10 years experience in the lumber industry. He began his career working for a Cedar company trading Spruce and Cedar and later went to work for two other forest products companies before he came to Richardson where he will cover the San Antonio and Austin, Texas region.

In his spare time he enjoys fish-

ing, basketball and baseball and spending time with his family.

Richardson Timbers operates an office as well as a full sawmill facility located in Dallas, Texas. For more information visit their website at www.richardsontimbers.com or email Suggs at bsuggs@richardsontimbers.com or phone 210-355-4212.

WHO'S WHO - Walley

Continued from page 2

and hardwood lumber and frame stock. The company offers its goods nationally and internationally with a niche in liquidations and closeouts. The firm's GCS sales are currently in excess of \$ 30 million annually.

Walley graduated from Wayne County High School in Waynesboro, Miss., and obtained an associate's degree in science and forestry from Jones County

Junior College.

His prior experience includes five years as a lumber trader for North Pacific Group. Walley will be responsible for buying and selling Southern Yellow Pine and all other related building material products. He and his wife Kerry have one child.

Gulf Coast Shelter is a member of the North American Wholesale Lumber Association. For more information visit www.gulfcoastshelter.com.

LMS -

Continued from page 4

inventories against customer needs, and it isn't always easy," explained Emmer. "The time lines are shorter, and the inventory is smaller." That's where Lumber Marketing Services' size comes in particularly valuable. "When you're small, you can adapt more readily," he said, comparing his compa-

The Softwood Forest Products Buyer ny to a speedboat circling quickly around barges in a harbor. "By the time larger companies can actually make a decision, it's often too late."

With an office location and a 4-acre yard/warehouse in Hope, Lumber Marketing Services was founded in 1990 by Emmer. His foray into the lumber industry took place in 1972 in Minneapolis, where Emmer worked for a wholesale distribution company. Upon graduating from college in 1977 he was promoted to assistant warehouse manager in a new Montana facility. Emmer ran a retail lumberyard in Montana in the early 1980s, and then worked as a mill sales manager for a mill in Newport, Wash., and a Cedar remanufacturer in Spokane, Wash., until 1990.

Then the entrepreneurial bug bit Emmer, who – armed with wholesale, retail, mill and remanufacturing experience – felt that he was well prepared to go into business for himself. "Having been deeply involved with all of those different aspects of the industry," he explained, "I was able to create a niche for myself based on everything I liked about those four types of distribution."

As an environmental physics major in college, Emmer developed a passion for green and recovery type products, two decades before it became popular. He also developed recovery programs for mills, and created a network of distribution that is sensitive to truly sustainable forestry, not just the rubber stamp agency status quo.

Like many startups, Lumber Marketing Services began in its founder's home, with Emmer serving as an independent sales representative for various small sawmills in the area. "These were mills that I was buying from when I was in the remanufacturing business," recalled Emmer. "I had developed a trust with them, and had been buying their products for so long that they came to me to sell their goods on the open market. The transition was pretty smooth."

From the hayloft of his barn, and with \$200 in startup funds, Emmer took small positions in low-grade items with extended terms. Low-grade Cedar was the first "big mover," he said, and was sold through the networks of distribution yards, friends, relatives and acquaintances that Emmer had formed during his years in the community. Later, he would add high-grade products to Lumber Marketing Services' lineup. "We've stuck with either the very high end or low end of the market," said Emmer, "all the while staying out of the crowded big box/lumberyard arena."

A master-level ski racer and a

Continued on page 21

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Our Specialty is the Specialties!

LMS -
Continued from page 20

dedicated triathlete who has been swimming, biking and running his way to success in the sport for several years, Emmer said his "hands on" approach has proven invaluable over the last 20 years, and particularly in today's tough economy. "People know that they can call and talk to me, and not an operator, a machine or an assistant," said Emmer. "They appreciate the low overhead aspect of my business, and they're buying from the same guy who sources the product and loads it on their trucks."

"My level of involvement gives a whole new definition to the term 'hands on'", said Emmer, who handles all of the payables, receivables, buying and selling, unloading and re-loading. Unlike those before him, this third generation lumberman's office is in a remote



LMS purchases Western Red Cedar, Port Orford Cedar, Douglas Fir, Englemann Spruce, Lodgepole and Idaho White Pine.

area of northern Idaho. "I sit about 100 yards from a grizzly recovery habitat overlooking 1,200-foot-deep Lake Pend Oreille," said Emmer, who isn't yet sure if a fourth generation will follow in his footsteps (he has four daughters, none of whom have shown an interest in the business yet), is looking forward to the economic recovery and the rewards that it will bring for those firms that weather the storm.

"When the years were good, I was basically just an order taker," he said. "Like most other people in the industry, I've had to get back into the trenches and it's paying great dividends that I'm sure will increase as the economy comes around."

Emmer also serves as an elder in a growing church in Sandpoint, Idaho, and has been teaching bible study classes at a Montana school for at risk teenage girls for several years. Emmer added, "I believe that

when it is all said and done, the most lasting legacy and satisfaction we will achieve, is the gift of serving others."

WESTON -
Continued from page 6

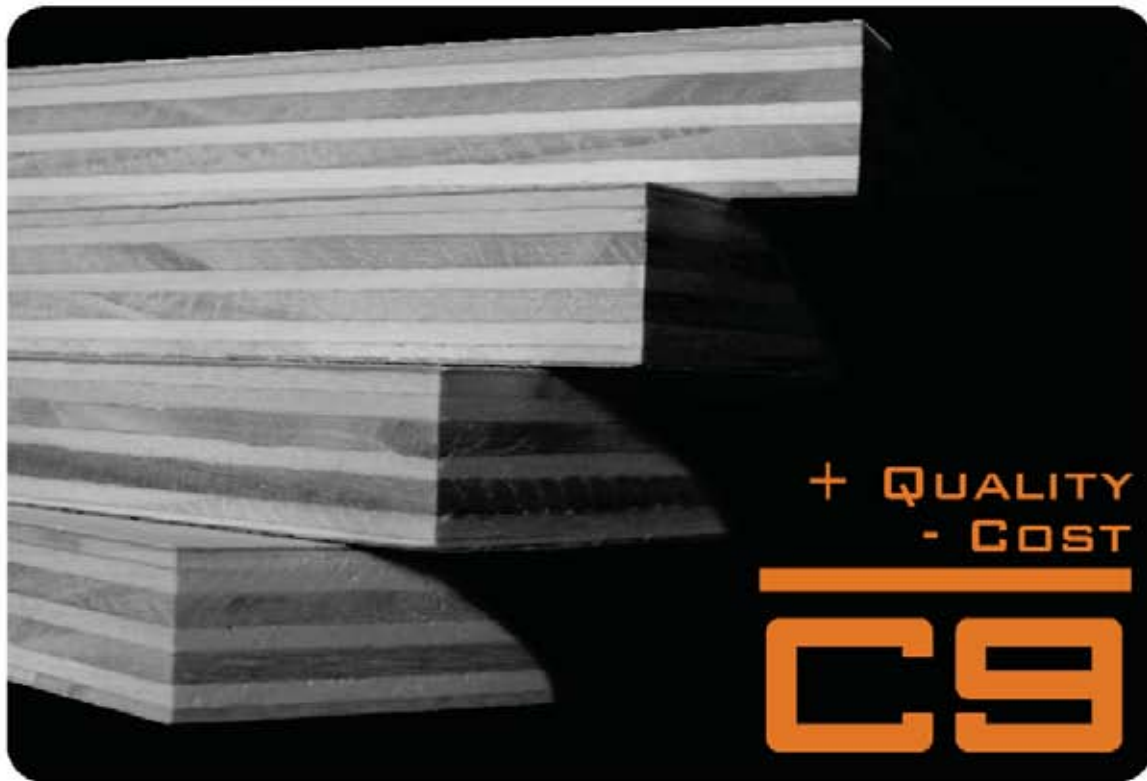
arrangements from ports less affected by the earthquake, Weston was able to resume shipments from Chile faster than many others.

Products from Chile include Radiata trim boards, mouldings and finger joint blanks. Weston inventories a large volume of these blanks domestically, which are milled to profile in Toronto. This enables Weston to fill orders with a very short lead-time, and to fulfil special requests such as custom mouldings and small order runs.

Weston also maintains strong ties with key Eastern White Pine producers. "White Pine is not always the cheapest fingerjoint on the market, but it is a superb specie and the quality of our products is outstanding. Having a three to four week lead time is great in normal

conditions, but when the earthquake hit Chile, it was a real diamond in the rough," says Lechem. "Many of our customers rely solely upon Weston to keep their operations running, and by cranking up our White Pine production we were able to switch the source from halfway around the globe, and not miss a beat."

The Weston team is rounded off by Howard Kumer and Dave Gambell, who along with Alan Lechem have a combined 60 years' experience in the industry. All senior staff travels regularly to meet with customers and suppliers, to ensure that not only best products but also best practices and new opportunities are identified. Head office is located in Mississauga, near Toronto, Ontario where a professional administrative and operations staff is dedicated to meeting customers' logistics and business needs. Inventory is kept both in Mississauga and at other strategic locations close to key customers and markets throughout North America.



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RE: CARB -California Air Resources Board

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Western Business Trends



By Terry Miller
Associate Editor

Softwood suppliers in the Western region report slow movement in the market. In Colorado a contact said, "I'm not sure that anybody is buying and that there is an actual recovery going on. A lot of people are still having difficulty finding jobs and those that do have jobs, are making less money than they are used to."

Handling Western Red Cedar and Douglas Fir, the source said supply issues have been weather-related and not economy related. "From six months ago our prices are at a push. I do not anticipate any changes in the next few months. Logistics and timing has sometimes given us an upper hand and we've made some good deals."

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified supplier said while FSC products are an issue for larger scale government projects, especially in the Western region, he doesn't look for it to be a long-term issue. "Personally if and when the economy does recover, I think it will be less and less of an issue," he commented.

Marketing to window and door and furniture manufacturers the source

said his export markets appear to be improving. "Our Asian market seems to be improving. Everywhere else, the year seems to be in the tank so far."

In Montana, a lumber supplier said he has not been experiencing improved business activity but certainly, things have gotten no worse. "I think it's going to take years for all the foreclosures to work through the system. Personally I anticipate that we'll be at this level for a while."

Manufacturing Ponderosa Pine boards, the contact said his prices are trending up and he doesn't expect changes anytime soon. "Our inventory levels are at about half of normal levels. We just aren't going to take any risks investing in large inventories right now."

He said while locating contract trucks has been difficult, rail transport has not been problematic. "Our trucking availability has been off since 2009. There are so many truckers that just fell off the map, it's hard to get good rates," he explained.

For the remainder of 2011, the contact does not expect much improvement. However, he doesn't expect activity to go below current levels either.

A source in Idaho said recent improvements to his operation's activity are directly related to local weather problems. "We had some really bad storms come through that did some major damage to commercial and residential properties. So the increase that we've seen in business is a direct result of that damage and not an improvement in gen-

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Northeast Business Trends



By Sue Putnam
Editorial Director

Softwood suppliers in the Northeast report weather impacted market conditions. However many are optimistic for a pick up with spring's warmer temperatures approaching.

A Softwood producer in Maine said, "In the New England area business has been sluggish due to weather conditions. Activity is not strong right now but we have reason to feel that there will be more activity during springtime."

Overall he said the attitude is better than last year. "For us on the mill side, we're seeing a little more activity. I know that our inventories are lower right now than they were a year ago as far as dressed and rough inventory in the yard. I spoke with a few other mills and it seems to be the same situation. So there may be a little less pie finished rough and in the pipeline than maybe there was last year at this time," he explained.

Handling Eastern White Pine he said, "Standard grades are strong, Premium grades are weak, and Industrial grades are moving only because of the export offshore business that has maintained a very

steady industrial business for us through the winter months, which is different from previous years."

Regarding transportation costs, the source said, "At this point we're just beginning to see the fuel cost start to have an impact. I've had a couple of brokers tell me it's been a little more difficult to get trucks up here because of the fuel rates right now."

Marketing domestically to stocking wholesalers throughout North America he said, "Everybody is feeling it in New England right now. The South is still down. I think we are starting to see more activity on the industrial side and also on the export side."

For the coming months the supplier looks for an improvement with winter coming to a close. "I think when the weather improves we'll get that 'pop' like we did last year."

In Massachusetts, a Softwood lumber supplier said business had improved during the fall, and his area also received a hard winter. "We had a horrific winter. We got snow early and midweek storms during the day, the worst of the worst in terms of timing."

"It's not fair to be judgmental on this area during the winter months," he continued. "I would say I'm cautiously optimistic for the spring. People indicate that there is a decent amount of work available, we just have to wait the weather out."

Producing Eastern White Pine and Spruce products, he said finger joint primed Pine is doing well currently. "Most of the work that's being done right now is limited to interior and the people who are doing rehab

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Ontario/Quebec Business Trends



By Michelle Keller
Associate Editor

Despite unsettled winter weather, many in the Softwood lumber market are feeling sunny about the prospects of a stable, if not brighter, future. Buyers and managers say that the market seems to be finding a bit of stability and, in some cases, improvement, after a tumultuous decade.

The sales manager at one Ontario mill said he feels that the past year has been one of minimal but steady growth, and that after the past few years, any growth sounds good.

"Six months ago, it was pretty quiet," he said. "A year ago was similar to now; slow but sure."

January and February have not been particularly auspicious, he noted, with storms recurring on a seemingly weekly basis. He said the weather has played a big role in keeping customers at home.

"This week, we've seen real tough weather," he said, adding that the storms have led to reduced enthusiasm for outdoor products. "We've seen decreased demand this week, last week, and probably into next week. We would have been a little busier."

In addition to the slow markets, he said he and other mill operators have felt consistent pressure to keep prices down. He added that the additional 10 percent tax on those selling into the United States, which has been in place for a year now, has not helped boost optimism or sales. As a result, he said, his company has focused primarily on selling to the southern Ontario market.

"The tax situation has made it uncompetitive to sell into the U.S.," he said. "Our U.S. sales have shrunk to almost zero. The extra 10 percent that was added a year or so ago brought the total to 15 percent, so the best net return is still on the Canadian side."

Despite the weather and taxes, this manager remains hopeful that the market will gradually turn around. He said he and others on the mill side of the business have been looking toward international sales.

"I think prices will improve and demand will slowly improve," he said. "There are unknowns, like those inscrutable Chinese. If only they could buy more from the North American market, or India. That's an unknown, but the trend has been increased buying from the Asian countries."

Not everyone, however, is turning to exports to keep afloat. In fact, some see additional challenges from abroad. A sales representative at one Quebec mill said her company has diversified its product offerings to help keep everyone working and to help contend with wood

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South/Southeast Business Trends



By Gary Miller
Managing Editor

Softwood lumber suppliers in the Southeast report somewhat mixed market conditions, but overall their attitudes have improved. Some are experiencing lingering effects from weather conditions and others report increased inquiries with moderate gains in sales activity.

In Mississippi, a Softwood lumber supplier said, "2011 started off 'on a good foot.' But it's really still too early in the year to tell if that's going to be a trend. January and February were really good months, so I'm really encouraged that maybe we've turned the tide in this market and are headed for better things this year."

As for the factors involved in his improved business conditions the source commented, "The general economy is showing signs of improvement. We've seen some growth in the last few quarters, so I think we'll begin to see business pick up for all of us as the general economy improves in this country."

For the lumber industry in particular along with the general economy as a whole, he said housing starts are

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his largest concern. "There is a lot of speculation about how many more foreclosures will take place and how we may possibly see a little more inflation and interest rates increasing. There is still some uncertainty out there but I think there is much less of it than before. I think that people are beginning to plan with more assurance than they were six months earlier."

In Arkansas a Southern Yellow Pine producer also said the general attitude and forecast for business is improving. "I remember at the end of 2009, every vendor, customer and contact that I talked with was expecting 2010 to be a bad year. The forecast was literally no expectation for a good year in 2010. Some of those same people that I've talked to in the last two quarters of 2010 and recently, such as customers and the mills I buy from, believe that 2011 is going to be a better year than 2010. I think the optimism going into 2011 is based on things that people are seeing in their businesses. How much better this year will be boils down to how hard we work. If you get out there and work hard to maintain relationships with your customers and vendors you can hold on to your business even when the market is shrinking. And certainly when the market begins to expand, those efforts will really begin to pay off."

"The reality of market conditions is that there are a lot less competitors in the pool than there were three to four years ago," he continued. "For the people who are surviving this economy, I think they're going to see

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