



Timber Talks

A Newsletter for WRLA Members & Colleagues

**OCTOBER
2009**

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From the desk of WRLA President *William A. Wood...*

Over the weekend of September 18th to 20th, we were invited to the Northwest Lumber Association annual fall board meeting. David and Sue Rosenmier, myself and my wife Brenda, headed across the state of Iowa, (and Wisconsin for Dave and Sue), to the Lake Okiboji area. We were met there with a warm and welcoming bunch of lumber dealers and associates from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. We attended the functions and sat in on their board meeting. The merger team was there and helped us acquaint with the people we haven't met yet. It appeared that all there were excited about our merger and looking forward to the larger, stronger organization.

It was encouraging to me to know that we are doing similar and good things here in Wisconsin regarding the association and our members. It is also encouraging that there are differences. These differences are a positive part of the benefits of the merge. We can look at these differences and make improvements in both organizations, as we move toward becoming one, powerful, association. The mood was upbeat and positive despite the economic conditions which are the same in those locations as here. The NLA itself has had better times as well. But they are working on many things, some cost saving, but mostly in programs and improvements for the benefit of the membership.

I believe I could sense a little envy from some of the NLA members when we discussed the exciting education foundation we are setting up. The foundation is going to be so much fun and productive, and they could relate but not participate. We are very fortunate that our association and members have put us in a position to accomplish this and more in the future.

If there are any questions or comments regarding this meeting, or any thing else for that matter, please feel free to contact us. See next months issue of Timber Talks for more information on the new Education Foundation.

Thank you for you're time and support.

Sincerely, Bill Wood
Current president, WRLA ✍

Estimating Camp—November 16th—18th

The 2009 Estimating Camp will be November 16-18, in Madison, Wisconsin. Basic estimating will be November 16-17; advance estimating on November 18.

Since great estimating skills are vital to our members businesses, we offer Estimating Camp each November. Now is the time to learn, re-learn, or refine your employees skills. A discount is offered when taking both courses taught by Keith Kluis.

Have your staff ready for construction season. A registration form is included with this newsletter. If you have any questions, feel free to call the WRLA office at (800) 236-3534. **Registration Deadline—October 31st.** ✍

Coming Events

Call the WRLA office for details on coming events

October 7-9, 2009

NLBMDA/HCN ProDealer Industry Summit
Phoenix, AZ

November 16-18, 2009


Estimating Camp
Madison, WI

November 18, 2009

Seminar- Construction Lien & Bond Claims: Make Them Pay!
Madison, WI

February 10-11, 2010

WRLA 120th Annual Convention
Kalahari Resort
Wisconsin Dells, WI



The high cost of insurance got you down?

Let the WRLA quote your insurance needs

Insurance Programs Available through WRLA

- ✓Health
- ✓Dental
- ✓Auto
- ✓Life
- ✓Property
- ✓Disability
- ✓Umbrella
- ✓Workers Compensation

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The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to be, nor does it constitute, legal advice. Don't apply or interpret the law without the aid of a trained expert who knows the facts. Your particular situation may change the application of the law.

WRLA Dues Renewal for 2010

Thank you to all of the loyal retail and associate members that are renewing their investment in the WRLA.

Your investment provides legislative representation, industry related informational updates, educational opportunities, networking events, and many other money and time saving programs and services.

WRLA is your association and needs everyone's support to continued working on behalf of its members.

All members should have also received an FCC form regarding faxing and e-mailing. Please fax the completed forms to the WRLA office at (262) 250-1842. These forms are necessary to ensure we are communicating with you in the manner you prefer.✍

Lots of Encouraging Housing News, But...

Source: NAHB's Eye on the Economy, September 2, 2009

The news surrounding the housing market of late has been undeniably encouraging. Both new and existing single-family home sales saw their fourth consecutive monthly increases in July, rising 9.6% and 7.2%, respectively.

In an even more upbeat sign of a budding recovery, the inventory of new single-family homes for sale has fallen to 271,000, its lowest level since March 1993. Inventories

have been falling for 27 months from a peak of 572,000 homes for sale in July 2006.

A higher sales rate and lower inventory reduced July's supply of housing to 7.5 months, down from 8.5 months in June. The months' supply measures how long it would take to sell the current inventory of homes based on the month's sales rate. As recently as January, this measure stood at an all-time high of 12.4 months.✍

Form I-9 Expiration Date Extended

Source: JJ Keller

All U.S. employers are responsible for verifying the employment eligibility and identity of all employees hired after November 6, 1986 to work in the United States, according to the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

Employers are required to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) for all employees, including U.S. citizens, in order to comply with the law.

Most recently, the version of the form bearing a revised date of 02/02/09 became expired on 06/30/09, but the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requested

that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approve the extension of the expiration date of this form. The USCIS announced on 8/27/09 that the OMB has extended its approval of the Form I-9 to August 31, 2012, which is the new expiration date for the form.

The newest version of the Form I-9 now bears a revised date of 08/07/09, and an expiration date of 08/31/12. Employers may begin using this form immediately, but may also use the previous version of the Form I-9 (which bears a revised date of 02/02/09 and an expiration date of 06/30/09), since no material changes were made to the form.✍

2010 WRLA Dealer Reference Manual.

Forms have been e-mailed/ faxed or mailed to all members and non-member retail dealers asking them to verify the information in the WRLA database for their company. If you have not return this form to the WRLA office, please do so as soon as possible. This is important to create the most accurate reference manual we can. Associate Members, please contact the WRLA office if you would like more information on advertising opportunities.✍

WRLA Member Service Collections & Credit Reports

As a member of the Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association you have available to you a professional commercial recovery service with the Wisconsin Credit Association (WCA).

You Deserve to Get Paid! - WCA collection clients receive:

- Commercial Credit Reporting Capabilities
- Collection Reminders Stickers
- Free Demand Service
- Automatic or Immediate Engagement
- Contingent or Hourly Engagement
- Forwarding Service
- Contingent Rate Guarantees

The Wisconsin Credit Association offers effective results oriented recovering services. WCA purpose is to provide members with a quality, professional and efficient recovery service to assist companies of all sizes. Their expertise, state-of-the-art systems and skip tracing capability extend their services and effectiveness nationwide.

The WCA can also save you money on credit reports. To provide maximum value to credit managers, WCA provides you access to many databases under one single, simple, low cost, generic report subscription. Credit managers do not need to subscribe individually to every single database or information provider in order to receive the best outside credit reporting information available. WCA offers it all, from Consumer Reports to Reports on International Customers and everything in between.

Current subscribers already enjoy the flexibility described and rely on WCA for data that assists them in the credit worthiness decision.

Other features include NO annual fees, NO contracts to sign, NO subscription expiration dates, and NO "use-em" or "lose-em" conditions!

To learn more about the WCA services, contact the WRLA office or visit WCA website at www.wcacredit.org.


Attitude

From: Associate Director, Ken Hager, Amerhart

Ok, so we're experiencing tough times, let's face it – the economy sucks. Depending on whom you listen to or what you read there seems to be plenty of advice in working through this economy. To be honest we don't need to read the studies of Harvard University on the state of the housing market to know that we are in a recession. I have been trying to keep away from the word recession however the media seems to want to make sure we understand that we are in an economic climate that makes the 80s look like a walk in the park. I recently read an article that said, "Managing your company in troubled times: four keys to success during the recession." If it was only that easy.

There is only one thing we can be sure of and that is our attitude. Charles Swindoll has one of the best reflections on attitude; I have kept his article handy and try to read it often. We all experience attitudes, what we do with them are important.

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill it will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitudes."

So there you have it, ATTITUDE, what will yours be? 


Web-Based Employee Training Available

Webinars

Webinars are an inexpensive way to get your people trained –no travel, no hotel cost! Just gather around your office computer.

Information on upcoming Webinars are posted in Timber Talks; on our website www.wrlamsi.com and will be emailed to everyone on our education email list. If you would like to be added to the webinar email list email us at wrla@wrlamsi.com or to be notified via fax, call the WRLA office at (800) 236-3534.

Green Building Training

It is important for industry sales people to be prepared to answer questions regarding green building and energy efficiency. The Certified Green Dealer Program™ offers an affordable and easy way to train your entire staff on green building science. Plus, the innovated, easy-to-use web-based program means there is no travel for the training. The training is specifically designed for lumberyards and building material dealers. Call (877) LBM-GREEN for more information or visit www.certifiedgreendealer.com 

The Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association Inc. has been bringing suppliers & retail dealers together for 120 years to network, and share the latest information on products for the building material industry.

Grow Your Business
at the
120th Annual WRLA Convention
Kalahari Resort & Convention Center
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

- Educational Sessions
- Networking
- Tabletop Showcase
- Receptions
- Membership Meeting
- Awards & Prize Giveaways

Save the Date—February 10th & 11th, 2010

For more information call 800-236-3534.



Tabletops for the 2010 Showcase

Associates, you can still reserve a tabletop at the 2010 Tabletop Showcase on February 11th at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

Make new partnerships and improve existing ones at the 120th Annual WRLA Convention.

To reserve a tabletop or for more information call 800-236-3534.

Names in the News

Congratulations **Miranda Bush**, daughter of **WRLA President Bill Wood & Brenda Wood**, who successfully completed the Madison Ironman triathlon in September.

In June, **Whirlwind Building Components** has been selected for the **2009 Best of Freeport Award in the Building Materials** category by the U.S. Commerce Association (USCA). The USCA "Best of Local Business" Award program recognizes outstanding local businesses throughout the country.

The National Association of Home Builders Research Center has given **Green Approved Status** to more than 20 **CertainTeed Corp.** products.

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SERVING THE RETAIL LUMBER INDUSTRY IN
WISCONSIN & UPPER MICHIGAN

Fraud Schemes Rampant Across the U.S.

Source: MEDA August, 2009

The National Consumers League (NCL) is warning that recession-related scams continue to flourish as desperate consumers look for ways to make a buck. **Here are the NCL's Top 10 Frauds:**

1. Fake Check Scams
2. Internet: General Merchandise
3. Prizes/Sweepstakes/ Free gifts
4. Phishing / Spoofing
5. Nigerian Money Offers
6. Business Opportunities: including Franchise and /or Distribution
7. Advance Fee Loans, Credit Arrangers
8. Friendship & Sweetheart Swindles
9. Internet Actions
10. Lottery/Ticket Buying Clubs.



NLBMDA Calls for Extension and Expansion of Homebuyer Tax Credit

Association Urges Lawmakers to Act Swiftly before Current Tax Expires

Source: NLBMDA, September 10, 2009

The National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) called on Congress to expand and extend the homebuyer tax credit before it expires on December 1, 2009. NLBMDA's 6,000 member companies employ more than 400,000 American workers, but have faced significant challenges in light of the housing and economic crisis. The \$8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit passed as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) earlier this year has provided a powerful incentive to spur home purchases, resulting in some positive signs of recovery this summer. Now that Congress has returned from its summer recess, NLBMDA is urging legislators to make housing a priority.

Specifically, NLBMDA has urged the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways & Means Committee to support and pass legislation such as that introduced by Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA), S. 1230, that makes the credit available to all prospective homebuyers and extends its availability for home purchases through November 30, 2010. The bill has support from across the political spectrum, including Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd (D-CT)

Health Care Reform Bill Takes Shape in Senate

Source: NLBMDA E-Update, September 21, 2009

Tomorrow the Senate Finance Committee will begin to mark up the draft health care legislation, "America's Healthy Future Act," introduced last week by Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT). Affordability has become the major focal point, with some in the Senate seeking to increase the tax credit for individuals who will be forced to purchase insurance under the Baucus plan. Affordability is also a concern for the business community, where the Baucus small business tax credit is so narrow few businesses will be able to qualify.

Under the Baucus bill, an employer with up to 25 full-time employees and average wages of under \$40,000 would qualify for a portion of the temporary tax credit, only employers with 10 or fewer employees and average wages of under \$20,000 will qualify for the full 35% credit. Employers with 50 or more employees will be assessed a tax penalty if any of their workers receive coverage through the exchange, and employers with more than 200 employees will have to automatically enroll workers in a plan unless the worker can prove they have coverage from another source (e.g. spouse's employer). Many of the revenue raisers in the Baucus bill, such as fees on medical devices and hospitals, will surely be passed on to insurers, thus raising the costs for private health plans.

While the Baucus bill came in at an unexpectedly "low" cost of under \$900 billion, it is likely that amendments will be offered that will raise the overall cost, meaning additional revenue raisers are still very much on the table for possible inclusion.

Baucus Health Care Plan Includes Onerous 1099 Reporting Provision

As anticipated, the Baucus health care plan also includes a corporate reporting requirement as one of the revenue raising provisions to pay for health care reform. The plan, as we've reported previously, would require all business to issue 1099s to all corporations from whom they purchase goods or services. As introduced in the Senate bill, there would be a \$600 threshold for each vendor, posing a further administrative burden as companies would have to track spending for each vendor to determine when the threshold was reached.

NLBMDA is working with its small business allies on this issue and will be vigorously opposing this measure.