



Timber Talks

A Newsletter for WRLA Members & Colleagues

FEBRUARY 2010

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Grow Your Business



WRLA
120th Annual Convention
February 10th-11th, 2010

WRLA 120th Annual Convention

"Grow Your Business"

February 10th & 11th, 2010

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

PRE-REGISTER TODAY for faster check-in at convention!

Fax your registration to (262) 250-1842 by Feb. 3rd

- **Education**
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Keeping The Team Motivated Seminar
Three -Exhibitor "How To" Seminars
- **Tabletop Showcase**
- **Receptions for networking**
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There was an error in the zip code on our registration form. If you mailed your registration, please call us at (800) 236-3534 or fax your registration to the WRLA office to be sure we have received it,

A complete convention program and registration form can be found on the WRLA website www.wrlamsi.com or call the WRLA office at 800-236-3534.

Housing Ends Poor Year, But Better Activity Expected in 2010

Source: WWPA Plumb Line, Jan/Feb 2010

Plagued by bad weather and a still weak economy, home building closed out 2009 on a whimper as housing starts slipped in December to finish the year with the lowest total in a half century. New forecasts, however, indicate construction activity may accelerate through much of this year.

The Commerce Department reported the annual rate of housing starts declined 4 percent to 557,000. Most of the decline for the month was in the Midwest and Northeast, which has been slammed by winter storms.

For the year, housing starts totaled 554,000 single-family and multifamily units, down almost 40 percent from the previous year and the lowest annual total since 1945. The total was in line with Western Wood Products Association (WWPA) earlier forecast of 551,000 units.

The West led the decline in construction, with starts down some 35 percent from 2008 totals. Home construction in the Midwest was down 31 percent and the South fell by 30 percent.

New forecasts issued during the International Builders Show in Las Vegas in mid-January were more optimistic for 2010. The National Association of Home Builders predicted housing starts would rise to 700,000 this year, pushed by a 38 percent rise in single-family home starts. NAHB Chief Economist David Crowe says construction activity should grow most of the year and approach an annual rate above 1 million units in 2011.

Coming Events

Call the WRLA office for details on coming events

March 15-17, 2010
NLBMDA Legislative Conference
Washington DC

March 23, 2010
E-Commerce Issues & Red Flag Issues Webinar

WRLA Membership Meeting

There will be a Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association Membership meeting on Thursday, February 11th, 2010 at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells, WI.

It Pays to insure with PLM

As an insurance company that has focused on the wood industry for our entire history, we have developed close ties to trade associations like the **Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association, Inc.** In addition to the endorsed safety group dividend plan, we support them through participation in meetings and conventions, outings, education, advertising and sponsorships.

PLM is pleased to be offering this dividend program to the **WRLA** and their members. The purpose of this plan is to reduce overall insurance costs of the group, by way of a dividend, through a conscientious program of loss prevention and reduction.

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Seven Lumber & Building Material Associations Form New Alliance

Source: ProSales Online, 1-13-2010

Seven regional building material trade associations have formed the Building Products Retailers Alliance.

The new super organization hopes to develop products and services for companies in the building supply channel.

Founding members of BPRa include the Construction Suppliers Association, Florida Building Material Association, Illinois Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association, Kentucky Building Material Association, Northwestern Lumber Association, Southern Building Material Association and Western Building Material Association.

The mission of the new alliance is to benefit companies doing business in the building supply channel by developing services and

products that make them more effective, efficient and less prone to liability, the organization said in a prepared statement.

“For years, the regional and state LBM associations have talked about the opportunities we’d create by pooling our thoughts and resources,” said Bill Tucker, president of the BPRa and the Florida Building Material Association. “With this new alliance, we’ve created the structure to turn those opportunities into reality.”

The regional and state LBM associations have historically focused on providing products and services to building material dealers, and that will not change. The BPRa’s focus is on developing programs that benefit the entire building supply channel.

10% OFF COUPON

Stop by the WRLA registration desk at convention for your **Convention Special -10% Discount** coupon. Save 10% on your next order of business forms or envelopes from the WRLA.

*New orders must be accompanied by a sample form.

This offer is good on one order only.

Congratulations!

You’ve voted and the winner of the 2009 Lumber Person of the Year is

Kevin Denson, Dalton Lumber

WRLA Lumber Person of the Year nominations are based on: ♦ success in business ♦ personal integrity ♦ industry knowledge ♦ professionalism ♦ leadership ♦ dedication ♦ participation in WRLA and other industry organizations.

Kevin started in the lumber business 24 years ago, working summers and part-time at Dalton Lumber while attending high school and college. In 2005, Kevin and his cousin Matt Quade purchased Dalton Lumber which has been in their family for 34 years. Kevin’s father has been general manager for 34 years.

Kevin was recently elected president of a buying group—Vertack Group—which consists of nine independently owned lumber yards in Wisconsin.

The father of an 11-year daughter, Kevin lives in Kingston, Wisconsin.

An award will be presented to Kevin at the WRLA Grand Luncheon on Thursday, February 11th at the Kalahari Resort.

CertainTeed Settles Shingle Suit

Source: ProSales, Jan. 4, 2010

CertainTeed Corp. has reached a preliminary agreement to settle a class-action lawsuit filed against it by homeowners who alleged a type of organic asphalt shingle manufactured by the company failed prematurely and didn't perform as well as they should, the litigants said Monday January 4th.

In the settlement, CertainTeed continues to deny the allegations and maintains that the "vast majority" of the shingles are defect free and will last beyond the warranty period, but said it is settling to avoid the expense and other negative aspects of protracted litigation.

As part of the settlement, CertainTeed has agreed to provide extra compensation beyond the company's warranty terms for home owners who are part of the class and who file claims. The settlement is not for a lump sum but, rather, individuals who are part of the class and who file a claim are paid based on a formula.

Neither CertainTeed or the plaintiffs have presented any valuation or estimate for how much the settlement will cost CertainTeed.

The settlement agreement covers only organic shingles, which the company made from July 1, 1987 through 2005 and discontinued manufacturing and selling several years ago. The shingles in the agreement were sold with the brand names Hallmark Shangle, Independence Shangle, Horizon Shangle, Custom Sealdon, Custom Sealdon 30, Sealdon 20, Sealdon 25, Hearthstead, Solid Slab, Master Slab, Custom Saf-T-Lok/Saf-T-Lok and the Custom Lok 25.

The settlement does not include CertainTeeds fiberglass shingles Centennial Slate or Landmark, referenced in the recent press release by Halunen & Associates. Nor does the settlement include the fiberglass formulations of Horizon, Independence, Hallmark, and Hearthstead shingles.

More information about the settlement and class members' rights will follow in the first quarter of 2010.✍

How Obama's Home Star Program Could Green Up American Homes

Source: NLBMDA Green Update, Jan. 11, 2010

Energy efficient housing. It's not the fun part of greentech. It's not some astounding new and innovative technology. It's not going to win any Da Vinci awards for creativity. But the Obama administration is betting its new Home Star "Cash for Caulkers" program that it's the one with the greenest bang for the buck. They'll pay you up to half the cost to retrofit that gas-guzzling house of

yours for up to \$4,000 and in the process put a quarter of a million unemployed construction workers back to work lowering your energy costs and carbon footprint. The \$23 billion dollar program should retrofit at least 6 million houses, and put a dent in the 17 percent unemployment rate in the construction industry. For more on this visitation the NLBMDA website-www.dealer.org.✍

Updated model COBRA Subsidy Notices Now Available

Source:JJ Keller

Plans are required to notify certain current and former participants and beneficiaries about the premium reduction under ARRA, as amended by the Department of Defense Appropriation Act 2010 (2010 DOD Act). The Department of Labor (DOL) created model notices and a list of FAQ's to help plans and individuals comply with these requirements. Each model notice is designed for a particular group of qualified beneficiaries and contains information to help satisfy ARRA's notice provisions, including those added by the 2010 DOD Act. They can be found at www.jjkeller.com/hrc.

The updated General Notice must be provided to all qualified beneficiaries (not just covered employees) subject to federal COBRA provisions who experienced a qualifying event at any time from Sept. 1, 2008 through Feb. 28, 2010, regardless of the type of qualifying event, and who have not yet been provided an election notice. This model notice includes updated information on the premium reduction as well as information required in a COBRA election notice.

Certain individuals who have already been provided a COBRA election notice that did not include information regarding ARRA, as amended, must receive a Premium Assistance Extension Notice which includes information about the changes made to the premium reduction provisions of ARRA by the 2010 DOD Act.

An updated Alternative Notice must be sent to persons who became eligible for continuation coverage under a state law. Continuation coverage requirements vary among states and issuers should modify this model notice as necessary to conform it to the applicable state law.✍

If you have questions on COBRA notices, contact your insurance carrier.

WRLA Members can also use the **WRLA Human Resource Phone Consultation Program** through **Constangy, Brooks & Smith**. Phone (414) 875-3023

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Freddy Almonte
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262.502.3823

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W175 N11086 Stonewood Drive
Germantown WI 53022
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Fax: (262) 250-1842
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Names in the News

Congratulations **Spruce Computer Systems** who celebrates their **25th anniversary** in 2010, marking a quarter century of service to hardware and LBM dealers. During that time, the company has grown steadily through a combination of cutting edge technology, fair pricing and unparalleled software support.

"Spruce Computer Systems began in 1985 when a group of 19 lumber, hardware and building material dealers got together and set up the company" said Rob Fitzpatrick, company President. "At the time, the dealers all shared a common problem: they couldn't find software that met their needs."

Certified Green Dealer™ Program, the nation's only program for certifying the nation's green lumber and building material dealerships as qualified sources for information about green building has announced that it has launched a **new .Org website**, with a user-friendly interface, updated content, and more rigorous testing requirements. Visit: www.CertifiedGreenDealer.org

Whirlwind Building Systems recently achieved the **IAS AC 472 certification** for the Houston, TX location. The IAS AC 472 accreditation program replaced the AISC-MB certification in 2010 focusing on quality and the process for which the products are manufactured and performance in the field. The certification process is a complete review of all practices, procedures, and products.

Dealer Helps in Haitian Relief Efforts

Source: ProSales 1-17-2010

A Miami building material dealer has found a special way to contribute to the massive relief effort for Haiti's earthquake victims: It's providing pallets and shrink wrap, plus materials it normally stocks hurricane preparedness, for the containers of goods that south Florida citizens are donating.

"The earthquake in Haiti and the tragic circumstances that have followed have caused a grass-roots relief effort in Miami unlike any I have seen since Hurricane Andrew," Shell Lumber president Andy Haase said in an e-mail to ProSales. After the earthquake stuck, "We immediately started receiving calls asking for donations of any kind, mostly monetary at first," he said. "A couple days passed and every group

from the Rotary club to the University of Miami was organizing containers of supplies or volunteers to help.

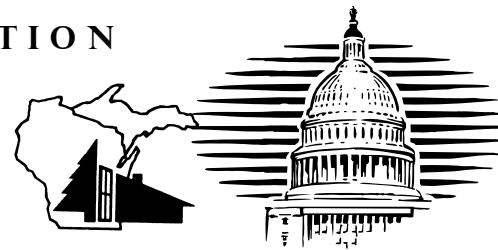
"The city of Miami contacted us to help move donations from City Hall to a warehouse where they had to start consolidating [goods]."

"We offered our trucks and gave numerous pallets of supplies as well, such as water, stoves, gas cans, water jugs, flashlights with batteries. It wasn't until later in the day the City Commissioner called and asked for empty pallets, empty boxes and shrink wrap. The volunteers needed the materials to package all the donations coming from regular people.

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.

Legislative Update

FEBRUARY 2010



NLBMDA Releases 2010 National Agenda *Source: NLBMDA E-Update 1-19-2010*

Last week the National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) released its 2010 National Policy Agenda (NPA), outlining key policies critical to restoring our nation's housing sector and its supply chain. As retailers of building materials, NLBMDA's member companies have sustained significant sales declines and job losses across the country over the past several years.

"NLBMDA looks forward to working with policymakers early in 2010 to develop new incentives for home improvements and retrofits that will restore jobs across the building supply chain," stated Dan Fesler, NLBMDA Chairman and CEO of Lamperts Inc. Our dealers deliver environmentally –friendly building products, including certified wood, to supply the growing green building movement. "incentives to increase the use of energy-efficient and environmentally-preferable products will provide a powerful stimulus for the housing sector and the overall economy," added Fesler.

NLBMDA will continue to advance pro– business policies that will strengthen small businesses and protect the many multi-generational family-owned businesses in the industry. The association's agenda includes statements on housing, legal reform, workforce policy, tax policy, product supply, transportation and energy.

The complete NPA can be downloaded from the NLBMDA website at www.dealer.org.

NLBMDA Weighs in on HOME STAR Proposals *Source: NLBMDA E-Update 1-19-2010*

As work continues behind-the-scenes to craft a HOME STAR program to provide incentives for energy-efficient home improvements, NLBMDA lobbyists have met with Hill and Administration staff to relay our concerns about

some of the provisions in early drafts. NLBMDA is advocating for a simple and easily administered rebate program that would enable all small and independent building material dealers to participate, not just big box retailers. The HOME STAR program, and a correlating BuildingStar program for commercial buildings, may be considered as part of the "jobs" package the senate will take up in the early part of the year.

NLBMDA Protests Small Business Health Care Provision

Source: NLBMDA E-Update 1-19-2010

NLBMDA is featured in ProSales magazine (week of Jan. 18th) regarding its opposition to the Merkely amendment which excludes the construction industry from the overall small business exception to the mandate that employers provide a minimum standard of health insurance to their employees. The feature also mentions the NLBMDA 2010 Policy Agenda. To view this article go to: <http://www.prosalesmagazine.com/industry-news.asp?referer=rss420§ionID=420&articleID=1171120>

WMC Board Approves Wisconsin Jobs 2010 Campaign

Source: WMC Capitol Watch, 1-25-2010

The Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) Board approved the Wisconsin Jobs 2010 campaign to promote top priorities for job creation that would renew Wisconsin's economy and make our state the most competitive in the nation. The Wisconsin Jobs 2010 Agenda contains common sense reforms to help Wisconsin get back to basics: control government spending, repeal \$3 billion in taxes passed in the most recent session, streamline permitting, repeal excessive regulations, and control frivolous lawsuits. The plan adopts policies that have built successful business climates in other states. For a copy of the campaign visit: <http://www.wmc.org/governmentaffairs/display.cfm?ID=2222>

If you have a regulatory issues you would like to see addressed, please contact the WRLA Office. The WRLA works with the National Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association (NLBMDA) on national issues and with the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) to lobby on state of Wisconsin regulatory issues. You can reach the WRLA via phone at 800-236-3534 or via email at wrla@wrlamsi.com.



Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association Inc.



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